

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



CONTRIBUTION OF PARTNER COUNTRIES TO EU YOUTH WIKI

KOSOVO¹ CHAPTER II VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

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Published: October 2021

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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 UNSC Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

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2.1. General context

Historical developments

Since the declaration of independence on 17 February 2008, the Republic of Kosovo has made progress with regard to the state-building and democratisation process aimed at the Euro-Atlantic integration of the country. In this context, Kosovo society has embraced democratic values as shown through the building of effective institutions and by strengthening civil society. The post-war period of Kosovo's reconstruction has also helped to institutionalise volunteerism within a legal framework. As in other South-East European countries, volunteering has become part of public policy and it has taken a specific place in youth policy.² Moreover, volunteering has become an integral part of the state strategy for the co-operation with civil society and a policy priority³ for the second five-year period of the new strategy (2019-2023).

The Republic of Kosovo is Europe's youngest state, with a population of 1.8 million. The average age is 26 years, and 38% of the population is less than 21 years old. Once democracy is strengthened and the economic opportunities increase, youth will become a crucial factor in Kosovo's development and prosperity. A young, well-trained labour force could be a significant advantage for the strengthening of democratic systems and for the boosting of productivity.⁴ Compared to other European countries, the Republic of Kosovo remains a country with a young average age, where about 20% of the population belongs to the 15-24 years age group, constituting the biggest and most active group of society and a capable labour force.⁵

During the last 12 years there have been some important steps forward after the approval of [Law No.03/L145 for the Empowerment and Participation of Youth](#). Another significant action was the legal process of recognising voluntary work in 2016 with the approval of the [Administrative Instruction No 1/2016](#). As a result of civil society's activities, improvement in legal instruments and attention shown by the government, there has been an increase in volunteerism by involving more young volunteers in various voluntary activities. Although evident, it is important to highlight that the highest level of volunteering appears among youth. The concept of volunteering is becoming increasingly present and familiar to many young people. According to the [Kosovo Civil Society Index 2018](#): "Although still low, the

2. Democracy Development Institute (2018), *State of volunteering in Kosovo: Challenges and Perspectives*, available at https://d4d-ks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/D4D_PI_14_SHQ_WEB.pdf?cfchljschltk=pmd8713d30e2df96b8a53e8de87a8d8eda3b2bfb448-1628147950-0-gqNtZGzNAG2jcnBszQa6, p. 7, accessed 2 August 2021.

3. Government Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society 2019-2023, available at <https://zgm.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/Strategjia%20ne%20tri%20giuhe.pdf>, accessed 2 August 2021.

4. USAID/Kosovo (2020), Country Development Co-operation Strategy (CDCS), p. 8, available at www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/CDCS-Kosovo-May-2025_External.pdf.

5. Strategy for youth (2019-2023), available at www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/Strategy_for_Youth_2019-2023.pdf p. 5, accessed 2 August 2021.

percentage of citizens who are affiliated or volunteering in Civil Society Organisations has increased, as well as the benefits of services provided by civil society... Survey data shows that close to 11.5% of Kosovo's citizens are members of one or more civil society organisations and 15.2% confirmed that they were volunteers for civil society organisations during 2017." In this regard, things are changing for the better thanks to the contribution and co-operation of CSOs with state institutions. The international institutions and their financial support have played a major role in promoting volunteerism and activism of civil society in Kosovo.

Main concepts

Volunteerism can be defined in various ways. In order to define this concept and to explain its actual development in Kosovo, a theoretical approach would be useful as it would aid formulation of the reasons that make volunteerism particularly important to society and how it relates to the promotion and to the strengthening of democratic values.

Volunteerism has been part of Kosovo society activities in various forms over time, depending on several factors. During the 1990s, volunteering efforts were focused on politics, economics and everyday life. At that time, volunteering activities were perceived as charity or as a survival and solidarity effort.⁶ Nowadays the meaning of volunteerism has changed and the society has a different view regarding it and its role in the society. These developments regarding the attitude and understanding of volunteerism are based on theoretical context. Scholars agree that there are three dominant classes of motivation and they are often found to coexist: *altruistic* or values-based motives; *utilitarian* motives; and *social* motives. Altruistic or values-based motives include religious beliefs, supporting an important cause, helping others, and so on. Utilitarian motives include enhancing human capital: for example, gaining work experience and job training, developing new skills, exploring career paths, enhancing résumés, or making useful contacts with the aim of a paid employment in the future. Social motives include extending one's social networks, volunteering because friends or colleagues do so, responding to social pressures to volunteer, and so on.⁷

The meaning of volunteerism, according to the [Cambridge Dictionary](#), is "the practice of doing work for good causes, without being paid for it". In the dictionary of Albanian language the definition of volunteerism concerns "the participation of someone in a movement or organisation... of his own free will, acting according to his own will: based on volunteerism" while the volunteer is defined as "he who performs a job, a task by his own

6. Creating a more enabling environment for development of volunteering in Kosovo, Study on Volunteering in Kosovo, Office of Good Governance, available at <https://zgm.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/Volunteering%20in%20Kosovo%20-%20Study%20-%20ENG-2-99-split-merge.pdf>, p. 64, accessed 2 August 2021.

