



# CONTRIBUTION OF NON-PROGRAMME COUNTRIES TO EU YOUTH WIKI

## KOSOVO<sup>1</sup> CHAPTER I I: VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

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1. All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

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## 2.1 General context

Volunteering in Kosovo has a unique history. In the 1990s volunteering was an important aspect of political and social developments in Kosovo. During the political repression and expulsion of Kosovo Albanians from social enterprises in Yugoslavia, and the close-down of Albanian-language schools, the Kosovo Albanians, with the help of their diaspora, started to mobilise and establish a parallel social and economic system that included education and medical care based on voluntary taxation (usually up to 3% of income). This parallel state collected incomes and financed public services that incorporated salaries for teachers, allocation of social assistance, purchasing school materials and funding for sports activities.<sup>2</sup> Each municipality had a multi-party Council of Finance whose volunteer tax collectors – sometimes people involved in similar work in the days of autonomy (within Yugoslavia), assessed how much each family should contribute, agreed this with the family and then collected it.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the services were provided by volunteers free of charge and it is clear that, without this voluntary mobilisation, the entire social and economic structure of Kosovo would have collapsed.<sup>4</sup> As a matter of fact, some observers even view volunteering as the “glue” that held Kosovan society together.<sup>5</sup> However, after the war this volunteer spirit has been in decline and societal appreciation of volunteering is at a low point. There are several reasons that led to this change, including political and social conditions, a low understanding of volunteering and low institutional appreciation for volunteer work. People were more concerned with providing food for their families than with volunteering.<sup>6</sup>

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2. Demi A. (2018), “How to build a parallel state”, *Prishtina Insight Magazine*, Prishtina, <https://prishtinainsight.com/build-parallel-state-mag/>.

3. Clark H. (2000), *Civil Resistance in Kosovo*, Pluto Press, London, p. 102.

4. UNDP report (2006), *A new generation of a new Kosovo*, [http://www.ks.undp.org/content/dam/kosovo/docs/KHDR/KHDR\\_2006.pdf](http://www.ks.undp.org/content/dam/kosovo/docs/KHDR/KHDR_2006.pdf), p. 80.

5. UNDP report (2004), *The rise of citizen: challenges and choices*, [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/kosovo\\_2004\\_en.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/kosovo_2004_en.pdf), p. 50.

6. Friderich Ebert Stiftung (2012), *Kosovo youth study: forward looking, grounded in tradition*, <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/8586048/Kosovo-FES.pdf/f70c4656-4af9-41c4-85a9-d82676c3d9d1>, p. 17.

The study conducted in 2012 mentions that volunteering among youth is at a low level, in which only one in five interviewed youth (21%) have been part of some voluntary work project in the past 12 months. Based on the findings, low engagement in voluntary activities is more a result of lack of initiatives rather than having a negative perception of or resistance to, voluntarism.<sup>7</sup>

The national definition of volunteering is regulated by an administrative instruction that defines voluntary work of youth as a youth activity where young people provide their time, labour, knowledge, and abilities in serving the community for the benefit of the society, voluntarily, without obligation and without payment. A volunteer is someone aged 15-24 that offers free services for the benefit of society.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

There is no specific law on voluntarism which would define the responsibilities and determine the main institutions that shape volunteering policy in Kosovo.

Kosovo does not have a national volunteering strategy which would set out a clear vision for the future of volunteering in Kosovo or would offer a practical solution for continuously promoting and supporting voluntary activities. Volunteering activity in Kosovo is regulated by the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth, which considers volunteering as an instrument for strengthening youth participation in decision making and promoting informal education.<sup>9</sup> However, this law offers a limited perspective as it narrows the volunteering concept just to the voluntary work of youth (defined as young people aged 14-24), while excluding other age groups. Even though this law defines the responsibilities of central and local institutions in advancing the role of youth and their participation in the decision-making process, it does not specify any institution which would be exclusively responsible for advancing and promoting

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7. Friderich Ebert Stiftung (2012), *Kosovo youth study: forward looking, grounded in tradition*, <https://pip-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/8586048/Kosovo-FES.pdf/f70c4656-4af9-41c4-85a9-d82676c3d9d1>, p. 17.

8. Administrative Instruction No. 1/2016 on Youth Voluntary Work, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=15172>.

