

The Role of Youth
in
Political Entities
in Kosovo

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USAID
NGA POPULLI AMERIKAN
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA





The Role of Youth in Political Entities

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International Foundation for Electoral Systems
2011 Crystal Drive, Floor 10
Arlington, VA 22202
E-mail: editor@ifes.org
Fax: 202-350-6701

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Table of acronyms

AAK	Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës
AKR	Aleanca Kosova e Re
D4D	Democracy for Development
FOL	Lëvizja Fol
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
KDI	Kosovo Democratic Institute
LDK	Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës
NISMA	Nisma për Kosovën
PDAK	Partia Demokratike e Ashkalijve të Kosovës
PDK	Partia Demokratike e Kosovës
PD	Partia e Drejtësisë
SLS	Samostalne Liberalne Stranke
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VV	Lëvizja Vetëvendosje

A. Executive summary

This report presents information on the role of youth in political entities and youth organizations as seen from the perspective of youth in general, representatives of civil society organizations, and youth who are currently members of political entity youth wings. The information presented in this report was collected through a face-to-face survey with youth, meetings and phone interviews. Below are the key findings:

- Seventy-three percent of the youth survey respondents had never been a member of a political entity youth wing or youth organization, 17 percent had been but are no longer members, and only 10 percent are currently members of a youth wing or youth organization;
- Forty-one percent of the youth survey respondents were dissatisfied with the role of youth in political entities, whereas 35 percent were satisfied. Respondents who are currently members of political entity youth wings or youth organizations are more likely to be satisfied;
- Self-help reasons were most prominent among youth survey respondents' views on the benefits of being a political entity member: the most frequently mentioned benefits were that membership of a political entity will help them obtain a job (48%) and help them develop professionally (36%);
- Twenty-eight percent of youth survey respondents stated that no political entity has policies that are closest to their views;
- The civil society key informants were of the view that youth wings do not play a role in political entities' decision-making processes, and that youth were only given minor administrative tasks particularly during the election campaign. They placed a great emphasis on the relationship between membership in youth wings and job opportunities, which reinforces the finding from the survey;
- According to civil society key informants, the advantages of youth membership in political entities are that youth learn about political developments, gain a better understanding of political parties and institutions, prepare to become politicians, and may get employed. On the other hand, these informants' also believed that membership may discourage youth from thinking in a non-partisan manner, and may be viewed as unprofessional;
- Members of political entity youth wings stated that among the reasons why they decided to become members are to: have a better future, assist the youth wing in implementing activities, be closer to politics, contribute to Kosovo's development, and be part of a youth wing that was seen as a hope for change. Members of youth wings did not mention employment as a reason for membership;
- Members of youth wings interviewed stated that they are satisfied with their involvement in the youth wings and with their involvement in the political entity's decision-making processes. They noted that youth wing activities include a wide range of recreational, humanitarian and educational activities, and additionally, for opposition political entities, organizing recently-held protests.

B. Introduction

Youth comprise a significant proportion of the population of Kosovo. The 2011 population register showed that almost a third (27%) of the population is between 15 and 29 years old. Studies of youth membership in political entities and youth organizations are lacking, and there is a need to examine the extent to which youth are involved and influence their decision-making processes.

During 2012, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) conducted a survey with over 1,200 respondents from all over Kosovo and found that around 90 percent of the youth aged between 18 to 25 had never been members of any political entity, non-governmental organization, youth organization or other youth group. These figures show a distancing between youth on the one hand, and political entities and youth organizations on the other. This alienation requires further examination on why there is a lack of youth involvement, how the political entities and youth organizations are perceived by youth, and whether these entities provide sufficient incentives for youth to join and play a role.

This report presents findings on the role of youth in political entities and youth organizations in Kosovo. The analysis section is divided into three parts, each of which presents the perceptions of youth involvement as seen from the perspective of: 1) youth in general; 2) representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs); and 3) youth who are currently members of political entity youth wings. Each of these three groups was asked similar questions regarding the role of youth, to assess the extent to which youth are involved in decision-making processes, are satisfied with their role, and are engaged in implementation of activities. There is a variety of views between the three groups on these issues, and the reader is encouraged to compare and contrast between these views. Furthermore, the report presents conclusions, recommendations and some good practices from other countries for effectively increasing the role of youth in political and decision-making processes. In the annexes, the report also refers to the relevant legal framework and party statutes in Kosovo, and other suggested reading pertaining to youth participation in political entities and youth organizations.

This report was researched and prepared by undergraduate students¹ engaged in research internships as part of IFES' U.S. Agency for International Development- (USAID) funded "Increasing Inclusion and Mitigating Violence in Electoral Processes" program in Kosovo, under the guidance of IFES Kosovo staff. This report is one of three reports on research into youth participation issues in Kosovo prepared by IFES in 2016. The other two reports present findings on the youth voter turnout in Kosovo, and the influence of political hate speech in the behavior of youth.

C. Methodology

This report presents the perceptions of the role of youth in political entities and youth organizations from the perspective of youth in general, representatives of civil society, and youth who are members of political entity youth wings. Quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to collect information from these groups.

¹ Endrit Dibrani, Rudinë Fetahaj (Faculty of Political Science at the University of Prishtina "Hasan Prishtina"), and Fjoralba Krapi and Hana Bacaj (Rochester Institute of Technology Kosovo).

First, to obtain information from youth in general, a systematic sampling survey was conducted with 300 respondents between 15 to 29 years old. This is the age range used in the definition of youth by USAID. These face-to-face interviews were conducted in five regions of Kosovo (Prishtina, Mitrovica, Prizren, Peja, and Skenderaj and Glllogovc). The sampling points were based on settings such as coffee-shops, education institutions, shopping malls and markets.

