

The background features a top-down view of several people sitting around a table, engaged in a meeting or study session. They are holding various items like laptops, tablets, and books. Overlaid on this scene is a blue network diagram consisting of interconnected hexagons and circles, with small orange dots at the nodes. In the center of the diagram, there is a lightbulb icon and a graduation cap icon.

# NONFORMAL EDUCATION, A NEW BUILDING BLOCK IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



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# **Nonformal Education, a New Building Block in Sustainable Development**

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACQUIRING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS  
OF THE 21ST CENTURY FOR ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP  
LIVING IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY**

# Policy Paper: Opportunities for acquiring knowledge and skills of the 21st century for active citizenship living in contemporary society

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## Executive summary

This policy brief is purposed to provide recommendations and propose concrete actions to relevant stakeholders in the education sector for improvement of access to and overall quality of education offered to young people and adults in the context of dynamic development of the contemporary world. The underlying idea is to contribute to overall endeavours to empower young people to better prepare for requirements in the labour market of modern age, and equip them with knowledge, skills and competences, to more effectively respond to challenges of continuous socioeconomic transition they are exposed to. In this regard, it is very important to sensitise relevant educational stakeholders on all levels of governance on the opportunities for improvement of overall environment for introduction of lifelong education concept with more effective utilisation of nonformal education. More specifically it is aimed support work of key actors on local and community level, but also those involved in curriculum development and implementation, and monitoring the execution of educational policies and practice.

The paper gives concise analyses of the legal, policy and institutional framework important for establishment and functionalisation of the nonformal education programs and gives outlines of the conceptual frameworks developed in leading European economies that could be replicated and adjusted for needs of young people and adults on local level with adequate contextualization to socioeconomic situation in Kosovo. Relevant provisions were indicated in applicable legislation which regulate this field, before all the laws on education and youth support, along with policy options and strategic framework on European and Kosovo level in those areas. It also refers to most recent evaluation of educational achievements and participation of young people in the labour market. The emphasis is made on key competences that have to be developed in the contemporary lifelong learning concept and how this approach could be advanced and subsided using existing opportunities and by providing access to additional resources through international cooperation.

In a wider context, the document recommends integration with key ongoing processes including European integrations and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals and benefiting from fund raising opportunities associated with them. For that purpose, cooperation and partnership with international organizations and sectoral civil society organizations is strongly recommended. The opportunities deriving from programs implemented by UNICEF including UPSHIFT, Podium, Ponder and Generation Unlimited as well as EU Erasmus + Programme are presented with explanation of concrete benefits they bring to young people through engagement with them at different levels of educational cycle.

The policy paper further gives recommendations for review of existing legislative and policy framework and propose necessary amendments and integration of nonformal education in the future strategic visions in education and development, what should result with increased budgetary resources, improvement of infrastructure and capacity building of all professionals involved in education process. It explores the opportunities for creating synergies among different actors in design and implementation of nonformal education programs that will reinforce effects and maximize impact of regular education on individual consumers and society. Specific recommendations refer to relevant stakeholders on both central and local level of governance, education institutions, civil society and international organizations, and to their effective coordination and cooperation in the framework of multistakeholder efforts needed to advance education process and its outcomes.

## Background and objectives

Acquiring knowledge, skills and competences in contemporary context may have diverse forms and mediums, with many new opportunities arising in digital age, in addition to existing traditional models and approaches. The life-long education concept integrates formal, non-formal and informal education with the aim of improvement in quality of life and of an individual and in the society and responding to requirements of real time socioeconomic and technological development. While formal education, as structured and systematic form of learning, includes pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education and vocational training, informal and non-formal concepts offer additional opportunities with more flexibility to adjust to demands of developments in contemporary context. Ideally, they should subside and complement formal education programs and curricula contributing to a wholistic educational arrangements offered and easily accessible for all categories of population.

The concept of non-formal education is increasingly utilized in many countries as subsidiary to regular education with aim to reinforce knowledge and competences acquired in primary and secondary schools as well as in higher education and during the professional engagement at different levels. In addition, it is very powerful tool in contemporary business environment for capacity building and continuous learning used by individual professionals and companies which are committed to human resources management and development. It is actually integral part of the lifelong learning concept which is key for constant struggle with labour market requirements in the situation of fast technological development and digitalisation as well as unpredictable destabilisations such as COVID-19 and large-scale armed conflicts and environmental issues resulting with migrations and other global effects.

In the dynamically changing business world, the need for non-formal education programs rapidly grows and brings new requirements for planning and implementation of public policies in the education sector. Unlike highly developed countries, developing countries passing through transitional phases in the socioeconomic development need comprehensive support in many aspects to set up the fully functional child/student centred education system with non-formal or subsidiary education concepts as integral part of the overall approach to education and socioeconomic development.