9. Democracy Development Institute (2018), *State of volunteering in Kosovo: Challenges and Perspectives*, [https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/D4D\\_PI\\_14\\_ENG\\_WEB.pdf](https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/D4D_PI_14_ENG_WEB.pdf), p. 11.

voluntary activities in Kosovo. Voluntary work in Kosovo can be organised by any natural or legal person, including public and private institutions, NGOs, youth centres and religious institutions that arrange voluntary activities which are beneficial to society.<sup>10</sup>

According to the law, the central institution responsible for the implementation of the law and overseeing the activities of other subordinate institutions is the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (hereafter, “the ministry”). The Youth Department of the ministry is responsible for administering and maintaining an electronic system (PDV) which will serve as a database and application for volunteers and voluntary work providers. Furthermore, this department is responsible for establishing a “Committee for Voluntary Work” which deals with the recognition of voluntary work that may be considered questionable.<sup>11</sup>

Another important actor involved in the policy making is the civil society, notably civil society organisations (CSOs). The majority of CSOs in Kosovo consider that volunteering should be regulated by law, and they are advocating for a special law on volunteering.<sup>12</sup> The main authority responsible for the youth sector at each local (municipal) level is a local Directorate of Culture, Youth and Sports. This directorate is responsible for drafting the plan for cultural, sports and youth support at the local level, and licensing the youth centres in municipalities.<sup>13</sup>

Other institutions that are included in the law are the Central Youth Action Council (CYAC) and Local Youth Action Council (LYAC). CYAC is a voluntary organisation of youth organisations operating in Kosovo. It represents the interests of youth organisations at the central institutions and towards international mechanisms related to youth. LYAC has the same role as CYAC, but the only difference is that it represents the interests of youth organisations at municipal and local level. Youth centres provide space for programmes and activities of young people. They are

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10. Administrative Instruction No. 1/2016 on Youth Voluntary Work, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=15172>.

11. Ibid.

12. Democracy Development Institute (2018), *State of volunteering in Kosovo: Challenges and Perspectives*, [https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/D4D\\_PI\\_14\\_ENG\\_WEB.pdf](https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/D4D_PI_14_ENG_WEB.pdf), p. 15.

13. Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation. [http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kosovo\\_2009\\_Youth\\_Law.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kosovo_2009_Youth_Law.pdf).

responsible for providing resources and opportunities for informal education or other activities that youngsters may undertake.<sup>14</sup>

The law foresees a division of responsibilities between central and local institutions for advancing the youth agenda and supporting youth activities in Kosovo. The main responsibilities of the government are:

- development, adoption and implementation of documents relevant to the youth sector;
- development, adoption and implementation of other youth programmes;
- development of the procedures and criteria for promotion and recognition of volunteer work and other forms of youth activities;
- collecting and providing data on the position of young people;
- supporting programmes for development and capacity building in the youth sector;
- providing information and regular consultations with youth-related policies and programmes for youth in the country and international youth exchange programmes;
- supporting the integration and participation in society of marginalised groups through programmes and campaigns;
- ensuring structures and procedures that guarantee the participation of youth and partnership among government and youth organisations.

According to the law in force, the government was obliged to issue a sub-legal act that would determine the key ministries responsible for the implementation of these provisions. However, this was not done, complicating the implementation of this law.<sup>15</sup>

When it comes to the local level, the responsibilities of municipalities include:

- ensuring the provision of financial and human resources for the implementation of youth programmes;

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14. Ibid.

15. Democracy Development Institute (2018), *State of volunteering in Kosovo: Challenges and Perspectives*, [https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/D4D\\_PI\\_14\\_ENG\\_WEB.pdf](https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/D4D_PI_14_ENG_WEB.pdf), p. 7.

- caring for the provision of adequate public space in consultation with the council to carry forward the action of the municipality, where young people plan, manage and develop their youth activities and informal education;
- supporting informal education for youth organisations and other development activities initiated by young people;
- youth policy development in consultation with the local youth council to carry forward the action of the municipality, in accordance with local needs;
- ensuring a transparent process during management engagement for public youth centre licensed by the municipality concerned.<sup>16</sup>

In terms of cross sectoral co-operation between ministries, departments and agencies in designing policies and measures on youth volunteering, Kosovo lacks co-ordinating mechanisms which would potentially foster and promote inclusiveness and a proper representation of relevant stakeholders.

