



BUILDING TRUST AMONG YOUTH

EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR A PEACEFUL, PROSPEROUS AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE IN KOSOVO [1]

SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER | 2019-2020



FOREWORD BY THE UNDC

In societies everywhere, peace can be best sustained and social cohesion best built through trust between people and communities, and by engaging all levels of society. We also know that development and peace are mutually reinforcing – when we progress in one, we progress in the other, too.

It is therefore my particular pleasure to present to you the first ever initiative in Kosovo supported by

the Peacebuilding Fund of the United Nations Secretary General: a joint youth-focused project of UNDP/UNV, UNICEF and UN Women and local partners building on the recommendations developed in the 2018 United Nations Trust-Building Forum. Over the past 18 months, we have supported the building of relationships between many skilled and talented young men and women across communities in Kosovo. The participants have increased their participation in economic and social activities. They have been enriched and they have enriched others as we heard from Tamara Vučić (24) UN Community Volunteer, from Donja Gušterica/Gushtericë e ulët: *“being able to support and inspire youth in my community is what I enjoyed most”*; also what Drilon Beqiri (24), a Blacksmith from Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, highlights: *“thanks to the self-employment program, I have a job, and I had the opportunity to hire other people within the business”*.

The last months have been marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. But in these difficult times – in fact, particularly during these difficult times – we have brought young people together virtually to talk about how to jointly combat fake news and hate speech. The virtual gatherings have also offered expressions of the diverse and rich culture of Kosovo from home on ‘Thursday’s Variety’ with bands and musicians from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds

Our joint “Youth for Kosovo” initiative also supports the Global Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals that aim at a more equitable world for all. The 2030 Agenda recognizes the impact of violence and insecurity on development and vice versa, and includes peace as a cross-cutting issue, with Goal 16 specifically targeting “Peace.”

We as UN Kosovo Team and the agencies involved, are excited to walk this journey with so many young women and men in Kosovo. We are inspired by the vision and energy we have witnessed along the way and look forward to continuing the journey together!

Ulrika Richardson
UN Development Coordinator

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YOUTH WORKING TOGETHER

YOUNG WOMEN AND MEN WORKED TOGETHER BUILDING SOLUTIONS TO COMMUNITY CHALLENGES. THEY JOINTLY REFLECTED ON SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND LEARNT HOW TO ADDRESS THEM CRITICALLY. THEIR CAPACITIES TO UNDERSTAND THEIR ROLE AS SOCIAL AGENTS FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION WERE ALSO INCREASED, HELPING THEM TO TAKE THE LEAD ON KEY ISSUES OF SHARED CONCERN.



UPSHIFT | "BUILDING BRIDGES, BREAKING BARRIERS" (4B)

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES BY OVERCOMING LANGUAGE BARRIERS

Guided by the idea of **improving communication and understanding among different communities**, a group of young people from Graçanicë/ Gračanica established an Albanian-Serbian language course for young people who face language barriers throughout their endeavors in education and employment. "We live in a mixed environment and we have to understand each other, at least something basic", say the locals of Graçanicë/Gračanica and Prishtinë/Pristina.



PODIUM | ALLOW ME AND I WILL SHOW YOU BY "THE SMURFS"

YOUTH ADVOCATING FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS

A team of young motivated **advocates** stood up for the most vulnerable group of their community – **children and youth with disabilities**. In less than 3 months, they **engaged 260 children and youth** in their creative workshops, developed artistic products, and organized public events in the city square. They inspired the community of Mitrovicë Veriore/Severna Mitrovica to embrace people with disabilities. They facilitated an opportunity for this group to be seen, heard and included.



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YOUTH & INSTITUTIONS

YOUNGSTERS ENGAGED IN ACTIVE LABOR MARKET MEASURES AND VOLUNTEERING, HAVE HELPED TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN YOUTH AND INSTITUTIONS BY ASSISTING THEIR PEERS IN EXPLORING JOB OPPORTUNITIES. THIS HAS ULTIMATELY TRANSLATED INTO EMPLOYABILITY AND INCREASED NEAR-MARKET SKILLS.



UN Volunteers ✓
@UNVolunteers



In [#Kosovo](#) the deployment of UN Community Volunteers is helping engage [#youth](#) in the reconciliation process & advan... <https://t.co/BaV6yj34yR>

3:39 PM - Sep 20, 2019



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See UNVolunteers's other Tweets



Our **48 UN Community Volunteers** (75% women & 50% belonging to non-majority communities) assigned to **employment offices** and **community-based organisations**, have greatly contributed to increase confidence between youth and local institutions.

