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2010 – 2012

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Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2010-2012

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Foreword by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, Mr. Valton BEQIRI

Dear young men and women,

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) in the Republic of Kosovo is fully aware of the vital role that our youth should play in the establishment and consolidation of the state. We are also aware and proud of the fact that Kosovo population is one of the youngest in Europe. Therefore, it represents an exceptional potential and energy for development, talent and creativity. However, we are also aware that any such potential requires a proper channeling of this energy. The needs, desires and ambitions of young people need to be directed towards their concretization and addressing so that this most vital part of the population can give a significant contribution to the future of this country.

Due to this reason, the Department of Youth in MCYS has developed the “Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2010-2012”, specifying the objectives and indicators to assist the development of youth capacities in the country. Youth priorities are elaborated into six categories: (1) Youth participation; (2) Formal and informal education; (3) Employment; (4) Health services for the youth; (5) Human security; and (6) Culture, sports and recreation. We are convinced that this Strategy, with categorized priorities, approved and supported by the Government of Republic of Kosovo, will serve as guideline in addressing main issues that any Kosovo young lady or man is facing today.

These challenges faced by the youth, as proven by the spirit of this Strategy, are always aiming to bring Kosovo youth closer to the young European citizens.

Cordially,

Valton Beqiri
Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports

The word of the Director of Department of Youth in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Mr. Fatmir HOXHA

In our country, although having an area of 10.887 km² and over 2 million inhabitants, half of the population is under the age of 30, which means that has a young age of population. In the past decade Kosovo went through challenges of political, economic and social development, these challenges also affecting young people, who will be tomorrow's workers, businessmen, parents and leaders of Kosovo. Problems in the youth sector emerging after the war refer to low level of participation of youth in the public life, unsatisfactory educational level (quantitative), high rate of unemployment, lack of health care services, lack of human security. However, in years some of these problems already started to be solved due to commitment of all actors composing the youth sector: relevant institutions, youth organizations, International organizations and other formal and informal groups. For the positive impact in changing this reality a special contribution was developed by the Department of Youth, acting as part of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. The mission of Department of Youth relates to the "youth empowerment and establishment of a supportive environment for the social and personal development of youth, creation of promotional opportunities, development and participation of young people in the active social life and provision of equal services to youth, which enable development of life skills and social values, respecting individual specifics.

In order to meet the requirements deriving from this mission, Department of Youth in the recent years has developed a number of documents that positively impact the implementation of its mission, including Kosovo Youth Strategy document 2010-2012 and Action Plan. This document elaborates the areas like youth participation, education, employment, health care, human security, culture, sports and recreation that are presented thoroughly as part of this document. All this work would not be possible without the support of our international and national friends therefore we highly appreciate the support of the partners in drafting and reviewing the Kosovo Youth Strategy 2010-2012.

We would like to thank representatives from UNICEF, GTZ, UNDP/UNV, the World Bank, USAID, OSCE, UNFPA, UNIFEM, for their significant contribution, energy and time dedicated to this process. Without their contribution the document would not be as comprehensive as it is now. We would also like to thank all young people, Municipal Youth officers, youth NGOs, Youth Centers, Youth Networks who have supported the process and participated in many workshops and presentations of the Working Group, KYAP Secretariat and our partners without whose help the Strategy and the Plan would not be developed as it is today. We would like to thank Inter-Ministerial Committee for the assistance provided in developing KYSAP and Youth Policy developers who provided valuable information in drafting the document. We would like to thank staff in the Department of Youth for the contribution in initiating and sending forward the process of KYSAP. In the end, the publication would not be possible without the financial support of GTZ, project EDYK, therefore we highly appreciate their regular cooperation and support, but also by the media and other actors who helped in our joint work.

Cordially,

Fatmir Hoxha,
Director of Department of Youth

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1. Executive summary

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. (See Annex B).

2. Introduction

2.1. Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan

Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan (KYSAP) has as a goal to improve youth situation, including all relevant government and non-government institutions, organizations and service providers, to assess and meet the needs of youth and finding mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making processes in Kosovo. The Strategy encourages the cooperation between youth organizations and the Government, respectively between all ministries whose activity is related to youth and between central entities and municipal ones in order to enforce youth policies and programs. Youth Action Plan describes the required steps for accomplishing the vision, strategy implementation, appointing relevant stakeholders, responsible organizations and the necessary financial means.

2.2. Policies for whom? Transition to adulthood

A challenge to most of youth strategies or policies is always related to the problems with the definition of youth and making a difference between this group from children and teenagers. Kosovo Youth Strategy recognizes the importance and the meaning of “youth” era in an individual’s life path, as a period of transition from social and economic dependence to full independence of an individual. According to draft law on Youth Empowerment and Participation, young age or the term young man/woman is defined as the age group of 15-24 years of age, therefore, Kosovo Youth Strategy is a document addressed to this group by providing opportunities that are appropriate for the youth stage, by keeping the autonomy and with special emphasis on participation and cooperation.

2.3. For the complete social development of youth

The complete development of an individual should be the supreme value of every society. Kosovo is privileged to have the youngest population in Europe, therefore, it is imperative for young women and men in Kosovo to live a high quality life and to become independent social individuals of tomorrow, by being fully conscious about their choices, by assuming responsibility over themselves, by assisting each other and by achieving self-accomplishment in relation to the society. Kosovo Youth Strategy strives to contribute to complete development of a young individual in a number of areas (physical, intellectual, professional, emotional and social). These goals do not tend to be normative, but to offer as much as possible a range of opportunities from which young people can choose. Kosovo Youth Strategy provides a variety of opportunities for self-development, by leaving the final decision on the hands of the young person, however assisting him or her to make the correct choice.

Kosovo Youth Strategy recognizes the rich cultural inheritance and tradition of Kosovo and supports the active participation of Kosovo youth in the society. This is the first step towards the promotion of the culture of cooperation between different institutions, in order to channel individual’s potential and creativity so that it can contribute to the greater good, to social welfare and to democratic development of the society. Kosovo Youth Strategy sees the full development of an individual as part of two society structures: formal and informal one.

2.4. Towards Kosovo's democratization and development– Kosovo Youth Strategy and other development strategies

Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan is connected to other sector strategies and is to be incorporated into current macro-policies.

These connections are expected considering that the youth comprises the majority of Kosovo population therefore the Plan and Strategy are at their favor. Generally speaking, since the young people are the ones with the most direct experience and understanding for their generation, their participation should be considered as the main value in the process of planning at the central level¹. Exempting young people would mean to remove the opportunity to half of population to exercise civic culture and the rights for their interests to be taken into account².

3. Youth Vision and KYSAP Mission

Kosovo Youth Strategy appeals to young women and men in Kosovo to be active, healthy, educated citizens, to enjoy good and quality life, to be prepared to face all life's challenges as responsible members of local, regional, European and global community.

