

# DETAILS

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## Human rights education Primary schools is where it starts

OSCE helps the Ministry of Education Science and Technology introduce human rights teaching in civic education classes

**Nikola Gaon, OSCE**

***Democratic institution building and protection and promotion of human rights are the key tasks of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (Pillar III of the UN Interim Administration).***

These tasks are often perceived as something that has to do with politics and politicians only, yet it is the common people that constitute a society and determine its quality. In other words, politicians and politics, though very important, cannot create on their own a democratic society that upholds human rights. These values need to be embraced by everyday people. In addition, for a human rights culture to be successful, it is necessary for everyone to learn how to use the law in order to have their rights protected.

And rather than embracing these values at an older age, human rights and democracy can best be understood in early stages of life. In fact, human rights learning can begin in pre-school and should continue through primary, secondary and higher education.

Kosovo's education system and curriculum

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*Human rights education is now being delivered in primary schools' sixth grade. International recommendation is to have it delivered through all education cycles from primary to higher education.*

developed following the 1999 conflict and establishment of UN's Interim Administration was an updated from the former Yugoslav one. However, human rights teaching was not part of it.

In attempt to bring human rights as a subject matter to primary schools, back in 2001,

the OSCE Mission, jointly with the Council of Europe, organized a Human Rights Calendar Campaign. OSCE's officers went to schools around Kosovo explaining and leading exercises and discussions about human rights and helping children come up with

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**Sven Lindholm**  
Spokesperson, OSCE Mission in Kosovo

Dear Readers,

This issue of Details is foremost dedicated to the youth. It addresses a number of educational initiatives and activities which are geared to get one of Kosovo's greatest resources, its young people, involved in their schools and with society. This large portion of the population is, after all, the future.

So why is the OSCE involved in all this? How do we interpret our mandate towards activities geared to youth?

Let me start with our educational initiatives, which both help those who may feel left out

and which supplement the education they already receive. First, a human rights culture is beginning to be nurtured. It is not only important for politicians, police, and civil society to promote, but such knowledge begins in school. The OSCE, with the co-operation of the PISG Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), teach human rights and help children learn what the rights mean to them. The hope is that by beginning such courses in primary school, youth will know and understand human rights and promote them throughout their lives.

Aside from teaching about human rights, the OSCE is also ensuring the right to education for particular communities which have been left out. Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children have not attended basic classes. They too are a part of society, and with MEST-supported "catch-up" classes, they can become like other schoolchildren. This benefits not just the RAE communities but society as a whole.

And then there is what is commonly known, but not fully understood – capacity building. Outside of school, young people are also contributing to society in other ways. The Youth Network in Pejë/Peć region has their own publication, voicing their concerns to municipal authorities. Political party youth

wings and other youth organizations in Kačanik/Kaçanik received training sessions from the OSCE on lobbying and advocacy.

The OSCE is also working to introduce youth to democratic processes, and to be engaged with democratic institutions. The Mission has helped to found Youth Assemblies in 10 of Kosovo's municipalities. Young persons, from ages 16-18, mimic the work of municipal assemblies and learn how to co-operate, how to present their problems in an effective way and how to solve them to meet set goals. Each group, as they come from a different municipality, has different concerns, but many seemed to be environmentally oriented. The OSCE will continue to help the Youth Assemblies as they take their next step towards greater involvement in their communities.

As it stands, the most overarching and most important aspect of this is that young people wanted to empower themselves. They are demonstrating that they can become agents of change.

With all these activities, the OSCE is helping Kosovo's young minds develop, to understand what human rights mean and how to promote them, and to become effective contributors and participants in society. The future is now.

*Continued from pg. 1*

their own expressions of what these rights meant to them. The most creative ones made it to calendar pages, which were exhibited in schools and cultural and community centers throughout Kosovo.

Yet this attempt was not a sustainable one. Human rights teaching could not be left to OSCE officers.

