

# 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.

TOKA is supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and implemented by Advocacy Training and Resource Center –ATRC.

# Teaching for Kosova



Photo: Teach For Kosova Fellowship Program

Due to the nature of the *Teach For* program, success stories come in the form of champions. Champions are people, organizations, partners, etc. who fight for a cause on behalf of someone else.

## **RECRUITMENT PHASE**

In the month of November, Teach For Kosova began the recruitment phase of the program.

The recruitment phase of the program entails enlisting Kosova's top performing recent university graduates and/or young professionals for the Fellowship. These individuals have shown exceptional leadership during their academic/professional careers and are passionate about the program.

When the team initially opened the application on the organizations website- expectations were that we would receive at maximum 50 applications. The application was opened on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 and would remain open until November 30<sup>th</sup>. With each passing week the number of applications steadily increased. Students and young professionals from every academic and professional background applied and when the application finally closed, the team was left with over 170 applications to sort through.

The application process will be reopened in February and April respectively, with the goal of selecting a total of 15 fellows to become the first cohort for the Fellowship. Of the 15 fellows that are selected 5 will come from the Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities. These fellows will then be placed in Kosova's highest need schools around the country to teach for a period of 2 years.

Teach for Kosova is supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and implemented by Advocacy Training and Resource Center –ATRC.

## Strengthening Women's Property Rights



Photo: Arjeta Gashi, Participant at “Strengthening Women’s Property Rights” Conference

KGSC’S project “Strengthening Women’s Equal Property Rights” aims to strengthen women’s property rights by providing them with greater information about the importance of formal property rights and raising communities overall legal awareness (Prishtinë, Drenas, Kamenicë, Mitrovicë, Prishtinë, Gjakovë, Prizren dhe Suharekë). The project strives to create a gender sensitive society by changing the attitudes and behaviors about women’s rights to inherit and own property. An informative and awareness raising video was released in big national media and electronic platforms, aiming to bring closer the information and emphasize the importance of women owning and inheriting property.

Part of the awareness raising activities was also the conference “Strengthening Women’s Equal Property Rights”. In the conference the discussion was focused on the effectiveness of current legislation and the relationship between property rights and women’s economic empowerment. During the conference and advocacy meetings, KGSC came across the case of Arjeta Gashi and her legal battle for recognizing the contribution to the creation of common wealth with her former spouse.

Arjeta Gashi presented her case to the participants of the conference and requested guidance from ombudsperson. She claims to have contributed to the joint creation and growth of wealth through her work at KOSTT over the past 10 years. She claims to own half of an apartment located in Prishtina as well as the joint property described in the lawsuit. “I have come today to present my case and the difficulties I have been facing for many years. It is particularly important that the Ombudsperson is here so that I could talk directly to him regarding my case and further discuss my possibilities of retrial. And this is not only my case but there are other women who face these difficulties. I just asked for what belongs to me, during the 10 years of marriage I invested a lot, worked all the time, took maximum care of children. I have encountered prejudices from friends and also from court officials during the trial. As for the inheritance from my parents, I was one of the few lucky women to inherit from her parents. Since I was very little I inherited property from

my parents whom I also would like to thank for being one of the few who inherit property to their daughters. I believe that initiative as this project and conferences as this one today help to increase the awareness of not only women to their right to inherit property but also motivate them throughout the same legal battles as I have faced”.

KGSC will be monitoring the case of Arjeta Gashi and offer her the guidance she needs for the litigation.

KGSC is supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and implemented by Advocacy Training and Resource Center –ATRC.

## Kosovo School for Girls Aiming Public Office



Photo: Jeta Kurtaj, Participant at Kosovo School for Girls aiming Public Office

For this quarter, the staff of the project identified one girl amongst the participants in ‘Kosovo School for Girls aiming Public Office’ as the success story. Since joining the school, Jeta has been eager to participate in discussions and debates organized by other civil society organizations in Prishtina, while aiming to bring change to her community and society. Her experience is attached below:

“I recently met with woman my age and quite a few of them were not aware of their rights and lacked information on gender equality. This is one of the reasons why I decided to apply to the Kosovar School for girls who would like to participate in the civil service.

