

Expanding opportunities for young people

MUNICIPALITIES FOR YOUTH IN KOSOVO

2019–2025 | US\$2.79 million grant

With 25% of its population between the ages of 10 and 24, Kosovo has the youngest demographic in Europe. Yet, 30.3%¹ of them are neither employed nor participating in education or vocational training, and young people have few opportunities to participate in decision-making. This limits their economic prospects and social mobility and contributes to migration, political dissatisfaction, and radicalization.

The [Municipalities for Youth in Kosovo \(M4Y\)](#) project, administered by the World Bank and financed by the [Japan Social Development Fund](#) (JSDF) supported the Government of Kosovo's efforts to engage young people in civic life and build their skills. Implemented by the Ministry of Local Government Administration, the project aimed to increase economic and social opportunities for young people, particularly those who were unemployed and not attending training or school.

Approved in 2019, M4Y operated in 14 municipalities and funded youth-led initiatives, offering leadership and job training, as well as fostering stronger engagement between young people and local institutions.

To create meaningful opportunities, M4Y provided grants for 240 youth-led community initiatives, ranging from establishing youth centers and creative spaces to organizing environmental clean-ups, sports events, and vocational training programs. Of the 195 community initiatives completed, 130 were led by young women, helping to establish new models of leadership and inclusive participation.

M4Y offered leadership and job-readiness training to over 3,188 young people, exceeding the initial target of 3,000. The skills training program, which covered project management, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship, helped young people build confidence and prepare for future employment. Of all trainees, 1,816 were young women, while 922 participants belonged to marginalized communities, including Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian groups. Additionally, 504 young people received training as volunteers, and 185 of them supported municipal projects and services.

M4Y gave young people a stronger voice in their communities, helping build mutual respect and understanding among youth from diverse backgrounds, as well as offering new opportunities to develop skills. The project was widely supported by local governments, who cofinanced the youth initiatives, ensuring that young people were involved in shaping and implementing local development projects. Some municipalities integrated trained youth volunteers into municipal departments, where they worked as accountants, engineers, or social workers alongside government officials and contributed to community planning efforts. For many participants, this project was their first opportunity to engage with their local government in a meaningful way.

"The IT course (delivered through the M4Y grant) for young people with disabilities and others from marginalized groups significantly boosted their digital literacy and self-confidence. Many of them gained a new sense of independence and were certified in computer skills", said a female participant from Ferizaj municipality.

By working directly with young people and local governments, M4Y provided a model for youth engagement. The experience also highlighted the importance of simplifying grant procedures and providing additional support for youth navigating financial and administrative processes, as well as addressing socioeconomic barriers, such as limited transportation options, to ensure the participation of youth from rural and peri-urban areas.

Significantly, M4Y underlined the importance of youth inclusion in the country. The lessons learned and experience from the JSDF-financed M4Y Project can inform and support the development of future engagement in this area.

¹ Kosovo Statistics Agency, <https://askapi.rks-gov.net/Custom/c1704156-ee8d-4715-b4d5-73f95ab4002b.pdf>