In school year 2003/2004 a Human Rights Education pilot project was organized territory wide bringing human rights work books for students, teacher's guides and teaching methodology books to 70 schools. All these materials were developed by the OSCE's experts in co-operation and with the approval of Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST).

"A year of teaching showed to be effective. Evaluation of the pilot project was positive and with small improvements to the materials MEST decided to incorporate human rights teaching in the civic education curriculum for 6 graders," says Ronald Hooghiemstra, Chief of the Human Rights Capacity Building Section at the OSCE Mission.

The school year 2004/2005 was used for reviews of the content and actual production and printing of teaching materials that will be sufficient for two school years yet to come (some 90,000 student books, 2,000 teacher guides and methodology books).

As of September 2005, all six graders in Kosovo will get to learn about human rights

and their meaning for their lives and lives of their families. To ensure quality of teaching MEST and the OSCE will train close to 2000 civic education teachers in teaching methodology and substance of human rights curricula using MEST's seven regional training centers.

However, problems in this area still do exist. They derive from a complex political situation and the existence of parallel systems. Schools that deliver education in Serbian language do not co-operate with MEST and do not use its curriculum (they use curriculum applied by the Ministry of Education of Serbia).

And although a draft translation of these human rights teaching materials exist in Serbian language, the OSCE has not yet been able to arrange to have this approved and finalized for use in classes of schools which teach in Serbian language. Children attending these schools are therefore denied access to human rights classes.

Furthermore, schools that deliver education in Bosnian language may delay human rights teaching until translated books are provided.

An additional outstanding question is what will happen with human rights teaching once books supplies provided by the OSCE for two schools years run out.

These questions will be something for politics and politicians to take care of when discussing and approving future budgets for education of Kosovo youth.

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# Kosovo Law Center educates youth

Financially supported by the OSCE Mission, the Kosovo Law Center (KLC) represents a think-tank that works to cultivate legal professionals' skills and to promote the culture of respect for human rights and rule of law throughout society.

**Adelina Sokoli, KLC and Nikola Gaon, OSCE**

Young people are one of their key target audiences and their education is high on the KLC's agenda. Recognizing that education about the role of government and legislation had to be adapted to youth of different ages, the KLC crafted programs to suit each of three key groups: primary school, secondary school, and university students.

Apart from providing education, the KLC also strives to motivate young people to think critically and become active participants in a democratic society. "We want to make them aware of "the rules of the game" when interacting with public administration in an effort to effectively advocate for change," says Adelina Sokoli, Programme Manager at KLC.

Furthermore, at the KLC they believe that it is important to instill a sense of importance of the rule of law with young people. "Only if youth know and understand their fundamental rights, the structure of the legal system and the basic rules of Kosovo law, they will be able to appreciate, respect and support a rule of law based Kosovo political system," adds Ms. Sokoli.

According to her awareness of "the rules of the game" in a democratic system, combined with the knowledge of legal rights and the role of the citizen as participants, and not as spectators, young people will be encouraged to become active members of the Kosovo society.

The KLC's Law Faculty Support Programme includes practical legal clinics that provide students with an opportunity to enhance

their practical legal skills, through drafting of legal memoranda such as indictments, verdicts and appeals and through participation in trial simulations. Just recently, KLC organized a Study Trip to France that gave 11 students an opportunity to expand understanding of international law and its applications, and to better understand the role of international organizations in European society preparing them for future dealings with international counterparts.

To improve conditions in which law students operate, the KLC is helping develop the Law Faculty Library and issues publications on applicable laws as well as handbooks on numerous legal acts and on how to conduct research and draft research papers.

Working with secondary school students in the framework of its Youth Legal Education Programme, the KLC organized a number of training sessions on human rights law and democratic practices. Addressing the contemporary themes in co-operation with local

NGOs, the KLC created a Human Rights, Law and Democracy Manual for Youth that was used in these trainings.

Not forgetting the youngest ones, the KLC conducted a Traffic Education project with children of ages six to 14. The project gave them an insight in traffic rules, but more importantly it gave them an insight in basic children's rights. The project's goal was to teach children to respect the law and learn the benefits of such behavior. Kosovo Police Service was partner in this project.