In local context, the correlation is made between results of two important research projects, the results of PISA tests for 15-year old children and labour force survey conducted in Kosovo in 2020. According to comparative analyses of PISA tests of children in the region of Western Balkans<sup>1</sup> in average performance in reading, mathematics and science made by UNICEF, *most systems in the region have a larger share of students who do not reach the minimum proficiency than the OECD average. However, there is a large variation across the countries/economies. For example, nearly 80% of 15-year old students in Kosovo do not achieve baseline levels of performance in reading, while in Croatia, this share is closer to the OECD average of slightly more than 20%.*

In addition, according to latest census in Kosovo, 18.2% of the total population are young people in the age group 15-24 years old. Even though such a young population is assessed as great human capital for socioeconomic development, in practice this asset has not been effectively utilised because education and training offered to them is not harmonized with labour market requirements. According to the Labour Force Survey

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/22081/file/PISA%20Highlights\\_final.pdf%20.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/22081/file/PISA%20Highlights_final.pdf%20.pdf)

conducted in 2020, the percentage of youth (age 15-24) who are neither in employment nor in education or training was 37.7 %, while overall youth unemployment remains very high in Kosovo with 46.9 % of youth aged 15-24 in the labour force unemployed<sup>2</sup>.

In view of above two research findings, there is a pressing need for action in assisting young people to adjust to needs of contemporary labour market, by offering them access to opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills and competences that will help them to adequately response to requirements for education and employment.

In this respect, the aim of this policy paper is to provide guidelines and concrete recommendations to policy makers and other relevant stakeholders in education and socioeconomic development in local context for improvement of access to quality non-formal education programs for children, youth and adult population with forward looking towards achieving knowledge-based society and contribution to overall wellbeing of young people and communities. Specifically, it will analyse existing resources and initiatives with reference to European and international standards and practice and propose the most effective approaches and the most sustainable interventions that could be implemented on different levels and with diverse beneficiaries.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.rcc.int/youth\\_db/files/user/docs/1.3\\_Kosovo\\_Report.pdf](https://www.rcc.int/youth_db/files/user/docs/1.3_Kosovo_Report.pdf)



## Methodology

The methodology for preparation of this policy paper integrates desk review of relevant legislation, and standards and practice of existing leading programs on the international level, cross cutting with situation analyses in the context of Kosovo and local and community level. The experience of some programmatic interventions implemented by UNICEF in partnership with Domovik was also used as an important reference in the context of Kosovo and Mitrovica region. Taking in consideration specific arrangements in the education sector in the area of NGO Domovik's engagement, availability and access to relevant programs in Serbia were also subject of review and analyses given that education system in some municipalities in northern, central and south-eastern part of Kosovo is implemented in line with curricula designed by Serbian Ministry of Education. In addition, semi-structured and fully structured interviews were conducted with beneficiaries of some programs implemented by Domovik in Kosovo, as well as bilateral meetings and focus groups with the most relevant stakeholders in the education system including students, teachers and policy makers.

## International standards and practice

By definition, *non-formal education refers to planned, structured programs and processes of personal and social education designed to improve range of skills and competences outside of education curriculum*<sup>3</sup>. Achievements in non-formal education is usually difficult to certify, however they are being increasingly recognized in practice in many fields and by many actors due to concrete benefits it brings. In the international context, European Union, Council of Europe, OECD, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP are among leading intergovernmental organizations that promote this concept. Council of Europe define it as *planned learning process with educational objectives based on the needs of learners*. It is based on voluntary participation and must be inclusive and accessible, with specific attention to include young people from marginalised groups. Applied methodologies should be participatory and learner centred, combining individual and group learning methods, and encouraging learning from each other. In this respect, its purpose is to support learning life skills and preparing for active citizenship<sup>4</sup>.

In its area of engagement, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is dealing with adult education, and according to OECD, types of non-formal education include *adult basic education, adult literacy education or school equivalency preparation*.

On the other side, according to UNESCO, *informal education is form of education that is institutionalized, intentional and planned by an education provider, with defining characteristic that it is an addition, alternative and/or a complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals. It is often provided to guarantee the right of access to education for all*. In the context of UN engagement, non-formal education can cover programmes contributing to adult and youth literacy and education for out-of-school children, as well as programmes on life skills, work skills, and social or cultural development.