The Mission of Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan is to support youth in Kosovo to make their vision a reality, by taking care of their health and safety, providing quality comprehensive education, creating opportunities for better job, active citizen participation and support for full accomplishment of their lifetime passions and aspirations.

¹ UNICEF proposal addressed to Children Rights Committee "To speak, to take part and to decide – The right of a child to be respected". Geneva, 15 September 2006, p. 10

² Ibid. p. 4

4. A demand driven document – the youth statement

4.1. “Kosovo youth: young European citizens”³

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 Kosovo youth believes that young people make invaluable contributions to the development of Kosovo. Our priorities will be identified in the Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan, which will address the following key issues: youth participation, education, employment, health-care, human security, culture, sports and leisure time activities.

We are aware that the overall economic development is not satisfactory. For the same reason more attention is required from everyone. Youth issues interlink with all Strategy subjects and as such they should be addressed with priority by each Ministry of the Kosovo Government and by each Municipality. We urge the policy makers and responsible stakeholders to use all available reports and research as well as statistical data to assess the situation of youth and its various subgroups in Kosovo.

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.

We are proud to call Kosovo our home and we respect our rich and diverse cultural heritage, ethnicities, religious backgrounds and gender equality. We envision our home as a harmonious environment for youth empowerment, employment, education and health.

As young European citizens from Kosovo, we are united by our common aspiration for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous future not only for us but for our brothers, sisters, children, grandchildren and many more generations to come.

³ The statement is drafted by young representatives of different youth organizations and presented to be included in KYSAP document during the first conference in November 2005.

4.2. Association of Kosovo with European and global youth policies and programs

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.

4.3. Open way of coordination and European Youth Pact

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.

4.4. KYSAP and best European standards

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.

Indicator 1: **Informal education** – This indicator is clearly covered by KYSAP. Informal education is a main objective of the Policy in the field of education in Kosovo.

Indicator 2: **Youth training** – This indicator is mentioned many times in KYSAP regarding formal and informal education, employment and health.

⁴ Adopted by Resolution Council in June 2002 and based on "White Paper"

- Indicator 3: **Legislation on youth**– The specifics of Kosovo case is the fact that its Government, with the support of international donors and in cooperation with International Council on National Youth Policies, has drafted a draft Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation, which is preceding the KYSAP, whereas in many world countries mainly the opposite occurs. Therefore, legal aspect of youth policies is incorporated as part of KYSAP. In addition, this document partly refers to a number of laws that have an influence on the Kosovo youth and calls upon to implement and improve them.
- Indicator 4: **Budget for youth** – The process of drafting KYSAP was funded by the Department of Youth in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and by international donors. The implementation part (e.g. Action Plan) lists the practical steps necessary for implementing this plan, as well as exact figures of the budget required. With resources from Kosovo Government and co-financed by International donors, KYSAP has secured the budget in order to improve youth situation in Kosovo.
- Indicator 5: **Youth information policy** – this is a cross-sectoral component of the KYSAP and refers to education, employment, health and human security subject areas.
- Indicator 6: **Multi-level policy** – KYSAP is not a plan addressed to central governmental level only. It involves also representatives of local administrations and local youth NGOs. Its drafters have consulted local levels and municipal authorities are encouraged to create their own municipal action plans based on the youth policy text.
- Indicator 7: **Youth research** – This is one of the core components of the KYSAP. The KYSAP Secretariat conducted a research on the needs and problems faced by young people and the youth sector in Kosovo in May 2006. It has also used data collected by the UNDP for the Kosovo Human Development Report.
- Indicator 8: **Participation** – Young people have been involved in the development of the KYSAP right from the beginning. Various youth organizations (like the Kosovo Youth Network) participated actively in drafting this document. A number of conferences were organized at the regional and local levels to ensure an active role for young people and their organizations in the process of drafting and implementation of the KYSAP.
- Indicator 9: **Inter-ministerial cooperation** – in the course of the drafting process an inter-ministerial committee was formed involving major ministries having activities related to youth. This committee had regular meetings to review the Kosovo Youth Strategy and Kosovo Youth Action Plan.
- Indicator 10: **Innovation** – the very structure of the KYSAP process is a novelty as it involves many partners. The KYSAP Secretariat played a coordinating

role and had representatives (focal points) in various ministries to incorporate all relevant activities and programs on youth in the Strategy during the drafting stage of the process.

Indicator 11: **Youth advising bodies** – according to the Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation, Kosovo Youth Action Council is to be established as a representative body for youth organizations as well as it will be decided for an Annual Conference on Youth Policy to be organized, where opinions will be exchanged on the governmental and non-governmental programs on youth.

As a main reference point for KYSAP is also the basic opportunity package identified by the Council of Europe. This minimum package of opportunities and experiences to which young people should have access to will improve the prospects of their successful integration into both the labor market and civil society. These opportunities and experiences constitute the scope of youth policy in the main involvement areas, which are the following:

- Learning: education and training (lifelong, formal and informal), recognition of informally acquired skills and competencies;
- Access to new technologies;
- Personal counseling with an expert, career guidance and support;
- Information;
- Access to health services and social security;
- Access to housing;
- The right to paid work;
- Mobility;
- Justice and youth rights (for example, to assistance);
- Opportunities for participation and active civic culture;
- Recreation, culture and society;
- Sports and outdoor activities;
- Away from home, youth exchange and international experiences;
- Peaceful and secure environment.

