



Transnational Report

on Social Entrepreneurship and Active Citizenship in Western Balkans

prepared by KMOP EIH



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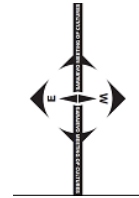


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Introduction

EPIC is an international cooperation project co-funded by Erasmus+, facilitating the cooperation of Erasmus+ programme countries (Cyprus, Greece) and third countries not associated with the programme from Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo). As part of this process, the partners of the Erasmus+ programme countries will transfer their expertise and experience in the field, and in return receive insights, feedback and practical experience, to the partners from the third countries not associated with the programme to collectively implement actions that will have a tangible impact in the local communities in support of youth organisations-workers and youth. A process that will enable the transfer and exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices and will also facilitate the capacity building of the implementing countries and the youth sector in the third countries not associated with the Erasmus+ programme in Western Balkans.

The present Transnational Report is the culmination of a collaborative research effort by partners PIF from Albania, SMOC from Bosnia-Herzegovina, and PEN from Kosovo, under the expert guidance of KMOP Education and Innovation Hub. The research process involved comprehensive Desk and Field research methodologies to gather data and insights from various stakeholders involved in youth social entrepreneurship.

The Desk Research component provided a thorough analysis of existing policies, practices, and reports on youth social entrepreneurship across the three countries. This phase aimed to identify the strengths and gaps within the current frameworks and to understand the broader context in which youth social entrepreneurs operate.

In parallel, the Field Research involved direct engagement with youth workers and young people through focus groups and online surveys. Each country conducted one focus group with 5-11 youth workers and in total, 24 youth workers were engaged in the three focus groups. The focus groups were complemented by two surveys, with one addressed to youth workers and the other to young people. In total, 77 youth workers and 81 youth



from the three implementing countries participated in the surveys. This approach ensured a diverse and comprehensive collection of perspectives, highlighting both commonalities and unique challenges faced by youth social entrepreneurs in different national contexts.

The findings from the research conducted by PIF, SMOC and PEN were analysed and synthesised into National Reports, each reflecting the specific realities of youth social entrepreneurship in their respective countries. KMOP EIH then performed a comparative analysis of these reports, identifying cross-national trends, shared challenges, and successful practices. The result is this Transnational Report, which offers a holistic view of the current state of youth social entrepreneurship in the participating countries and provides actionable recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders aiming to foster a supportive environment for young social entrepreneurs.

This report not only sheds light on the present landscape but also serves as a strategic guide for future initiatives aimed at empowering youth social entrepreneurs, ensuring they have the resources, support, and environment needed to thrive and drive positive social change.

Social Economy Trends in Europe

The social economy encompasses a range of entities with different business and organisational models. In the EU, the social economy accounts for 2.8 million organisations and entities and provides over 13.6 million paid jobs, corresponding to 6.3% of the total EU working population¹.

Social economy covers entities sharing the following main common principles and features: the importance of people as well as social and/or environmental purpose over profit, the reinvestment of most of the profits

1

https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu_en

and surpluses to carry out activities in the interest of members/users (“collective interest”) or society at large (“general interest”) and democratic and/ or participatory governance².

“Social Economy” mainly refers to:

- Cooperatives
- Associations
- Mutual benefit societies
- Foundations
- Social Enterprises³.

They are private entities running economic activities whose main purpose is to provide goods and services to their members or the community at large, with profits coming second. They build on local roots, using solidarity and participation as core principles driving their activities.

EU Social Economy Action Plan

The EU Social Economy Action Plan⁴ aims to enhance social investment, support social economy actors and social enterprises to start-up, scale-up, innovate and create jobs.

It will do this through a series of initiatives in the following three areas:

- creating the right framework conditions for the social economy to thrive,
- opening up opportunities and support to capacity building,
- enhancing recognition of the social economy and its potential.

² ibid

³ ibid

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1537&langId=en>

The action plan announces a number of key actions to support the social economy, for example:

- a Council Recommendation on developing social economy framework conditions,
- a new EU Social Economy Gateway to provide a clear entry point for social economy stakeholders, other relevant actors and individuals seeking information on relevant EU funding, policies and initiatives,
- a new European Competence Centre for Social Innovation.

Opportunities for social entrepreneurship for youth

Albania

Civic education is an integral part of the curriculum in Albanian schools. It aims to equip students with knowledge about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, as well as skills for active participation in democratic processes. The legal framework in Albania provides the right to education for all children, regardless of their needs and special abilities. On the other hand, the youth sector has promoted and mainstreamed civic education through non-formal education and donor-funded projects. These efforts aim to foster an environment that encourages active participation in society and promotes lifelong learning among Albanian citizens

Entrepreneurship education is a recent field in Albania and is being developed to enhance students' entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. The goal is to support students to develop an independent and versatile approach by growing the spirit of entrepreneurship. Albania has adopted some European policies and frameworks regarding entrepreneurship education, such as the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (EntreComp), which defines 15

competences that make up the entrepreneurial mind-set and behaviour.

Albania hosts many international organisations that aim to support the government and the market to improve youth employment and youth entrepreneurship. Some of the most prominent are as follows.

EU for Innovation – This is an initiative that aims to support the development of innovative businesses in Albania and offers a range of services, including training, mentoring and funding opportunities for young entrepreneurs. The website provides information about programmemes, events and success stories.

Regional Start-up Ecosystem Development – This page provides information on the regional start-up ecosystem development programmeme, which is designed to support the development of start-ups in the Western Balkans. The programmeme offers training, mentoring and networking opportunities for young entrepreneurs, as well as access to funding and other resources.

Albanian American Development Foundation – This foundation provides support for young entrepreneurs in Albania through a range of programmemes, including business incubation, mentoring and access to funding. The website provides information on their programmemes, success stories and other resources for young entrepreneurs.

GIZ – This is a German development agency that provides support for young entrepreneurs in Albania and other countries. The website provides information on programmemes, success stories and other resources for young entrepreneurs.



Additional support to young social entrepreneurs is that coming from youth workers. According to the survey conducted with youth workers, 84% of them responded that they support young social entrepreneurs with educational resources/workshops, 60% with mentorship, 52 % with networking opportunities, and only 4% with training.



On the other hand, young people responded that the most beneficial support to them are mentorship programmes and networking opportunities (62%), financial grants or investments (59%), and workshops or training (45%). There seems to be a communication gap between youth workers and young people, preventing youth from fully utilizing the support available to them.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR AS A CATALYST FOR SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, social entrepreneurship remains unregulated at the national level. As a result, its greatest potential for growth lies within the non-governmental sector. The number of non-governmental civil society organisations (NGOs) in BiH has been increasing exponentially, creating numerous initiatives for youth to engage in various aspects of civic life.

NGOs play a crucial role in responding to society's needs and requirements. They often serve as a window into new trends and technologies, particularly concerning EU accession. Furthermore, the non-governmental sector operates across the entire country, including both large cities and rural areas. Legislatively, NGOs have an advantage in conducting social entrepreneurship activities, as they are not-for-profit organisations with simpler registration procedures compared to profit-based enterprises or companies.

However, for social entrepreneurship to thrive, the non-governmental sector must form alliances with both the private and public sectors. The combined efforts of these three sectors



would create an optimal ecosystem for social entrepreneurship, driving innovation and addressing community needs more effectively.