YOUTH HELP YOUTH FIND JOBS

Remarkable results are shown by the volunteers in Employment Offices, who deliver **public service to their peers**, improve the outreach and continue to develop a strong communal sense while striving to include underprivileged youth. [Explore the stories of Elza and Nora](#) as UN Community Volunteers in two different municipalities in Kosovo.





“

My mother is my teacher and associate; our common desire is for me to start working independently. This profession is something my mother has been doing for years as a hobby, so it's time that I inherit it – professionally.

Dragana Petković, Pastry Chef

“

As a kid, I enjoyed watching my uncle weld more than playing video games. Today, I have my own welding shop that will continue to expand.

Veljko Vučetić, Founder of VIVAR

Dragana and Veljko are 2 out of 38 successful examples of young aspiring individuals who have registered as job-seekers in the Employment Office for career guidance services, ultimately benefiting from [the self-employment program \(SEP\)](#).

[Learn more about SEP](#)

2100 YOUNG WOMEN LEADING

YOUNG WOMEN FROM DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES IN KOSOVO INCREASED LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE CAPACITIES ACROSS DIFFERENT FIELDS: SCIENCE, SPORTS, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA (WPS), JOURNALISM, POLITICS AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE.



#HerWorldHerRules

CHALLENGING GENDER STEREOTYPES ON A BASKETBALL PLAYGROUND

Girl athletes from different communities in Kosovo gathered to [break down stereotypes and promote the role of women in sports](#) on International Women's Day. Guided by renowned

women basketball players and basketball coaches from the Basketball Federation "Vëllaznimi", these talented girls played in an intense 3-hour tournament. Their symbolical game represented women in basketball inspiring each other to develop leadership and teamwork skills through sports. Sport remains a powerful instrument for **building trust**, driving **social change** and **overcoming gender gaps**.



WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE

FROM QUIZONOMY TOWARDS A NEW GENERATION OF WOMEN SCIENTISTS

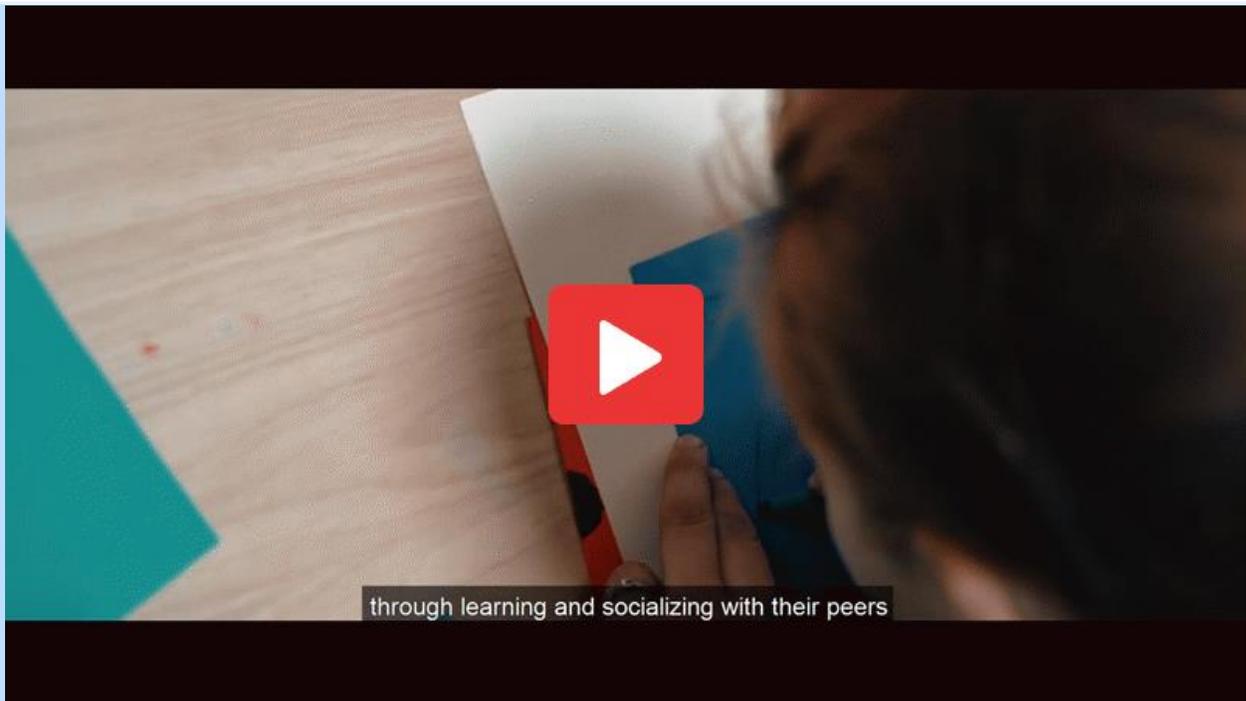
Did you know that only [35% of all students enrolled in STEM](#)-related fields of study are women? This year, the annual high school tradition of students in the Gymnasium in Fashti Llap/Laplje Selo, was dedicated to raise awareness about such important issues.