7. Cnaan R. A. and Goldberg-Glen R. S. (1991), "Measuring motivation to volunteer in human services", *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 27, 269-84; Cappellari L. and Turati G. (2004), "Volunteer labour supply: The role of workers' motivations", *Annals of Public Cooperative Economics* 75, 619-43, available at <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0899764009344353>, accessed 5 August 2021.

free will without reward”.⁸ Another definition relating to the “Voluntary Work of Youth” can be found in Administrative Instruction No.01/2016: “Youth activity where youths voluntarily, without an obligation, provide their time, labour, knowledge and their abilities in serving the community for the benefit of the society without payment. A volunteer is someone aged 15-24 that offers free services for the benefit of society.”

2.2. Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

Volunteering activity in Kosovo is regulated by [Law No.03/L145](#) on Empowerment and Participation of Youth, which considers volunteering as an instrument for strengthening youth participation in decision making and promoting informal education.

Regarding the youth policies and governance administration process, the current legal framework considers the [Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports](#) (MCYS) as the main responsible institution for youth policy implementation. Decree No. 07/85 (2019) on “Concept – Paper on Empowerment and participation of youth” emphasises the role of MCYS, especially its obligation in implementing adequate programmes and in accordance with EU policies also. Law enforcement and its oversight is a responsibility of MCYS. According to the [Strategy for youth 2019-2023](#), starting from 2019, the [Department of Youth \(DfY, part of MCYS\)](#) plans to organise activities for “the promotion of volunteer work, for cultural and ...intercultural development, entrepreneurship, sports and youth co-operation”. Based on the Strategy for youth, voluntary work is meant to be managed by the DfY, while volunteer organisations, institutions and all other legal entities are obliged to register through the electronic system (VDP) and to record volunteer work hours, recognising at the same time the status of a young person as a volunteer and the volunteer work experience.

According to [Law no.03/L145](#), 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.

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 relating 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.

8. Thomai J. et al. (2006), “Albanian language vocabulary”, Academy of Sciences of Albania, Tirana, pp. 1203-04.

Cross-sectoral co-operation

There is no official mechanism for cross-sectoral co-operation dedicated exclusively to youth volunteering. 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

There is no specific national strategy on youth volunteering in Kosovo. Volunteerism in Kosovo forms part of two main strategic documents updated recently: the Kosovo [Strategy for Youth 2019-2023](#) and the Government National [Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society \(2019-2023\)](#). Volunteering is considered a priority policy for youth empowerment, which is the reason why legal frames formulated up to now are related precisely to youth policy.

Unlike the previous [Strategy for Youth \(2013-2017\)](#), where volunteerism was included as one of six main goals, the actual Strategy for Youth 2019-2023 has only three main goals and volunteerism represents a specific objective in its own right. It is Objective No.1.4: “Developing volunteering” and it consists of four sub-objectives. More specifically, the new Strategy for Youth presents a “closed circle”, including the promotion of volunteering and voluntary work, management, recognition and support of the voluntary work process and youth organisations. Statistical data reveal that only 13% of youths have participated in civil society activities as volunteers. Therefore the awareness-raising activities are specifically considered at the first sub-objective (No.1.4.1).

Another important aspect is the financial support of youth organisations by the government. The financial support is about €60 000 per year and is available for 20 youth organisations aiming to promote volunteering and voluntary work. The Department for Youth in co-operation with the UNICEF office in Kosovo, as well as with all development agencies and other interested parties that aim to contribute in this area, will support youth organisations in Kosovo in carrying out activities and projects with the goal of promoting volunteering and voluntary work in the community. These objectives are in the implementation phase that has started from 2019 year.

The new Government Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society (2019-2023), adopted in April 2019, reflects significant improvements and further consideration regarding the role and necessity of volunteering, which proves the consolidation and a more mature stage of the institutions in Kosovo and of the policy-making structures. The completion of the legal

framework on volunteering is a priority already formulated in the Government Strategy for co-operation with Civil Society (2019-2023) and the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy.⁹

There is a cohesive approach in setting the objectives in the new strategy in light of the evaluation of the results of the implementation of the first Government Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society (2013-2017).