In an effort to tackle some of the burning issues in Kosovo, the KLC conducted a research on murder phenomenon in post-conflict Kosovo. The objective of the project was to provide to local and international institutions as well as to local public, the information that would help them better fight this type of crime.

The educational component was not missing here either. Law Faculty students had a role of junior researchers.



*Kosovo Law Center delivers human rights education to children and youth of different age groups. Their main focus is, however, on university students.*

# Building common youth platform in Kosovo Youth Assemblies Retreat in Žabljak, Montenegro

“This is only the beginning. There are others coming after us. They can further build on everything we started here.”

**Mustafa Skenderi, OSCE**

Those were the words of Lindita Agushi (18) and Ivana Radosavljević (17), participants of the retreat organised for members of ten Youth Assemblies from throughout Kosovo, in August this year, at Žabljak, Montenegro. The aim of the retreat was to create a joint platform for young people’s social engagement.

More than 270 young people participated in the retreat. They were divided into two groups, each working for three days – the first one from 19 to 22 August and the second one from 23 to 26 August.

## Experiences from the world

Based on experiences and initiatives by youth from all around the world, in 2003 the OSCE Mission in Kosovo began implementing Youth Assemblies Project, at municipal level. The aim was to introduce to democratic processes young people, teenagers of ages 16 to 18, who are about to become of age and obtain full civil rights. It included teaching them on how to get involved in work of government institutions and NGOs at municipal and central levels, how to present their problems in an effective way and how to work to solve them.

The first members of the assemblies were chosen two years ago, with the assistance of secondary school directors. Those first participants had then recommended new members to be their successors.

Youth Assemblies fully mimic the work of municipal assemblies. Members of the youth assemblies vote to elect president, chief of executive board and the deputy president. They have a statute similar to the one of the municipal assembly. The only difference is that the members are high school students not older than 18. Through simulations of assembly work they learn how to co-operate with municipal bodies and how to achieve their goals.

In Dragash/Dragaš, for example, the goal was to support development of tourism in Gora. Youth Assembly, with financial support of the municipality, marked all the important sites and had put up signs to guide the visitors.

## In Žabljak

In front of the “Javorovača” restaurant in Žabljak a huge tent was placed. However

the tent was too small to host all the participants of the seminar’s second group. There were more than 140 of them. Several groups of young people were sitting in circles on the meadow, voicing themselves through murmur, clamour, sometimes even shouting, and all of that in a passion of the discussion with a wish to voiceover others and to express their knowledge. Someone watching from sideways might say: “Grown up, yet playing children games - very un-serious!” Maybe it does look like it, but as Biserka Ivanović, project co-ordinator from OSCE says: “These games actually have a purpose. They relax those kinds so that they can bridge the barriers that exist there at the beginning”.

It was for the first time this August that members of all ten Youth Assemblies from ten Kosovo towns: Prizren, Dragash/Dragaš, Suharekë/Suva Reka, Rahovec/Orahovac, Lipjan/Lipljan, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Leposavić/Leposaviq and Podujevë/Podujevo have gathered. Through interactive games they have met each other, became friends and started to speak openly about their problems.

“Actually this is an opportunity for members of all Youth Assemblies to meet each other, to exchange ideas, to establish contacts, to feel the spirit of team work, and to build a unique spirit of youth assemblies”, says Matthew Minns, Manager of the OSCE Youth Assemblies Project.

Group of trainers, members of NGOs from Gjilan/Gnjilane and Rahovec/Orahovac was engaged to work with youth in Žabljak, as they have rich experience with this kind of seminars.

Nexhat Ismaili, one of the leaders on this seminar from the Gjilan/Gnjilane NGO “Action for peace and against violence”, says that work with youth is a great pleasure for him. “The aim is for these groups to establish communication through informal discussion, but also to save the energy for the second part of the seminar, when they should discuss, take the initiative and try to solve problems they identified during the first part of seminar, while performing so called “games”.”