In the framework of continuous learning, **European Union** has established **8 key competences**<sup>5</sup>, which are important for a **lifelong continuous education**:

1. Be able to **communicate** in your **mother tongue**: understand, interpret and express feelings, facts, concepts and opinion in both written and oral forms.
2. Be able to communicate and decode meanings in a **foreign language**.
3. Develop **mathematical competence** and basic competences in **science** and **technology**.
4. Be able to use **digital technologies** and understand the **ethical and legal issues** surrounding them.
5. Show initiative to assimilate new **knowledge**, and to advance skill levels towards **professional level**.
6. Develop **social and civic competences**: interact with other people, adapt a situation and work under pressure, and work in a team.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/non-formal-education>

<sup>4</sup> <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership>

<sup>5</sup> [www.europeanschool.be/8-key-competences-for-a-lifelong-continuous-educatio...](http://www.europeanschool.be/8-key-competences-for-a-lifelong-continuous-educatio...)

7. Be aware of **cultural diversity** and the world's **cultural heritage**.
8. Develop a sense of **initiative** and **entrepreneurship**.

In all 8 competences there is a room and entry points for subsidiarity between regular education curriculum offered in schools and non-formal education, that could be offered through cooperation with civil society, international organizations and private sector, but certainly last three competences give plenty of space for integration of informal education. In practice children really do not learn much about civic initiatives and engagement or entrepreneurship in formal education. Moreover, in many local contexts and with vulnerable communities, there is a need to support establishment of complementary programs for use of digital technologies and development of basic competences for science and technology. It will contribute to more equal start for all in higher educational levels.

There are several steps that need to be followed in establishment of the quality life-long learning environment. Certainly, in the context of transitional countries, the regulatory framework should be reviewed and subsided to recognize competencies acquired through non-formal education, in co-operation with all relevant education and training institutions and with the intergovernmental organisations interested in dealing with these questions. In many contexts, it is necessary to raise awareness with NGOs, donor community, governments, universities, employers and other stakeholders on the benefits that these synergies bring to the individuals and societies.

The latest EU Youth Strategy developed for the period 2019-2027<sup>6</sup>, provides framework for European cooperation in the youth sector, with aim *to improving conditions for young people in Europe by creating more and equal opportunities for education and employment, and by promoting their active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity*. It is based on three main pillars, Engage-Connect-Empower, with Engage focussing on youth participation and inclusion in democratic processes, Connect -providing unhindered access for all young people to cross-border mobility opportunities for education and work, including volunteering, and Empower - focussing on creation of conducive environment for quality and innovative youth work as a catalyst for their empowerment. The strategy foresees initiatives in eight areas including employment and entrepreneurship, social inclusion, participation, education and training, health and well-being, voluntarism, global networking and cooperation and creativity and culture. This framework gives significant space for implementation of nonformal education concept subsidiary to regular and informal education to further enhance their life skills, active citizenship and access to contemporary labour market, and contribute to achievements of objectives of the strategy. Some of the key actions foreseen for implementation of the strategy are aimed at improving cross-sector cooperation across policy areas, facilitating volunteering and solidarity mobility, and what is very relevant for this policy paper, *implementing a youth work agenda to increase recognition of non-formal learning, and reinforcing the link between EU youth policy and related EU programmes (Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps)*. (Source EU Youth Portal)

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<sup>6</sup> [https://youth.europa.eu/strategy\\_en](https://youth.europa.eu/strategy_en)

## Applicable legislation and policy options in local context

On the level of Kosovo, two laws regulate education sector, including the Law on Pre-university Education<sup>7</sup> and the Law on Higher Education. The first one, which is more relevant for this policy paper, regulates pre-university education and training from International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels 0 to 4, including education and training for children and adults taking qualifications at these levels. It includes early childhood education or pre-primary education (ISCED 0), primary education (ISCED 1), lower secondary education (ISCED 2), upper secondary education (ISCED 3) and post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED4).

Article 1.2 fully correlates with skills, knowledge and competences that pupils should acquire through pre-university education according to EU framework of 8 key competences. This article provides references to development the pupil's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential along with formation of basic scientific knowledge, communication, observation and analytical skills, creativity, autonomy and related learning competences. It should further develop their respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and principles set out in the relevant international conventions and domestic legislation. The aim is to develop pupils' respect for parents and teachers, their own culture's identity, language and values of their communities, and respect for diversity as well as spirit of good understanding, peace, tolerance, gender equality and friendship with members of all communities and respect for the environment (*source Law on Preuniversity Education in Kosovo*). Kosovo education system started with implementation of the new competency-based curriculum in 2017/18, however the beginning was characterised with lack of textbooks and relevant teaching tools and insufficient training and support for teachers and directors in implementing the curriculum.