Region	Respondents	Sampling Points
Prishtina	97	49
Mitrovica	35	18
Prizren	90	45
Peja	48	24
Skenderaj & Glllogovc	30	15
TOTAL	300	151

The persons who participated in the interviews at each sampling point were selected using randomization techniques. The field work was conducted during February and March 2016.

Second, to gather information from civil society groups, three meetings and a phone interview were conducted with representatives of CSOs. The organizations that were interviewed, the Kosovo Democratic Institute (KDI), Democracy for Development (D4D), and Levizja FOL, were selected on the basis of their experience in working with both political parties and youth organizations. The phone interview was conducted with a representative of BRAN, an organization working on empowering the Ashkali community in Kosovo. The meetings and interviews with CSOs were completed during March and early April 2016.

Third, to add the perspective of those who are members of youth wings within political entities, nine phone interviews were conducted with members of political entity youth wings, three with different members of each of Partia Demokratike e Kosovës (PDK), Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës (AAK), and NISMA për Kosovën (NISMA). Most of the interviewees were members of the political entity youth wing leadership structures, and a few of them were regular members without leadership roles. Attempts to interview representatives of youth wings of other political entities, namely Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës (LDK), Partia e Drejtësisë (PD) and Srpska Lista, were unsuccessful. The research team did not consider interviewing representatives of political entities that do not have a youth wing within the structure of the political entity, which excluded political entities such as Lëvizja Vetëvendosje (VV) and Partia Demokratike e Ashkalijve të Kosovës (PDAK) from the interview process. The phone interviews were completed during March and April 2016.

This is a youth-initiated research project that was completed with limited financial and human resources. Only a limited number of surveys and interviews were conducted within the resources available, but the methodology was designed in such manner as to ensure useful indicative results. The research team encountered difficulties in setting up interviews, as some of the political entities did not show interest in participating in this research. The research team would like to thank the survey respondents, representatives of CSOs, and members of youth wings who allocated time for the interviews, and contributed to the findings that are presented in this report.

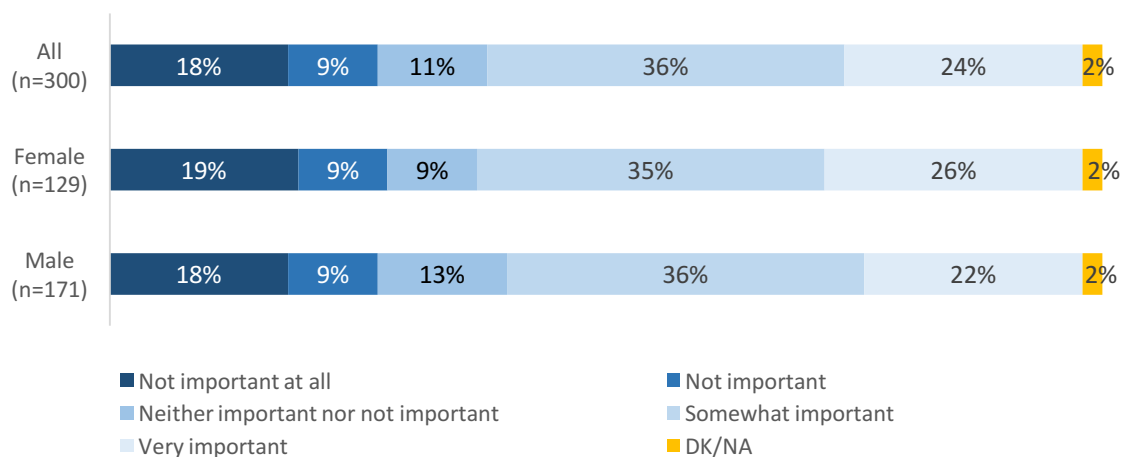
D. Findings

This section of the report is divided into three parts, each of which presents the findings on the role of youth in political entities and youth organizations as seen from the perspective of: 1) youth in general; 2) representatives of CSOs; and 3) youth who are currently members of political entity youth wings.

1. Views of youth in general

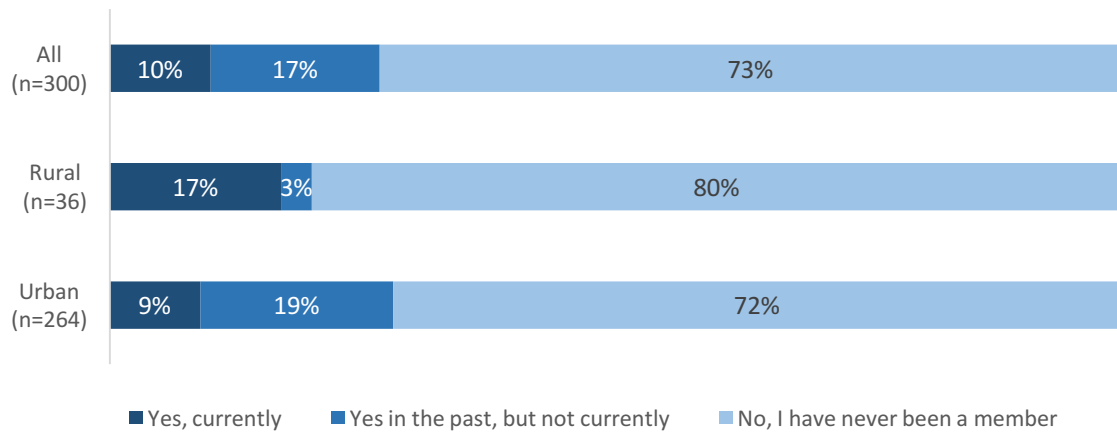
Generally, the survey respondents acknowledged the importance of youth involvement in political entities. Almost two-thirds (60%) of the respondents believe that it is somewhat or very important for youth to be members of political entities in Kosovo. This may be viewed as one of the ways by which youth can engage in political life. However, there is a considerable proportion whose view is that youth membership in political entities is not important (9%), or not important at all (18%) (Figure 1). Both male and female respondents had similar views on the importance of youth membership in political entities.