Both youth and youth workers in BiH believe that there are opportunities for youth in social entrepreneurship, which has as well been backed up by the two best practices examples singled out in the desk research report.

The best practice examples present two strong initiatives for youth, composed of a series of events offering training on entrepreneurship, focusing on hard skills such as business planning and other important entrepreneurial skills. The projects, which have ultimately evolved into self-sufficient and self-running programmes still offer youth with opportunities for mentorship and support for young people willing to start their own business.

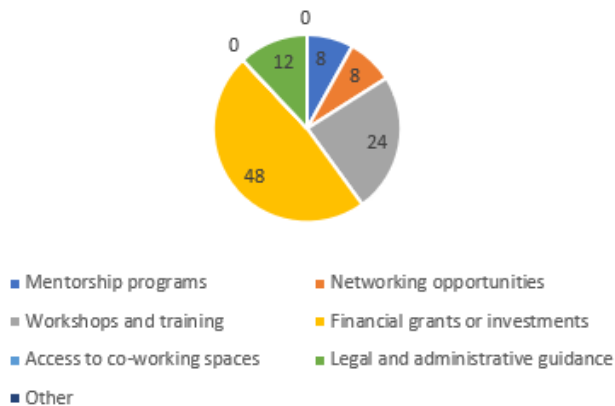
As to different institutional opportunities, youth seem to rely mostly on the non-governmental sector. They claim that the public institutions are over-crowded and old dated, and they lack the initiatives which could satisfy the needs of the youth in contemporary times. On the other hand, non-governmental sector lacks the support from the public institutions and various levels of governance, specifically in providing financial support and resources.

ENHANCING YOUTH ENGAGEMENT THROUGH A COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT – PRIVATE, PUBLIC AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL

Youth workers from the NGO sector emphasise the necessity of comprehensive educational opportunities for young people. These should be complemented by professional staff in public institutions who are capable of initiating, implementing, and following up on various youth-related projects and initiatives. An overarching strategy

to promote social entrepreneurship, specifically highlighting its possibilities, is also essential.

What types of support do you believe would be most beneficial to young social entrepreneurs? (Select all that apply)



Mentorship and local community support for youth have as well been singled out, while for youth workers it would be beneficial to form a networking group for sharing ideas and experiences.

International experts have as well been listed, specifically in regard to organising educational sessions, where an experience of an international expert could provide with an opportunity for young people to get acquainted with the latest trends in the market.

And finally, a collaboration between a public, private and an NGO sector has as well been given priority as an initiative which would effectively improve the work of youth workers. This would of course have to include a greater support from the governance level

particularly in terms of financial means, as well as networking with the private sector in providing mentorship opportunities.

The youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina have primarily highlighted the type of support they need, as opportunities for social entrepreneurship are quite scarce. When asked to name successful social entrepreneurs, many admitted they were unfamiliar with any, largely due to the absence of a database of social enterprises and the lack of promotion for such ventures.

Given the lack of a national law, strategy, or action plan for social entrepreneurship, it is understandable that opportunities are limited. Most youth believe that the greatest support for aspiring social entrepreneurs would come from financial grants and investments, as well as workshops and training sessions. Mentorship programmes and legal and administrative support are also seen as beneficial. However, without effective promotion and a single point of contact for youth regarding social entrepreneurship, even the best mechanisms may fail to be properly utilised.

Youth workers are focused on providing educational resources and workshops, given the limited opportunities due to the non-existent legal and regulatory framework for social entrepreneurship. They offer training sessions on various fields relevant to social entrepreneurship, emphasizing skill development and self-confidence. Their work is primarily evaluated through surveys and feedback from youth participants.

However, without a centralised point of contact, these evaluations are used only for internal purposes, limiting the broader impact and follow-up activities. Establishing a well-promoted, centralised

resource for youth social entrepreneurship could significantly enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of support mechanisms.

Kosovo

Kosovo's civic sector remained active in 2022 and 2023, with groups organizing protests for women's rights and against violence towards women, the social rights as well as freedom of speech. Successful campaigns included advocating for the removal of VAT taxes on menstrual products and a budget increase for domestic violence shelters. After constant protests and pressure from civil society, the government introduced legislative changes that would allow cases of gender-based violence to be prioritised since police and judicial authorities have tended to give lenient sentences to such perpetrators. Freedom House report on Kosovo for 2023 informs that "under the law on freedom of association, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) function freely, though the courts can ban groups that infringe on the constitutional order or encourage ethnic hatred. NGOs occasionally experience pressure to curtail criticism of the government, though many continue to criticise the authorities and have largely been able to engage in advocacy work without interference"⁵.

On the other hand, whether in creative entrepreneurship or in electoral process participation, young people in Kosovo demonstrate a clear willingness to become active citizens. Even though the Kosovo government through the Ministry of Youth Culture and Sports has developed the new strategy for youth in Kosovo, it remains to be seen how this new strategy will be successful in implementation and providing opportunity for youth activism that would possibly lead to social entrepreneurship. Also, the Ministry of Trade Innovation and

⁵ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/kosovo/freedom-world/2024>

Entrepreneurship is providing funding possibilities still the lack of awareness on benefits of Social Entrepreneurship is still present among young people. Another window for young people to become active citizens largely remains the projects initiated by international and local non-governmental organisations. There are usually several initiatives that strive to involve youth engagement as well as participation and lately also social entrepreneurship initiatives in Kosovo began to emerge.

During June 2024 the project conducted a survey on opportunities with youth workers and youth in Kosovo and it spanned across most of the regions in Kosovo. Section. The majority of respondents from youth workers groups informed that they have knowledge of Social Entrepreneurship of which 44% of respondents replied that they have very good knowledge of social entrepreneurship, while 52% of respondents replied that they have some knowledge of social entrepreneurship.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how familiar are you with the concept of social entrepreneurship?

25 answers

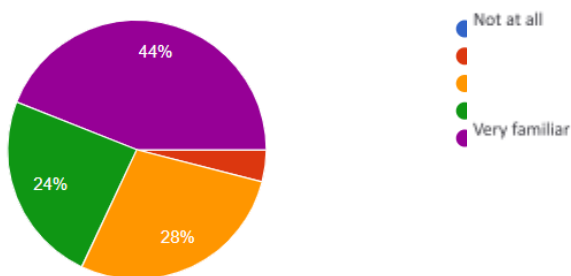


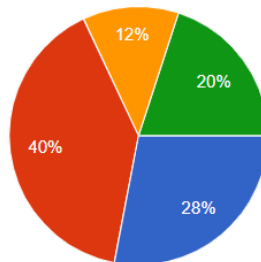
Figure 4 Familiarity of youth workers with social entrepreneurship in Kosovo

Youth workers in Kosovo have important role on supporting youth. It is a mixture of different support measures that are in place in Kosovo and provided by youth workers depending on their role and

responsibilities. Their role varies from providing mentorship, workshops, and networking with a small number of youth workers also supporting youth on direction to financial support and education. 20% of youth workers do not measure the impact of their work while 40% rely on sharing success stories and case studies. Only 12% provide for long-term tracking of ventures. Detailed information on social entrepreneurship, better marketing and promotion, integration of all phases of support to social enterprise startups, financial support and long-term mentoring and networking are some of the suggestions that youth workers provided in the survey. Finally, 80% of respondents stated that they will be willing to participate in the possible future network of youth workers with focus on social entrepreneurship.

