



## Know Your Rights

### **Summary**

In Kosovo, like in most countries, the rights of youth and their participation in decision-making processes are regulated legislatively in the Assembly. However, youth in Kosovo are still not well-informed of their rights and the existing legislative processes. Based on focus groups held with the representatives of Local Youth Action Councils from Skenderaj, Drenas, Rahovec and Peja; School Action Council representatives and young people, it was concluded that there is still a critical need for having direct channels to advocate and participate in policy decisions that affect them and their peers/communities. Based on the focus groups, it was noted that youth leaders lack the awareness, relevant data and skills that help conduct evidence based advocacy, and so the creation of a user-friendly tool was necessary to raise awareness of the information about the existence of youth rights in Kosovo.

This campaign, initiated by UNICEF Innovations Lab Kosovo has reflected the vital importance of rights knowledge to active citizenship and self-advocacy, while the Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo introduced the Know Your Rights Kosovo-wide platform which offers the chance for young people to report on rights violations online to the Ombudsperson's office.

The collaboration with the OIK is an opportunity to create an innovative system of monitoring the violation of rights. This Platform is instrumental in expanding social dialogue between local authorities, youth organizations and the youth of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

*"Know your rights"* platform is the first online mechanism for the monitoring of the right violations is established, and is expected to increase youth-led advocacy and to expand rights awareness in the most marginalized communities in Kosovo.

### **What is the "Know your rights" platform?**

*"Know Your Rights"* is an online platform, developed by UNICEF Innovations Lab Kosovo in cooperation with the Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo, that helps Kosovo's young people understand their rights and entitlements by providing easily-navigable, easily-understood youth-friendly descriptions of the rights of young people (aged 16-29) under applicable legislation. The platform's *Rights Guide* covers key rights in areas prioritized by young people, including: education, health, minority communities, employment, family, the law, community engagement, social benefits and youth empowerment. Accompanying each right is a mapping of the institutions that are responsible to uphold the rights, as well as those to which young people can address complaints if the rights are violated, and an in-line glossary of youth-friendly definitions of important terms and concepts.

The platform details the process of addressing complaints to the Ombudsperson Institution in Kosovo (OIK) and provides a mechanism to file reports directly through the “*Know Your Rights*” platform.

The platform is designed to reach and engage youth of Kosovo to actively participate in advocating for the changes they wish to see in their communities. The collaboration with the Ombudsperson Institution of Kosovo was an opportunity to create an innovative system of monitoring the violation of rights. Through the close partnership between UNICEF and OIK, the campaign launched a year ago through various events, such as workshops with students in schools throughout Kosovo, roundtables on youth rights with youth and institutional partners, distribution of promotional materials to municipal youth centers, etc. So far, the platform has more than 8 thousand users and has been visited more than 30 thousand times.

The usage of the platform has been positive from the outset and it is expected that the usage will steadily increase following the handover of the platform, whereby OIK will continue the promotional campaign with high school students. As an institutional leader in the monitoring and protection of human rights and freedoms, as well as a great partner in the design and implementation of the “*Know Your Rights*” platform, OIK is set out to promote and apply the platform through the execution of their mission with respect to youth.

Specifically, this will address the fundamentals of youth participation; youth understanding their rights and entitlements; youth having access to youth-friendly translations of their rights and entitlements, and opportunities to be included in the formulation of policy and to evaluate the provision of resources. It will also seek to engage a broad range of local and international stakeholders involved in child and youth issues in Kosovo, including local youth leaders and associations, relevant government Ministries, local and international policy and advocacy experts, international donor organizations and select private sector entities.

Public institutions intend to strengthen youth organizations and, through them, to establish a permanent interaction and a bridge of cooperation between youth and decision-making institutions. As such, “*Know your rights*” offers a user-friendly online platform for addressing all the issues related to advocacy and lack of information about rights of youth in Kosovo.

### **Why the Know your Rights platform?**

The Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth No. 03/L-145, “aims the advancement and continuous-affirmation of youth participation in decision-making processes, without any distinction and exclusion, in the development of a democratic society, in order to improve the lifestyle of the youth and their social status”.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, this law obliges Kosovo institutions to ensure youth participation and influence in decision-making processes affecting the youth. In addition, this law also details some of the fields where youth participation is mandatory:

- Education;
- Employment;
- Public health;
- Social issues;

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. *KOSOVO STRATEGY FOR YOUTH 2013-2017*. Prishtinë: S. N., 1992. Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, 2013. Web. 24 Mar. 2017.

- Culture, sports and recreation;
- Citizen education and democracy;
- Environment, spatial planning and rural development

The overarching goal of “*Know Your Rights*” is to offer user-friendly tools and activities aiming to get the youth of Kosovo to be directly involved and influence decision-making, with a focus on providing accessible participation in the key issues that affect them and their peers.

The present situation lays emphasis on raising awareness of usage of tools related to policies that improve the access of young people to their rights. These policies could include making more effective use of the tools the Assembly of Kosovo offers and developing further activities and programs that take into account the specific needs of young people. As such, this platform serves as an important reference for improving the legislative system in the country. It plays an important role in holding key institutions and decision-makers accountable for the fulfillment of rights for all children, youth and women. Thus, the present goal is about reaching an increased number of youth, especially the most vulnerable ones, and making sure they are empowered to actively engage in civil society/community activities, raise their voices and actively participate in decision-making processes