Figure 1: How important is it for youth to be members of political entities in Kosovo



Although respondents acknowledge the importance of youth membership in political entities, counter-intuitively, they do not seem to be involved in these entities themselves (Figure 2). Almost three-quarters (73%) of the respondents had never been a member of a political entity youth wing or youth organization. Only 10 percent of respondents are currently members of a youth wing or youth organization. Respondents from rural areas are almost twice as likely to be currently involved in political entity youth wings and youth organizations, than youth from urban areas. However, a higher proportion of respondents (17%) had been a member of a political entity youth wing or youth organization in the past, but are no longer a member. This was more likely among respondents from urban areas. There is almost no difference between male and female respondents on this issue.

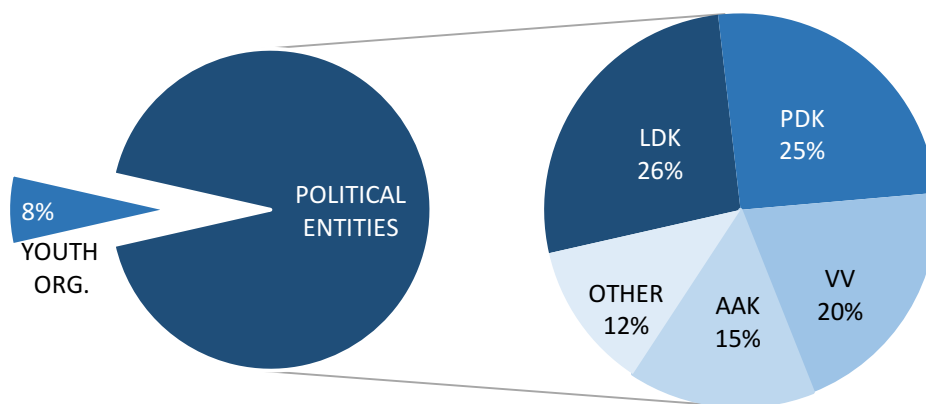
Figure 2: Are you a member of any youth organization or political entity affiliated youth wing



There was a variety of reasons for not ever having joined these entities provided by respondents. In general, these responses indicated perceptions that there were few opportunities or little incentive to be involved. Of those who gave reasons, 41 percent stated that they had not been interested in joining. The only other reasons given by a significant number of respondents were that membership will not result in anything positive for them (9%), and that they did not support any political entity (9%). Over one-quarter (27%) of those respondents who had never joined any of these entities did not give a reason.

Of those who currently are, or have been but are no longer, members of political entities or youth organizations, the vast majority are or have been involved in political entities. Only 8 percent are or have been involved in youth organizations. Among those who are or were involved in political entities, 26 percent are or were members of LDK, 25 percent of PDK, 20 percent of VV, 15 percent of AAK, and the rest were involved in other smaller parties (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Youth membership in youth organizations and political entity youth wings, and break-down by political entity

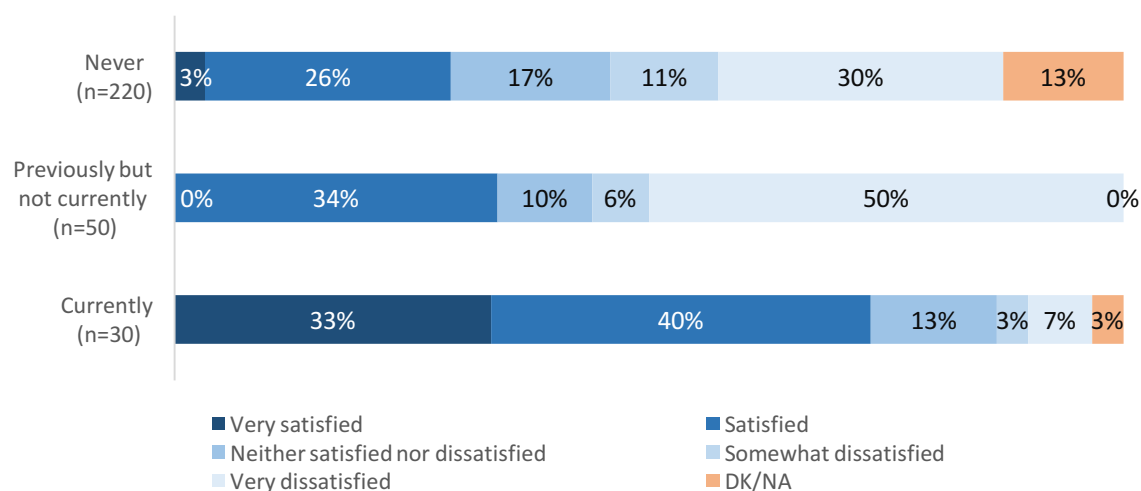


The survey results show a split in views about the extent to which respondents were satisfied with the role of youth in political entity structures in Kosovo. More than a third (35%) of the respondents were satisfied with the role of youth in political entity structures. They believe involvement in political entity

structures enables youth to gain experience, become active in political entity activities, create better networks and bring new ideas to their political entity. However, there was a slightly higher proportion (41%) who were dissatisfied. Significant reasons for dissatisfaction include that youth do not have any role to play in political entities, youth have no impact on decision-making, misuse of power, organizations are not active on youth interests, and that youth were only engaged for minor administrative tasks.