Through this, I was able to meet with girls and woman to discuss such issues on gender equality and human rights in general. I’m always surprised at how people are subjected to injustice by our society and/or their family. During the 3 modules, we talked about our family issues through them we realized that all of us face the same difficulties because of the patriarchal society we live in. This felt very frustrating at first, but it also made me realize that we’re not alone. We were also able to meet successful women from different fields who told us about their accomplishments and the challenges they had to overcome to get there. This is what I particularly enjoyed during the training. I think it’s important to surround yourself with people who believe in the capacities of others. Moreover, surrounding yourself with people who are open-minded about gender issues gives you more motivation and strength to keep on fighting for what’s right, no matter the challenges you may face. Additionally, we were asked to identify key moments in our lives which

strengthened us and were a lesson for our journey. After this, I realized what I would like to do in the future: I want to work for gender equality and raise my voice for human rights.”

INDEP is supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and implemented by Advocacy Training and Resource Center –ATRC.





## SUCCESS STORY

# The Right to Property, empowers women in business



Photo: from the left Valbona Ajeti talking to Vesa Pallaska from KW4W

“I run a private business in my village. When I first started, people thought we are just a bunch of women wasting time, no one took us seriously, mainly...well because no women runs a business where I live.” – says Valbona Ajeti, laughing. “

Valbona is one of the most enthusiastic, strong-willed and determined person you will ever meet. She lives with her family in Sllatina e Epërme/Gorna Slatina - a village in municipality of Viti/Vitina located in southeastern part of Kosovo. Her company “GRASEP” – an abbreviation meaning Women of Sllatina e Epërme/Gorna Slatina has 20 women employees and produces preserved vegetables, pickles and mainly so called Ajvar (a very famous red pepper sauce in Kosovo that goes with basically everything).

“My business was not always this big, I had some machines and a small number of people involved. Now, having a parcel carried in my name from my husband’s inheritance will be a boost to my success as a business-woman. Now I have no limitations get loans and widen

my business in terms of a bigger space, bigger machines and just more workshop room for workers. Having a property on my name strengthened and empowered me a lot!” Valbona together with other women and men from Viti/Vitina municipality were a part of continuous trainings on women’s rights with the focus on property and inheritance rights, business and other managerial skills organized by Kosova - Women 4 Women (KW4W).

“I have employed 20 women whom I shared most of the trainings with. We have grown into something bigger than I have imagined, and trust me it’s not always only about the success of my business; but to see attitudes changing, to see women empowered and having a job in the village- this brings me joy!” Valbona is one of the rare women that owns property in her village. According to the latest study published in 2017 by Property Rights Program<sup>1</sup>, only 20% of women in whole Kosovo own land. Valbona knew her rights, knew the laws, but her determination was crucial. “I encourage other women, too. Their right on property is guaranteed by the law. No woman should hesitate on her rights”.

KW4W has trained 340 women and 106 men about their property rights in municipalities of Viti/Vitina, Kaçanik/Kaçanik and Štrpce/Shtërpce and plans to train additional 400 women in the course of this project. Kosovo already has good laws on the books that guarantee a woman’s equal right to property, but implementation of such laws is very slow, mainly because of the patriarchal attitude of Kosovar society.

*KW4W is supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and implemented by Advocacy Training and Resource Center –ATRC.*

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.advocacy-center.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ENG\\_FINAL\\_Kosovo-PRP-MidTerm-Survey-on-Property-Rights-July-2017.pdf](http://www.advocacy-center.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ENG_FINAL_Kosovo-PRP-MidTerm-Survey-on-Property-Rights-July-2017.pdf), Midterm national survey on property rights in Kosovo, 2017, page 8



**USAID**  
NGA POPULLI AMERIKAN  
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA



## TREGIM SUKSESI

# Fuqizimi i grave për mundësi të barabarta



*Syri i Vizionit gjatë një tryeze të rrumbullakët duke avokuar për fuqizimin e grave.*