The assessment of the implementation process of the first strategy for the period 2013-2017 was led by the Office of Good Governance, which is part of the Office of the Prime Minister (OGG-OPM) with the support of the EU-Technical Assistance project. Regarding each of the four previous objectives set in the strategy for the period 2013-2017, a list of problems was identified based on their main causes in the realm of government co-operation with civil society. While there has been progress made with regard to all objectives, regarding the volunteerism the results are: “less progress has been made in the areas of volunteer development” and that “it is worth pointing out that much needs to be done to develop volunteering”.¹⁰ The problems that have been identified regarding the implementation of Objective No.4 of the strategy for the period 2013-2017 are shown below:

- lack of volunteering in public benefit programmes;
- volunteer organisers face some administrative and legal obstacles in engaging and retaining volunteers;
- lack of standards for and capacities of CSOs to recruit engage and manage volunteers;
- lack of public/citizens’ awareness on the opportunities and values of volunteering.¹¹

The lessons learned from this process have served to emphasise the importance of these strategic objectives and the necessity to revise them in the new context and the development processes in the Government Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society for the period 2019-2023. There are four strategic objectives set in the framework of the new strategy for the period 2019-2023:

1. increasing civil society’s participation in policymaking;
2. increasing accountability and transparency in public funding for CSOs;
3. developing practices and procedures of the contracting of CSOs for the provision of public service;
4. increasing volunteering in public benefit programmes.

Referring to Objective No.4, the strategy proves to have progressed forward as it aims to increase volunteering in the programmes of public benefit. The intent here is to establish a comprehensive legal and institutional framework to support the development of

9. Annual Report on Implementation of the Government strategy for co-operation with civil society 2019-2023 for year 2019 (2020), available at <https://zqm.rks.gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/dokumentet/RAPORTI%20VJETOR%20P%C3%8BR%20STRATEGJIN%C3%8B%202019-TD.pdf>, p. 14, accessed 5 August 2021.

10. Government Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society 2019-2023 (2019), available at www.civikos.net/repository/docs/Strategy_eng_291507.pdf, p. 11, accessed 5 August 2021.

11. Ibid, p. 12.

volunteering, including the building of [civil society's capacity](#) to recruit, engage and manage volunteers.

This strategic objective has a general goal and three specific aims as shown below:

4. *General goal:* Encouraging and promoting volunteering in public benefit programmes.

Specific aims:

- 4.1 Establishing a comprehensive legal and institutional framework to the support the development of volunteering.
- 4.2 Developing the capacities of CSOs to recruit, engage and manage volunteers.
- 4.3 Increasing citizens' awareness on the opportunities and the values of volunteering.

Regarding the implementation of the objectives mentioned above, some preparatory activities started in 2019 focusing mainly on the improvement of the legislation on volunteering. As provided in the strategy, all activities relating to the fourth objective are scheduled to start in 2020-2021.¹² While in 2020 the concept document on the arrangements and the promotion of volunteering was formulated, during 2021 is foreseen to start the implementation of the recommendation formulated in the concept document. During 2021 is planned to publish also a grant scheme for the financial support of the activities for capacity building for CSOs in the effective management of volunteers. Around four or five CSOs will be contracted in order to provide training on the effective management of volunteers in their local communities. Besides, one element of the activities scheduled to take place during 2021 is the preparation of a manual for the recruitment and management of volunteers together with an awareness campaign for volunteering and the update of the online register.¹³ The Co-operation Council for Government – Civil Society is the main instrument in monitoring the implementation of the strategy. The council consists of 29 members, 15 of whom represent civil society and 14 members are appointed by the state institutions.¹⁴ The results of the implementation of the Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society 2019-2023 will form part of the annual report.

2.4. Laws and regulations on youth volunteering

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

Volunteering, in general, is regulated by Law No.03/L145 (2009) on the Empowerment and participation of Youth. One of the four aims of the law is: "voluntary work and informal education of young people". The law, which is related to youth aged 15-24 only, is biased

12. Annual Report on Implementation of the Government strategy for co-operation with civil society 2019-2023 for year 2019 (2020), available at <https://zgm.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/dokumentet/RAPORTI%20VJETOR%20P%C3%8BR%20STRATEGJIN%C3%8B%202019-TD.pdf>, p. 14, accessed 8 August 2021.