Even though this is the fifth seminar she attends, Lindita says that this was the first



*Municipal Youth Assemblies from throughout Kosovo met this August to build a common platform for their future action at the central level.*

# Kasneci/Glasnik

The OSCE Office in Pejë/Peć started publishing Kasneci/Glasnik newsletter in August 2001. Four years later, the newsletter reaches its readers on regular basis, now with improved content and layout.

## Mevlyde Salihu, OSCE

time she had met members of other Assemblies. Comparing the seminar in Žabljak with the previous ones, she says that by character this one is more fun and more suitable. "A game is not only a game, that's what I have found out here. There is a lesson to be learnt from today's games and it attained the goal. It led us to the continuation of today's session when we started to name problems that concern us and to explore ways for their possible solution and look for people we should address them to."

Branislav Nešović (19) from Leposavić/Leposaviq, now Youth Assembly President currently under resignation (he resigned from the position), say that for him personally this was the opportunity to meet other members of Youth Assemblies from Kosovo. "Members from Leposavić have never had a chance to meet Youth Assemblies' members from other communities. We have only heard about each others, but now we are here together, we can talk, we can exchange thoughts without prejudices and obstacles."

For these young people who might in future become politicians, professors, members of NGOs, engagement with assemblies has in a way changed their lives.

"I feel more mature, adults listen to what I have to say with attention, I gained self-confidence", says Vlora Cakoli, who is now 18. When she was 16 Vlora became President of the Youth Assembly in Kamenicë/Kamenica. Working and participating in various seminars organized by the OSCE, she learnt how to lead people of different character, how to unite them around the common idea, how to organize them and how to be always responsible and sincere. "This is a great experience for me and no matter what occupation I get to choose in the future, this experience will always serve me."

## Continuation of work

During the past two years municipal structures have accepted the work of the assemblies very seriously. For example, Youth Assembly in Podujevë/Podujevo organized a public debate about standard implementation in their municipality. Following this debate youth of Podujevë/Podujevo came up with the idea to make a documentary about what the municipal government is doing to implement the standards.

Youth Assemblies will, after the retreat, go one step further. It is foreseen that representatives from all youth assemblies would form one central assembly following the model of the Kosovo Assembly. Youth will try to draw attention of central level institutions to their problems. At the same time that will be the chance for them to learn about how Kosovo Assembly works and how the Ministries function.

Kasneci (Herald) newsletter is a bridge between local institutions and citizens in Pejë/Peć region. Young people living in the region express their concerns and voice their priorities in Kasneci, and local authorities get a better idea of what the citizens consider to be matters of urgency.

Kasneci is the first multiethnic project in this region and is one of the first publications in Kosovo issued in Albanian and Bosnian/Serbian languages. The newsletter covers Pejë/Peć, Deçan/Dečani, Istog/Istok, Gjakovë/Đakovica and Klinë/Klina municipalities and comes out every three weeks.

The main issues the newsletter addresses are those that concern the citizens of these municipalities, with the primary aim to inform the institutions and local government officials about their problems.

The project was initiated by the OSCE Office in Pejë/Peć, but the local NGO Syri i Vizionit was the implementing partner since the very beginning. "The last five issues were done completely by the NGO, whereas OSCE continues to financially support the project," said Albert Prenkaj, Democratization Officer in OSCE Peja Office.

The issues that are addressed in the newsletter are those that have to do with the daily life of citizens. "Journalists, Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Bosnians and Kosovo Serbs, get ideas talking to citizens about what they think are the priorities, and then they write about them," said Veton Mujaj, executive director of the local NGO Syri i Vizionit.

"And, we always make sure that every edition of Kasneci is in the hands of local government official, so that they find out what are the issues citizens see as a priority and solve them" said Mujaj.

The newsletter gives fair space to each of the five municipalities it covers, and it also has a page for issues concerning any particular ethnic community. In addition, the newsletter has designed a page where they publish opinions of ordinary citizens.