[QUIZONOMY](#) spoke up for **girls in science** as a way to counter the setbacks for women such as lower salaries, fewer promotions and biased assumptions. The member of the team "Distortion of Mind", Aleksandra Djokić, said that she will work hard to change it "by showing that as a girl, **I can do just as well** as any boy".



60 YOUNG WOMEN ADVOCATE IN THE PARLIAMENT FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In July 2019, young aspiring women from different regions across Kosovo partook in an [extraordinary parliamentary session](#) with the members of the Women's Caucus to advocate for the representation and participation of [young women in politics](#). They provided input into the development of the [2019-2021 Strategy and Action Plan of the parliamentary Women's Caucus](#), which is a guiding document to increase the number of young women involved in leadership, politics and decision-making.



YOUNG LEADERS BRINGING CHILDREN CLOSER TO THEIR DREAMS

As part of the mentorship programme, four mentees engaged children living in marginalized conditions in an [interactive learning and socializing environment](#). Their initiative provided English classes to [40 children of Roma, Egyptian and Ashkali communities](#) at the drop-in center for children in street situation in Prishtinë/Priština and “Vlada Cetkovic” primary school in Mitrovicë Veriore/Severna Mitrovica. The mentorship programme is engaging prominent women from the private and public sphere to mentor young women to become [successful leaders](#).



MENTEES HELP 25 YOUNGSTERS TO PUSH THEIR CAREERS FORWARD

The high unemployment rate among youth in Kosovo was addressed by a unique collaboration between 3 mentees - the workshop [Supporting Youth in Career Development \(SYCD\)](#). Participants got the opportunity to identify their strengths and weaknesses under the guidance of professional assessors, who then helped them to shape their career prospects. Finally, they met with successful entrepreneurs to explore employment opportunities. [25 youngsters](#) were individuals from different backgrounds, coming from rural and urban areas, persons with disabilities and youth from SOS Children’s Village.

YOUTH DURING COVID19

Youth PONDER virtually for the first time

While self-isolated at home, [58 young women and men around Kosovo](#) virtually discussed and worked together during the Critical Media Literacy Workshop (PONDER). By exploring media literacy and critical approaches to information, these young participants were encouraged to identify and examine bias, to judge the value, authenticity, and authority of the information they encounter - all of which were successfully accomplished while at home.

The post-pandemic world envisioned on the canvases of young artists

"The heart is portrayed with cords on the back akin to those of the mask, thereby symbolizing a need to protect ourselves from negative feelings in the aftermath of the pandemic," said the young artist Agnesa Haliti, who participated in the online painting course led by the renowned painter Teuta Kelmendi. While at home, the participants learned new painting techniques and transferred those lessons in their own creations under the theme "The world after COVID-19 pandemic". A collection of the paintings of these talented young women and men will soon be published in an online collection on the platforms of UN Women.

Volunteers become key actors of information for non-majority communities

[37 UN Volunteers in Kosovo](#) mobilized to protect the health of persons from non-majority communities by disseminating verified information on COVID-19 translated in the Romani, Turkish and Serbian languages. Filling the gap of the lack of information in these languages, led to them gaining widespread attention. The information in the native languages of non-majority communities has been officially included in [Kosovo's National Public Health Institute](#).

Thursday's Variety: artistic sessions to tackle misinfodemics and hate speech

The series of online artistic and cultural events "[Thursday's Variety](#)" raised awareness on the importance of staying at home by calling youth to counter hate speech in online media and to promote verified sources of information during COVID-19 in Kosovo. Youth got the chance to become part of the biggest global conversation UN75 and to interact with 5 prominent artists during their performances while at the same time being exposed to video messages from UNKT, Kosovo institutions and field experts.

YOUNG BLOGGERS, YOUNG ACTORS



**YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR
SEWS PROTECTIVE MASKS
FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS**

Arta Qirezi, SEP Programme



**DIVERSE TEAMS BUILD
CREATIVE SOLUTIONS**

by Arbnore Nokaj, UN Youth Volunteer

**THE DIFFICULT MISSION OF
JOURNALISM IN
PEACEBUILDING**



by Elion Kollçaku, Journalist



BIBERCE THEATER FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG TALENTS

by Mila Mihajlović, GETO Theater

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UNDP-UNV, UNICEF, UN WOMEN are jointly implementing the project called **Empowering Youth for a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Future in Kosovo** (also known as **Youth for Kosovo**) funded by the [UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund \(PBF\)](#).

[1] References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)



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