The law further brings division of competences between the municipalities and ministries in relation to establishment of educational institutions at different levels, where each municipality is assigned with establishment of primary (ISCED Level 1) and lower secondary (ISCED Level 2) schools, and where possible upper secondary schools and vocational training schools (ISCED) Level 3.

Article 23 of the Law only mentions extra-curricular activities in the paragraph 1, that school director or the Parent's Council, with the consent of the governing board, may organize extra-curricular activities, while paragraph 23.2 states that extra-curricular activities shall be regulated with a special bylaw.

The objectives of Kosovo education strategy 2017-2021<sup>8</sup> have set several strategic objectives including increased participation and inclusion, improvement of the management system, strengthening quality assurance mechanisms, teachers' development and others. One of the strategic objectives was strengthening vocational education and training and adult education aiming to align vocational education with labour market demand in Kosovo and beyond and create an open education system for adults. The main priority in this area is to create a better relation between study programs and labour market needs, develop a special core curriculum for the vocational education and training aligned with the Kosovo Curriculum Framework, to ensure systematic provision

<sup>7</sup> <https://masht.rks-gov.net/en/law-on-pre-university-education-in-the...>

<sup>8</sup> [https://smartkosova.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/KOSOVO\\_EDUCATION\\_STRATEGIC\\_PLAN-2017-2021-2.pdf](https://smartkosova.rks-gov.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/KOSOVO_EDUCATION_STRATEGIC_PLAN-2017-2021-2.pdf)

of quality practical learning and professional practice, to ensure sustainability and further development of Competency Centres and to create an efficient and quality system of education for adults.

The mid-term evaluation of the level of achievement of this strategic objective of Kosovo education strategy<sup>9</sup> indicates increased interest of youth on vocational schools over the last years, however, the harmonized approach towards professional education and labour market requirements is still not in place and quality assurance mechanisms are not yet developed. According to evaluation, *practical learning in schools and professional practice in business remains unsatisfactory, while career guidance and counselling remains a challenge and services offered are still limited in some municipalities.*

The new Kosovo Education Strategy 2022-2026<sup>10</sup> was officially presented by the government in October 2022, while prior to that draft document has been posted online for consultations. One of the key strategic objectives of the newest policy document is *harmonization of the vocational education and training with the dynamic developments in technology and the labour market, in view of lifelong learning.* It provides new entry points for integration of nonformal education programs, by recognizing that *opportunities for lifelong learning and mobility are limited and are not in accordance with the need for continuous retraining of the workforce.* Consequently, *the main focus within this strategic area is to review the offer of vocational education and training as well as quality improvement, in order to develop transferable skills, digital skills, entrepreneurial skills and professional technical skills, in line with labour market needs and digital and green transformation trends.*

The new law on youth in Kosovo is in the preparation, while the applicable law<sup>11</sup> in its Article 4 recognizes the right of youth for self-organize and volunteer work. Further Article 6, on responsibilities of central government bodies, paragraph 1.3 assigns central-level governmental bodies for the development of procedures and criteria for promotion and recognition of volunteer work and other forms of youth activities, while paragraph 1.6 assigns them to support programs for development and capacity building in the youth sector. Furthermore, Article 7 of the law regulates responsibilities of municipal bodies, and in its paragraph 1.3 assigns **them to support for informal education for youth organizations and other development activities initiated by young people.**

In Serbia, the Law on Fundamentals of Education System<sup>12</sup> regulates the fields of preschool, elementary and secondary education and pedagogy. Article 2 of the law defines that *education and pedagogy system shall include preschool pedagogy and education, elementary and secondary education and pedagogy and shall constitute an integral part of the life-long learning of all citizens of the Republic of Serbia.* This definition is very important in terms of recognition of the life-long education concept and gives basis for further advocacy and cooperation with authorities in establishment of subsidiary education programs including non-formal and informal education. Defining the objectives of the education and pedagogy of the Law in the Article 4, there is clear convergency towards previously elaborated EU framework of key competences for life-long education, by defining more specifically in the paragraph 4.2, that one of the objectives of education and pedagogy is *to facilitate the acquisition of high quality knowledge, skills and*

<sup>9</sup> <http://kosovoprojects.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Implementation-of-Kosovo-Education-Strategic-Plan.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> [https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/Storage/Consultations/14-54-14-17062022/3.--Draft-Education-Strategy--2022-2026\\_En.Doc](https://konsultimet.rks-gov.net/Storage/Consultations/14-54-14-17062022/3.--Draft-Education-Strategy--2022-2026_En.Doc)