How do you measure the impact of your support for young people and their social enterprise initiatives?

25 answers



I do not measure the impact
Success stories/case studies
Surveys and studies
Long-term tracking of ventures

I do not measure the impact
Success stories/case studies
Surveys and studies
Long-term tracking of ventures

● Ndjekja afatgjatë e sip
● Unë nuk e mas ndikim

Figure 5 Ways that youth workers measure the impact of their support to young people for social entrepreneurship initiatives

In Kosovo the idea of Social Entrepreneurship is at its infant stages. The legislation is very recent and borrowed by other EU countries such as Italy, and is yet to be seen how it will impact the social enterprise ecosystem. However, the legislation does not really

provide for any incentives nor make a significant distinguishment between continuing as NGO and becoming a Social Enterprise. Their financial support benefits are non-existent at this stage for social enterprises, hence no willingness to transform to social enterprise or become a social enterprise. The youth workers are doing their best within the existing system but rely heavily on donor funding projects. Youth on the other hand are primarily focused on securing their own financial stability and looking to provide services to EU and overseas business that pay relatively decent salaries hence venturing into social entrepreneurship is somewhat not attractive idea considering the lack of support from start-up to becoming a standalone business venture.

Challenges for social entrepreneurship for youth

Albania

Currently in Albania, digitalisation is an overarching priority; therefore, most of the ongoing debates in the youth sector and in policy making are linked to e-participation, cybersecurity and youth engagement. However, young people still have low trust in institutions and the economic challenges they face remain hot points for further policy intervention. Most of the issues require further policy development in Albania, given that topics such as meaningful participation and e-participation remain unexplored and unregulated by policy makers with concrete actions. On the other hand, more awareness, information and capacity building are needed within the youth sector and for young people on the importance of engagement and participation, bodies and existing procedures that enable their participation, as well as how young people can be themselves more proactive in this regard.

While a significant step has been made by introducing a Law on Social Enterprises, the sector's representatives are not pleased with its scope and have advocated amendments. But very few changes

have been affected; the law remains largely the same. Furthermore, they stressed that current legislation overlaps two different types of activities such as social services and work integration. This approach excludes many social enterprises that either provide social services or integrate marginalised groups but conduct other economic activities. The state disregards the importance of economic aspect of social enterprises that can strengthen their sustainability and capacity to meet social criteria. Another legal issue concerns entities that fulfil social enterprise criteria according to the EU definition but are not able to associate with the sector in Albania. More specifically, entities that call themselves social enterprises that are not registered as NPOs can incur a fine of up to 290 EUR.

Developing social entrepreneurship ventures by young people in Albania is notably challenging. Based on the input of youth workers involved in the focus group, achieving the status of a social enterprise requires affiliation with an organisation. It becomes the responsibility of the organisation to register it and be taxed as a business with a VAT number. In this case, there is no benefit in having the status of a social entrepreneurship. If the organisation associates the name with the social enterprise, it makes the relationship with different donors more difficult. Having the status of being a social enterprise seems to have more limitations than benefits. It seems very unlikely to succeed, except when there is support from EU funds.

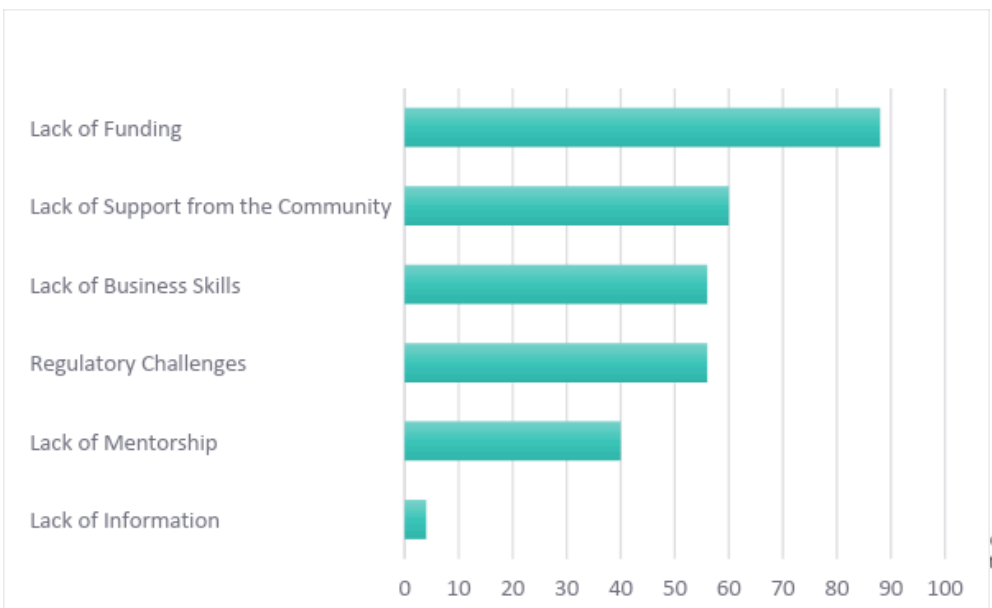
Based on the legal framework, social enterprises must have at least 30 percent of the staff from vulnerable groups amongst their employees. However, there is a gap in the law because there is no way to prove that a person belongs to certain vulnerable groups because it is based on self-declaration. For example, if someone is unemployed, he/she is consequently registered at the labour office.

But, for some other categories, it is difficult to have a confirmation document.

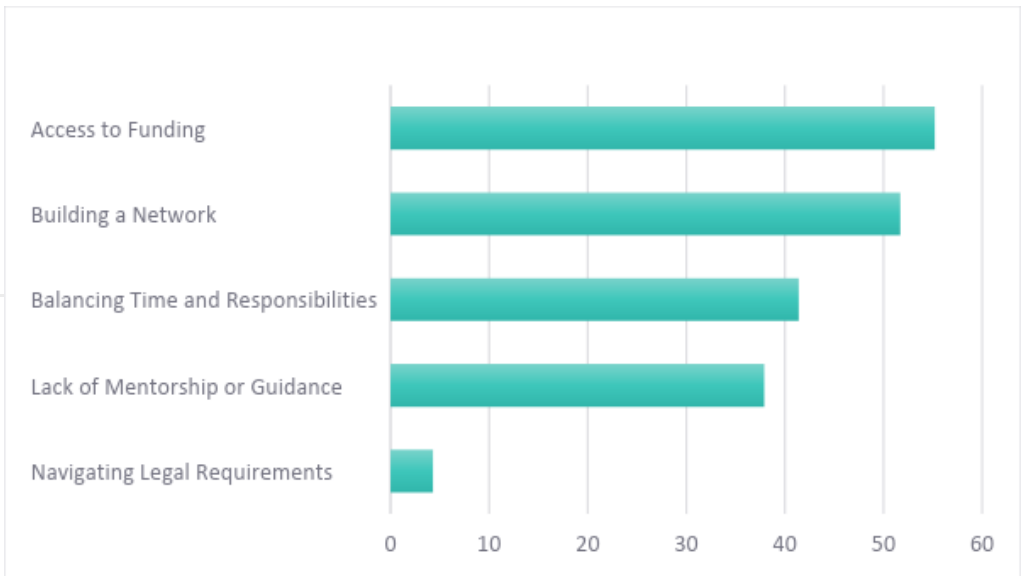
On the other hand, the legal framework is not clear and there are no tax reductions for social enterprises. Social enterprises are treated as regular businesses which also have penalties if they don't comply with law articles. For these reasons, organisations hesitate to apply to get the status of a social enterprise.