### 2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

Kosovo has never had a specific national strategy on youth volunteering. However, voluntarism in Kosovo is recognised in two main strategic documents: the Kosovo Strategy for Youth (2013-2017)<sup>17</sup> and the Government National Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society (2013-2017).<sup>18</sup>

Volunteerism together with social integration, sports, culture and recreation are included as one of the six main goals of the Kosovo's National Strategy for Youth (2013-2017). In this strategy, volunteerism is first seen as a driving force to raise co-operation based on ethnic and cultural diversity – in other words, as a very valuable instrument in reaching the goal of youth integration in society. Second, volunteerism is also significant to facilitate a better co-operation among

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16. Law on Youth Empowerment and Participation, [http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kosovo\\_2009\\_Youth\\_Law.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kosovo_2009_Youth_Law.pdf).

17. Kosovo Strategy for Youth (2013-2017), [https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/KOSOVO\\_STRATEGY\\_FOR\\_YOUTH.pdf](https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/KOSOVO_STRATEGY_FOR_YOUTH.pdf).

18. Government National Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society (2013-2017), [http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Strategjia\\_qeveritare\\_per\\_bashkepunim\\_me\\_shoqerine\\_civile\\_drafti\\_perfundimtar\\_\(2\).pdf](http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Strategjia_qeveritare_per_bashkepunim_me_shoqerine_civile_drafti_perfundimtar_(2).pdf).

various organisations whether non-governmental, governmental or international at the local and central levels.<sup>19</sup> In addition, it is emphasised that volunteerism is one of the priorities for institutions, national and international NGOs at local and national levels, and that the Kosovo Strategy for Youth and Action Plan has a proactive approach in addressing and promotion of volunteerism among youth in Kosovo.<sup>20</sup>

In this strategy, it is recognised that volunteerism is not that well developed among youth, and that a large number of young people are not involved in any activity or have limited access to youth activities. Therefore there is a crucial need for a better structured policy based on identifying and addressing the needs of youth.<sup>21</sup> The implementation, monitoring and final evaluation of Kosovo's National Strategy for Youth and its Action Plan is an integral part of the duties and responsibilities of the Department of Youth within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports.

On the other hand, in the National Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society, volunteering is included as one of the four main strategic objectives. Volunteering is admitted to be one of the key elements of the civil society.<sup>22</sup> This strategy aims to analyse and identify the needs and profile of volunteering in Kosovo. On the basis of this, a sustainable system to the specific needs of Kosovo can be developed. The planned measures to achieve this objective are:

- identifying the needs and profile of volunteering in Kosovo;
- defining principles of the system for an integrated approach towards development of volunteering;
- building a monitoring system and reporting for volunteerism.<sup>23</sup>

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19. The Kosovar Strategy for Youth 2013-2017, p. 16. [https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/KOSOVO\\_STRATEGY\\_FOR\\_YOUTH.pdf](https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/KOSOVO_STRATEGY_FOR_YOUTH.pdf).

20. Ibid, p. 17.

21. Ibid, p. 22.

22. National Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society, p. 27, [http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Strategjia\\_qeveritare\\_per\\_bashkepunim\\_me\\_shoqerine\\_civile\\_drafti\\_perfundimtar\\_\(2\).pdf](http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/Strategjia_qeveritare_per_bashkepunim_me_shoqerine_civile_drafti_perfundimtar_(2).pdf)

23. Ibid, p. 27.

The main government authority to implement, monitor and report on this strategy is the Office of the Prime Minister / Office on Good Governance. During this process, the Office has the continuous support of CiviKos, which is a national platform of Civil Society Organisations in Kosovo. The Office of the Prime Minister / Office on Good Governance is responsible for co-ordinating the entire process of implementation and providing an independent approach to monitoring and evaluating this strategy. In addition to this, a joint commission (council) of both parties is established. The mandate of this council is to include discussion and propose solutions to issues that are not incorporated in this strategy. This council is co-chaired by representatives of the CiviKos Platform and representatives from the Government of the Republic of Kosovo.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

There is no national programme for youth volunteering and no specific budget allocated for strengthening the volunteering sector in Kosovo.