13. Ibid, pp. 48-50.

14. Ibid, p. 30.

against any age below or above this category.¹⁵ In this regard, volunteerism and volunteering activities are seen in a narrow and undeveloped perspective, being considered only as volunteer work and relating only to youth as an age group. In the framework of the law mentioned above, the voluntary work of young people is considered important and beneficial for society, and it can be organised by any natural or legal person engaged for the good of society.¹⁶

In 2010, the government approved [Administrative Instruction No.10/2010](#) “For Volunteer Work of Youth”. The document defined volunteers and voluntary work in detail; it outlined the obligations of volunteers and the organisers of voluntary work, and further accelerated the process of registration and recognition of volunteers and voluntary work organisers. In 2016, an updated version of Administrative Instruction No.1/2016 on Youth Voluntary Work was approved. The purpose of the Administrative Instruction is the regulation of the rights, obligations and procedures relating to youth voluntary work, as well as the Committee for voluntary work. Despite its improvements compared to the previous document, the voluntary activities were still viewed in a narrow perspective, leaving unaddressed some aspects of voluntary contribution mentioned above.

Volunteering is considered a priority policy for youth empowerment, and it is an important part of all key documents regarding youth policies. Since 2018, the problems that surfaced during the implementation of the actual legal basis on volunteerism have been addressed with an increasing sense of engagement. An important document that provides actual analysis regarding the implementation of youth policy is [Decree No. 07/85 “Concept – Paper on Empowerment and participation of youth”](#) approved on 22 January 2019. The document addresses the challenges that followed the implementation of the law in force (Law No. 03/L-145 on Youth Engagement and Empowerment), as well as the specifics of the development process that has taken place in Kosovo currently, and the EU youth policies based on the EU strategic framework 2010-2018. The aim of Decree No. 07/85 (2019) is to support the “empowerment and participation of youth in political processes, decision-making and the promotion of active citizenship to young people”. The document analyse that the actual legal framework doesn’t handle the developments regarding the recognition of internship and the formal role of the [Kosovo Volunteers platform](#).

In the local level of government, different municipalities have approved “Regulations” regarding volunteerism –“Regulation on empowerment and promotion of volunteering”. Some examples are as follows: the Municipality of Pristina¹⁷ in 2013, the Municipality of

15. Creating a more enabling environment for development of volunteering in Kosovo, Study on Volunteering in Kosovo, Office of Good Governance, available at <https://zgm.rks-gov.net/assets/cms/uploads/files/Volunteering%20in%20Kosovo%20-%20Study%20-%20ENG-2-99-split-merge.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2021.

16. Ibid, pp. 6-7.

17. Regulation on empowerment and promotion of volunteering in Pristina municipality (2013), available at <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=11838>, accessed 8 August 2021.

Gjilan in 2013, the Municipality of Suhareka¹⁸ in 2015, the Municipality of South Mitrovica¹⁹ in 2015, the Municipality of Rahovec²⁰ in 2016, etc. Based on the above-mentioned regulations (Article 5) the local authorities in each municipality are obliged to recognise and promote volunteerism “as an activity of special interest to the Municipality, insofar as it improves the quality of life, stimulates the active participation of citizens in social life and contributes to the development of an equal, humane and democratic society”.

There are no official documents establishing quality standards to be applied to the organisations and projects in which young volunteers participate, or relevant criteria for their evaluation.

2.5. Youth volunteering at national level

Youth volunteering at the national level has improved in the last two years. Starting from 2019, there has been established a work team to draft the “concept document on volunteering”, and to revise the law on the empowerment and participation of youth as well as several strategies on youth. CSOs’ co-operation with the government reflects a serious commitment toward the improvement of the legal framework on volunteering. Despite the difficult situation due to Covid-19 restrictions and its negative impact on the CSOs’ activities and voluntary work, according to the [World Giving Index²¹ for 2020](#), Kosovo is in the top 10 most generous countries, and placed in ninth position out of 114 countries. Regarding the volunteering component, Kosovo is ranked 97th out of 114 countries as citizens have spent 10% of their time in volunteering. There is an evident increase of 4% in 2019 compared to the data of World Giving Index for 2017, where only 6% of the citizens’ time was spent in voluntary activity.²²

Referring to the [BTI index \(2020\)](#), Kosovo citizens’ engagement in CSOs remains generally low but, in comparison to previous years, there is a visible increase in the number of citizens engaged in CSOs or volunteering for them, or of those citizens who have benefited from

18. Regulation on empowerment and promotion of volunteering in Suharek municipality (2015), available at www.online-transparency.org/repository/docs/Rregullore_per_fuqizimin_dhe_promovimin_e_vullnetarizimit_ne_Komunen_e_Suharekes.pdf, accessed 8 August 2021.

19. Regulation on empowerment and promotion of volunteering in Mitrovica South municipality, (2015) available at <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=11481> accessed 8 August 2021.