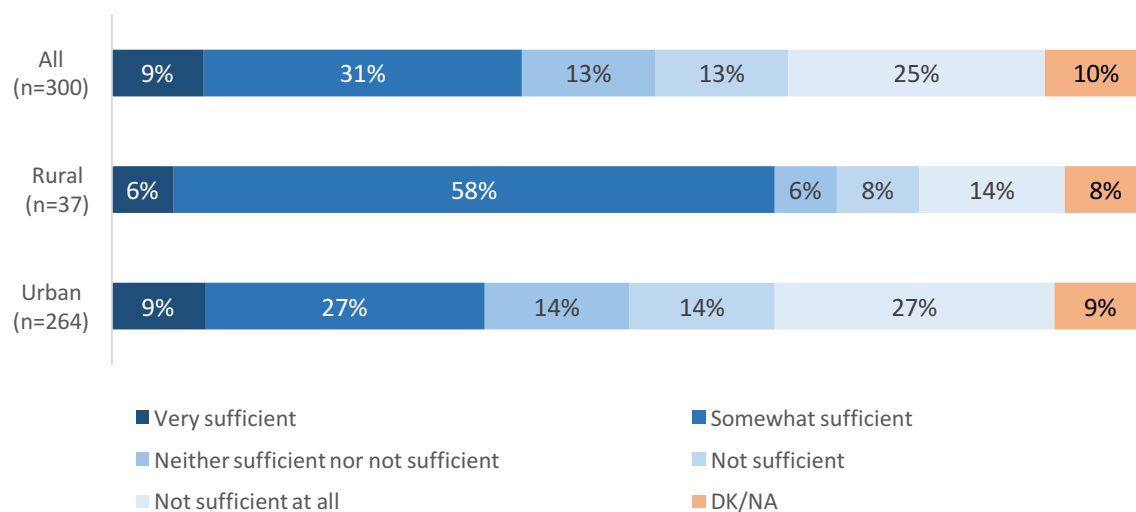
Unsurprisingly, those respondents interviewed who are currently members of political entity youth wings or youth organizations are much more likely to be satisfied with the role of youth in political entity structures than those who had previously been a member, but are no longer a member, who tended to be very dissatisfied (Figure 4). Those respondents who have never been a member were fairly evenly split between those who are and are not satisfied, but a significant proportion of these respondents could not answer this question.

Figure 4: Satisfaction with role of youth in political entities by current, and former members and those who have never been members



There were polarized views among the respondents as to the opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making processes in political entities. Overall there is an almost equal proportion of those who believe that opportunities are sufficient (40%), to those who believe that such opportunities are insufficient (38%). Respondents from rural areas are almost twice as likely to believe that opportunities for youth to be involved in decision-making are sufficient, than those from urban areas (Figure 5). There are similar perceptions among male and female respondents with regard to opportunities for youth to participate in decision making in political entities. There is a greater proportion of respondents between 15 to 21 years of age, than youth between 22 to 29, whose view is that opportunities to be involved in decision making in political entities are sufficient.

Figure 5: Opportunities for youth to be involved in decision-making in political entities



The perception among survey respondents was that there is a relationship between membership in a political entity and the possibility of obtaining a job. Respondents were asked to provide multiple responses on how membership of a political entity or affiliated youth wing assists young people in their lives. Respondents were more likely to agree that membership will help young people obtain a job (48%), help them develop professionally (36%), increase their awareness of what is happening in Kosovo (32%), make their voice heard (32%), and prepare them to become politicians (25%) (Figure 6). Very few respondents thought that being a member of a political entity or youth organization does not help at all.

Self-help reasons were most prominent among respondents' views on the benefits of being a political entity member particularly in relation to obtaining a job, developing professionally and networking with powerful people. Respondents were more likely to see membership in parties as a means to achieving personal goals, and less likely as means to implement political programs that would address social issues.

Figure 6: Does being a member of a political entity or youth organization assist a young person to: (multiple responses allowed)

Obtain a job	48%
Develop professionally	36%
Increase awareness of what is happening in Kosovo	32%
Ensure that voices of young people are heard	32%
Prepare to be a politician	25%
Connections with people who have position of power	23%
Be invited to parties and social events	21%
Be engaged in the decision-making process	18%
Ensure the community is provided with services	13%
Does not help in any manner	6%
Other	5%
Don't know/No Answer	2%

There are some differences in respondents' views of ways through which young people can participate in decision-making processes in Kosovo now, as opposed to additional ways in the future (Figure 7). To an open response question, being active in a political party (19%), and taking part in protests (19%) were the most frequently mentioned current ways to participate in decision making. Twelve percent of respondents believe that currently there are no effective opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making processes. One-fifth of respondents did not know of ways to participate in decision making.

Figure 7: More frequently mentioned ways to participate in decision-making processes at present time, and in future (multiple responses allowed)

	<i>Now</i>		<i>Future</i>
Being active in political entities/politics	19%	→	25%
Being active in NGOs	6%		5%
Involvement in projects and organizations	7%		5%
Promote new ideas	5%		4%
Being active through meetings or petitions	5%		2%
Taking part in protests	19%	→	6%
Being better educated	4%	→	22%
No effective opportunities are available	12%	→	0%
Better employment opportunities	0%	→	6%

However, the respondents have a different and more optimistic view of ways in which young people can participate in decision-making in the future. This is most clearly shown in the increase in respondents who see being better educated as a way of participating in future decision-making, and the positive trend in those who identified being active in political entities or politics. On the other hand, compared to views about the present, respondents were less likely to see taking part in protests as a way of participating in decision-making in the future. No respondents thought that there would be no effective opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making in the future. However, one in five respondents were unable to answer these questions either about the current situation, or the future. In conjunction with the responses to earlier questions on membership of organizations, this points to a lack of a societal engagement by a significant proportion of young people. There were similar proportions of male and female respondents for each of these means of participation now and in the future.