Gratë në Kosovë përbëjnë gjysmën e popullatës, mirëpo pjesëmarrja e tyre në jetën politike dhe ekonomike mbetet mjaft e kufizuar. Sipas statistikave 60% e grave në Kosovë janë deklaruar si joaktive për punë, ndërsa një fakt tjetër shqetësues është se gratë e moshave 24-34 vjeçare janë deklaruar si amvise. Me mbështetjen e Programit Angazhimi për Barazi – E4E, Syri i Vizionit – një organizatë joqeveritare vendore, po punon në promovimin dhe ndërtimin e kapacitetit të grave për të ndryshuar situatën dhe të përmirësojnë përfaqësimin e grave në sektorin publik.

Zbatimi i projektit “Mbështetja për gratë” lehtëson fuqizimin e pozitës së grave në pozita udhëheqëse por edhe vendim-marrëse, ndërsa intervenimet në rregulloret komunale të Pejës, Deçanit, Istogut dhe Junikut tashmë janë iniciuar. Kjo është bërë me qëllim që t’ju ofrohen grave mundësi të barabarta në qasje tek dokumentet zyrtar, ku gjuha e ndjeshme në aspektin gjuhësor mungon.

Këshilltaret komunale, zyrtaret për barazi gjinore dhe për informim janë ftuar fillimisht për të analizuar

rregulloret. Rregulloret janë përzgjedhur bazuar në zbrazëtitrat për intervenim. Më vonë, punëtoritë janë organizuar me ekspert dhe janë analizuar amendamentet dhe ndryshimet. Takime janë zhvilluar edhe me Kryetarët e Kuvendeve dhe me këshilltaret komunale, dhe janë diskutuar të gjitha opsionet për ndryshime të dokumenteve zyrtare.

Gjatë këtij procesi, të gjitha katër Komunat themeluan Komisionin që të punojë në përfshirjen e ndryshimeve dhe integrimin sa më të shpejtë në agjendën e Kuvendit. Komuna e Pejës, tashmë ka arritur ta përfshijë amendamentin në rregullore. Ky amendament është miratuar në Kuvendin Komunal në Janar të 2017-ës, si një nismë e grupit të grave të Pejës të kyçura në projekt. Neni 15, pika 1.6 lidhur me kushtet, kriteret dhe procedurat për ndarjen e subvencioneve është futur dhe përfshirë si kriter, kështu që në rast kur përfituesja është “femër e vetme në krye të familjes (shtëpisë)” do t’i ofrohet ndihmë në përfitimin e subvencioneve dhe bursave nga Komuna e Pejës.

Tetë rregullore Komunale janë në proces të amendamentimit në komunat e tjera të synuara. Këto amendamente do të garantojnë barazinë e grave në Komitete, Grupe Punuese, etj. lidhur me subvencionet, bursat, dhe krijimin e kushteve më të mira për pjesëmarrje të grave në nivel lokal.

Syri i Vizionit është duke zbatuar projektin “Projekti për Mbështetjen e Grave” përkrahur nga Programi Angazhimi për Barazi - E4E që financohet nga Agjencia e Shteteve të Bashkuara për Zhvillim Ndërkombëtar – USAID, dhe implementohet nga Qendra e Trajnimeve dhe Burimeve për Avokokim – ATRC.

# SUCCESS STORY

## Civil society engagement countering Violent Extremism



*"The idea of civil society engagement countering violent extremism is rich in content and important for the coordination of activities either among the civil society within the city, but also at national level."*

Vlora Gaxheri – Syri i Vizionit

Engagement of civil society organizations and activists countering Violent Extremism in municipal level in Kosovo is an important approach in order to have locals addressing the issue, based on community activities.

Ten (10) civil society organizations from Peja, Mitrovica South, Gjilan, Ferizaj and Kaçanik, together with “Security Policy Research Center” and National Coordinator on Implementation of Strategy on Prevention of Violent Extremism and Radicalization Leading to Terrorism 2015-2020, gathered in Pristina, on 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2016, in a Activity Planning Workshop for 2017, and the first round of trainings for SCOs municipal level on violent extremism leading to terrorism.