5. Work methodology and process flow

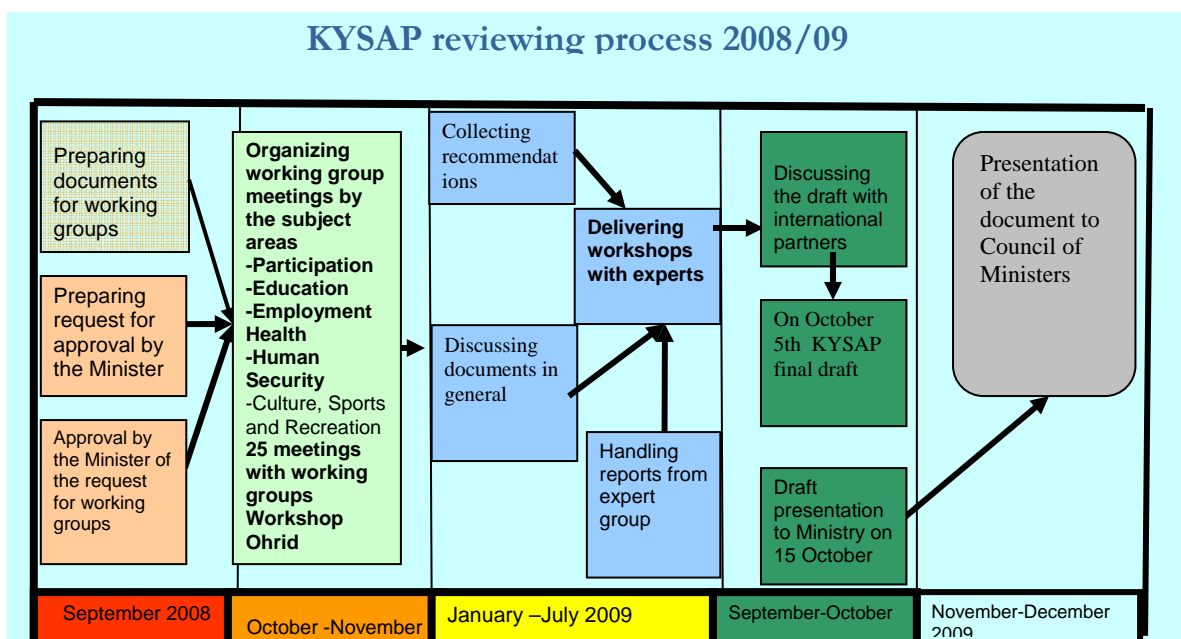
5.1. Basic information

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 (KYPAP) 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, led by Youth Department.

5.2. Drafting stage

The process of drafting KYSAP 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.



5.3. Participatory approach

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.

5.4. Local level consultations

Although established at Kosovo central level by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, the Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan is a document dedicated to all Kosovo youth to be implemented also on the local level. Several consultations with youth in municipalities and with a number of youth organizations took place during the drafting process. Municipal youth officers as well as other young people who were interested were able to express their opinion on their actual problems they are facing. Of course, their suggestions for Strategy objectives were taken into account as well.

5.5. Inter-Ministerial cooperation and consultation with all stakeholders

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.

5.6. A plan for young women and men

As a social category, youth in the political and socio-economic context includes women and men, rural and urban youth, scholar and extra scholar youth as well as employed and unemployed youth. In general, gender perspective on youth increases the capacity to explain and unveil the unequal set of opportunities and different needs between men and women. During childhood and adolescence identity is formed through a process by which young people accept ascribed roles and are identified with given models of behavior. Roles divided by gender become stereotypes through which identity and life path are constructed.

5.7. KYSAP promotion

Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports has conducted a promotion campaign during drafting stage. The public in general was informed about the ambitious mission as

well as objectives of the Strategy. The campaign used different media, such as: press, radio and TV advertisement and Internet.

6. Strategy components – an overview of youth situation in Kosovo

It is estimated that over 50% of Kosovo population is under the age of 30. This fact requires for immediate actions to be taken regarding the education and integration of young generations. A direct consequence of lack of investments in the youth is that a country is wasting young potentials for its development. Youth Strategy in Kosovo adopts an integrated approach for social, economical and political participation of youth in society. In particular, youth need formal and informal education, in line with the needs of labor market, they need youth-friendly health-care services, more security, employment, recreational activities and for participating in decision-making⁵.

Although youth participation is a value itself, it is mainly a means of developing other subject areas such as: education, employment, health services etc. Among other things, Kosovo can reach progress in other sectorial policies listed below only thanks to active participation of youth, better infrastructure and proper information. Meanwhile, in the process of participation the integrity of the young person should be kept therefore, current situation of youth participation and objectives of the Strategy are presented here, through other subject areas: education, employment, health care, human-social security and culture, sports and recreation. An essential element when defining subject areas and objectives of the Strategy, Action Plan and activities of KYSAP is an understanding of the real situation of young people in Kosovo. Only with such understanding it is possible to consciously identify the needs and expectations of young people and prepare answers to their problems. This chapter contains a descriptive and analytical part of the situation of Kosovo youth.

6.1 Youth participation

The ability of young people to influence the institutions that affect their lives seems very limited. There are different causes for this situation in the regional perspective including economic situation, the war and post-war period, the former system, lack of confidence in political parties, disillusion with politics, non-transparent political institutions, lack of youth policies, the absence of facilities and resources, and the formal education system. The qualitative poverty study of Kosovo indicates a very limited influence of youth on the institutions that affect their lives, whether in the family, at school or in the community⁶. For example councils, or students' organizations in some Kosovo schools and universities may not exist, or students are not informed about them. Also, there is a low level of participation of students in such bodies⁷. Another example is the low decision-making power of young people within political parties and a fairly small

⁵ This responds to the direction of policies for South-East Europe, see: G. La Cava, P. Lytle, A. Kolev – "Youth in South-East Europe; from risk to empowerment", 2005, p. 11.

⁶ Kosovo Poverty Assessment, Promoting Opportunity, Security and Participation for All. World Bank 2005, page 47

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

number of young politicians who are in actual leading positions⁸. There is a general feeling among young people that many local institutions that deal with youth issues are not responsive to their needs. Often, these local institutions have a very small number of young people as members of their personnel, thus preventing proper youth representation⁹.

As the document produced by Kosovo Youth Assemblies shows “...young people in Kosovo are left outside the process of decision making. They are not regularly invited to relevant discussions that affect their lives and future in schools, universities, local or central government”. Such a lack of institutional framework for youth participation and decision-making appeared to be the key element identified during the first conference on KYSAP held on November 2005. According to participants, many of whom represented youth NGOs, currently there is no sufficient cooperation between youth NGOs and the Government of Kosovo. What is interesting is that the adult respondents involved in politics in Kosovo also believed that young people through the establishment of youth forums and NGOs should address the problems of Kosovo youth.¹⁰ UNICEF provided a similar recommendation, appealing for improving opportunities for participation through different methods similar to the above mentioned¹¹. In the light of the problems identified above there is a need for effective policies on youth participation, which must view young people as agents of change and active participants in local, national, and global governance. In Kosovo there is a need for institutional provision for youth participation in the public domain.

6.1.1. Capacities of youth organizations and their openness to international cooperation

Operation of youth NGO's and access to official information is regulated with two legal acts. They are, UNMIK Regulation 1999/22 “On the Registration and Operation of Non-governmental Organizations in Kosovo” and Law on Access to Official Documents. The Regulation contains a number of important provisions on the approved form of NGO organization and the manner of their establishment. In general, it is accepted for an NGO to be involved in economic activities for the purpose of supporting their activities, clearly it acknowledges the right of Kosovo NGO's to receive grants and donations and, there are requirements in order to acquire the public beneficiary status. The Law on Access to Official Documents allows for any “permanent resident” or a person who is entitled to become a Kosovo resident and its natural and legal persons to have the right of access to any of the documents of any Government institution, municipal or independent body. 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 etc¹². I.e. low capacity of youth NGO's is a problem facing youth sector in Kosovo. It can be looked from the internal and external perspectives. From the internal point of view many youth organizations in Kosovo have not developed institutional capacity, which involves elements that help an organization to accomplish its mission in an effective and efficient manner. An

⁸ Report from discussion with the focus group Politicians and Political Activists for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 4

⁹ Ibid. page 48

¹⁰ Report from discussion with the focus group Politicians and Political Activists for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 3

¹¹ UNICEF submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child “To Speak, Participate and Decide – The Child's Right to be heard”. Geneva, 15 September 2006, p. 7

¹² KCSF “Mapping of Civil Society” 2006

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 are far from this concept and especially 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.