20. Regulation on empowerment and promotion of volunteering in Rahovec municipality (2016), available at <https://kk.rks-gov.net/rahovec/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2018/04/Rregullore-per-fuqizimin-dhe-promovimin-e-vullnetarizimit-ne-komunen-e-Rahovecit.pdf>, accessed 8 August 2021.

21. The Charities Aid Foundation’s World Giving Index offers a unique glimpse of global trends in generosity. It provides answers to questions about where people are most likely to engage in social activities for the benefit of their communities and to champion the growth of global giving.

22. Mapping of Local and Community based CSOs (October 2018), European Union 4 Kosovo, available at www.ngolens.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Final-report-english.pdf, p. 27, accessed 5 August 2021.

CSOs' services. Still, there is a lot of work to do in order to cultivate the culture of volunteerism and to strengthen the CSOs in Kosovo. Based on the [CSO Sustainability Index for Kosovo](#) in 2018, many organisations engage volunteers in events and activities but only a few engage volunteers on a regular or ongoing basis. Even community-based CSOs generally fail to meaningfully engage volunteers in their work.

It was foreseen but it wasn't completed an amendment of the Labour Law aimed to recognise the internship and volunteer work as work in framework of the [Action Plan for youth employment 2018-2020](#) period.

Another goal of the Action Plan for youth employment in the period 2018-2020 is to support voluntary work initiatives which contribute to youth employment. According to statistics, in 2018 around 1 500 youths were involved in volunteer work, while in 2019 there was a slight increase of volunteering engagement as around 2 100 youths participated in volunteering activities.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation in 2020 was difficult with regard to restrictions, and consequently the volunteering activities were limited. About 380 volunteers were certified during 2020, and about 40 of them have completed the work hours as specified by the Administrative Instruction for volunteer work. In sum, there have been around 4 000 young people who have contributed in volunteering work.²³

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, in partnership with local and international partners from 2 to 27 August 2021, has organised different activities with a focus on crucial issues regarding youth. August was declared by the MCYS as "[The Month of Youth](#)". Topics such as vocational training and employment of young people, mental and reproductive health, youth activism at local and central level, recreation and leisure activities, volunteering and integration and the protection of marginalised young people were part of the programme completed during the month.

2.6. Cross-mobility programmes

Kosovo's youth participate in every regional initiative relating to voluntary activities. There are several very important facts regarding these activities that deserve a mention. In 2018, a local antenna of the Regional Youth Co-operation Office (RYCO) was inaugurated in Kosovo. During 2019, Kosovo chaired the Governing Board of RYCO and two meetings were held.²⁴ From 2014 to 2018, more than 800 participants have benefited from one of the three Youth Mobility actions: mobility of young workers, youth exchanges and the European

23. Action Plan for youth employment 2018-2020, Annual Monitoring Report 2020 (March 2021), Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, available at <https://mpms.rks-gov.net/wpdm-package/plani-i-veprimit-per-punesimin-e-te-rinjve-2018-2020/>, p. 37, accessed 10 August 2021.

24. Kosovo 2020 Report, European Commission, available at https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/default/files/kosovo_report_2020.pdf, p. 85, accessed 10 August 2021.

Voluntary Service.²⁵ In 2021 there were 17 organisations from Kosovo’s civil society accredited by the European Voluntary Service (EVS). In 2018 there were 12, but in the last two years five more organisations from Kosovo were added;²⁶ they were accredited by EVS and became members of the [CSOs’ list](#). All these organisations are eligible to send and receive volunteers from Kosovo to the EU and vice versa. These data show the increased interest of Kosovo CSO for international co-operation in volunteering activities.

Kosovo is a partner country in the European Solidarity Corps (ESC). The ESC allows young Europeans aged from 18 to 30 years to join an organisation abroad as volunteers, with financial support provided by the European Commission. As Kosovo is a partner country of this programme, organisations from the country can host volunteers from ESC participating countries.²⁷

In 2019, a new programme to promote regional cross-border volunteers started. The project, named “[ROUTE WB6](#)”, created the first Regional Youth Volunteering Exchange programme, with the aim of promoting youth mobility, volunteering and peace building in the region. “ROUTE WB6” is a three-year project of the Regional Youth Co-operation Office (RYCO), which will strengthen the capacities of the National Volunteer Services in the Western Balkans, develop and test a Regional Volunteer Service, and scale up and promote a regional volunteer programme.²⁸ Through this programme, volunteers will be able to support local initiatives, will become more sensitive and driven by relevant causes across the region and will gain critical thinking skills on the challenges that the communities are facing.²⁹ The programme represents a unique opportunity for the Western Balkan youth to volunteer across the region. Approximately 400 young people from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia will have the opportunity to volunteer in the region, but also to learn more about the concept of ethical volunteering and how to improve volunteer policies and legislation.³⁰