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kosovo\\_2009\\_Youth\\_Law.pdf](https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kosovo_2009_Youth_Law.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> <https://legislationline.org/documents/id/19514> · PDF file

*opinions linguistic, mathematical, scientific, artistic, cultural, technical and information literacy, enabling the children and young people to live and work in the modern society, and paragraph 4.4, to develop the abilities of children and students to find, analyse, utilize and communicate information, while skilfully and effectively using information and communication technologies.* Furthermore, paragraph 4.9 sets an objective that children need to *develop key competences necessary for life in a modern society, enable them to work and pursue their profession by developing professional competences, in accordance with the requirements of a given profession, through the development of modern sciences, economy, technical equipment and technology.*

Paragraph 4.12 defines the objective to help children and students develop communication and dialogue skills, the sense of solidarity and efficient cooperation with others and acquire team building skills and fostering friendship and camaraderie.

Further in Article 5 which defines learning outcomes, two provisions are very relevant for this exercise, including 5.1 related to adoption and construction of the knowledge and communication of the acquired knowledge, and 5.4 to work efficiently with others as members of a team, group, organization and community. They both fully correlates with EU competences framework, subsiding education objectives defined by law elaborated above.

In the Chapter II of this law which regulates developing, ensuring and improving quality of education and pedagogy, Section 1 on Councils, Article 12 foresees that Vocational Training and Adult Education Council is in charge for secondary vocational education, specialist and artisan training, adult education, practical skills training and professional skills training. According to the law it is obliged to cooperate with National Education Council, which is in-charge for preschool, elementary, general secondary and secondary arts education. In this way, the lifelong education concept is clearly supported by this law and gives again excellent ground for establishment of complementary educational concepts and creating synergies between the regular education and nonformal education concepts with aim to maximize impact of education on children and adults. In the comprehensive range of competences of the Council for Vocational Training and Education of Adults, one of the relevant for this policy paper is to propose to Minister the list of educational profiles and curricula and syllabi for educational profiles, what provides significant room for advocacy and concrete influence in better integration of the educational profiles with labour market requirements. The Law further regulates the roles of two institutions for the purpose of monitoring, ensuring and improving the education system quality and development including Institute for the Improvement of Education and Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation.

Based on Article 18 of the Law, the Institute for the Improvement of Education shall include three organizational units including Program and Textbook Development Center, Vocational Training and Adult Education Center, and Educators' Professional Development Center.

Chapter III of the Law defines establishment and work of educational institutions and other organizations, and in the Article 28 it defines that institution may be established by the Republic, an autonomous province, a local self- government unit, another legal entity or a private entity. It is noteworthy, that Article 33 of the Law in this chapter, on Expanded Work and Activities of an Institution, defines they may perform other work and activities which support education and pedagogy provided that they do not impair educational work and activities. *The expanded work and activities of an institution may include the provision of services, production, sales and other activities which promote or*

*contribute to a more rational and improved quality delivery of education and pedagogy work and activities. A secondary school may deliver training programs in accordance with the needs of the labour market.* In legal terms, these provisions open the room for establishment and implementation of non-formal programs to equip pupils and students with additional skills to better respond to dynamically changing labour market.

Article 37 provides that an institution may be established by a foreign country, a foreign legal or private entity under the conditions envisaged by an international agreement, or under the reciprocity conditions. The certificate issued to a student by a school shall be recognized, in accordance with applicable conditions and procedures. These provisions set legal basis for application of some internationally recognized programs such as UPSHIFT, Podium, Ponder, Generation Unlimited and others, which will be elaborated in the next chapter of this assessment.

## Availability of subsidiary programs for acquiring knowledge, skills and competences of 21<sup>st</sup> Century

On the level of schools, subsidiary education is organized in the form of supplementary education or catch-up classes for children with lower educational achievements or those who were absent from regular classes due different reasons, additional classes for talented and gifted children, and sections in artistic fields including music, drama or visual arts. The supplementary education is integral part of the regular education and is included in all planning cycles in educational institutions. In efforts to decrease school dropout UNICEF supported development of the model on How to Achieve Quality Supplementary Education in Serbia<sup>13</sup>. It is based on several pillars including supporting in a broader context, parental involvement and provision of basic conditions for organizing supplementary classes. It also requires establishment and maintenance of internal support network, introduction of preventive measures during regular classes with frequent needs assessments along with measures in the framework of supplementary classes.

Dual education or so-called education in line with business requirements is introduced in Serbia<sup>14</sup> based on the practice of developed EU countries, before all Germany. It combines internship in a company and vocational education at a vocational school. Currently, three year and four-year programs are offered to interested candidates, mainly in the field of mechanical engineering, metal processing, electrical engineering, aircraft engineering, agriculture and food processing, traffic, forestry and wood processing, trade, tourism and textile industry. The opportunities for such education exist with vocational centers and technical schools in Kosovo.