"We have special page where we publish citizens' opinions," said Mujaj. "This is also a good way for us to get an idea of the readership we have. If we continuously receive articles from citizens, it shows that they read Kasneci."

Kasneci is distributed for free. It reaches all institutions in five towns and is being distributed through kiosks with other newspapers and magazines found. It is also taken to cafeterias so that it can reach young people.

Articles published in the newsletter have accelerated the solving of many issues. Mujaj says that as a result of articles published in the newsletter, road signs were changed, or

new ones were put up.

"There were cases when road signs were incorrectly put up and confused citizens. They complained, we published articles in Kasneci, and local authorities did what they were expected to do – changed them – or put new ones where necessary," said Mujaj.

"The inhabitants of a neighborhood in Pejë/Peć had problems with a water channel that went through their street; after many articles published in Kasneci, the municipality decided to do something about it," Mujaj mentions another example of Kasneci's influence on local authorities.

The newsletter has gone through changes since it was first published. It has changed in content and layout, thus improving and becoming more professional. Now, professional journalists write for the newsletter, and there are correspondents in Klinë/Klina, Gjakovë/Đakovica, Istog/Istok and Deçan/Dečani covering their region.

Although the municipal bodies think critically of Kasneci, because it often criticizes their work, the staff of Syri i Vizionit hopes that they will soon realize that Kasneci tries to bring authorities and citizens closer together and its sole aim is to make life better for all.

As a way of becoming self-sustainable, Syri i Vizionit has recently started to publish advertisements in the newsletter. "We have dedicated a small space for marketing," said Mujaj, as we want to secure ways to become self-sustainable." Until then, Kasneci continues existing with OSCE's financial support.



Journalists working for Kasneci/Glasnik newspaper write about problems and developments in their community. They help bring closer local officials and population.

# Education for all: Re-integrating minorities into the schools system

As any parent well knows, the quality of a child's education greatly affects his or her prospects for employment and a happy adult life. Education also plays a crucial role in promoting integration within communities, building a solid social foundation on which a dynamic and prosperous economy can be built. The strength and inclusiveness of a schools system is therefore an important indicator for the future health and stability of society.

William Henley, OSCE



*Kosovo Roma, Ashkalia and Egyptian children often lack access to primary education. Catch-up classes are helping them made up for lost schooling.*

Too frequently, however, children from minority ethnicities do not attend school in Kosovo. This is especially the case with the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. This impacts negatively on society as a whole, inhibiting the ability of generations of able individuals to contribute positively to life here.

The reasons for poor attendance are numerous, including early employment, isolation, poor security, prejudice and a lack of awareness among government and local authorities. Even for children willing and able to attend school, entry is often difficult because they have had little or no primary education. Many are unable to read and write.

## Making up for lost time

In light of this, advice, funding and logistical support has been provided over the past year by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo for a 'catch-up classes' project. Its aim is to improve access to mainstream education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students of primary and secondary school age. Classes began in September 2004 and ran for nine months, covering a curriculum laid out by the government, with lessons in mathematics, science, geography, literature and languages.

The project's co-ordinators have been faced with a daunting challenge over the year as, in many cases, children may have missed out on up to seven years of schooling. In spite of this, their enthusiasm is seemingly undimmed.

One determined local co-ordinator is Indira Elshani, responsible for organizing classes in Prizren. "We need to eliminate illiteracy and give these children opportunities for a better future," she says.

OSCE support to the project, which was initiated by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, included covering the costs of local co-ordinators and learning material in eight municipalities: Lipjan/Lipljan, Pejë/Peć, Prizren, Suharekë/Suva Reka, Istog/Istok, Shtime/Štimlje, Gjakovë/Đakovica and Prishtinë/Priština.

In total, almost 500 Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children between the ages of six and fifteen have benefited over the past academic year.

## Tailored classes

Teachers strive to bring the students' academic performance to the level required for participation in mainstream school. For many students, it has been their first school experience, while others have missed so many classes that they have to repeat their schooling altogether.