In this regard, a Regional Volunteers Web Platform, <https://routewb6.org/>, was established in March 2021 in the context of the ROUTE WB6 project. Since the start of the ROUTE WB6 project, different activities have been held around Balkan countries. We can mention the “Stakeholder Meeting” held in September 2019 in Pristina, where more than 30 participants from all around Kosovo, representatives of NGOs, LYACs, institutions and international

25. Kosovo 2018 Report, European Commission, available at <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/default/files/20180417-kosovo-report.pdf>, p. 65, accessed 10 August 2021.

26. The new accredited CSOs are: 7 ARTE; Anibar; Duart Plot Meshire; LETS DO IT PEJA; Youth Initiative for Human Rights – Kosovo.

27. European Solidarity Corps, available at <http://gaiakosovo.org/2020/07/04/european-solidarity-corps-information-for-interested-organizations/>, accessed 10 August 2021.

28. Stakeholders Discuss Development of Volunteering Infrastructure in Kosovo, BY RYCOWBORG (2019), available at <https://www.rycowb.org/?p=6848>, accessed 10 August 2021.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

organisations/agencies participated in this activity.³¹ Another activity worth mentioning is the organisation of a workshop on “Volunteerism in Kosovo” by the Lens organisation on 11 March 2020. The goal of this workshop was to build the capacity of civil society organisations to recruit and manage volunteers in Kosovo.³² Also in the context of the project of Strategic EVS for Nature Conservation, more than 60 volunteers that were organised in five short-term groups participated in volunteering activities during summer 2019 divided in groups with two weeks period and two months period activities from June to September in Serbia, Bulgaria, Kosovo and Croatia. The volunteers have contributed to the efforts of organisations and local communities to preserve biodiversity, to raise awareness and establish co-operation with the responsible institutions.³³

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

Despite the absence of a Law on Volunteering in Kosovo, foreign volunteers have the right to perform volunteering in Kosovo territory under the condition of [Law No. 04/L-219 \(2013\) on Foreigners](#). The Law on Foreigners stipulates that: “A foreigner in the Republic of Kosovo may work on the basis of a *permit issued for residence and employment* or a *certificate for employment notification* (Article 67).

Based on Article 76 (points 1.8, 1.9 and 1.12) on the basis of a certificate for employment notification, up to 90 days within a year, the following foreigners may work:

- 1.8. Students who come to unions or Kosovo institutions for voluntary work in work camps or educational and work programmes, respectively, who are coming for an internship in the diplomatic and consular missions accredited to the Republic of Kosovo;
- 1.9. Volunteers who are working in unions and non-profit institutions in the Republic of Kosovo in accordance with the special provisions, respectively, based on voluntary co-operation and exchange programmes;
- 1.12. Foreigners who carry out an internship, training or voluntary work within a Co-operation Programme, Lifelong Learning Programme and Youth in Action programme, and other programmes and initiatives, which are being implemented by a competent authority for education and science.

The above-mentioned categories are allowed to give their contribution in volunteering activities in Kosovo territory.

2.7. Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

31. Ibid.

32. KWN Joins Workshop to Increase Volunteerism in Kosovo (June 2020), available at <https://womensnetwork.org/kwn-joins-workshop-to-increase-volunteerism-in-kosovo/>, accessed 10 August 2021.

33. Long-term volunteering, GAIA Kosovo from Kosovo (February 2019), available at <https://sci.ngo/vov/volunteer-summer-in-the-mountains-of-the-balkans/>, accessed 10 August 2021.

During 2018-2020 there has been an institutional effort both at the central and the local level of government to foster and emphasise volunteering in Kosovo's society. With regard to the central level, the promotion and awareness of volunteering have been included in two main strategic documents: the Kosovo Strategy for Youth 2019-2023 and the Government National Strategy of Co-operation with Civil Society 2019-2023. In documents, the importance of and the necessity to promote volunteerism among young people through awareness-raising activities are emphasised.