From the external point of view, youth organizations in Kosovo do not enjoy proper support from the central and local administration bodies. They rarely receive any sustainable funding or resources that can be utilized in their work. At the municipal level, youth NGOs face obstacles regarding the usage of youth centre and many report that there is a general lack of interest for the activities and programs of youth organizations. 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.

6.1.2. Youth voluntary work

Voluntary work is a valuable way by which young people can gain practical experience and improve their qualifications. In addition, voluntary work empowers young people; it helps them overcome the feeling of idleness by allowing young people to become active citizens¹⁴. In Kosovo, often there is a misconception regarding the difference between youth NGO's and voluntary work. Many people equate voluntarism with NGOs. Some respondents to the UNV interview stated that working in NGO is voluntarism, independent of payment.

Youth volunteerism can be analyzed as a cross-sector item with reference to subject areas of employment, education, health, and human security. Other information suggest that the main interest of youth in voluntary work appears to be in sports clubs, cultural and humanitarian organizations, but there is a lack of interest of voluntary work in informal groups, education and youth organizations¹⁵.

¹³ Report from discussion with the focus group Politicians and Political Activists for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 3

¹⁴ G. La Cava, P. Lytle, A. Kolev – "Young People in South Eastern Europe: From Risk to Empowerment", 2005, p. 107

¹⁵ Research "Conditions of youth in Kosovo" prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS.

It is apparent that most people in Kosovo do not see the benefits of engaging in voluntary work. Most people agree that there has been a decline in voluntary work since 1999. There are less and less people who are willing to do tasks without payment to the benefit of other people. Especially in urban areas, and big cities such as Prishtina, Prizren and Gjakova, where young people are struggling with economic problems and rarely consider engaging in voluntary activities, since they have difficulties with making a living¹⁶. Unfortunately, political problems can be a big obstacle for the development of voluntarism in the future.

It is necessary to create a policy and a strategy to make voluntary work more attractive to citizens, since it is an essential part of a sound society. It needs to be institutional support for voluntary work and the (political) leaders should be examples of the importance of voluntary work. It is also believed that if the media would give coverage to successful voluntary work, people would see its effects and would engage in some kind of voluntary work themselves¹⁷.

Regional networking is poor and legal basis and pro-volunteer approach within institutions is insufficient. One major problem identified is that volunteerism is not officially recognized (i.e. by one sort of a card proving that volunteers are working). There is a need for the principles of voluntary work, instructions and standards on the engagement of young volunteers and obligations of the beneficiary to be developed.

6.1.3. Existing youth services

In Kosovo existing services for youth are mainly provided by youth NGO's supported and funded by Department of Youth, municipalities and international organizations. 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. The number of those, who receive indirect support, or directly benefit from awareness campaigns, seems to be much higher although there are no exact figures available. Youth services ensure the implementation of basic democratic rights to self-organize and to participate in all areas of development of the public life and local community. For example Youth Networks are now established in more than five municipalities who served as a ground for forming thirteen Municipal Youth Action Councils. Another good example is programs and services that foster volunteer participation. These services are mainly offered by youth centers and NGOs and they provide young people with many opportunities for personal development and growth, as well as opportunities for initiation and implementation of youth actions and initiatives.

In most cases the beneficiaries of such educational services and participants in vocational training programs receive certificates for trainings or courses they attended. Many organizations involve their participants as well as beneficiaries in the process of evaluation of the services provided.

It should be remembered that majority of youth NGOs are located in urban areas and only few are located and operate in rural areas. Despite the fact that some "urban" youth NGOs operate and provide services in the villages, young people living in rural areas must be considered as under-served. There is no sufficient data to analyze the real picture

¹⁶ Volunteerism in Kosovo: a study commissioned by UNV, p. 13-14

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 15

whether the needs of young women are served and whether the needs of disadvantaged youth are met. Several factors are being recognized as important to the services for young people provided by youth NGOs and other actors, including support of parents, costs of services and whether they are provided free of charge. Also the capacities of the organization providing services, financial resources available from municipalities, central institutions or the international donor community are important elements.

6.1.4. Objectives

1. To promote and ensure institutional mechanisms for participation of youth in decision-making process.

KYSAP considers youth participation as a process through which youth develop their skills, build-up capacities, create aspirations, gain the trust and generate income¹⁸. The main activity in accomplishing this objective shall be the drafting of a legal framework for youth participation and creating youth consultation and representation organisms in Kosovo. In addition, attention will be paid to capacity building of public administration to enable successful cooperation with young people and to enable youth participation in drafting of sectoral policies in Kosovo.

2. To ensure support for youth sector from local level.

This objective is to be treated at the municipal level through drafting and implementing of local youth policies and action plans with active participation of youth organizations.

3. To support networking and cooperation of young people in regional and European youth activities.

Constant cooperation of youth networks with their counterparts in the region, Europe and beyond will be supported, by organizing working visits, exchanging best practices and participation of selected people from Kosovo to important youth events in Europe and world-wide.

4. To improve capacities of youth organizations.

Trainings will be organized according to drafted standards; qualitative programs will be encouraged and counseling services will be provided to youth organizations.

6.1.5. Indicators

Progress achievement indicators are mainly quantitative and of measurable nature. Since this subject area requires for mechanisms for youth participation to be created, the activity indicators include, but are not limited to:

- Adoption of the Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation;
- Establishment of Youth Action Councils at central and local levels;
- Organizing workshops;
- Creation of central database and focal points to disseminate information and informing the youth; and,
- Participation in youth activities outside Kosovo.
- Inclusion and involvement of all communities.

¹⁸ In compliance with UNICEF recommendations, see: UNICEF submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child "To Speak, Participate and Decide – The Child's Right to be heard". Geneva, 15 September 2006, p. 13.

There are also some quality indicators to assess the implementation of this objective, such as:

- Increased support for municipalities to create youth representative bodies,
- Higher involvement of young people in development of youth policies;
- Recognition of informal education through a certification system; and

Output impact indicators in the area of youth participation are:

- Established Municipal Youth Action Councils and influencing the local youth policies in all municipalities by the baseline of 30 % and by the end of year 4 of the implementation stage up to 100%;
- Increase the outreach of rural youth in youth programs and services (baseline of 15.000 young people with at least 40% increase in 4 years);
- Increased number of young people from minority community groups in youth programs (baseline of 300 young people with at least 30% increase in 4 years);
- Higher participation of young people in leading youth organizations (in 3 years baseline + 30%); and
- Higher percentage of young women in management of youth organizations (in 3 years baseline +30%), to name only a few.