Moreover, to obtain the status of a social enterprise, you must apply to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. This Ministry has declared in 2019 to give an annual amount of 150 million ALL to be distributed to social ventures. But there has never been transparency in this aspect and there are no public announcements about where these funds go.

The survey evidenced other challenges faced by young social entrepreneurs in Albania. According to youth workers, lack of funding (88%), lack of support from the community (60%), and lack of business skills and regulatory challenges (56%) are the main challenges faced by young social entrepreneurs.



From young people's point of view, access to funding (55%), building a network (52%), and balancing time and responsibilities (41%) are the main challenges when it comes to undertaking such initiatives.

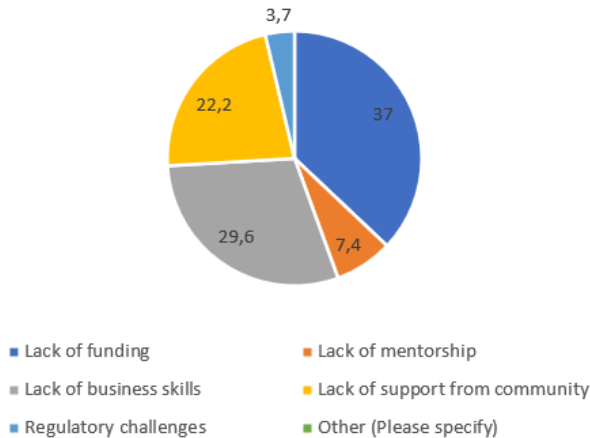


Bosnia-Herzegovina

One of the greatest challenges in BiH pertaining to active citizenship and social entrepreneurship is the lack of political will and legal instruments. As to the youth in BiH, there is still an ongoing struggle to introduce youth policies and strategies on a national level, and even though there are initiatives, mostly launched by an NGO sector,

there are still no relevant policies specifically promoting active citizenship and social entrepreneurship for youth.

What are the top three challenges you believe youth face when starting social entrepreneurial ventures?



Apart from the lack of legal instruments, young people in BiH are facing financial difficulties when starting their own business, followed by a lack of proper knowledge, skills, and experience in running and maintaining their own enterprises. Introducing social entrepreneurship for youth might be one of the possible solutions to financial difficulties, whereas young people after registering their start-up as a social enterprise might be entitled to pay less compensations and taxes. The issue of lacking proper knowledge and skills would remain, therefore there should be initiatives and programmes offering young people formal or non-formal education and training opportunities. For active citizenship, it is adamant that youth be separated from political pressure. Even though much can be done through advocacy and awareness raising, there should be proper governmental mechanisms in place. Nevertheless, advocating active citizenship for/towards social

entrepreneurship will provide youth with an opportunity to actively engage in changing the face of their communities.

What are the biggest challenges you face or anticipate facing in pursuing social entrepreneurship? (Select all that apply)

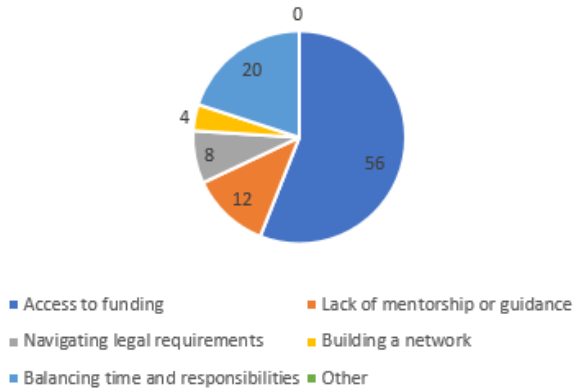


Figure 10 Challenges youth face starting a social enterprise in BiH based on youth's opinion

MARKET SURVIVAL AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The challenges for social entrepreneurship in Bosnia and Herzegovina are pervasive across all segments of society and its governance structure. A major impediment is the absence of a national Law on Social Entrepreneurship. While laws exist at the entity level in Republika Srpska and Brčko District, the lack of such legislation in the Federation of BiH results in unequal opportunities for social entrepreneurship across the state.

Despite these legal restrictions and disparities, social enterprises do exist in the country. However, there are no state mechanisms or structures to collect important monitoring data, such as the number

of social enterprises and their efficiency. Public institutions provide very limited assistance to social enterprises, largely due to decentralization and inadequate institutional oversight.

This situation leaves social entrepreneurship in Bosnia and Herzegovina reliant on the efforts of the private and non-governmental sectors, both of which face significant challenges in fostering a supportive environment for these ventures.

The private sector in BiH struggling to survive on the market is not that reluctant to give up some share of its profit to societal issues, while non-governmental sector, as being non-profitable finds it difficult to remain sustainable on the market. Still, it seems that non-governmental sector is the most active in the area of social entrepreneurship and youth activism, as it is composed of a nation-wide network of different associations tackling various societal challenges.

SURPASSING THE OBSTACLES WITH A STRONG DESIRE TO ADDRESS SOCIETAL ISSUES

According to a survey of youth workers from the non-governmental sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the greatest challenges youth encounter when starting their own social enterprises include a lack of financial funds, followed by inadequate entrepreneurial skills and limited support from the local community. The non-governmental sector, which struggles with insufficient financial support itself, primarily offers opportunities for youth to learn about social entrepreneurship through workshops and training sessions.

However, the sector faces challenges in providing mentorship, networking opportunities, financial counsel, and emotional support

to youth due to understaffing. Moreover, there is a lack of proper oversight mechanisms within non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or civil society organisations (CSOs), relying mainly on tools like surveys and youth feedback for monitoring. Few organisations have the capacity for long-term monitoring.

Survey results indicate that many young people are unfamiliar with the concept of social entrepreneurship, often conflating it with traditional entrepreneurship. Despite this, their motivation stems from a desire to address societal issues, with financial constraints being a major impediment.

Additional challenges identified by youth include balancing free time with responsibilities, navigating bureaucratic administrative procedures, and achieving sustainability in a volatile market. Unlike in the European Union, where starting a business is facilitated with benefits, youth in BiH find it easier to freelance than to establish sustainable enterprises.

Youth also emphasises the importance of local community support, advocating for incentives aligned with youth-related strategies and covering contemporary topics of interest. They seek community-provided facilities for meetings and idea-sharing, as well as free office space to support their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Despite these challenges, youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina are driven by a strong desire to address societal issues, which often outweighs the obstacles they face in their journey towards social entrepreneurship.