Youth volunteering in Kosovo is part of several strategies, including the Kosovo Strategy for Youth (2013-2017) and the Government Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society (2013-2017). Apart from this, youth volunteering is included in the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth, and regulated by Administrative Instruction 01/2016. Kosovo's youth have an advantage compared to other age groups, as all these documents aim exclusively to support, regulate and advance youth volunteering (aged 14-24). According to Kosovo's Civil Society Index (2016), most of the CSOs in Kosovo engage volunteers in their activities to perform varied tasks, and the engagement of these volunteers is done in formal and informal ways.<sup>25</sup> In general, the volunteering engagement in Kosovo remains low, but the situation is gradually improving. In Kosovo "more than one third of Kosovars have engaged in volunteering during the past two years; 38.5% in 2016 and with a decline to 32.7% in 2017".<sup>26</sup> A survey conducted in 2017 showed

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24. Ibid, p. 26.

25. Democracy Development Institute (2018), *State of volunteering in Kosovo: Challenges and Perspectives*, [https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/D4D\\_PI\\_14\\_ENG\\_WEB.pdf](https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/D4D_PI_14_ENG_WEB.pdf), p. 13.

26. Ibid, p. 16.

that volunteers were mostly young people aged 18-24, thus constituting 14.3% of those who were engaged in voluntary activities.<sup>27</sup>

The motives for volunteering differ; however, the main motivation is to contribute to the community, followed by personal goals such as to enhance social capital through networking, employment prospects and education. When it comes to the main fields where volunteering activities take place in Kosovo, a recent study shows a shift in preference between 2016 and 2017. While in 2016 most volunteers were engaged in caring for people with disabilities, children and the elderly, in 2017 the main volunteering field was education, followed by community development, environment, culture, etc.<sup>28</sup>

In order to foster volunteerism and reduce the potential barriers to participation, Administrative Instruction 01/2016 foresaw several obligations for organisers of voluntary work. Below will be mentioned some of these obligations:

- volunteers should be reimbursed by the provider of voluntary work for any expenses incurred during their involvement in volunteering activities;
- to provide a break during the day and ensure or provide a daily meal while carrying out work;
- to ensure or provide transport if necessary.

The institution which monitors the organisers of voluntary work and their programmes is the ministry's Department of Youth. It does this through the central electronic system PDV. The administrative instructions make it mandatory for organisers of voluntary work "to register and verify the voluntary work including working hours".<sup>29</sup>

In Kosovo, there is no national policy/programme or initiative which identifies and seeks the participation of specific target groups within the youth population (e.g. young people in

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27. Ibid, p. 16.

28. Ibid, p. 19.

29. Administrative Instruction No. 1/2016 on Youth Voluntary Work, <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=15172>.

transition between education and employment, unemployed young people, young adults without formal qualifications) in voluntary activities.

## 2.5 Cross-mobility programmes

Kosovo participates in the Erasmus + programme and there are currently 12 organisations that are accredited by the European Voluntary Service (EVS) programme. Kosovo's accredited organisations are: Balkan Sunflowers Kosova, Centre for Economic and Social Development, Childprof, Diakonie Kosova, GAIA, George Williams Youth Associations in Kosovo, Infnit, NGO The Ideas Partnership, NGO TOKA, NGO Create, Qendra Rinore Ardhmeria – Kline, VIER PROFTEN Kosova. This means that these organisations are eligible to send and receive volunteers from Kosovo to the European Union and vice versa.

Young volunteers can also benefit from the Service Civil International Network, which offers international volunteering opportunities from one to 12 months. Volunteers that are engaged within the SCI programme are provided with food and accommodation, pocket money and basic health insurance.<sup>30</sup>

In addition, young volunteers can benefit from the SLOVAK AID programme,<sup>31</sup> which is co-ordinated by the Slovakian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and is implemented by the Slovak Agency for International Development. Kosovo is listed as one of the participating countries in this programme.

## 2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

The most important source of information on volunteering opportunities for young people is the online platform called “Kosovo Volunteers”, which is a free platform that aims to match the

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30. <https://www.sci.ngo/>.

31. <http://www.slovakaid.sk/en/slovakaid>.

volunteers and recruiters.<sup>32</sup> This platform enables young volunteers to connect with non-profit organisations and engage in different volunteering opportunities that are available on this website. This platform is managed by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports together with UNICEF Innovation Lab Kosovo. The platform is in line with Administrative Instruction No. 01/2016 on volunteering, which foresees the establishment of an electronic system (PDV) which would serve as a database for young people who want to engage in voluntary activities and as an address for voluntary work providers to publish their voluntary opportunities.<sup>33</sup>