Vlora Gaxheri is one of civil society activists from Peja. She works with NGO “Syri i Vizionit”, which – as she describes – is involved in the welfare of citizens and is ready to give contributions whenever and wherever necessary.

*“Violent Extremism although not something unfamiliar in our country, still continues to be confused with terrorism. Even though it remains a threat, it is still not accepted as an existing issue, or it is silenced when identified. Such elements are enough convincing to undertake concrete steps towards preventing and fighting it, in places where it is suspected that is getting stronger”,* says Vlora Gaxheri.

She emphasizes the necessity of the community activities countering violent extremism in her municipality.

*“Municipality of Peja is not listed as large-risk place of violent extremism, but the beginning of "localization" and raising awareness about the consequences and the fact that no one benefits from extremism, is no longer needed, but very necessary indeed”,* says Gaxheri.

The project ‘Promoting civil society engagement countering violent extremism’ is implemented by ‘Security Policy Research Center’ - SPRC and supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and supported by Advocacy Training and Resource Center -ATRC.

## SUCCESS STORY

### Strengthening the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community in society



*Photo: The youth from Albanian community and Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian community in Gjakova/Đakovica with certificates of lectures about diversity*

It all started with truAktiv, a youth Program implemented by Sbunker - that brings young people together around critical thinking, reading clubs, discussions and actions initiated by youth itself in Prishtina/Priština, but not only. “Together we can” is one of the truAktiv initiatives implemented in Gjakova/Đakovica by Kristjan Lleshaj, a member of Albanian community in Kosovo.

*“At the beginning I was only a participant during youth discussions organized by truAktiv in my town. I and some friends decided to apply at truAktiv call with one of our idea we had for quite some time now. Being aware of the marginalized Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community in Gjakova I somehow felt obliged to do something towards this reality” – says Kristjan.*

The integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community in Kosovar society is still far from satisfactory. According to the “Strategy for integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community” only 32.4% have finished primary school.

*“Most of my friends from this community are dropouts. I want to motivate Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian community and take action. This was a good chance for us to do something; through our idea supported by truAktiv we have taken our first step. The activity brought together Albanian community and Roma, Ashkali Egyptian community during lectures about diversity and other actions that strengthen the integration and raise the value of multiculturalism.”*

The two day activity took part in Gjakova/Đakovica and brought together thirty young people from different backgrounds and ethnicities, aiming to raise young people's awareness about the value of cultural diversity, promote inter-ethnic cooperation, and to prevent inter-ethnic conflict in the community. “This activity was very welcomed from both sides, the Albanian and Roma, Ashkali, Egyptian community” – says Kristjan. “We need a voice that lobbies for the protection of human rights and raises awareness about the importance of education, especially among young people coming from the community.”

The initiative “Together we can” motivated Kristjan and his friends to register a non-governmental organization in Gjakova/Đakovica named “Initiative”. They are determined to further strengthen the youth towards integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community in Kosovo.

This initiative is a part of truAktiv Program implemented by Sbunker, which is supported Engagement for Equity Program, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID and realized by Advocacy Training and Resource Center – ATRC.

## Success story

# POLIS advocates for the right of women to property



*Photo: POLIS signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Gender Equality Agency*

The Government of Kosovo issued the Administrative Instruction (GRK) no. 03/2016 on Special Measures for the Registration of Joint Immovable Property on behalf of both spouses, which entered into force on 10 March 2016. This Administrative Instruction aims dropping the fee upon registering property in the name of both spouses in the public records. Period of effectiveness of this Instruction was originally one year.

Public Organization for Local Initiatives and Support - POLIS, with the project “Common engagement for women’s rights to joint property” supported by Engagement for Equity Program -

E4E, is promoting equal rights to property, thus considered this Administrative Instruction as very important. POLIS signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Gender Equality Agency, which operates under the Prime Minister’s Office of the Republic of Kosovo, defining coordinating actions with the aim of achieving common goals. An impact analysis of the measure carried out by the POLIS noted that the impact of this Instruction is great, especially in Ferizaj.