Kosovo

According to the World Bank data the share of youth not in education, employment or training, total (% of youth population) in Kosovo was reported at 32.9 % in 2022, compiled from officially recognised sources⁶. Kosovo is often highlighted for having the youngest population in Europe, with 55% of its population under 30 and over one-third under the age of 18. The Policy Brief published by the Austrian Institute for International Affairs⁷ among others highlights the following challenges and barriers beginning with; a) outdated quality of the education system, b) mismatch of education and labour market needs and c) finally the challenge of others deciding for young people without hearing and taking seriously the voice of young people. UNICEF Kosovo Programme⁸ informs that In Kosovo, traditional social norms mean that young people are often not included in decision-making in their homes, schools, or communities. Significantly, 61 per cent of adolescents and youth report feelings of exclusion, perceiving “little” or “no opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. This means adolescents and youth in Kosovo cannot realise their rights due to the lack of capacity, skills, and opportunity to participate in civic, political, and professional spheres. Today, only 10 per cent of youth in Kosovo believe their interests are well represented in politics. Platforms and mechanisms for youth participation at the local level are either absent or dysfunctional and fail to include marginalised and vulnerable youth. Both local and central institutions still do not consider young people’s development a priority, which is reflected by the dismal budget allocations for youth activities at both levels. The

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<https://tradingeconomics.com/kosovo/share-of-youth-not-in-education-employment-or-training-total-percent-of-youth-population-wb-data.html>

⁷ <https://www.wb2eu.eu/?p=9878>

⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/kosovoprogrammeme/second-decade-childs-life>

result is a generation of disenfranchised youth and adolescents with little experience or interest in social and civic engagement at local or regional levels. Women and youth face significant barriers to entrepreneurship due to age and gender-based discrimination and stigma, such as accessing networks and resources and gaining trust and recognition of skills and experience combined with a lack of support for funding as well as development of professional and technical skills.

During June 2024 the project surveyed opportunities with youth in Kosovo. The survey included youth from age 14 to age 29 and it spanned across all regions in Kosovo.

Only 14.8% of youth responded that they are very familiar with the concept of Social Entrepreneurship while the rest of the respondents responded that they know partially or very little about Social Entrepreneurship.

How familiar are you with the concept of social enterprise?

27 answers

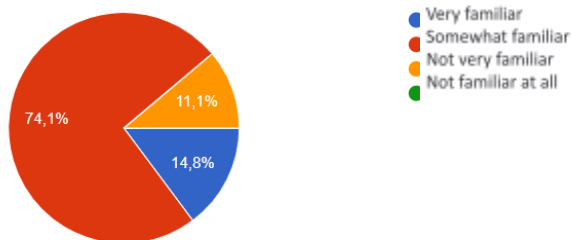


Figure 11 Familiarity of young people with social entrepreneurship in Kosovo

29.6% responded that they are involved in Social Enterprises while the majority declared that they are not involved in social enterprise activities. Out of those who responded that are involved in Social Entrepreneurship stated that they are involved in forms of volunteering, environment protection as well as local municipalities activities.

Are you currently involved in an organization/business that is a social enterprise?

27 answers

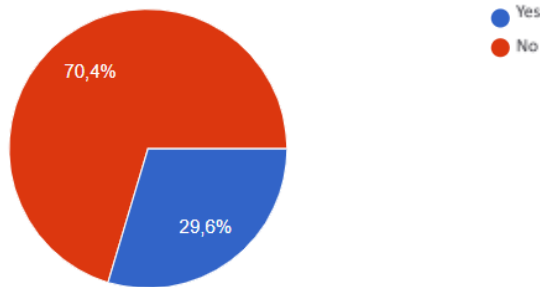
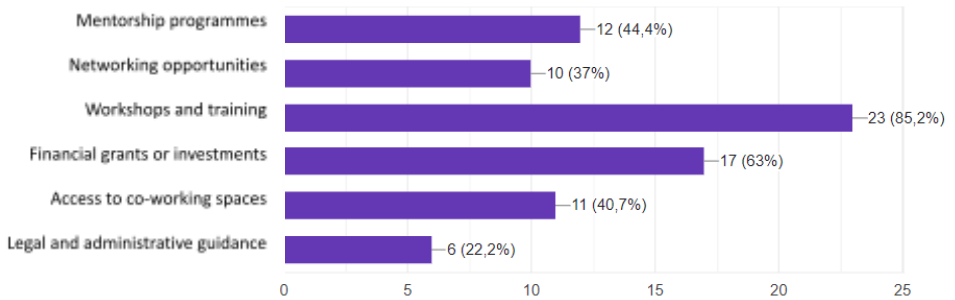


Figure 12 Involvement of youth in social enterprises

The desire to solve social issues combined with educational programme opportunities is the biggest motivator to get involved or interested in social entrepreneurship followed by Passion for entrepreneurship, Influence from peers or mentors and lastly media exposure. When asked about challenges and support, Balancing time and responsibilities was the biggest challenge identified by young people in this survey. Further other challenge identified is the Access to funding and Lack of mentorship or guidance followed by Building a network and navigating legal requirements.

What types of support do you believe would be most helpful for young social entrepreneurs? (Select all that apply)

27 answers



When asked What types of support they believe would be most beneficial to young social entrepreneurs – the young people by far identified the need for Workshops and training as the main form of support that they would need. After the need for training the next support identified is support for financial grants or investments followed by Mentoring support, Access to Co-working spaces while Networking and Legal and Administrative guidance are at the bottom of the list for the support needed. Only 18.5% of respondents see themselves as future leaders of a Social Enterprise, while the majority of respondents, 37% , see themselves as Supporting social ventures in a different capacity (e.g., mentor, investor). 14.8% are not sure whether they see themselves related to Social Enterprise while 29.6% see themselves as Involved in social entrepreneurship, but not as a leader.

Where do you see your involvement in social enterprise in the next 5 years?

27 answers

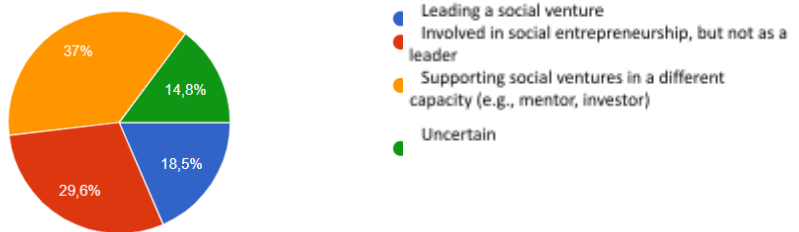


Figure 13 Aspirations for future involvement in a social enterprise

When asked - How can educational institutions, governments, or organisations better support youth in social entrepreneurship? – the youth provided a variety of answers including the realisation of various activities and enterprises for self-awareness and social progress. Sharing information about social enterprises, what they are and what they offer in the environment where they live. More opportunities are given in educational institutions so that young people have easier access to these enterprises. Educational institutions, governments and organisations can better support young people in social enterprise by offering educational programmes that develop their entrepreneurial skills, providing grants and funding for social projects, and creating mentoring and training networks to help develop their ideas. theirs. Finally announcing new grant openings in a way that motivates young people, managing to observe every activity of enterprises for the reason that young people know that their work is being watched by someone and is being evaluated and is not going to waste are answers given by respondents. When asked about - Are there any specific areas of social impact you are passionate about and would like to see more focus on in the social entrepreneurship community? – the respondents replied that leadership, Education, Training

Specific Education on Information Technology, and Mental and Psychological Support at the community level are some of the areas identified by youth as a possibility of their involvement in providing social impact.

Youth in Kosovo are seeking opportunities to get engaged in social life, but unfortunately, there are limited opportunities provided only by the NGOs and some very small local youth initiatives. The new government strategy for youth is under approval process yet it remains to be seen how it will be implemented. Unfortunately, the strategy does not provide and direct support to Social Entrepreneurship endeavours it rather focuses on youth activism with some measures of Equipping young people with life skills through qualitative non-formal education and qualitative youth work.