6.2. Formal and informal education

In any discussions about education it must be reminded that learning occurs in formal, non-formal, and informal educational settings and that the learning experience can be equally powerful in each of those settings¹⁹. Formal education is properly associated with schools. It is the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded educational system running from primary school through the university and including, in addition to general academic studies, a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training²⁰. Non-formal education has been defined as any intentional and systematic initiative (usually outside of traditional schooling) in which content is adapted to the unique needs of the students (or unique situations) in order to maximize learning and minimize other elements which often occupy formal school teachers (i.e. taking a roll call, enforcing discipline, writing reports, supervising study hall, etc.)²¹. The methods used in non-formal education are very different in nature to those used in formal education institutions. Rather than learning “pure theory” from textbooks, young people “learn by doing”. Due to the participatory nature of the activities, young people are forced to take responsibility for their own learning and engage actively in the process. Youth activities provide “real life” situations that cannot be replicated easily in a classroom. Learning takes place in specific contexts and is therefore more meaningful²².

It must also be recognized that young girls/women and young boys/men face different obstacles and challenges in access to education and treatment within the system.

Girls face additional challenges in completing education due to realities of motherhood and childbirth. Policy objectives and activities must take into account the girls that are falling out of the education system and strive to keep them in.

¹⁹ Arlen Etling – “What is Informal Education?” *Journal of Agricultural Education*, Winter 1993, p. 73

²⁰ P. Coombs – “New paths to learning for rural children and youth”, 1973 p. 11

²¹ J. Kleis, L. Lang - Toward a contextual definition of informal education. *Informal education discussion papers*. Michigan State University, p. 6

²² European Youth Forum Youth Report “Education, Employment and Young People in Europe”, 2004, p. 42

6.2.1. Formal education strategies – the need for better coordination

The overall situation of formal education in Kosovo is still facing a number of difficulties although major progress on the policy level has been achieved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, which in June 2004 launched the Kosovo Strategy for Development of Higher Education for the years 2005-2015. This 10-year strategy of the Higher Education in Kosovo is a document that reflects a consensus among political factors, the academic and scientific associations, students, civil society, other stakeholders and wide public community for a vision for higher education in Kosovo²³.

The overall goal of this strategy is to contribute to the building of a modern system of higher education in Kosovo²⁴ and the strategy addresses the reality by identifying vision, principles, mission, and strategic objectives as well as by framing it into the implementation plan with budget implications. There are also other strategies developed in the area of formal education, such as: Kosovo Strategy for Rural area education (2004 – 2009), and the adult learning strategy for Kosovo (2005 – 2015). Such strategies targeted specifically on formal education are needed, as the actual situation in formal education is inappropriate. However, there should be stronger cooperation between institutions in relation to special activities and programs. This process has started and requires support. For example, key stakeholders are currently working to create an inter-ministerial group to develop sustainable strategies for Life Long Learning in Kosovo, coordinated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

6.2.2. Access, quality, facilities

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 accessing the existing ones).

Young people feel educational institutions do not comply with the Law on Education and that gaps in legal infrastructure cause an absence of information on student's rights and responsibilities. Other people say that the education in Kosovo is influenced by politics and lacks a system of values. Lack of transparency as well as nepotism, religious interference and intergenerational conflicts are also observed.

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. Estimated costs for a household for basic education are as follows: textbooks and learning materials cost about 40 – 80 euro per student a year, adding costs for transport and meals. These costs are perceived to seriously hamper access to basic education for children of poor households. Total education expenditures for 2005 amount up to 97.9 million euro (13% of the total budget), 76.4% of which are 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 euro)²⁵.

²³ Strategy for Development of Higher Education in Kosova for the years 2005-2015, page 4

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ See, footnote 6

6.2.3. Early school dropout – a critical challenge

Another critical challenge for formal educational system in Kosovo is the high rate of school dropouts. Only one third of the participants, who enrolled the first year, manage to reach professional secondary qualification or obtain a diploma for high education. Estimated rate of abandonment of mandatory education is about 12-13 %, secondary education around 28 % whereas for higher education more than 50 %. High rate of school dropouts may be partly due to low outcomes from education (expressed in income generated from education), inappropriate learning facilities and private costs for education purposes. However a survey conducted by authors of the Strategy on education in rural areas of Kosovo indicates that the reasons behind school abandonment include migration of families, travelling distance, parents who do not see the need for education, uninterested children, and the need for employment or to assist with home work²⁶. The reasons presented for abandoning secondary education include low family income, lack of transport means, marriage (women) and no future prospect from secondary education²⁷.

6.2.4. Counseling and information services

Ultimately much is to be done on counselling system, that would guide young people through educational system, inform them about informal 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 or act as mediators²⁸. It has to be noted that the trust young people hold in private education institutions is increasing. More than half of young people think that private sector services are better and 1/3 that they are weaker. What young people like about private education institutions is the ease of registration, the quality of such schools and the academic staff²⁹. Young people feel private universities prepare their students better for the practical side of work and feel that a diploma obtained at a private university increases their chances in the labour market³⁰. Public school and universities are not flexible enough and the knowledge acquired there does not meet the market needs.

6.2.5. The need for full recognition of informal education

It is fair to say that informal education has not received a level of visibility and credibility that reflects the contribution it makes to individual development. This is a direct consequence of not being part of any certification system³¹. Informal education has a less clearly framed curricula and much less “certification power” which gives it a weaker social and financial position³².

²⁶ Strategy for education in rural areas in Kosovo, page 66

²⁷ Strategy for education in rural areas in Kosovo, page 70

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

²⁹ Research “Conditions of youth in Kosovo” prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS

³⁰ Report from discussion with the focus group Students for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 5

³¹ See, footnote 21

³² Manuela du Bois Reymond – “A Study on the Links Between Formal and Non-formal Education”, p. 5

According to the survey conducted quite a high number of young people in Kosovo attend courses outside the formal school system, mostly language and computer course. Results from the survey show a lack of interest in courses on business and economy³³.

The need for informal education in Kosovo seems not to be urgent in rural areas. Out of school youth and adults have extremely limited access to learning opportunities. Life Long Learning, whether it is fighting illiteracy or returning to basic education, building on already acquired knowledge or adding new competencies, is in the hands of individuals, but a supportive public and private system must be at hand to fulfil the needs of individuals. There is a need to strengthen projects undertaken by local NGOs, which offer well established courses in agriculture, food processing, etc. since the scope of such activities is still limited³⁴. Such programs would be particularly beneficial for youth who have either not entered or have dropped out of secondary school.