When respondents were asked about which political entity had policies closest to their own views, over one-quarter (28%) of respondents answered that no political entity has policies that are closest to their views. A further 16 percent preferred not to answer this question.

2. Views of civil society organizations

Some of the key informants from CSOs interviewed for this study linked the current political entity youth wings to the communist party structures in former Yugoslavia, and emphasized that such youth wings had been traditionally used as mechanisms by which youth were recruited and engaged in political life. However, they acknowledged that the population of Kosovo is relatively young, and that political entities may be incentivized to use such wings to appeal to youth.

The CSO key informants did not question the reason for existence of political entity youth wings, but expressed concern as to their role and impact in a political entity's decision-making processes. In their view, youth wings serve as symbolic mechanisms by which parties cover for lack of youth representation in party leadership structures, and inadequate programs dealing with youth interests. Typically, the parties may involve the head of the youth wing in party leadership structures, but the decisions are taken by senior party leaders. These key informants recommended that youth be more demanding within the political parties, show their integrity and values, as they have the power to make changes to the way political entities govern themselves.

The CSO key informants voiced concerns that youth were only given minor administrative tasks during the campaign period. This concern was also expressed among the youth surveyed, who mentioned youth engagement in minor administrative tasks as one of the reasons why they were dissatisfied with the role of youth in political entities. According to CSO key informants, youth are used for distribution of promotional materials (posters, brochures), securing votes, observing Election Day, and forming the necessary crowd for campaign events. The CSO key informants claimed that youth wings are only minimally active when there are no elections. They also noted that some youth wing activities did not seem serious, referring to examples when youth wings were tasked to wait for diaspora arrivals at the airport and distributing *baklava* to them, or releasing pigeons on the main boulevards.

The CSO key informants placed great emphasis on the relationship between membership in youth wings and job opportunities, which reinforces the earlier finding from the survey that respondents were likely to agree that membership in a political entity will help young people obtain a job. These CSO key informants were of the view that political entities promise jobs in the public sector to youth, particularly if their entity wins the elections. Their view is that, typically, it will be only be the head of the youth wing who will be employed in a public position, and have the possibility to advance in a career.

The CSO key informants believe that there are a number of reasons that may encourage youth to become members of youth wings and political parties in general. These include idolization of the party leader, influence from the family, desire to become a politician, and better employment opportunities. However, they also noted that there are a number of factors that may push youth away, including fear of being viewed in a partisan manner, which may be costly depending on how successful the political entity is in the election. This concern was also raised in a previous IFES publication on women's inclusion in electoral management bodies, the results of which showed that women in particular were hesitant to affiliate themselves with political entities, as their employment would be affected particularly if their political entity did not win the election.

According to the CSO key informants, membership in political entity youth wings comes with both benefits and costs (Figure 8).

Figure 8: CSO key informants' perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of youth membership in political entities

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about political developments • Gain a better understanding of functioning of political entities and institutions • Prepare to enter political life • Employment opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourages youth from thinking in a non-partisan manner • Viewed as taking sides and unprofessional, if member • Youth may get disappointed with what they find inside the political entity

The CSO representatives were of the view that Kosovo could learn from the United Kingdom, where political parties establish branches as student organizations, which then work to bring together students with the same political views, and improve their access to decision-making processes. This was recommended as one of the ways by which political entities in Kosovo can reach out to youth, and bring new ideas into the entity.

3. Views of members of political entity youth wings

The members of youth wings who were interviewed listed numerous reasons as to why they decided to become members of youth wings, including: to have a better future, to assist the youth wing in implementing activities, to be closer to politics, to contribute to Kosovo's development, and to be part of a youth wing that was seen as a hope for change. Idolization for the party leader was also mentioned. Contrary to the views expressed by youth in the survey and of the CSO key informants, access to employment opportunities was not among the reasons for membership in political entities, according to those youth wing members interviewed.

From the descriptions provided by the members of youth wings who were interviewed, the youth wings of PDK, AAK and NISMA seem somewhat similar in the way they engage young members in their activities. The members of these youth wings have the right to propose activities and initiatives within the youth wing.

There are also some differences in the way these youth wings function and make decisions. NISMA interviewees stated that their youth wing leadership (a Chair, two Deputy Chairs and a Secretary) meets at least weekly, and while decisions are mainly taken jointly and unanimously by the leadership, all members are regularly consulted. They organize roundtables to discuss social problems.

The PDK youth wing informants stated that decisions of the Democratic Youth are taken by a two-thirds majority vote of all members. There are currently 31 members. All members have the right to propose ideas for youth activities and initiatives. As stated by these informants, there is also a group of youth volunteers who are integrated within PDK and are engaged in implementing activities, but they do not take part in decision-making.

Interviewees from the AAK youth wing did not provide much information on the way the youth wing operates. They noted that the youth wing is a separate department of the party, has a leadership

comprising a Chair, two Deputy Chairs and Secretary, and its members have the independence to decide on their own without the influence of the party leaders.

These informants indicated that there is a wide range of activities that the youth wings implement. Youth from PDK claimed that they have implemented over 50 activities in the last two years, some of which included cleaning of the Mirusha waterfall, charity activities to help families in need during the New Year holidays, sports events for youth, repairing a statue of Gjergj Kastrioti Skenderbeu, and other activities promoting tourism at the local level.