Data analysis has been forwarded to the Gender Equality Agency (GEA), with a recommendation to extend the effectiveness of the Instruction at least for a year. GEA considered the recommendations and in close cooperation with POLIS advocated to the Government of Kosovo to extend the applicability of this Instruction. As a result, this measure was approved by the Government, extending the validity until April 27, 2018.

POLIS is supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, funded by the United States Agency for International Development - USAID and implemented by the Advocacy Training and Resource Center - ATRC.

## SUCCESS STORY

# Empowering Equal Economic for all women



*Photo: Handicraft shop in Drenas/Glogovac*

Women's economic empowerment is a prerequisite for sustainable development and pro-poor growth. Women's empowerment increases access to economic resources and opportunities including jobs, financial services, property and other productive assets, skills development and market information. Women in Kosovo remain in highly difficult socio-economic situation and emphasize the need for access to productive inputs, training and employment.

The reality today, shows there is a need for more support regarding economic and financial independency for women of Sexual Gender based Violence (SGBV) and marginalized minorities, for better education and (self) employment support at all levels. Considering the important role that women play in family and their unrecognized role in community, the need for more community-oriented interventions remains a priority for our society.

Engagement for Equity grantee, Kosovo Rehabilitation for Tortured Victims (KRCT) in partnership with Center for Promotion of Healthy Family (CPHF) and Center for Promotion of Women's Rights (CPWR), are implementing the project "Equal economic empowerment to all women in Kosovo". As a result of hard work and good cooperation between three organizations, the opening of a handicraft shop was promoted at the Center for Promotion of Women Rights premises in Drenas/Glogovac.

The shop aims to increase the level of employment for woman/survivors of sexual and gender based violence in Kosovo to create equal opportunities, social integration and welfare of woman. The opening of this shop will enable self-employment of 25 women and generate income, dedicated for this group of women working there. All the products are handmade, mainly traditional clothes, bags and souvenirs, and can also be purchased on – line in this website: <http://qpdg.org/>. Besides the shop that empowers women for equal economic opportunities, KRCT project focuses on vocational education, advocacy and networking of job opportunities for women.

KRCT implements the project "Equal economic empowerment to all women in Kosovo", through Engagement for Equity Program, financed by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and supported by Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC).

## Marking the World Mental Health Day



Photo: some of the members of the 'Dëshira' Club during the work fair in Pristina. Lumnije Demolli, third from the left

Lumniye Demolli is 37 years old and suffers from a mental illness. Lumniye for more than 26 years has been isolated at home. She did not go to school, and she was illiterate. This is due to lack of support from the family as well as insults from the neighbors and neighborhood children. "I came here with my dad. I lived with dad, grandmother and grandfather. All three have died. Now I continue coming to 'Dëshira' Club. I'm so glad that I learned reading and writing and now I'm learning tailoring and I started working as a tailor's assistant. Now through 'Dëshira' Club I socialize with students, with people. Before they called me 'stupid', I was unable to go out, they did not let me. Now I am very happy to be here with friends and have a nice time".

Non-governmental organization 'Dëshira' Club from Prishtina is a day-care center for the rehabilitation of persons with mental disabilities with about 200 members. The active participation of the members

contributes to the identification and referral of other persons with mental health problems, marginalized by society and isolated by their family members. For many people with mental impairment in Kosovo, freedom of movement is quite difficult and this category of people is also "isolated" by the members of their family, due to prejudices coming from society.

'Dëshira' Club is providing integration, educational and social programs, including courses on computer use, literacy, employment support and counseling services, etc., to members with mental health impairment. Apart from socialization and rehabilitation, the goal is to make the members become more independent, to engage and integrate into the labor market through job training and self-employment.

Today, 'Dëshira' Club marks the World Mental Health Day through advocacy campaign for the rights of persons with mental impairment, contributing to raising public awareness of the needs of this category of people and engaging in a more constructive cooperation between Kosovo institutions and this initiative.