Other obstacles for the development of informal education in Kosovo include the lack of legal basis for this type of activities, lack of extra curriculum activities at school and lack of education in the media (young people believe that media and especially public television, school magazines and Internet should give young people more space to express their needs and opinions)³⁵. In general, lack of recognition of informal education is the major problem in Kosovo and the recognised qualification system is missing.

6.2.6. Objectives

1. To strengthen cooperation among governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations, to create better opportunities in the field of formal and informal education.

The objective will be implemented through cooperation with various stakeholders, especially the municipalities and youth and student organisations. Opportunities will be identified for joint awareness campaigns, sharing of existing facilities and effective allocation of funds.

2. To create a flexible and acceptable education system, comprehensive at every stage of life.

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 people of adult age, who, for whatever reason, were unable to complete their education. Such courses, both formal and informal will gain support through tailored promotion tools and allocation of special funds.

3. To harmonize the education to the labour market demands in the current socio-economic circumstances.

Based on identification of market needs through relevant surveys conducted, education strategies will be modified (for example entrepreneur skills will be introduced to the curricula). There will be also public information points to notify current employment opportunities.

³³ Research "Conditions of youth in Kosovo" prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS.

³⁴ A Strategy for Education for Rural People in Kosovo, p. 71

³⁵ Research "Conditions of youth in Kosovo" prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS.

6.2.7. Indicators

In the subject area of **education**, action oriented (quantitative) indicators, among others, include:

- Organization of a specific number of events, simulation activities, study visits, scholarships and trainings;
- Provision of specific amounts of funds, establishment of new institutions like the Accreditation Institution, etc.

On the qualitative side (performance indicators) are:

- Better cooperation between institutions and increased involvement of communities and civil society complement the picture.

Examples of output impact indicators are:

- Decrease the percentage of school dropouts among youth in upper secondary education (baseline 28%, in 3 years 15 %);
- Increase the percentage of universities and upper secondary schools that have elected student representatives actively participating in decision-making (in 3 years baseline +30%);
- Increase of the percentage of young male and female receiving additional skills through informal education activities (baseline 5 %, in 3 years 20%).

6.3. Employment

Unemployment continues to be generally considered Kosovo's biggest problem. "The first and most exigent of the issues confronting us today is the lack of employment opportunities within Kosovo. Without reasonable possibility for regular, worthwhile and lawful employment we are left with few desirable choices" – states the Youth Assembly Recommendation for Change document³⁶. The survey conducted by the KYAP Secretariat confirms this observation. Only 1/20 of respondents are not worried about their employment; these were people who were either not looking for a job, or their working place was guaranteed, for example in the private sector³⁷.

Young people have different reasons to be concerned with the labor market. If they are still living with their parents then they generally depend on the family income to study or to have decent livelihood. Unemployment rate is increasing among women, with the unemployment rate being twice higher for women than the men.

6.3.1. The structure of unemployment among youth

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 minority³⁸. According to UNDP survey conducted in 2006, 43 % of unemployed people are searching for a job for

³⁶ See, footnote 7

³⁷ Research "Conditions of youth in Kosovo" prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS.

³⁸

more than one year. 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 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (72.2 per cent looking for a job 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)³⁹. Unemployment is pervasive among women, thus experiencing unemployment rates double that of men. It is obviously higher in the age group of 15-19 and accounts for 60.1% and decreases to 45.0% in the age group of 20-24⁴⁰. 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 some countries of South-East Europe (SEE) is Roma youth⁴¹.

6.3.2. Consequences of limited employment opportunities

There are different opinions among the employed youth: a vast majority of them (93.4%) are mainly or partly satisfied with their current job, while only 6.5% of them do not want to change their workplace. The reasons for the desire to change the job are: better salaries (38.3%), better career opportunities (36.4%) and improvement of working conditions (18.4%).

Limited economic opportunities are leading to variety of negative consequences. Some youth are turning to the black market, criminal activities or they become victims of violence or other deviant behavior. Also limited employment opportunities force young people to look for a job abroad. Survey findings from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova and Serbia confirm that a majority of youth would emigrate if they had the opportunity to do so. International migration can have a positive effect; young people and their households can overcome unemployment and poverty by working abroad and sending private remittances home. For Kosovo Albanians, such remittances are estimated at 43 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Yet, the negative aspects of labor migration are that home country is losing educated people in the surrounding region and wasting investments made in education in the home country⁴².

With such an unfavorable situation it is only natural that the working conditions for the employed “happy few” are tough and there are examples of exploitation of employees. 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 International Labor Organization (ILO) criteria: (i) whether they had a signed employment contract; and (ii) whether the

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ All statistical data in this paragraph taken from the ILO study conducted in 2005 (not yet published)

⁴¹ G. La Cava, P. Lytle, A. Kolev – “Young People in South Eastern Europe; From Risk to Empowerment”, 2005, p. 65

⁴² 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

enterprise was registered⁴³. Many young people suffer from increasing family poverty, often resulting in child labor, school drop out, or human trafficking.

6.3.3. Job searching methods

There are different data available as to the preferred job search methods by the Kosovo youth. Some point to official institutions and networks of family and friends. Others identify printed media (job advertisements) as the main source on information about available vacancies. Whatever the sources of information are, however, 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.

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. Similarly negative views are given to youth centers, which are not well assessed by youth respondent⁴⁴.

6.3.4. Education for employment

Generally speaking young people find education attained as being relevant for getting a decent job, therefore the aim of many young Kosovo Albanians (and especially women) is to achieve higher education in the belief that it will improve their employment opportunities. Increased school attendance is without doubt a positive indicator, as there is a general assumption that better educated youth will be more employable. However, it appears that many young people in Kosovo post-pone their entry into the labor market for lack of present job opportunities, more than for a reasoned career choice. A belief that university education will ensure employment is unfortunately unfounded: when recruiting new employees in Kosovo, employers look first at the work experience⁴⁵. Lack of work experience is identified to be one of the obstacles in the recruitment process. More and more young people are conscious about the fact that education without experience is not enough to successfully compete in the labor market⁴⁶. There is a common idea that more training throughout the studying period and additional ones after graduation should be offered to students by both government and private institutions to help them put their ideas into practice⁴⁷.

⁴³ Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan, a mid-term policy framework 2006-2008

⁴⁴ Research "Conditions of youth in Kosovo" prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS.

⁴⁵ Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan, a mid-term policy framework 2006-2008

⁴⁶ Research "Conditions of youth in Kosovo" prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS.