The role of local government and educational institutions in supporting youth social entrepreneurship

Albania

The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare is the main institution responsible for drafting policies for the promotion and development of social enterprises.

The State Social Service is an institution subordinate to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, responsible for implementing the policies of the ministry.

An important role that the local government units have:

1. Local government units support and implement social enterprise development policies in the territory within their jurisdiction.



2. Local government units enhance social enterprises' involvement in public procurement procedures, according to the conditions of the legislation in power

Although the roles and functions of each public institution may seem clear and beneficial to young entrepreneurs, youth workers share a different opinion. They emphasised in the focus group that very little is done on this topic by the government.

They cited that the government should organise consultation and take into account the suggestions given, not as they did in 2015-2016 when the law was about to be established. Local governments could provide rent-free facilities to start social enterprises or expand their activities to the existing ones. Another way could be to have social enterprises in the public buildings which would be a huge support. Or, cover health insurance and social contributions for a certain period and even pay first salaries till the venture progresses.

The government should promote social enterprises by changing the legal framework which lacks even the definition of a social enterprise and encourage social enterprises through supporting policies. Local government could search for best practices and apply them to our local situation.

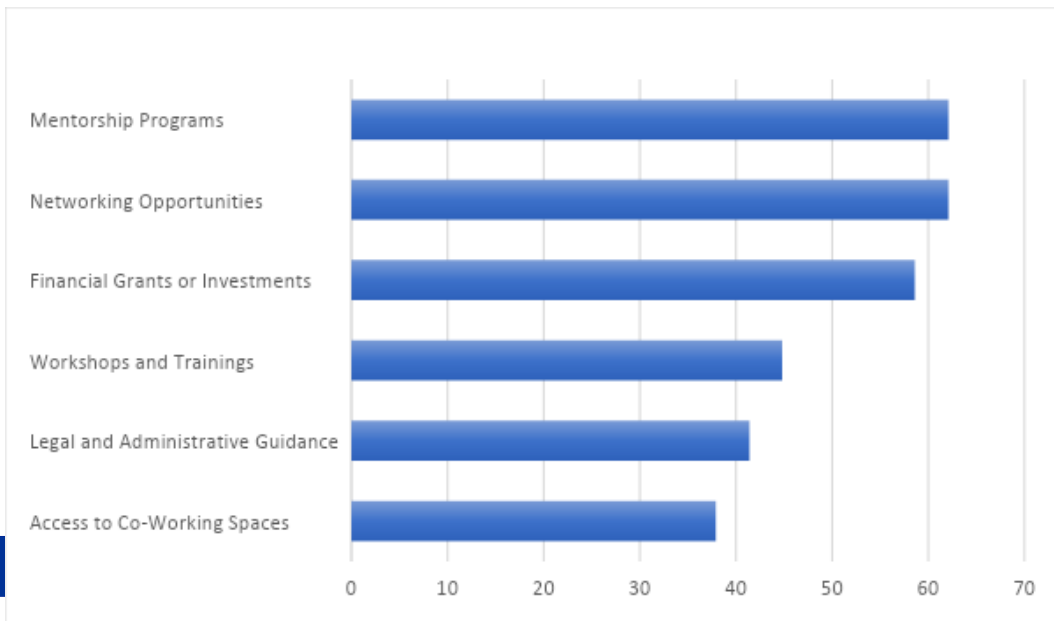
Furthermore, the documentation required for the application to obtain the status is problematic. The instructions are evasive and there is a lack of transparency

A dedicated transparent institution should be created to fully help social enterprises and support them through their progress. Even though public entities have the role of helping and guiding social entrepreneurs, there have been cases of individuals who have judged people leading these enterprises or have created different stereotypes about the purpose of these businesses. In this case,

training and consultation is necessary even for civil servants on the topic.

Young people were very clear in the survey according to this issue. They emphasised the importance of local government fulfilling their role through:

- Financial support through grants or other mechanism
- Policy Development and mentorship
- Curricula update in schools/universities on social entrepreneurship
- Legal framework changes to support young entrepreneurs
- Tax exclusion
- Low-interest loans
- Creating a network and mapping of social entrepreneurship
- Access to resources like co-working spaces and technology
- Simplified regulatory processes, along with offering awards, support through competitions, and public recognition
- Involvement in decision-making processes



Regarding the educational institutions, they cited the need to be helpful through:

- Mentorship and guidance programmes, trainings, boot camps, workshops
- Spreading information and knowledge
- Creating networking opportunities
- Youth exchanges to share best practices
- Raising awareness and advocating for better support
- Specialised courses and other activities focused on social entrepreneurship. It is also important to teach entrepreneurship at a young age for the youth to create that entrepreneurial mindset. It could be organised with incubation programmes and run Hackathons so that young people can pitch their socially impactful ideas.

Through this support, young social entrepreneurs may be inspired and motivated to pursue their ventures.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

LOCAL ENTERPRISES TO ENHANCE SOCIAL WELL-BEING

Local government plays a pivotal role in Bosnia and Herzegovina, considering its status in not having adopted the Law on Social Entrepreneurship, or for Youth on a national level.

It operates at various levels depending on the entity. Municipal or city administrations serve as the lowest level in BiH, while in the Federation of BiH, cantonal governance units also play a significant role. In Republika Srpska, city administrations represent the local government units.

Despite these administrative structures, the adoption of a Law on Entrepreneurship remains pending in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, there have been initiatives focusing on social entrepreneurship in certain cantons. For instance, Sarajevo Canton has developed a comprehensive Study on Social Entrepreneurship aligned with the EU Agenda 2020 priorities. This study aimed to draft and adopt the Development Strategy of Sarajevo Canton for 2012-2020.

The Study defines social entrepreneurship according to the European Commission's framework, emphasizing enterprises established to enhance social well-being. It outlines several measures to promote social entrepreneurship:

- Establishing an information centre or online platform for stakeholders seeking information on social entrepreneurship.
- Introducing necessary education at all levels, particularly in high schools and universities, and offering educational programmes for public administration, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector.
- Facilitating collaboration between non-governmental and private sectors as contact points for presenting social entrepreneurship programmes and available funding opportunities.
- Utilizing existing potentials to develop public and social services and enabling social enterprises to contribute to public and social welfare.

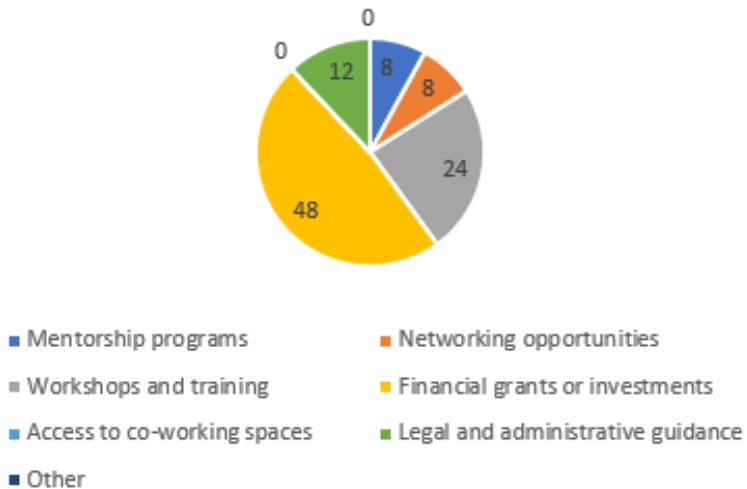
- Securing and developing models of social economy in areas like environmental protection, tourism, small and medium enterprises, family businesses, traditional crafts, and local products.
- Activating the banking sector to establish specific credit lines for social entrepreneurs, including micro-credit start-ups.
- Supporting technological innovations and improving all-sector services.
- Initiating the drafting of an institutional framework at the cantonal and federal levels to support social entrepreneurship.