The youth from NISMA noted that they had been engaged in organizing protests, and advocating for visa liberalization. In the future, they plan to draft a budget for the youth wing, organize reading courses, and hold free foreign language classes. Youth from AAK mentioned that they were engaged in helping their communities during the floods, organizing soccer activities, and distributing posters for candidates. They also mentioned that their regular youth wing activities stopped as of recently, as they were engaged in organizing protests. Youth across all parties raised concerns that the youth wing activities were constrained by lack of funding.

From the information provided by these interviewees, many of the activities that youth wings implement seem to be outside the scope of political involvement, and do not seem to involve youth in the political entity's decision-making processes. However, when asked about the degree to which they believed that the youth wing was involved in decision-making processes, generally those interviewed believe that they have a reasonable involvement in these. When asked to rate on a 10-point scale, "To what extent do you believe the youth wing is involved in the political entity's decision-making" where one is not at all involved and ten is highly involved, the average rating was seven. The level of involvement rating from youth interviewees from PDK was slightly higher than those of NISMA and AAK.

The members of youth wings interviewed seem satisfied with their involvement in political party youth wings. When asked to rate on a 10-point scale, "How satisfied are you with your involvement in the youth wing" where one is very dissatisfied and ten is very satisfied, the average rating was nine.

E. Conclusions

This report presents the views of youth in general, key informants from civil society organizations, and members of political entity youth wings, about the role of youth in political entities and youth organizations and their involvement in decision-making processes.

Respondents to the survey acknowledged the importance of youth involvement in political entities, however, about 90 percent of those surveyed are not current members of any political entity youth wing or youth organizations. Respondents were more likely to be, or have been a member of a political entity than any other type of civil society youth organizations. Self-help reasons were most prominent among respondents' views on the benefits of being a political entity member, particularly in relation to obtaining a job, developing professionally and networking with powerful people.

There is almost an equal proportion of respondents who believe that opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making processes in political entities are sufficient (40%), and those who believe that such opportunities are insufficient (38%). Over a quarter of respondents indicated that there was no political party whose policies were closest to their views.

There was significant agreement with these views expressed in interviews with key informants from CSOs involved with both youth and political entities. They also noted that the main incentive for youth to join political entities is to find a job, but that this may not be a realistic expectation apart from youth leaders in the political entity. According to these CSO informants, the role of youth wings within political entities is generally only symbolic, and youth are only asked to complete minor administrative tasks. Their general impression about the youth wings was that they are structures created to recruit new members and bring votes for the political entity, and they have little to no impact in the decision-making processes.

The youth within political entities who were interviewed seem satisfied with their involvement in the political entities, and the extent to which they are involved in the decision-making processes. Generally, youth who are members of political entities stated that they have joined the youth wings to change the current political situation, help their community, get closer to politics and leaders whom they idolize. The interviewees' descriptions indicate that youth wings operate in different ways in the three political entities – PDK, AAK and NISMA – of which they were members. Youth of these parties appear to engage in a wide range of recreational, humanitarian and educational activities. Youth wings of opposition parties seem to also be engaged in organizing protests that were held recently.

There are both similarities and differences in the views across these three groups. All three groups seem to acknowledge the importance of youth membership in political entities, and that youth have potential to play a significant role within these entities. Political entity youth wings were generally seen as adequate mechanisms by which youth could play a role, although the civil society representatives expressed skepticism as to their current role within political entities. The perception among the youth surveyed and the civil society representatives interviewed is that there is a close connection between membership in a political entity and employment opportunities. However, employment was not mentioned as a reason for joining political entities in any interview held with a member of a political entity youth wing.

Civil society representatives interviewed were generally dissatisfied with the role of youth in political entities, and youth surveyed were fairly evenly split between those satisfied and dissatisfied. However, members of political entities themselves expressed satisfaction with their involvement. There was a similar position across the three groups on the role of youth in decision-making. The youth surveyed and civil society representatives interviewed, questioned the extent to which youth wings are actually engaged in political entity decision-making processes and whether they currently are given worthwhile roles to play. On the other hand, youth from within political entity youth wings who were interviewed claimed that they are sufficiently involved in decision-making processes, although the nature of the activities that they described as implementing were not always of a political nature.

F. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this research, there are some key actions that political entities could take to increase the participation of youth in their structures:

- Provide greater incentives for youth to become and remain members, such as providing them with significant tasks to implement;
- Inform youth of opportunities and benefits of becoming involved in political entities;
- Enable youth to lead the implementation of youth-led initiatives and volunteer projects;
- Organize regular trainings and mentorship programs to enhance the knowledge of youth wing members, and equip them with professional skills necessary to enter professional or political life;
- Dedicate sufficient funding for enhancing youth capacities and implementation of youth-led projects; and
- Ensure that youth's views are mainstreamed, through meaningful and regular consultation with youth wing members, into the political entities' policies.

G. Examples of Youth Activism

Ireland: Project 321 was developed in response to youth concerns about not being part of the democratic process. Prior to the 2004 local and European elections, each local youth service invited young people to a consultation day to examine issues affecting them and decide what steps they wanted to take. The youth formed sub-committees. One group made a video, another group developed an information sheet, and a third organized an open forum to which all candidates in the elections were invited. This forum was successful with 70 percent of the candidates participating. Using a "speed dating" format, each candidate spent 10 minutes with each sub-group discussing the issues raised and what they were willing to do to address youth concerns if elected.²

Jordan: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has initiated trainings with the aim of creating a linkage between youth and local governments, and increasing awareness about the opportunities for participating in politics. The UNDP has supported the Ministry of Political Development (MoPD) to amplify its engagement with youth through Facebook and Twitter, with a view to facilitating online discourse. The UNDP also supported the MoPD to develop a database of youth online groups in order to systematically solicit input from youth groups on how to spur youth participation in the country's political life. An innovation camp for youth was held, with features like mock elections, and interactive training on public speaking, the use of social media for development and other professional skills. A partnership with the Princess Samara University for Technology is backing development of a local governance game to engage youth online.³