The presence of many international organizations in Kosovo brought opportunities for introduction of some contemporary programs implemented in other parts of the world and the most developed countries in Europe. Certainly, the work of UNICEF and Save the Children in this area is highly beneficial and naturally assigns them leading position in this respect. Their cooperation with sectorial civil society organizations provides them with better outreach to children and youth beneficiaries and communication and cooperation with educational institutions.

Since many years, UNICEF implements its youth advocacy platform and through activities in that field strongly promotes education for active citizenship and acquiring life skills with youth and adolescents. The approach always involves matching the needs of young people with the educational process with impact of activities on participants and wider communities, teaching beneficiaries on how their activities can make change in local context.

Last several years, UNICEF introduced and implemented throughout Kosovo program **UPSHIFT**<sup>15</sup>, which combines leading approaches in youth and adolescents' development through strengthening their capacities in social innovation and entrepreneurship. The aim is to empower marginalized youth and adolescents to become social innovators and entrepreneurs. Through innovative, learner centred learning techniques, UPSHIFT teaches youth and adolescents how to understand community challenges and design and build impactful solutions in the form of products or services.

The methodology applied is comprised of contemporary approaches integrating

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/serbia/publikacije/kako-do-kvalitetne-dopunske-nastave>

<sup>14</sup> <https://dualnoobrazovanje.rs>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/innovation/upshift>



problem solving and critical thinking, communication, professional conduct and networking, and management of organizational processes. Practically, it begins with introductory training and assistance to participants in problem identification and problem definition, and further leading teams made of participants through the application process for the UPSHIFT programme. In this way, practical approaches and frameworks are introduced to young people to understand markets and needs, define and understand problems, create, build, and test solutions, and build creative processes and organizations to deliver those solutions.

Another contemporary program introduced by UNICEF in Kosovo is **Podium: Advocacy for Change**<sup>16</sup>, a social advocacy program that teaches youth and adolescents from marginalized groups on how to effectively advocate for the needs and rights of their community. Through this program, youth and adolescents develop capacity to deal with challenges they face in their communities and gain public support for their resolution and improvements. It helps them in understanding of their role in social change and builds their skills and confidence to advocate and contribute to building sustainable livelihoods. The main objective of Podium is to support the right of youth and adolescents to be heard. It gives youngsters vital skills on conducting community needs assessment, managing campaigns, lobbying and influencing decision-making processes, and using media for raising awareness on social issues. It is a bridge that engages youth, institutions and media. In practical terms, it chooses a number of youth groups based on the application process. Selected teams are further taught on how to become change-makers and find solutions for the most important issues for them, and at the same time learn how to collaborate with duty-bearers. They are included in trainings on finance and management, advocacy research, design of an action plan, lobbying with decision-maker, campaigning, social media advocacy and network building.

In contemporary context and rapid technological development, young people are exposed to large amount of information in digital sphere. The **PONDER, Critical Media Literacy Programme**<sup>17</sup>, is an informal education program also implemented by UNICEF in Kosovo with aim to help young people to improve critical thinking skills and better understand and evaluate the information they encounter from a critical perspective. It is designed to empower youth and adolescents to challenge indoctrination and anti-social messages with a critical interpretation of what they see, hear, and read, all while realizing their role as agents of social change. In this respect, critical media literacy is imperative not only for the wellbeing of individuals themselves, but also for peacebuilding, public safety and participatory democracy. The program contains training of adolescents and youth on critical media literacy along with short-term media internships and managing the online platform Young Critics Network where youth and adolescent post their analyses of relevant media texts, evaluate them and offer a value judgement on the authenticity, factual background and tone of text.

NGO Domovik was involved in the development of the **Competences Passport**<sup>18</sup>, an instrument which aims at systematic analyses, identification and documenting abilities, skills and competences of beneficiaries acquired through formal education, but also through non-formal education and informal learning. It was produced based on the instrument designed by German Institute for Adult Education and adjusted for the socio-economic and cultural context of Western Balkans. This comprehensive instrument is purposed for career advisors and provides methodologies and techniques for measuring

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/podium>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/kosovoprogramme/ponder>

<sup>18</sup> <https://skills.org.ba/en/competencies-passports/>

and development of EU framework of key competences through adequate communication with beneficiaries. In the time of growing importance of nonformal and informal learning, the Competences Passport is an instrument for research on individual's own skills and abilities and personal self-reflection and shaping the educational and performance biography. It brings individual, social and entrepreneurial benefits.

