



From Intent  
to Impact

# Implementing the New Law on Youth



Organization for Security and  
Co-operation in Europe  
Mission in Kosovo

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo (the Mission) has long advanced youth public participation as part of its mandate to promote human rights, democratization, and inclusion. It has spared no effort in supporting the development of the new youth legislative and regulatory framework, notably the 2024 Law on Youth and the accompanying Regulation on Youth Councils, which mark a major step toward formalizing youth public engagement.<sup>1,2</sup> This brief addressed to all central and local actors involved in establishing the new youth councils aims to fully unlock the potential of the policy and legal reform in generating a positive change, while considering the specific circumstances on the local level to better enhance its relevance.

## KEY CHALLENGES

Thanks to desk research, survey and youth outreach meetings with municipalities and youth stakeholders at the local level<sup>3</sup>, the Mission identified concerns in relation to the implementation of the new youth legal and regulatory framework.

### Co-ordination and Transition

The transition from Local Youth Action Councils (LYACs) to Local Youth Councils (LYCs) has created uncertainty over roles and responsibilities, with youth fearing duplication and municipalities being unsure of their new facilitating role. Sustaining existing positive practices is a significant challenge, while options for co-ordination, communication, institutional support and alignment of local priorities remain unclearly defined.

### Institutional and Financial

Against the pressing demand for capacity building, it is unclear whether the Agency for Youth Development (AYD) can effectively fulfil its competencies. Municipalities have also stressed the need for a clear legal basis that allows public financing of LYCs in line with budget cycles, as well as for guidance and standardizing procedures for the establishment and support of youth councils.

### Sustainability and Motivation

The informal and voluntary nature of the Central Youth Council's (CYC) and LYCs' participation raises concerns about long-term viability, as the lack of incentives may undermine consistent youth engagement. A new general legislative framework on voluntarism, not limited to youth volunteerism, is still lacking to create genuine incentives for young people's public participation.

### Awareness and Capacity-building

Less than half of interviewed young people are familiar with the new legal framework, creating an awareness gap that risks limiting effective implementation. Both youth and municipal actors called for practical training on participatory methods, fundraising, advocacy, community outreach, policy monitoring and institutional coordination.

### Inclusion and Representation

Strengthening outreach to marginalized groups, including youth with disabilities and those from non-majority communities, remains a critical challenge to preserve the representative function of the councils. The risk of political influence compromising the councils' representativeness should also be considered and, whenever necessary, mitigated.

<sup>1</sup> Law No. 08/L-264 on Youth, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=95847>

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (MSY) NO. 09/2024 on Youth Councils, approved by the Minister with Decision No. 140/2024, date 31.12.2024, available at: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=100111>

<sup>3</sup> The Mission conducted this research between March and May 2025, covering 40 respondents in the survey, and six outreach meetings across 26 municipalities engaging over 100 youth stakeholders.

## CALL TO ACTION

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To fully realize the potential of the new youth framework, the Mission recommends to complement the adoption of legislative and regulatory measures with concrete measures, thus ensuring that youth councils become effective, inclusive, and sustainable platforms for youth participation.

### Co-ordination for collective engagement

**Strong communication among the Ministry of Sports and Youth (MSY), municipalities, youth councils, and civil society should become the norm, not the exception.** Aligning municipal strategies with LYC plans will create consistency and amplify impact. Former LYAC members can serve as mentors, ensuring that valuable experience is carried forward and used to strengthen new youth structures.

### Strong Institutions for a strong and resilient youth sector

**No youth structure can thrive without institutional and financial support.** Municipalities should integrate LYC funding into their annual budgets, provide workspaces and logistical resources, and designate youth officers to guide councils while safeguarding their independence. Municipal progress on LYC establishment should be monitored for accountability. The AYD must be fully operational and capable of offering technical assistance and reinforcing co-operation at all levels.

### Nurture motivation for sustainable engagement

**Motivation drives continuity.** Recognizing youth engagement through certificates, academic credits, or career-linked benefits will sustain their participation and underscore its value. Visible acknowledgement of youth contributions to policy and decision-making processes will help institutionalize youth councils as credible, lasting platforms for democratic dialogue and community leadership.

### Build Knowledge and Skills

**Awareness must lead to empowerment.** The AYD, supported by partners, like the Mission, should lead inclusive, hands-on training programmes on participatory planning, advocacy, and project implementation. A youth-friendly, multi-language awareness campaign should make rights, roles, and opportunities under the new system clear and accessible to all.

### Inclusion at the core

**Diversity is the strength of any democratic process.** Municipalities and civil society should ensure an open, transparent selection of council members by implementing an effective public outreach. Targeted outreach and support measures must promote participation of youth from non-majority communities, rural areas, and persons with disabilities, ensuring every young voice counts in shaping local decisions.

## THE ROLE OF THE OSCE MISSION IN KOSOVO

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The OSCE Mission in Kosovo remains a trusted and strategic partner to institutions, youth bodies, and civil society in translating the new youth framework into practice and tangible results. Leveraging its unique mandate and field presence, the Mission bridges the policy and participation, strengthening institutional capacity to design and implement youth-centred policies, empowering young people to engage confidently with decision-makers, and fostering the dialogue and trust essential to democratic governance and resilience.



## ROADMAP TO UNLOCK

## THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE YOUTH REFORM

### Co-ordination and Transition

- Strengthen communication
- Align strategies
- Leverage institutional memory

### Awareness and Capacity-building

- Develop and roll out training and mentoring
- Launch a youth-friendly, multi-language awareness campaign
- Utilize the OSCE Manual titled: "Establishing and Managing the Youth Councils"

### Institutional and Financial Support

- Fully operationalize the AYD
- Clarify legal financing pathways for LYCs as informal groups
- Ensure municipal support for LYCs

### Inclusion and Representation

- Guarantee transparent and inclusive selection
- Promote participation of marginalized youth

### Sustainability and Motivation

- Establish digital and physical record-keeping systems
- Advocate for policy or legal amendments
- Support and monitor municipal progress