These measures aim to foster a supportive environment for social entrepreneurship in BiH, encouraging innovation and community engagement across various sectors.

LOCAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AS THE FIRST RESPONDENT TO SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

Based on field research and respondent feedback analysis, local government support has been identified as a crucial resource needed to introduce and enhance social entrepreneurship opportunities for youth. Specifically, youth emphasise the importance of financial resources provided by local government units (municipal and cantonal levels). These resources should be in the form of grants directly

What types of support do you believe would be most beneficial to young social entrepreneurs? (Select all that apply)



allocated from local government budgets, along with specific financial incentives tailored for young entrepreneurs.

In addition to financial support, local governments are urged to allocate funds for educational and training programmes tailored for young entrepreneurs, as well as mentorship initiatives. Ensuring the sustainability of educational and entrepreneurial centres through funding various programmes and projects specifically designed for social entrepreneurship is also crucial.

Local governments should play a pivotal role in facilitating access to EU funding opportunities for youth, ensuring they can efficiently utilise these resources. This can include covering startup costs,

co-financing initiatives, and providing educational opportunities to acquire necessary knowledge and skills.

Moreover, there is a pressing need to improve the promotion of social entrepreneurship at the local level, ensuring that young people are aware of the opportunities available to them.

For youth workers, addressing the lack of local community support is identified as one of the top three challenges. They emphasise the importance of local community support in enhancing their efforts to promote and facilitate social entrepreneurship among youth.

By addressing these needs and challenges, local governments can significantly enhance the environment for youth-led social entrepreneurship, fostering innovation and community development across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

INTRODUCE EDUCATION ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A PREREQUISITE FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT

The Study on Social Entrepreneurship in Sarajevo Canton has outlined essential measures focusing on education and training sessions. These initiatives target social entrepreneurs, managers, employees of social enterprises, volunteers, and even public administration officials. Whether implemented through formal educational channels or increased informal sessions, this segment is crucial for the local government to effectively foster social entrepreneurship development.

Survey respondents have underscored the importance of incorporating educational and training sessions on social entrepreneurship. Key implementation strategies include:

- Organizing practical training sessions tailored for youth.
- Integrating topics relevant to youth, such as unemployment, enhanced education, and mitigating brain drain, into strategies and action plans.
- Expanding educational sessions and content dedicated to social entrepreneurship.
- Hosting workshops and providing opportunities for project funding.
- Empowering youth to initiate their own startups and social enterprises.

To ensure that social entrepreneurship gains equal recognition and support as an economic asset within the community, it is imperative for all levels of government to collaborate. Specifically, higher levels of government must acknowledge and endorse the influential role of local governments in advancing social entrepreneurship.

These measures collectively aim to enrich the entrepreneurial landscape in Sarajevo Canton, fostering innovation and sustainable development for the benefit of its communities.

Kosovo

In the first week of July 2024 PEN organised a focus group discussion with the aim of gathering opinions from individuals that are involved on the topic of social entrepreneurship. The participants included representatives from various sectors, including business incubators, NGOs, representative of the Ministry of Youth Culture and Sports, and aspiring social entrepreneurs. The focus group aimed to identify challenges, opportunities, and perceptions regarding social



entrepreneurship in the current socio-economic and legal landscape. The following are some of the key elements of the focus group discussion:

KEY FINDINGS

1. Limited Information and Legal Ambiguities

- **Lack of Information:** Participants highlighted a significant lack of information about social enterprises. This gap in knowledge affects awareness and understanding of social entrepreneurship among potential entrepreneurs and the general public.
- **Legal Vagueness:** The legal framework governing social enterprises is perceived as vague. Social enterprises are often not registered as entrepreneurs but rather as businesses or non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which creates confusion and potential legal challenges.

2. Success Stories and Legal Influences

- **Few Success Stories:** There are not many widely known success stories of social entrepreneurship. This lack of visibility contributes to scepticism about the viability and benefits of social entrepreneurship.
- **International Models:** The current social enterprise law is influenced by Italian and German models, focusing more on the NGO logic. While there are models like the "corporate social responsibility" that would link bigger corporations with social enterprises there is insufficient information, and they face challenges in implementation.

3. Funding Challenges

- **Funding Disparities:** NGOs have the right to receive funds, while social enterprises often do not, leading to a disparity in funding opportunities. The profit vs. non-profit distinction complicates the financial sustainability of social enterprises

Recommendations for support mechanisms and educational/training resources for young people to get involved in social entrepreneurship

Albania

During the focus group, youth workers highlighted various recommendations for fostering social entrepreneurship among young people.

One of their recommendations was for local government and public institutions to raise the capacities of their staff in regards to application for funds on EU programmes and later on to distribute it to young social entrepreneurs in order to initiate and progress their ideas.

Most importantly, there should be a change in legislation to encourage young people to undertake such initiatives.

Moreover, the mentality about the mission of social enterprises and the work they do should change as well. Awareness raising campaigns, workshops, training are a must to support social ventures.

Also, it is of great importance to incorporate the development of social enterprises and voluntary work in the school curriculum. It could be added to the subject career orientation that is already

established. Additionally, administrative staff, teachers, and parents have to be trained on the topic.

According to the survey findings, youth workers recommended the following actions:

- Form a union or association which fosters new social entrepreneurship ventures
- Better legal instruments in their support
- Community positive pressure to consume products or get services offered by social enterprises
- Conducting meetings with different stakeholders such as policymakers, business actors, youth workers, NGOs, and young people to support new and the progress of such initiatives
- Establishing youth-focused funds and offering microfinancing options
- Building a community through incubators, accelerators, and peer networks can facilitate collaboration and shared learning.
- Simplified registration processes and tax incentives
- Providing access to technology and innovation hubs will help young entrepreneurs develop and test their ideas.
- Enhancing visibility through media exposure, awards, and public awareness campaigns could give recognition for their efforts.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

SUPPORT MECHANISMS

The Study on Social Entrepreneurship in Sarajevo Canton outlines critical measures aimed at introducing, efficiently implementing, and

ensuring the sustainability of social entrepreneurship in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1. Increasing Promotion of Social Entrepreneurship Benefits

- Introduce education programmes in social entrepreneurship and social economy.
- Establish and conduct training programmes tailored for public administration.
- Design awareness campaigns highlighting the societal benefits and positive impacts of social entrepreneurship.
- Establish a networking platform for social enterprises.
- Support innovation and foster a competitive spirit, implementing a rewarding system.
- Develop specific entrepreneurial and managerial skills for founders, employees, and volunteers in social entrepreneurship.

2. Providing More Funding Opportunities

- Foster regional cooperation and increase the utilization of international funds.
- Offer financial incentives for social entrepreneurs.
- Enhance networking and accessibility to platforms offering initial capital and other resources.