⁴⁷ Report from discussion with the focus group Business Community for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 6

6.3.5. School to work transition

Problems arise also in relation to the transition from education to employment. The success or failure of such transition not only has high short-term costs, but also can have a continuing impact throughout the life cycle. Young people may become disillusioned as a result of the difficulties they face in trying to obtain employment or because of poor employment conditions. If they are unemployed for a long period of time, this can adversely affect their future success in the labor market. Young people are particularly vulnerable at the time of the transition because they may not have sufficient income to cover their living costs, especially if they cannot depend on family or public support structures. Thus the period of the transition is one when young people risk poverty, or even social exclusion in the most extreme cases.

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 one third (37.5 %) of them have not started their transition, e.g. are still being educated 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 later⁴⁸.

6.3.6. The need for more work places

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 (registration and licensing), low levels of information available and high start up capital necessary due to limited infrastructure⁴⁹. Additionally, the tax system is considered by the respondents as unfavorable both as to the rates and as to its complicated documentation procedures⁵⁰.

6.3.7. Positive examples and hope for improvement

Despite the vulnerable position of youth in Kosovo, there are many positive examples for programs implemented and services provided, which contribute toward the holistic development of young people and increasing their participation in the public life and community development⁵¹. So far the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare have established eight Centers For Vocational Trainings. At these centers, young people are provided with opportunities to gain professional training in twenty-three occupations and computer skills; as well as they are provided with knowledge and skills to start their own business. The vocational training centers are in good cooperation with employment offices, so they ensure direct service to many young people who are registered as unemployed. Several other direct services are provided by some Youth centers, which

⁴⁸ Kosovo Youth Employment Action Plan, a mid-term policy framework 2006-2008

⁴⁹ Report from discussion with the focus group Business Community for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 4

⁵⁰ Report from discussion with the focus group Business Community for the project Human Development Report Kosovo 2006, p. 4

⁵¹ See, footnote 10

correspond with the needs of young people to get their first working experience and then to find a job. For example the specific training services implemented in the IRC Youth Center in Prizren. In addition to this a new curricula for 9th grade has been developed, by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), in which were integrated several components of vocational training⁵².

6.3.8. Objectives

1. To improve job-finding opportunities for youth.

There shall be a joint commitment from all relevant government and private business mechanisms, in order to open more various opportunities for employment by youth.

2. To support employment increase.

The Ministry is interested to play an active role in providing this support, in accordance with the points mentioned in this strategy.

3. To improve cooperation between institutions in their youth employment policies.

This cooperation should and will be encouraged, as an improved cooperation will result in increase of youth employment rates.

6.3.9. Indicators

The activity-oriented indicators in the objective of **employment** are:

- Publishing of reports and other documents;
- Providing measurable trainings to target groups;
- Drafting of legal regulations in the area of employment.

Performance indicators include:

- Increase of the quality of public employment services and,
- Proper career guidance, functioning monitoring mechanisms, internship standards, etc.

There are two output impact indicators in this area:

- Increased percentage of young male employees of age 20-24 (baseline 55 %, in 3 years 65%); and,
- Increased number of young female employees of age 20-24 (in 3 years baseline +10%).

6.4. Health-care services for young people

Good health is vital for achieving a good quality of life for young people in Kosovo. Therefore there is a need for existing and functioning health services, which yet are not fully established and developed. 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. These medical personnel should be able to provide counseling for young people as to how to prevent such diseases as STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), HIV/AIDS, as well as providing other medical services.

⁵² Ibid.

Problems related to the provision of appropriate health services for young people seem to be of financial nature, human resources and awareness of youth. 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. In addition there is inadequate engagement of family health centers, a lack of access to health programs and lack of confidentiality in youth health services.

6.4.1. Prevention and health information

Prevention is the best way to avoid high costs of treatment. Respondents feel a great deal of focus should be sent on providing proper information and health education materials to young Kosovars. Nowadays individual information methods dominate regarding methods of health information dissemination. When faced with health issues, young people consult first the media and Internet then they seek health advice in formal education institutions. There is an obvious lack of information obtained through informal education. Generally however 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. In terms of health care it must be recognized that young women and young men have different health needs and challenges. Young people feel that schools do not fulfill their tasks in providing health education and services; there is a 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 people. On the other hand young people are mostly interested in information on infections and diseases like HIV/AIDS and drug addictions.

6.4.2. The need for better cooperation

Draft Strategy on HIV/AIDS prevention for 2009-2013 lists youth as one of the risk groups and target groups of the prevention policy⁵³. The Ministry of Health has drafted this strategy. However participation of youth in defining health policies is limited. One of many possible explanations of this fact can be on one hand that responsible institutions are not providing opportunities and on the other hand lack of interest by young people in participating in defining health policies. Few youth NGOs implement health programs however there is no effective and sustained cooperation between youth NGOs and the Ministry of Health. This all has its source *inter alia* in inadequate funding for engagement of youth NGOs in such programs.

6.4.3. Objectives

1. To promote youth healthy lifestyles.

There will be media and awareness raising campaigns to promote healthy lifestyles and eating habits. NGOs will be implementing projects involving young people in these processes.

⁵³ HIV/AIDS prevention strategy (2009-2013)

2. Youth shall enjoy health care through friendly health services.

There will be youth-friendly health services provided by public health-care institutions and outside them.

3. To ensure inter-institutional cooperation in health related issues for young people.

Among others, there will be an inter-ministerial commission established for youth health related issues.

6.4.4. Indicators

Objectives will be evaluated using quality and quantity measuring. Oriented and measurable activities include:

- A number of established and operational friendly health services,;
- A number of accomplished projects and campaigns;
- A number of information sessions on quarterly basis for defined beneficiaries

The quality of institutional work will be increased due to:

- Inter-ministerial commission for youth health issues being established and operational;
- Health coordinators being appointed in relevant Ministries;
- Increased health education quality;

6.5. Human Security

In the areas of human and social security it is believed that creation of safe environment (in a broad meaning of this word) is a precondition to any further positive developments as far as youth and youth-related issues are concerned.

The issue of human security is one of principal importance to Kosovo youth. It brings together two elements: protection and empowerment, which can be labeled as “passive” and “active”. The first element of “Protection” refers to the standards, processes and institutions required to protect people from critical and pervasive risks. It implies a “top-down” approach as the states have the primary responsibility to implement such a protective structure. However, international and regional organizations as well as civil society play a pivotal role in protecting people too. The second element of “Empowerment” implies a “bottom-up” approach. It aims at developing capabilities of individuals and communities so that they can take responsible decisions on their own behalf.

6.5.1. Kosovo Youth and Violence-Crime

The conducted survey shows a contradiction between a general fear from 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 actions taken against such activities, which should be strengthened⁵⁴.

6.5.2. Youth mobility and youth with special needs

It is of serious concern that most young people, regardless if coming from Albanian majority or minorities, considers that youth mobility is not satisfactory. Also this situation affects young people with special needs, creating obstacles for their decent life.