*'Dëshira' Club is implementing the project "Enhance Participation of Persons with Intellectual Impairments in Employment and Self-Employment" supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, that is funded by the United States Agency for International Development – USAID and implemented by the Advocacy Training & Resources Center - ATRC.*

## SUCCESS STORY

### My Voice Matters



Aldi Hoxha, a member of Group of Young Advocates promoting the rights of people with Down syndrome.

”My name is Aldi, I am from Kosova, My Voice Matters!” is the slogan that Aldi Hoxha is holding in his hands. A twenty year old Aldi is a member of the Group of Young Advocates that was established by Down Syndrome Kosova, with the aim to involve persons with Down syndrome in advocacy processes and raise their voice towards

realization of their rights. Down Syndrome Kosova has up to 900 persons with Down syndrome registered in their lists, age 0- 50 years old from all parts of Kosova.

Today is the World Down Syndrome Day and the office in Pristina is formalizing the Group of Young Advocates. This group is made of 15 persons with Down syndrome, coming from different cities of Kosova. The mission of the Group is to break barriers and prejudices in Kosovar society - through the willingness and work show the abilities and voluntarism of persons with Down syndrome - and become an equal part of the society.

Aldi Hoxha together with other members of this Group spends most of his time in Down Syndrome Kosova working on various projects in this center: “I work for Down Syndrome Kosova, but I am not just an employee of the organization, I decided to get involved in the field of public relation because I want to inform people about persons with down syndrome in TV shows, in the radio and as an actor on stage. My voice matters!” says Aldi.

Down Syndrome Kosova is implementing the project “Empowering Persons with Disability – PWD community through increased participation in institutional policies and social life” supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E that is financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and implemented by Advocacy Training and Resource Center –ATRC.





## SUCCESS STORY

### The youth of Kaçanik/Kaçanik being active against violent extremism and radicalism



"Children and youngsters in the streets of Kaçanik/Kaçanik"

The youth in Kaçanik/Kaçanik have been very active during the last period in disseminating messages against violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism. Youth activism in this municipality is facilitated through various activities in Kaçanik/Kaçanik

Ardijana Tusha the representative of Youth Local Action Council (YLAC) in Kaçanik/Kaçanik, has collaborated with several other nongovernmental organizations in this municipality to promote youth activities in opposing violent extremism. Ardijana together with the Association of People with Disabilities and NGO "Gjethi", during this period have promoted messages of tolerance and cultivated traditional values in her community.

On May 31, 2017 in the center of Kaçanik/Kaçanik, were organized traditional games with the youngsters from this municipality. The important topic with dozens of young people has been the promotion of messages of tolerance and messages against violent extremism.

*"The empowerment and raising awareness among the citizens, explaining them that this new global flow does not only lead to a tragic ending but also destroys everything you've built, is something that is increasing each day. Even though, an overall challenge is the low quality of education and lack of information, citizens need to raise their voice all together for a safer and more peaceful life,"* says Ardijana.

Through traditional games, dance and music, the youth of Kaçanik/Kaçanik have united and supported each other in confronting violent extremism and radicalism. The promotion of traditional values through youth activities and other categories of society aims to cultivate the love and prosperity of young people in Kosovo, avoiding extremist ideologies and deviant phenomena.

Such activities are implemented through the project "Promoting civil society engagement in countering violent extremism" realized by Security Policy Research Center – SPRC, supported by Engagement for Equity – E4E program, that is financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID and implemented by Advocacy Training and Resource Training – ATRC.



## SUCCESS STORY

### Shaping new generations of activists against violence



*Photo: TruAktiv program gathers young activists to debate through critical thinking on violent extremism and radicalization.*

---

During last decades the people of Kosovo have undergone a difficult period of armed conflict, circumstances which have influenced radicalism, hatred and non-tolerance among different groups, which consequently can affect the appearance of elements of terrorism. The geo-strategic position of Kosovo presents a risk for spreading the syndrome of terrorism, particularly the one with religious fundamentalism basis.