- Develop special programmes to fund the initial startup phase (up to three years).
- Support the establishment of associations representing vulnerable groups.

3. *Optimizing Legal Framework*

- Advocate for the adoption of a Law defining social enterprises, their activities, and designations to enhance visibility in the market.
- Amend supporting laws to create a more conducive legal environment.
- Facilitate administrative procedures to streamline operations.
- Provide free-of-charge use of public spaces for a limited period (long-term).
- Develop a supportive regulatory environment specifically tailored for associations in Sarajevo Canton.
- Establish a system for social monitoring and reporting.

4. *Identifying Strategic Market Sectors*

- Highlight specific sectors conducive to the development of social enterprises:
 - Transport, especially public transport.
 - Social protection.
 - Health sector.
 - Education.

- Environment.
- Public utilities services.
- Disaster protection.
- Tourism.
- Agriculture.

INNOVATIVE TRENDS

Youth workers have identified innovative trends that could effectively engage youth in social entrepreneurship. These include:

- Digital Transformation, Sustainable Development, and Green Entrepreneurship
- Governance and Management
- Innovations in the Labor Market
- Information Technology
- Social Responsibility and Financial Independence
- Enhanced Social Networking
- Comprehensive Social Media Platform Promotion
- Support for Startup Development
- Promotion of Youth Activism and Self-Promotion Opportunities
- Exchange of Experiences with Successful Entrepreneurs
- Development of Mentorship Programmes
- Facilitation of Sectoral Cooperation (Private, Public, and NGO Sectors)
- Creation of a Database for Potential Investors
- Establishment of a Central Monitoring and Evaluation Body for Entrepreneurship
- Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Social Entrepreneurship
- Development of Hub Communities for Social Entrepreneurship



Creating a robust ecosystem for young social entrepreneurs requires trust and support from all levels of government and society. Emphasizing youth activism and their innovative potential is crucial. Continuous and inclusive support should be provided to address youth needs and expand the scope of social entrepreneurship into areas of interest such as:

- Culture and Art
- IT Sector
- Sport and Recreation
- Nutrition
- Legal Aid
- Mobile Application Development

By embracing these trends and broadening the horizons of social entrepreneurship, Bosnia and Herzegovina can foster a dynamic environment where youth thrive as innovators and changemakers in their communities.

Kosovo

Based on the conclusions drawn from the survey with youth and youth workers and focus group discussion the project will try to summarise some of the recommendations that highlights the strong desire of Kosovar youth to engage in social change, but acknowledges a lack of structured opportunities. While a new government youth strategy is in development, it currently emphasises activism and skills development, neglecting social entrepreneurship (SE). This document proposes recommendations to address these challenges and nurture a thriving social entrepreneurship ecosystem for young people.

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **Limited awareness and education on social entrepreneurship:** The concept of social entrepreneurship is new in Kosovo, leading to a lack of understanding among potential young entrepreneurs.
- **Unclear legal framework:** Recent social enterprise legislation lacks clarity and incentives, making it unclear how it differs from traditional NGOs and disincentivizing transformation.
- **Financial hurdles:** Absence of dedicated funding mechanisms for social enterprises makes them financially unsustainable compared to donor-funded NGOs.
- **Youth career aspirations:** Young people prioritise immediate financial security, leading them towards higher-paying jobs rather than social enterprise ventures perceived to lack support.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Awareness and Education:

- **Develop social entrepreneurship curricula:** Integrate social entrepreneurship modules into educational programmes at all levels, with a focus on business skills, social impact measurement, and legal aspects.
- **Organise workshops and seminars:** Conduct targeted workshops on social entrepreneurship, including success stories, feasibility studies, and business plan development, specifically for youth.
- **Utilise online platforms:** Create a web portal offering resources, educational materials, and mentorship opportunities for aspiring young social entrepreneurs.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework:



- **Review and refine social enterprise legislation:** Advocate for revising the social enterprise law to clarify its benefits and distinctions from NGOs. Consider including tax breaks, simplified registration processes, and access to specific funding streams.
- **Promote stakeholder engagement:** Engage young people, incubators, and social enterprises in discussions around refining the legal framework to better suit their needs.

3. Funding and Financial Sustainability:

- **Establish dedicated funding mechanisms:** Create government or donor-supported funding programmes specifically for social enterprises, focusing on start-up capital, grants, and impact investment opportunities.
- **Explore social impact bonds:** Investigate the feasibility of social impact bonds, where investors provide upfront financing for social enterprise projects with social impact outcomes determining returns.
- **Encourage corporate social responsibility:** Motivate businesses to invest in or partner with social enterprises aligned with their corporate social responsibility strategies.

4. Building an Enabling Ecosystem:

- **Facilitate networking opportunities:** Organise regular networking events connecting young social entrepreneurs, mentors, investors, and potential collaborators.
- **Municipal support:** Encourage local governments to develop and implement initiatives directly supporting social enterprises, such as preferential procurement policies, incubation space, and streamlined permitting processes.

- **Success stories and role models:** Showcase success stories of established Kosovar social enterprises, inspiring and motivating young people to consider this path.

Conclusion

It can be In Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo, there is a pressing need to enhance awareness and education about social entrepreneurship among young people and youth workers. In Albania, the majority of youth is not familiar with social entrepreneurship, indicating a need for targeted training, workshops, and courses to increase understanding. Similarly, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are misconceptions about social entrepreneurship, with many youths favouring traditional profit-driven ventures over socially impactful enterprises. Both youth and youth workers in this region require enhanced education and practical business skills to bridge this gap. In Kosovo, integrating social entrepreneurship modules into educational programmes and developing online platforms with resources and mentorship opportunities can significantly improve awareness and understanding.

The legal and policy frameworks in these countries need improvements to support the growth of social entrepreneurship. In Albania, clearer legislation, increased transparency in funding, and stakeholder consultation are essential to create a supportive environment for social entrepreneurship initiatives. Bosnia-Herzegovina faces bureaucratic hurdles and an unclear legal framework, necessitating alignment with European Union standards to foster a supportive environment. In Kosovo, the current legislation lacks clarity and incentives. A comprehensive review to introduce tax breaks, streamlined registration processes, and access to specific



funding streams tailored to social enterprises is necessary to provide the needed support.

Financial support for social entrepreneurship remains a critical challenge across all three countries. Community and government support is also crucial for fostering social entrepreneurship. In Albania, the government and public institutions need to elaborate policies and create a supportive legal environment to encourage social entrepreneurship initiatives. Local community support in Bosnia and Herzegovina often falls short, with a need to empower local governments to drive initiatives and provide tailored support grounded in youth-centric research. In Kosovo, local governments should implement preferential procurement policies for social enterprises, offer incubation spaces with subsidised rent, and streamline permitting processes to demonstrate their commitment to fostering social entrepreneurship. Networking and mentorship are also pivotal for the success of young social entrepreneurs, as well as skills development programmes. Last but not least, monitoring and evaluation are critical for ensuring the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at fostering social entrepreneurship.

By addressing these areas, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo can build robust social entrepreneurship ecosystems. This will empower young people to combine their entrepreneurial spirit with a desire for social change, leading to inclusive and sustainable development across the region. Implementing these recommendations will enable these countries to transform their current landscapes, allowing young people to unlock their full potential and contribute to a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

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