

Active Citizenship



Photo: Participant at TOKA's Project "For youth, by youth"

Toka's project "For youth, by youth" (Hani i Elezit, Kaçanik, Gjilan and Viti) aims to empower at-risk youth in the Municipalities of Hani i Elezit, Kaçanik, Gjilan and Viti, through developing the resilience, soft, critical thinking, leadership and active citizenship skills in youth of targeted municipalities, training and supporting Active Citizens Club youth leaders in their community, increasing the positive alternatives to youth by implementing at least one youth-led and youth-serving community initiative per municipality,

Antigona Selimi, 18, Viti

My participation in this project is very important because through participating in the spring sessions I was inspired to start our club here in Viti, to facilitate the activities that we did during spring, but now with younger kids. The training that we had in September was extremely useful. Using the skills we gained, we developed our community's young people skills. Now, months later, I feel like I have changed, especially in the way I see things. During our active citizen's club, I have noticed that in our community there is so much need for such projects and such training because there is not much that goes on in here. The best moments throughout this project were during our active citizen's club. The one that is in my memory is the day we went out with our young clubbers on our community walk. Together we saw that there is a tremendous need of our community members for voluntary projects. That was unforgettable!

Edi Shaqiri, 17, Gjilan

"For youth, by youth" is a very important project for me, because not only that we delivered a project to change our community, but I have also developed my skills and have learned lots of new things that will help me in the future. The most exciting part of the project was leading the active citizen's club since I have practiced my skills, met new people and gained lots of information. From day one, we were free to express ourselves and that made me feel very good. Now I am so much myself and I can communicate better. This experience has motivated me a lot and I wish that in my community we could have even more projects like this, where we are the ones helping our community. Every moment passed in TOKA is extremely precious to me, but the Active Citizens training is very dear to me. During those days, I've made friends and gained knowledge that has helped me every day since.

Yllza Vila, 17, Hani i Elezit

The reason why this project will always be dear to me is that by participating in it I have invested in my self's and my community's development. I have succeeded in expressing my talent and skills in some fields that didn't think I had any skills. I also have gained new friends, with whom we have exchanged ideas and our experiences. The training sessions in spring were extremely meaningful to me and that's because, throughout these sessions, I have gained the freedom to speak up in front of a big group of people, I have freely expressed my ideas for different solutions for problems we had during the way, and I have gained tremendous self-confidence. Also, I developed my skills in managing a group of students, cooperation, time management, critical thinking, and teamwork. After all these activities, I feel confident and I am not afraid to express my thoughts and ideas. I have changed a lot and most importantly I have changed one very important idea. Now I think that if we work hard enough we can achieve anything, no matter how many obstacles we might encounter along the way. There is also a way to solve a problem and even though we are a small community, all of us together can do a lot! When I look back to these past months, I am reminded of the last meeting of our active citizen's club when our club members did the group reflection, during which I have never felt more proud of myself and our club members.

Ganimete Osmani, 17, Kaçanik

Since this is the first time I have ever participated in such activities, this project was extremely important to me. Every phase of the project was crucial, but for me, the training phase during spring was the most important one because it is there that I for the first time have learned about critical thinking and problem solving, and so many other things that were all new to me. During

this time, I have also developed my facilitation and my communication skills. I will forever be grateful to TOKA because it has changed me enormously. Comparing myself to 2 years ago, I feel like I'm a completely different person. I have become friendlier, less judgmental and I have realized that I need to love people exactly as they are. I would also like to change my community in that way. My community needs people who are willing to use volunteering so we can change this place and help each other. Thanks to this project, I am now one of those people. The best moment during this experience was the day when we delivered our project in the preschooler's classroom. That day I saw very happy kids, parents, and teachers. Being one of the leaders of the club, I have felt very happy that we could help as little as we can. To see others smiling and happy, no matter their gender, age or religion, is the biggest achievement of anyone.

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