Kyrgyzstan: Since 2000, with the support of USAID, IFES has conducted over 20 Democracy Camps across Kyrgyzstan. Middle-school participants learn democratic values, leadership skills, teamwork, their role as citizens, and how to advocate for change in their society. In 2009, over 2,600 students applied to take part in the camps. The goal of this project is to build civic-mindedness and engagement among the young generation, and to instill in them a belief in their capacity as individuals to improve

² CSSP (2007) "Engaging youth in Community Decision Making" p.13

³ United Nations Youth (2013) "Youth Political Participation and Decision – Making" p.3

their communities and country. This is a necessary step in building a more democratic culture in Kyrgyzstan.⁴

Lebanon: The Lebanese Parliamentary Internship Program was developed to offer Lebanese students an opportunity to participate in public decision making. The program provides trainings on public policy making tools, and introduces students to the legislative and oversight functions of the Parliament. This program created a matching system to connect university students with members of the Parliament, and held a conference which consisted of youth and women in political parties to discuss democratic transition on Lebanon.⁵

The Netherlands: In the city of Tilburg, youth ambassadors are described as “young people with ideas who want to encourage other youth’s ideas.” The city aids the germination of their good ideas with a budget of approximately 40,000 euros per year to support proposals made by youngsters. A young person can present an idea on paper and receive up to 2,000 euros to implement his or her plan. The youth ambassadors invite other young people to talk about their plans and then decide which proposals to fund. Each year, young people present more than 50 ideas, such as a debate, an indoor soccer tournament, a film they want to make, an event they want to organize.⁶

United Kingdom: The United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP) program aims to empower young people between 11 to 18 years old by giving them the chance to influence national and local government. Some of the ways they do this are by collecting views and opinions from youth and school councils and voluntary organizations, and by communicating regularly with their local government and with their member of Parliament. The UKYP aims to promote debates and campaigns on issues, for instance, such as tuition fees, bus fares and representation of young people in the media, that appear relevant to young people in the UK. Run by young people

Tips to include youth

“Avoid tokenism: Include young people in meaningful numbers. Too often, people or organizations go through the motions of engaging youth by asking a few individuals their opinions, adding a token number of young people to decision making boards, or including a few youth in select activities. Young people see through tokenistic efforts. They must be included in adequate number and genuine roles to be authentic participants.

Involve youth from the beginning: Bringing young people in at the last minute can sink an initiative. Not only is it likely to look like tokenism, it fails to obtain their valuable input. When youth are engaged from the start, mistakes can be avoided, more successful strategies can be developed, and youth ownership and support can be developed. Young people are far more likely to stay involved and be positive about the work that is accomplished.

Take the time to fully engage involve young people: Sometimes organizations, officials and communities – often working under a funding or administrative deadline – rush to get a project up and running. Going through the steps to engage youth people in meaningful ways and to keep them involved can be time-consuming.”

Source: Center for the Study of Social Policy (2007) *Engaging youth in Community Decision Making*, page 41.

⁴ www.IFES.org

⁵ United Nations Youth (2013) “*Youth Political Participation and Decision – Making*” p.4

⁶ Center for the Study of Social Policy (2007) “*Engaging youth in Community Decision Making* p.41

for young people, UKYP gives the young people of the UK between the age of 11 and 18 a voice, which is listened to by local and national government.⁷

Annex I: Excerpts from Kosovo law

In 2009 the Assembly of Kosovo adopted a Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth, which aims to promote and reaffirm continued participation of youth in the decision-making processes. Some of the articles relevant to the topic of this paper are shown in the table below. In accordance with the law, the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports adopted several administrative instructions, which aim at regulating youth organizations, youth volunteerism, youth councils, and non-formal education activities.

Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth	
Article 6 Responsibilities of central government bodies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Central Government bodies, in compliance with the Kosovo Youth Action Council shall be responsible: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. for the development, adoption and implementation of documents relevant to the youth sector; 1.2. development, adoption and implementation of other youth programs; 1.3. for the development of procedures and criteria for promotion and recognition of volunteer work and other forms of youth activities; 1.4. for collecting and providing data on the position of young people; 1.5. to support programs for development and capacity building in the youth sector; 1.6. to provide information and regular consultations with youth-related policies and programs for youth in the country and international youth exchange programs; 1.7. to support the integration and participation in society of marginalized groups through programs and campaigns; 1.8. for ensuring structures and procedures that guarantee the participation of youth and partnership among Government and youth organizations. [...]
Article 7 Responsibilities of municipal bodies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Municipal authorities shall have the following responsibilities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. to ensure the provision of financial and human resources for the implementation of youth programs; 1.2. to care for the provision of adequate public space in consultation with the council to resume the action of the municipality, where young people plan, manage and develop their youth activities and informal education; 1.3. support for informal education for youth organizations and other development activities initiated by young people; 1.4. for youth policy development in consultation with the local youth council to resume the action of the municipality, in accordance with local needs; 1.5. ensuring a transparent process during management engagement for public youth center licensed by the municipality concerned.
Article 13 Participation of young people in sectional policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kosovo's institutions, each in its scope, ensure the participation and influence of young people in the decision making process. 2. Participation of young people in sectional policies is done in the following areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. education; 2.2. jobs; 2.3. public health; 2.4. social issues; 2.5. culture, sport and recreation; 2.6. civic education and democracy; 2.7. environment, spatial planning and rural development.