Apart from the main public authorities, civil society has also been active in promoting voluntary activities in Kosovo. With the aim of building the capacities of civil society organisations and public institutions on volunteer management, UNICEF Innovation Lab Kosovo, NGO Pen and OSCE Mission in Kosovo organised a workshop in 2017 and 2018 called “Volunteer Management Workshop”. This programme aims to equip CSOs and public institutions with skills in volunteer management, volunteer recruitment, instruction on youth volunteerism, knowledge on the accreditation of the European Voluntary Service and the opportunity to win small grants on volunteer management.<sup>34</sup>

A campaign called “EU Youth Volunteer Ambassador Competition” was launched by the EU Information and Cultural Centre in Kosovo in 2016 with the aim of promoting the voluntary work of high school and university students. The students were invited to tell about their voluntary work and the impact they made in their communities. The top three volunteer ambassadors were awarded prizes in recognition of the significant impact of their voluntary work.<sup>35</sup>

On 5 December, Kosovo celebrates International Volunteer Day. In 2017 several activities were organised by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, in collaboration with UNICEF and OSCE,

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32. Kosovo volunteers (online platform): <http://kosovovolunteers.org/>.

33. Administrative Instruction No. 1/2016 on Youth Voluntary Work. <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=15172>.

34. Innovations Lab Kosovo (2018), *KOVO: Volunteers management workshop*, <http://kosovoinnovations.org/kovo/>.

35. EU Information and Cultural Center: <http://euicc-ks.com/campaign/calling-all-youth-volunteers-in-kosovo/>.

so as to increase awareness on youth volunteering and its importance for the well-being of their community.<sup>36</sup>

## 2.7 Skills recognition

Skills recognition for young volunteers is regulated by the administrative instruction on youth voluntary work. It regulates the criteria and mechanism for recognising youth voluntary work. The organiser of the voluntary work shall be registered in the platform for volunteerism through the online application in the electronic system (PDV) that includes personal identifying information, time period of involvement and nature of voluntary activity. The organiser of the voluntary work is also responsible for reporting through the platform for voluntary work in the Youth Department on any changes in status and volunteer agreement. Upon completion of the agreement for voluntary work, the voluntary work provider is obliged to issue the young volunteer with a certificate for their engagement as a volunteer worker that describes the activity and whether the volunteering process was completed successfully or not. The Department of Youth has the right to assess and control these data.

The administrative instruction also specifies that the Youth Department, through its Office of Information Technology, administers and maintains the electronic system (PDV). In this electronic platform, volunteers will be able to verify the records of their engagement in volunteering activities as well as print their certificates. Additionally, this system allows for creating volunteer index cards in an electronic form for young volunteers as evidence of completion of voluntary work, duration and other relevant information.

In addition, the Division of Human Resources within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is obliged to appoint a responsible official from the staff of this ministry as the competent official in terms of officially recognising voluntary work. Furthermore, the administrative instruction also foresees the establishment of a committee for voluntary work that shall review requests for the recognition of voluntary work when and if the official considers it questionable.

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36. UN Volunteers (2017), *Transforming passion for volunteerism into action in Kosovo*, <https://www.unv.org/our-stories/transforming-passion-volunteerism-action-kosovo>.

## 2.8 Current debates

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is currently in the process of drafting the new strategy on youth (2018-2023) and its action plan (2018-2021) where volunteerism is emphasised as an important objective. This strategy is expected to be finalised and approved in the upcoming months. Apart from this, the CSOs in Kosovo are advocating for a specific law on volunteering which would provide more instructions in terms of regulating voluntary work in Kosovo. The draft law, initiated by the Prime Minister of Kosovo, aims to:

- define its principles, conditions, rights and voluntary obligations;
- set the institution(s) that will be responsible for monitoring voluntarism;
- set up the mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of voluntary work;
- set the minimum procedural standards for volunteerism;
- set the correct model of registering and evidencing voluntary work, types of contracts and certificates.<sup>37</sup>

The Prime Minister's Office / Office for Good Governance, in close co-ordination with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, and Ministry of Public Administration and other relevant stakeholders, will take responsibility for drafting and finalising this document.

Civil society in Kosovo is also advocating for a national strategy on volunteering which would provide an inclusive policy framework for advancing voluntary work in Kosovo. In addition to this, the ministry is aiming to come up with new ways for incentivising and promoting youth voluntary activities.

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37. Telegraf portal (only available in Albanian), <https://telegrafi.com/kryeministri-inicion-ligjin-per-vullnetarizem/>.