The structure in charge is the Department for Youth (DfY), which has the responsibility to apply and implement actions that promote volunteering and voluntarism. As stated in the Strategy for Youth 2019-2023, this goal will be achieved through the use of visual and audio media, on-site visits to youth organisations in all municipalities of the country, through debates and conferences, as well as through electronic platforms, without excluding other types of activity. In the Government Strategy of Co-operation with Civil Society 2019-2023 No. 4.3, "Increase citizen awareness on the opportunities and values of volunteering", a specific objective has been included with the same purpose. For 2021 several activities have been scheduled in order to fulfil this objective, such as the campaign on volunteerism and a number of different activities like Video spot, leaflets, etc.³⁴

Another useful instrument contributing to the participation in, awareness of and promotion of volunteering activities is the "[Kosovo Volunteers platform](#)" (KOVO). Since 2017, this unique online platform has created an electronic market between employers and young people, volunteers and job seekers. The platform is a partnership between UNICEF and the Ministry of Culture and Youth in Kosovo. The aim of the database was to facilitate the recruitment of volunteers for volunteer work providers by supporting the online registration of volunteers, registering volunteer hours and issuing certificates. The platform was based entirely on Kosovo's present legal frame. The platform is managed by an officer appointed by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, who monitors and maintains it. With the assistance of [KOVO](#), around 10 800 volunteers are now registered on this platform as of 2019, and there are about 300 non-government organisations which continuously recruit volunteers in an attempt to implement their projects.³⁵

A growing trend is that many non-governmental organisations and other civic initiatives have started to use voluntary work as a component of their activities. Awareness activities about youth volunteering are implemented by different civil society organisations on the local and national levels. The biggest campaign that includes the largest number of volunteers is "[Let's do it Kosovo](#)". Every year since 2012, Kosovo has been organising large national one-day cleanups. In 2018, more than 10% of the population participated in the

34. Government Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society 2019-2023 (2019), available at www.civikos.net/repository/docs/Strategy_eng_291507.pdf, pp. 42-43, accessed 5 August 2021.

35. Aliu L. (2019), "Shaping the future based on solidarity and through the passion of volunteers", available at www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/stories/shaping-future-based-solidarity-and-through-passion-volunteers, accessed 5 August 2021.

cleanup. “Let’s do it Kosovo” offered to be the global media and communication centre for World Cleanup Day 2019. Kosovo was the first country to hold this role beside the Estonian team, which had been the initiator and chief co-ordinator of World Cleanup Day since 2008. “[Let’s do it Kosovo](#)” provided staff, logistics and technical support to teams in over 170 countries.

It’s worth mentioning the Mentorship Scheme, a UNICEF project implemented by the Kosovo CSR Network. The Mentorship Scheme aims to contribute to the empowerment and development of young people by increasing the capacity and the ability to participate in the workforce, in policy-making and decision-making processes, through volunteer mentoring from the private sector and other young professionals.³⁶ During the pandemic, young doctors and students have been parts of volunteer contribution to manage the pandemic crisis in Kosovo.

From March 2020 to August 2021, more than 250 young doctors and medical students were included as volunteers for the provision of various health care services throughout the pandemic.³⁷ According to the experts, volunteering activities need to be promoted and further supported because of their positive impact in many aspects. Such activities, not only help young people to gain experience but also have a positive impact in the psycho-social aspect also.

There are numerous ways and instruments to promote values like volunteering. An original event in this regard was the one that took place on the tenth anniversary of the [organisation GAIA Kosovo](#), where a podcast series of 10 episodes was created about peace, volunteering, social and environmental justice, and other relevant topics, with friends and inspiring people, celebrating virtually due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

2.8. Skills recognition

The recognition of voluntary work in Kosovo can be regarded as a means of empowering youth, since it has created many opportunities for professional development and informal education for young people in Kosovo.³⁸ There is a chain of legal instruments, institutions and procedures to be followed for the recognition of voluntary work in Kosovo. The legal basis is Article 6 on Law No. 03/L-145 on Empowerment and Participation of Youth (2009), in which are established “the responsibilities of central government bodies for the

36. Ibid.

37. Qerreti B. (2021), Volunteering in pandemic time, *Revista Mjeku* Vol. 1, available at <https://omk-rks.org/wp-content/uploads/Revista-Mjeku-COVID-19-V%C3%ABllimi-1-Mars-2021-Dr.-Bujar-Qerreti.pdf>, accessed 10 August 2021.