⁷ London School of Economics - Enterprise (2013, February) "Youth Participation in Democratic Life" p.49

Annex II: References to youth in political entity statutes (unofficial translation)

Excerpts from the statutes of the largest political entities, PDK, LDK, AAK and NISMA, that refer to the functioning of youth wings and participation of youth in political entity decision-making processes are presented in the table below. There were no references to youth or youth wings found in the VV statute.

<p>PDK</p> <p>Partia Demokratike e Kosovës</p> <p>(Statute 2005)</p>	<p>Article 7 Organizational method</p> <p>7.5 Within PDK, the Organization of Democratic Women (GDK) and Organization of Democratic Youth (RDK) function, organized at both central and local level branches of the party. Their method of organization and functioning are regulated with specific regulations that are approved by the Steering Council. RDK and GDK are represented on the structures of the party with at least 20.</p> <p>Article 26 Party Leadership</p> <p>26.10 Members of leadership with a right to vote, according to the position, are also the Chair of the GDK and Chair of the RDK.</p>
<p>LDK</p> <p>Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës</p> <p>(Statute 2012)</p>	<p>Article 18 Assembly of LDK</p> <p>18.3 In the event of the election of delegates for the Assembly, each branch ensures representation of women and youth.</p> <p>Article 29 Leadership</p> <p>29.3 The leader of LDK, leader of women’s forum and youth forum are members of the leadership.</p> <p>Article 38 LDK Forums, Councils and Interest Groups</p> <p>38.4 In LDK’s youth forum, youth between 16 to 26 years old are organized.</p> <p>Article 45 Branch Leadership</p> <p>45.3 The leader of the women’s forum and the leader of youth forum are members of branch leadership.</p>
<p>AAK</p> <p>Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës</p> <p>Statute</p>	<p>Article 37: Alliance of Youth of Kosovo</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth inside AAK can be organized as Alliance of Youth of Kosovo (ARK); 2. ARK has its own organizational structure. For organizing the structure of ARK, its organs approve the own acts that are in accordance with status and program of AAK; 3. Members of ARK support and apply the policies directed from the Assembly, Steering Council, and presidency of AAK and ARK; 4. ARK has its own regulations and working program in accordance with the statute and program of AAK. 5. ARK elects all of its leading organs in its Assembly, which serve three-year terms, with not more than one possibility of re-election. 6. The ARK Election Assembly gathers once in three years, whereas the Extraordinary Assembly meets based on needs. <p>Article 38: Membership in ARK</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Any citizen under 30 years old can be a member of ARK; 2. Leading organs of ARK are responsible for: 3. Including and advancing of youth inside AAK; 4. Structuring and empowering of ARK, and 5. Working with the branches of ARK. <p>Article 39: Chair of ARK</p> <p>According to the position, the Chair of ARK is a member of the AAK presidency, and is responsible for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work of ARK in accordance with the statute and program of AAK, regulation and work plan of ARK; 2. Coordinating the actions between ARK and AAK and representing the interests of ARK in AAK structures.

<p>NISMA (Statute 2015)</p>	<p>Article 9 Organization of NISMA for Kosovo 6. NISMA for Women of Kosovo and NISMA for Youth of Kosovo function in all three levels of organization within NISMA for Kosovo.</p> <p>Article 13 Branch Council 3. Members of the Branch Council are also the Chairs of branches, the members of Parliament from the respective municipality, the elected of the assembly, the appointees of local governance, the Chair of women in the branch, and the Chair of youth in the branch.</p> <p>Article 17 National Council of NISMA 3. Members of the National Council are according to their duty: leaders of Nisma, leaders of branches, Chair of Women, Chair of Youth, members of Parliament from NISMA [...].</p> <p>Article 18 NISMA Leadership 1. The NISMA Leadership is composed of an odd number of members, including: the leader of NISMA, Chair of National Council, General Secretary, Chair of Youth of NISMA, Chair of Women of NISMA, and [...].</p>
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Annex III: More reading

Kosovo sources:

- Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth, adopted by the Assembly of Kosovo 2009, accessed on June 2016 at <http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2009-145-eng.pdf>.
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- Administrative Instruction 11/2010 for Licensing of Youth Centers, issued by the by Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, accessed on June 2016 at http://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/U.A. Nr. 11-2010_per_regjistrimin_e_Qendrave_Rinore.pdf.
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- Administrative Instruction 09/2010 for Responsibilities and Procedures for Establishing and Functioning of Youth Action Councils in Kosovo, issued by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, accessed on June 2016 at http://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/U.A. Nr. 9-2010_per_pergjegjesite_dhe_procedurat_e_themelimit_te_Keshillave_te_Veprimit_Rinor_ne_Kosove.pdf.
- “Kosovo Strategy for Youth 2013-2017,” issued by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (2013), accessed on June 2016 at https://www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/KOSOVO_STRATEGY_FOR_YOUTH.pdf.
- “Local youth action council participatory handbook,” issued by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (2013), accessed on June 2016 at <http://www.osce.org/kosovo/110054?download=true>.

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- United Nations Youth (2013), “Youth Political Participation and Decision – Making”, accessed on June 2016 at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-political->

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- Center for the Study of Social Policy (2007), "*Engaging youth in Community Decision Making*," accessed on June 2016 at <http://www.cssp.org/community/constituents-co-invested-in-change/other-resources/engaging-youth-in-community-decision-making.pdf>.
- Council of Europe (2003), "*Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life*," accessed on June 2016 at http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Coe_youth/Participation/COE_charter_participation_2013_en.pdf.
- United Nations Development Program (2013), "*Enhancing Youth Political Participation throughout the Electoral Cycle*," accessed on June 2016 at http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Electoral%20Systems%20and%20Processes/ENG_UN-Youth_Guide-LR.pdf.