On the other hand a clear youth mobility policy is needed in the countries of SEE. Youth mobility provides not only informal education opportunities, but also inter-cultural learning experiences and exchanges, which help overcome inter-ethnic prejudices and promote tolerance among young people in the region. Youth exchange programs and youth mobility policies are therefore critical to promote social cohesion and help prevent inter-ethnic conflicts in the future⁵⁵.

6.5.3. Inter-ethnic cooperation

The inter-ethnic situation in Kosovo is improving as fewer cases have been recorded which would aggravate inter-ethnic relations to an extent that could affect stability in Kosovo.

6.5.4. Youth and natural environment in Kosovo

Young people in Kosovo are aware that inappropriate exploitation of natural resources has a negative impact on future prosperity of people in Kosovo. Many young people are aware of the deteriorating environment situation caused by an apathetic population, business community and institutions. "Due to lack of awareness of the population in general of the issue, little regard of the local and central authorities to solution, insufficient investment into recycling and refuse collection, the poor planning of the placement of factories and illegal wood-cutting practices in the forests, the future for Kosovo's environment looks bleak"⁵⁶. There is an expressed need for raising awareness on the protection of natural environment through public initiatives in cooperation with youth organizations in Kosovo.

6.5.5. Objectives

1. To raise awareness and responsibility of young people on the importance and preserving of living environment.

The Government will support and initiate awareness campaigns and will support voluntary youth groups in their activities for environmental protection.

⁵⁴ Research "Conditions of youth in Kosovo" prepared by KYAP Secretariat in cooperation with the Department of Youth, MCYS

⁵⁵ G. La Cava, P. Lytle, A. Kolev – "Young People in South Eastern Europe; From Risk to Empowerment", 2005, p. 18

⁵⁶ See footnote 7

2. To improve inter-ethnic cooperation among young people.

2. To facilitate youth mobility.

The Government will strive to advocate for improving the mobility of young people.

3. To increase participation of young people in local and central levels in human safety issues.

This objective of this subject area requires for an increased level of participation and awareness in municipalities and central level.

4. To promote an inclusive environment for young people with special needs

5. To raise awareness among youth on domestic and sexual violence.

6.5.6. Indicators

Within the area of human security, it is expected that:

- The number of young people from different communities participating and working together in youth programs and the number of young people with special needs benefiting from youth programs will increase of at least 30% in 4 years time, comparing to the baseline;
- The percentage of schools delivering environmental education programs should increase for 80% in 4 years compared to the baseline, etc.

6.6. Culture, Sports and Recreational activities

When drafting policies it is very important to consider how young people spend their free time, how they realize their hobbies and passions, to what extent do they consume and participate in cultural, sports and recreational activities. The process of consultations for drafting the KYSAP provided an overall picture of the needs of the Kosovo youth in this regard. Most of the young people would like to actively participate in sports activities, mostly as amateurs, however there is also a percentage of prospective sportsmen who would professionally engage in sports. The infrastructure for sport activities is however limited. Young people feel there should be better physical education provided at schools.

6.6.1. The Law on Sports and the operation of sports associations

Law on Sports No. 2003/24 (promulgated with UNMIK Regulation 2004/26) regulates the organization, terms and manners of conducting sports activities, rights, duties and responsibilities of those organizing it, and other relevant issues related to physical-sports activities, in particular establishment as well as its management, registration of the sports organizations.

To implement this law the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports has issued Administrative Direction No. 02/2005 on the Registration and Licensing of Federations and Sports Associations in Kosovo. This AD determines that sports federations are non-governmental, non-political and non-profit organizations, which shall be established and

organized on a voluntary basis and registered as NGOs. The MCYS has also approved sub-legal acts on the establishment and registration of public and private sports clubs and supervision of administrative and professional work in sports clubs.

6.6.2. Objectives

1. To support and promote cultural, sports and recreational values and activities for the youth.

2. To improve infrastructure for cultural, sports and recreational activities for amateur youth.

Municipal and central authorities will be more committed in this regard.

3. To promote and develop physical education and all sports for young people to be engaged.

6.6.3. Indicators

Quality indicators of this subject area are:

- The finalization of agreements between institutions to make available youth sports and cultural buildings currently occupied for other purposes; and,
- The enhancement of curricula.

However, majority of indicators are of quantitative nature and include:

- Allocation of necessary spaces dedicated for youth activities in each municipality,
- Number of implemented projects,
- Number of talented individuals supported to develop their skills in the arts, sports, etc.

The following are some of output indicators:

- Increased number of municipalities providing the appropriate location, free to engage in cultural, sports and recreational activities (baseline 10, in 4 years 24 municipalities);

7. Implementation and evaluation mechanisms

7.1. Inter-ministerial Council

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 Inter-ministerial 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.

7.2. KYSAP Advisory Group

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.

7.3. Kosovo Youth Action Council and annual youth conferences

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.

7.4. Annual reports

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.

7.5. Cooperation with Municipalities

A number of activities listed under the KYAP strategy involve municipalities. The KYSAP Implementation Unit will maintain constant relations with Municipal youth officers in Kosovo and address their questions and concerns. International donor community, through their field presence, shall also support municipalities in the execution or completion of duties, entrusted to them by the KYSAP.

Abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|--|
| WB | World Bank |
| DoY | Department of Youth |
| MDCYS | Municipal Directorate for Culture, Youth and Sports |
| EDYK | GTZ Program for Youth Empowerment and Development |
| GTZ | German Governmental Organization for Technical Cooperation |
| ILO | International Labor Organization |
| CoE | Council of Europe |
| MEST | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| MEF | Ministry of Finance and Economy |
| MCYS | Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports |
| MESP | Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning |
| MLSW | Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare |
| MoH | Ministry of Health |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe |
| YC | Youth Center |
| KYN | Kosovo Youth Network |
| KYSAP | Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan |
| UNMIK | United Nations Mission in Kosovo |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| UNV | UN Volunteers |
| UNICEF | UN Children's Fund |

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Vullnetarizmi në Kosovë: studim i bërë nga Vullnetarët e OKB-së

Annex: Youth Action Plan 2010 - 2012

This is the final public version of the Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2010 – 2012. Strategy is a result of a number of consultations with governmental and civil society youth activists, as well as of the appropriate assessments regarding the youth situation in Kosovo. The drafting process of Kosovo Youth Strategy and Action Plan was led by the Department of Youth in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. The Strategy covers a number of cross-sectoral subject areas identified in the Kosovo Youth Policy. Subject areas are the following:

- Youth participation;
- Education;
- Employment;
- Health;
- Human security, and
- Culture, sports and recreational activities.

The three-year plan of Youth Strategy, presented in the following charts, contains a number of policy objectives for each subject area. For each policy objective, detailed activities including the target date and required budget have been specified, as well as responsible institutions for coordination and implementation of these activities have been identified.