Another resource available is **Generation Unlimited**<sup>19</sup> which is global public-private-youth partnership program, working to empower young people with skills and connect among themselves and with opportunities for *skilling, working, and social impact*. It was launched by the UN Secretary-General at the 2018 UN General Assembly, and anchored in UNICEF. Generation Unlimited is bringing together global organizations and leaders including Heads of State, CEOs, Heads of UN agencies, and civil society champions with young people to co-create and deliver innovative solutions on a global scale. Kosovo is among the beneficiaries of this program in Eastern Europe along with Tajikistan and Turkey.

Both, Kosovo and Serbia are beneficiaries of the EU Erasmus + program<sup>20</sup>, which offers great opportunities for mobility and cooperation in higher education, vocational education and training, school education (including early childhood education and care), adult education, youth and sport. More specifically, by supporting mobility of learners and staff Erasmus + provides opportunities for *“for pupils, students, trainees and young people, as well as for professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, sport coaches, staff of education institutions and civil society organisations to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country”*. The overall objective of the Programme is **to support, through lifelong learning, the educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport, in Europe and beyond**. As such, the Programme is considered as key in advancing youth policy cooperation under the European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027. More specifically, it promotes *learning mobility of individuals and groups, as well as cooperation, quality, inclusion and equity, excellence, creativity and innovation at the level of organisations and policies in the field of education and training*. In addition, **it aims at promoting non-formal and informal learning mobility and active participation among young people** (Source Erasmus+)

NGO Domovik is already engaged in cooperation with this program in the segment related to cooperation with civil society youth organizations, what could be effectively utilised by individuals and schools in the area of implementation of its activities.

In discussion with pupils and students as well with teachers and employers, the need for practical education is often mentioned as a missing element throughout the education cycle. Practical education helps development of competency and the improvement of skills and abilities, and entails practical experience and the application of theories. In the context of Kosovo, on the level of secondary schools, practical education is introduced with medical schools, however other profiles are not offered with these opportunities. At the university level, usually one semester allocated for practical education, however, it is rarely systematized and does not bring much benefits for employment. Employment offices offer internship programs for graduates of secondary schools and higher education for limited number of individuals.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.generationunlimited.org>

<sup>20</sup> [erasmuspluskosovo.org](https://www.erasmuspluskosovo.org)

## Involvement of actors in extracurricular activities

In schools, supplementary education is part of the regular curriculum, while extracurricular activities may include sections for work with gifted pupils/talents for different subjects and arts. Initiatives for establishment and implementation of nonformal programs are not frequent and usually not included in school plans and programs.

Vocational training schools are part of the formal education, and their certificates are recognized and issued by ministry of education. On local level in Mitrovica region, vocational school exist on Doljane, Zvecan municipality, while in South Mitrovica, NGO Diakonie provides vocational training for certain technical professions.

On the institutional level, there are institutes or academies whose role is to provide training and capacity building activities for employees of public administration (KIPA) or judiciary (Kosovo Justice Academy) which implements pre-service and in-service trainings for judges and prosecutors, while Kosovo Bar Association runs its own training centre for capacity building of its members lawyers. Many other professional associations are renewing licenses of their members through attendance of relevant number of accredited courses over the year.

Non formal education programs are not systematically planned and permanently offered to young people. They are usually implemented by NGOs with support of international donors, and may include training and capacity building activities on project cycle management, language and computer courses, thematic workshops on democratization, basic human rights, development and others. Some international organizations are also offering non-formal education, in most of cases in the framework of individual projects without programmatic approach.

Online learning platforms are increasingly used by many individuals, companies and organizations as they are aligned with contemporary time constrains. They are usually developed as self-learning or tutored courses or combined with in-person leaning, individual or in groups. In this respect, the example is Council of Europe which provides access to legal practitioners through its online platform HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals)<sup>21</sup>. Many legal professionals and students have completed E-learning courses through this platform free of charge. The use of e-learning opportunities multiply increased in the time of COVID-19. Many other online platforms offer quality education opportunities such as Coursera, Udemy, Skillshare, LinkedIn Learning and others.

There are no specific guidelines or policies in reference to nonformal education available in legal and policy framework either on central or local level of governance. The participation of schoolchildren in certain programs is mainly result of their individual interest or personal initiatives and enthusiasm of teachers or school directors to benefit from programs offered by NGOs and international organizations.