The presence of a significant number of Kosovar youth fighting in Syria and Iraq, or the overall growth of political violence and hate speech on social media, indicate that lack of hope among many young people is

not producing only criticism and useful activism to improve such circumstances any more.

S'bunker through its critical thinking program truAktiv has achieved major youth engagement on countering violent extremism through. truAktiv Program was carried out through seven largest Kosovar municipalities, with three hundred (300) people reached only during six (6) first months of this activity. Many youngsters and activists have stated that before their participation in truAktiv, many of them indicated they had little to no education on important socio-political themes. Upon enrollment in truAktiv, the young participants experienced intensive training by renowned experts on issues and questions of Kosovar trends on radicalism and violence, gender and ethnic discrimination, community activism and rule of law.

To have a more strengthened impact, S'bunker organizes movie screenings and book contests on related themes, held each month, this way enriching the background and ethnic diversity of participants.

The project “Countering Violent Extremism through “Critical Thinking Program” is implemented by S'bunker, with the support of Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and realized by Advocacy Training and Resource Center -ATRC.



**USAID**  
NGA POPULLI AMERIKAN  
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA



## SUCCESS STORY

### “Peer Gynt from Kosovo” a play about youth involved in violent extremism



*Photo: PEER GYNT from Kosovo, a play that portrays the youth involved in violent extremism.*

During last decades the people of Kosovo have undergone a difficult period of armed conflict, circumstances which have influenced radicalism, hatred and non-tolerance among different groups, which

consequently can affect the appearance of elements of terrorism. The geo-strategic position of Kosovo presents a risk for spreading the syndrome of terrorism, particularly the one with religious fundamentalism basis.

The presence of a significant number of Kosovar youth fighting in Syria and Iraq, or the overall growth of political violence and hate speech on social media, indicate that lack of hope among many young people is not producing only criticism and useful activism to improve such circumstances any more.

Multimedia realized a play about a failed dream. PEER GYNT from Kosova is a story that comes through a young and naive boy, PEER - the protagonist of the play, covering his life experiences from pre-war Kosova until today. PEER, led by a dream for a better life, tries to find happiness by immigrating in Europe. He soon gets involved with a group of criminals and finds himself locked behind the bars in Europe. One story leads to another, but PEER is continuously involved with the wrong guys. His life takes a different path, far away from what he dreamt of as a young boy. His experiences throughout the play, are a reflection of lots of young desperados from Kosova, leaving their country with full of hopes and dreams for the ‘paradise’. Reality is harsh, and most of them deal with isolation, away from their home, their dreams turning into a nightmare.

The play portrays another very important issue in our today's society-the religious radicalization of Kosovo's youth. Most of the so called "holy warriors" fighting in foreign religious wars, have been radicalized from Europe, while in prison. The audience (mainly high school students) was involved in an interactive conversation about the radicalization and the story in general. Most of the reaction by the audience was positive, some were hesitating to tackle this issue, and few of them even left the play without comments, nor reaction (Hani Elezit show). The most positive feedback was from teachers and school directors, emphasizing that this play raises awareness among the youth about radicalization.

The performance was presented to several municipalities in Kosovo, such as in Suhareka/Suvareka, Hani Elezit/Elez Han, Ferizaj/Urosevac, Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje and Prishtina/Pristina.

Margaritë Daka a high school student from Suharekë/Suvareka points out that "there are several choices in our life and we must choose the right one."

"Peer Gynt from Kosovo" shows have been very well received so far and we can clearly see that the messages are being delivered successfully. Young people in the audience do watch the play with curiosity and engage in the debate after the play, where issues connected to the play are discussed. From the post-show questioners that we have collected, it is clear that young people do appreciate that the approach to the issue through theater is very useful and much more productive.

Peer Gynt, condemned to live in freedom, personifies the destiny of our youth, whom in order to survive is forced to hit the road, even to the frontline in Syria, to eventually return to his homeland with a mountain of despair on his shoulders. It should be mentioned that the situations which Peer Gynt goes through are quite illustrative for a large number of our young people, who see Europe as a survival shelter.