According to Xhevat Neziraj, the local co-ordinator for Pejë/Peć, this kind of learning really helps enable the integration of schoolchildren even after they have been out of the normal educational system for a long time. He has organized catch-up classes at the Vaso Pashë Shkodrani primary school.

Zyra is a sixth-grade student at the school. "In our last class, we learned about biology

and cells," she says. "I really like this kind of learning. It means we will be able to catch up with grades we weren't able to complete earlier."

## Greater opportunities

According to Saskia Marsh, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo's focal point for the project, the classes have had a real impact, although she admits that further progress can still be made. With education, the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community is in a better position to advocate for its needs, she says.

"The children gain greater acceptance from their peers through interaction with other children from different ethnicities and backgrounds. Initially this happens through extra-curricular activities, which are organized as part of the catch-up classes, and eventually through participation in mainstream education."

In addition to enabling integration, the long-term hope is that by improving individual job opportunities through basic learning at school, the skills base in local economies can be broadened. This benefits entire communities, no matter what their individual ethnic make-up may be.

But the project's co-ordinators acknowledge that a nine-month catch-up curriculum is not itself enough to satisfy the educational needs of all participating children. "To fully accomplish its goals, it's clear that students need another two to three years to complete their primary education," says Marsh.

There are other areas too that require attention, such as improving the equal participation of both genders and providing additional catch-up classes for non-Albanian speaking children.

## "We want to be like all other schoolchildren"

Nonetheless, with teachers, students and parents all enthusiastic about the project, it is hoped that the impetus and support provided by the OSCE in this initial year will be enough to justify its future continuation and expansion – so long as the commitment of local partners and the Ministry, especially, can be sustained.

"I'd like to attend next year," said Zyra. "Not only me, but all of us, we don't want to stay behind. We want to be like all other schoolchildren."

# Political empowerment of youth in Kaçanik/Kaçanik

Following two months of trainings for political empowerment organized by the OSCE Office Štrpce/Shtërpçë for over thirty young people from Kaçanik/Kaçanik, a graduation ceremony was organized in Hotel Evropa in Kaçanik/Kaçanik. Trainings included topics such as engagement of youth in democratic institutions, advocacy, rights of youth, lobbying, etc.

**Mustafa Skenderi, OSCE**

Six years following the end of conflict in Kosovo there are still no youth NGOs, youth wings of political parties or any other informal youth organizations from Kaçanik/Kaçanik, that succeeded to affirm themselves and get involved in public or political life of municipality. With this said no one had seriously addressed issues that of concern for youth or other citizens to the municipality. Lobbying is still just a far a way concept.

The project "Political empowerment of youth in Kaçanik/Kaçanik" implemented by OSCE Office in Štrpce/Shtërpçë, is actually aimed at improving communication between civil society - in this case youth - and municipal bodies, and at increasing the level of young people's knowledge about and active involvement in public life and democratic processes in the municipality.

The recently formed NGO "Youth initiative" from Kaçanik/Kaçanik, the partner organization in this project, has successfully implemented its part of work foreseen by the project draft, says Mohamed Sagdati, project coordinator from the OSCE Office in Štrpce/Shtërpçë. They identified and included potential participants, young repre-

sentatives of political parties, students and pupils that were organized within their faculties and schools, or were just décor to their parties.

"When we started we had problems, but this is what we face when implementing other projects too. People at the beginning do not really trust different project activities. But then, during the second or third session and after the promotion campaign through media and posters posted throughout the city, we faced problems of finding venue big enough for normal work, as interest for attending the trainings increased."

The project engaged local trainers: professors and experts on civil society, as well as employees in municipal bodies. That initiated spontaneous discussion between participants and trainers. In total five trainings were held, presenting to youth concept of civil society, role of youth in civil society, advocacy for community's concerns and interests, role of media, gender issues, etc.

While receiving diploma Armend Brruti, member of NGO "Wake up" from Kaçanik/Kaçanik, said that he gained a lot and was

impressed by the trainings. "I gained very much from this training. I learnt many new things such as how to lobby, how to advocate our interests, and how do municipalities function. I also learnt about rights of young people."