In the context of Kosovo, the most active actors in the field of nonformal and informal education are civil society organizations and international organizations, which usually work in synergy and through partnership arrangements. Owing to UNICEF and its partners including Domovik and other partner NGOs, above elaborated programs such as UPSHIFT, PODIUM, PONDER and Generation Unlimited were implemented with young people in Kosovo, with great success, participation and acceptance by beneficiaries. They produced many positive effects and should serve as a role model for other relevant

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.coe.int/web/help/courses>

stakeholders and their future programming.

On the regional level of Western Balkans, there are initiatives for establishment the network of NGOs for promotion and advancement of nonformal education. In this respect NGO Domovik is included in one of the emerging initiatives which is yet to be functionalised. Again, it is with civil society in a driving seat in these initiatives with very good understanding of multiple benefits this concept brings for individuals and societies.

## Policy recommendations

It is very important to undertake comprehensive review of the legislative, policy and institutional framework in the field of formal, nonformal and informal education. A quality needs assessment in education system and entire sector of education against the requirements of new era of development should be conducted, taking in consideration all existing resources, strengths and opportunities as well as gaps and challenges that must be overcome. In this respect, relevant findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the Kosovo education strategy 2017-2021 should be taken in consideration and integrated in the follow up policy document for the upcoming period.

This should further result with development of new strategic framework with determined position of each type of education provided within the education system and incentives for their complementary planning and implementation, with mutually reinforcing effects on end users. It should also provide for legislative amendments where necessary and adoption of secondary legislation.

Regarding the institutional framework, establishment of the body for coordination in the field of nonformal education will have multiple benefits in terms of aligning it with needs of beneficiaries in the contemporary labour market and matching with formal education offered in regular schools.

The Law on Social Entrepreneurship provides basis for establishment of school firms for work of secondary schoolchildren. This concept is widely used in some European countries, and models and best practices could be utilised in the local context.

It is necessary to link nonformal education with national developmental policies and ongoing integration processes in wider international context in which Kosovo is taking part. The planning and implementation of the educational programs should be integrated with existing processes EU of integration and achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, Agenda 2030). In this way, access to funding and programs could be additionally secured for investment in nonformal education.

In respect of access to quality nonformal education programs, it is recommended to do mapping of the existing programs implemented at different levels including community, local, national, regional and international level. Some of existing models could be institutionalised and offered as extracurricular educational activities through cooperation with schools, NGOs and other actors offering program of nonformal education and training. They should be reviewed and if needed adjusted to complement formal curriculum and contribute to individual and societal development priorities in the modern age.

## Recommendations to specific actors

On the central level, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should undertake and lead the review and amendment of the relevant laws and adoption of administrative instructions, protocols, rulebooks and other pieces of legislation to support better utilisation of nonformal education. One of the tasks should be to enable recognition of certificates of completion obtained through this form of education. In development of new education strategies in the future it should integrate objectives and plan concrete actions to promote and support of nonformal education complementary to formal education. Concrete budgetary allocations and incentives should be also made for this purpose in new policy documents and secured in its practical implementation.

Municipalities should proactively engage in joint work and cooperation with ministries to identify what program could be the most beneficial in their specific local context taking in consideration its development priorities and needs of young people and communities. They need to create partnerships with existing programs in the territories under their administration and offer any kind of support needed. Where necessary, municipal assemblies and relevant education directorates should adopt regulations in support to establishment and implementation of nonformal education programs. Specific incentives such as use of public spaces and premises, financial assistance where possible and engagement in public-private partnership are also strongly recommended to municipalities.

Being directly involved in educational work with children, schools must more proactively engage with NGOs and international organisations to take part and involve as many as possible children in nonformal education programs available on the community level. Participation in nonformal education networks on the national and international level with schools and programs in the relevant field is strongly encouraged as it brings multiple benefits for pupils. Schools have to do periodic needs assessment with pupils/students and regularly take feedback from them, and further integrate it in projects with nonformal education providers. Introduction of practical education in schools in different forms including through cooperation with nonformal education programs will certainly bring tangible benefits for young people in matching their acquired knowledge and competences with labour market.

NGOs should increase efforts in provision of nonformal education programs and to harmonize approach with needs of beneficiaries and ensure complementarities with formal education. Their role is to further promote nonformal education with young people and educational stakeholders. In addition, they should partner with international organizations and engage in fund raising and exchange of experiences.

International organizations should provide financial assistance and expertise and guidelines for regulatory framework, taking into account the recognition at European level of the competencies acquired through non-formal education, in co-operation with all the appropriate education and training bodies and with all interested dealing with these questions. They should support development of instruments and policies on the whole issue of non-formal education as a tool to improve participation and social integration of young people. They can provide examples of good practice in this field, especially forms of participatory learning, education for citizenship, intercultural learning, and participatory learning methods.