The project 'Handling violent extremism through social theater' is implemented by Multimedia, supported by

Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and supported by Advocacy Training and Resource Center -ATRC.



## SUCCESS STORY

# Tackling radicalization through media



*Photo: Internews Kosovo airs a reportage Failure of De-radicalization on national media*

The global rise in violent religious extremism has had its fee in Kosovo as well. The conflicts of last decades within the region and in other countries, which people in Kosovo have traditional, cultural and historical ties with, have attracted citizens of Kosovo towards violent extremism. The presence of a significant number of Kosovar youth fighting in Syria and Iraq, and the overall growth of violence and hate speech on social media, indicates the lack of tolerance among many young people.

The Kosovo Government has made several attempts to counter violent extremism by passing laws on the prevention of terrorism financing, and prevention of participation in terrorist groups. The government has

also developed a national strategy on prevention of extremism and radicalization.<sup>1</sup>

Engagement for Equity grantee Internews Kosovo is tackling the issue of radicalization through raising awareness of the Kosovar youth about violent extremism in order to prevent their radicalization and recruitment of youth in terrorist groups and monitoring current and future cases in court sessions related to terrorism and violent extremism. All these cases and current developments of violent extremism in Kosovo are aired through television and online media.

According to data collection conducted by Internews Kosovo on the number of persons that are a part of terrorist organizations, it comes out that there are 26 children, 37 women and 72 men from Kosovo are involved in foreign conflicts.

Internews so far has reached about 300,000 youth through targeted social media campaign, TV debates, written articles, lectures and infographics on extremism and radicalism, and aims to reach at least 1 million Kosovars.

The project “Countering Violent Extremism among Kosovo’s youth” is implemented by Internews Kosovo, supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and supported by Advocacy Training and Resource Center -ATRC.

<sup>1</sup> Strategy on prevention of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism 2015-2020 [http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/STRATEGY\\_parandalim\\_-\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/STRATEGY_parandalim_-_ENG.pdf)



## SUCCESS STORY

### Preventing violent extremism through lectures



*Photo: iChat during lectures with youth on violent extremism*

During last decades the people of Kosovo have undergone a difficult period of armed conflict, circumstances which have influenced radicalism, hatred and non-tolerance among different groups, which consequently can affect the appearance of elements of terrorism. The geo-strategic position of Kosovo presents a risk for spreading the syndrome of terrorism, particularly the one with religious fundamentalism basis.

The Kosovo Government has made several attempts to counter violent extremism by passing laws on the prevention of terrorism financing, and prevention of participation in terrorist groups. The government has

also developed a national strategy on prevention of extremism and radicalization.<sup>1</sup> Also, civil society is working on raising awareness amongst citizens and youth in particular.

Engagement for Equity grantee Qualitative Institute for Researches, Analyses and Trainings – iChat has implemented the project “Inform to prevent” and has raised awareness of various forms of involvement of youth in extremism that lead to radicalism in Kosovo. Fifty six (56) young people were certified as "Peace promoters" after following lectures and trainings on peace promotion and prevention of young people of their community from engaging in activities that undermine their security and integrity.

iChat held lectures in 14 high schools from 7 Kosovo municipalities (Ferizaj/Uroševac, Kaçanik/Kaçanik, Prizren, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Peja/Peć, Mitrovica and Vushtri/Vučitrn) gathering over 500 young people from all over Kosovo. These lectures contribute on raising awareness and prevention of youth involvement in violent extremist activities in foreign wars.

The project “Inform to prevent” is implemented by iChat, supported by Engagement for Equity Program - E4E, financed by United States Agency for International Development – USAID, and supported by Advocacy Training and Resource Center -ATRC.

<sup>1</sup> Strategy on prevention of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism 2015-2020 [http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/STRATEGY\\_parandalim\\_-\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.kryeministri-ks.net/repository/docs/STRATEGY_parandalim_-_ENG.pdf)