38. Aliu L. (2019), “Shaping the future based on solidarity and through the passion of volunteers”, available at www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/stories/shaping-future-based-solidarity-and-through-passion-volunteers, accessed 5 August 2021.

development of procedures and criteria for the promotion and recognition of voluntary work and other forms of youth activities”. First, in 2010, through Administrative Instruction No.10 “On the Volunteer Work of Youth” and later through the updated version in 2016 of Administrative Instruction No.1, “Youth Voluntary Work”, the process of the recognition of voluntary work was institutionalised. The crucial and most promoted component of the Administrative Instruction was the establishment of the Platform and Database for Volunteerism, an “electronic system for managing online, the promotion and the recognition of voluntary work”.³⁹

According to Kosovo’s legal framework, one year’s voluntary work experience shall be recognised if young people under 18 years of age carry out over 222 hours of work. The same applies if young people over 18 carry out over 1 107 hours of voluntary work per year. The relationship between the organiser of the voluntary work, which might be a CSO, a public or a private institution etc., and the volunteer is established by an agreement. The organiser is obliged to register the volunteer in the electronic system PDV. The Department of Human Resources appoints an official from the staff of MCYS, who is in charge of the recognition process, and responsible for the maintenance and development of PDV.⁴⁰ Despite the improvements made in the legislation and the procedures about the recognition of the voluntary work, the results of youth participation in voluntary activities remain very low. During 2020, around 380 volunteers were certified, and 40 of them have achieved the hours required as stated in the Administrative Instruction for Volunteer Work.⁴¹

2.9. Current debates and reforms

In nowadays, there is awareness rising about the volunteering in Kosovo. The current debates relating to this issue are focused on several aspects of the “youth policy” and “policy on volunteering” including the necessity of reviewing and adding new legal instruments from both the legal and practical perspective. Decree No. 07/85 (2019) on “Concept – Paper on Empowerment and participation of youth” outlines three options for changing the current situation with regard to youth policy:

- Option 1. Status quo (no changes);
- Option 2. Changing the existing policy;

39. Sheremeti Ç (2019), “Are Kosovo’s policies actually helping youth who want to volunteer?”, available at <https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/are-kosovos-policies-actually-helping-youth-who-want-to-volunteer/>, accessed 10 August 2021.

40. Administrative Instruction No. 01/2016 on Youth Voluntary Work, available at www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/UA_01-2016_per_punen_vullnetare_te_te_rinjve.pdf, pp. 9-11, accessed 2 August 2021.

41. Action Plan for youth employment 2018-2020, Annual Monitoring Report 2020 (March 2021), Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, available at <https://mpms.rks-gov.net/wpdm-package/plani-i-veprimit-per-punesimin-e-te-rinjve-2018-2020/> p. 20, accessed 8 August 2021.

➤ Option 3. Changing the existing implementation approach.⁴²

Based on this document, a process of drafting the new law on the Empowerment and Participation of Youth is ongoing and the consultation phase has begun but still the draft does not comply with the standards.⁴³ During the last two years, CSOs have been actively participating in roundtables organised in the context of the new law on the empowerment and participation of youth.⁴⁴

At the 18th government meeting, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo spoke about the results of his 100 days of governance and when referring to the youth initiative he stated that: “A new youth employment programme has been designed in co-operation with UNDP, which will focus on providing opportunities for internships and volunteer work”.⁴⁵ This proves that the Government of Kosovo pays special attention to the necessary solutions and to the legal instruments that are needed in order to improve youth policies and youth voluntary work.

Although there is no specific law on volunteerism yet, a working team has been created and their goal is to draft the “concept paper on volunteering”. The document “will promote and create a supportive environment for the development of volunteering”.⁴⁶ The working team is under the support of the Office for Good Governance; apart from members of public institutions there are members from the [LENS organisation](#) (a civil society organisation). The aim of this document is “to promote and create a supportive environment for the development of volunteering”.⁴⁷ The concept document on volunteering is expected to be finalised and approved in the coming months.

The debate between different actors involved in the process emphasise the importance of the promotion activities on volunteering and the necessity to work on a continual basis in order to cultivate a permanent volunteering process that can guarantee a sustainable value of volunteerism in Kosovo society.

42. Ibid, pp. 8-9.

43. Annual Report (March 2021), On public consultations in the government of the Republic of Kosovo for 2020, available at www.civikos.net/repository/docs/Annual_Report_On_Public_Consultations_2020_571212.pdf, p. 21, accessed 8 August 2021.

44. Stakeholders Discuss Development of Volunteering Infrastructure in Kosovo, BY RYCOWBORG (2019), available at www.rycowb.org/?p=6848, accessed 8 August 2021.

45. Prime Minister Kurti at the 18th government meeting speaks about the first 100 days of his governance as a turning point towards development (30 June 2021) on The Prime Minister’s Office, available at <https://kryeministri.rks-gov.net/en/prime-minister-kurti-at-the-18th-government-meeting-speaks-about-the-100-days-of-turning-point-towards-development/>, accessed 11 August 2021.

46. For more information, see: Government Strategy for Co-operation with Civil Society 2019-2023 (2019), p. 10.

47. Ibid.

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