Dituri Neziri is of similar opinion, but she would be more satisfied if she could see successful application of knowledge gained through trainings. "We wish to be active participants of civil society. The training is our driving force to continue to develop in all the aspects of social and political life of our municipality. If we manage to implement the half of what we have learned on these trainings, I will consider this a big success".

In order to get familiar with the work of municipal bodies, youth had a chance to see how everything is functioning in practice. Namely, the delegations were formed and were present on the Municipal Assembly sessions, governing board sessions and other committees. Speaking about the way that the youth activities will reflect on the work of municipalities, Ibrush Vishi, the director of the Department of Sport and Culture in Kaçanik/Kaçanik municipality, says: "I believe and I'm sure that this will have a positive effect. This will provoke and make youth interested to participate in public life and work of municipal institutions. On the other hand, while they develop their skills, they will be monitoring us and correcting us, because it is normal we make mistakes in the work".

In order for this initiative not to end with finalization of trainings, the OSCE Office in Štrpce/Shtërpçë will continue to support the work of youth NGOs. At the initiative of the OSCE Office during the training sessions an NGO called "Forum" was established. Members of this NGO, representatives of all NGOs and youth associations from Kaçanik/Kaçanik, will try to unify and mainstream the work on the joint platform.

"It is hard to talk about the sustainability, because there is a lack of funds in civil sector, donors were not present in Kaçanik/Kaçanik, and some will have to look for their future in regionalization. Making contacts with regional NGOs should be their next step. In the era of mass media it should not be a big problem," concluded Mohamed Sagdati.



*To help their politically empower, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo works with young people at local and central levels. Including youth in work of domestic institutions and in decision-making processes is one of the OSCE's priorities.*

# Youth Leaders Summer Camp 2005

**“As a young person in Kosovo you have to carry the hopes and desires of all those who have suffered in the past. In a very real sense you hold the key to the future of Kosovo. In time you will have the responsibility of leading Kosovo and shaping its future,”** said Steve Bennett, Director of OSCE Mission’s Department for Police Education and Development at the opening of the youth camp at the police school in June this year.

## Hasan Sopa, OSCE

Considering the fact that youth in Kosovo make up a significant proportion of the population - 60 percent of inhabitants are un-der age of 30 - OSCE’s efforts to reach out to young people present one of the biggest challenges in the Mission’s work. The challenge becomes that much greater knowing that these young people are the ones to build modern Kosovo society.

By incorporating police training and development with youth outreach activities the OSCE ran Kosovo Police Service School (KPSS) engages in both short and long term activities to increase police’s ability to respond to youth issues and to instill sense of responsibility and respect for rule of law with young people.

In 2004, the OSCE Mission in co-operation and with support of the US Department of Justice began organizing youth camps at the KPSS. Positive assessments of the two camps organized over the last year led to the organization of a Future Leaders Youth Camp 2005. This time, camp organization involved KPS’s Unit for Community Policing as well as UNMIK Civil Police officers. Its multi ethnic character is helping improve interethnic relations Kosovo wide.

The youth camps, including the most recent one organized in late June to early July, enabled its participants to make a significant impact in their communities. They have gained educational opportunities in civic responsibilities, conflict management and non-violent problem solving which they applied back home.

According to Nerimane Gerguri of the camp coordination team June 2005 camp was the biggest one with almost 250 participants. Unlike the pervious two that lasted three days this one went on five days, from June 29 to July 3. “During these five days youth representing different communities had the opportunity to learn together, share experiences, establish relationships and develop qualities and skills as future leaders, as well as create partnership with the police,” she said. The activities of the youth camp were designed to foster interaction between its participants. “They are designed to provide them with opportunities for developing their leadership skills and civic responsibility, combined with fun and interactive learning,” said Juliane Hertweck, Camp Coordinator. “To name just a few of the highlights, there were sport competitions, non-competitive sport activities, an art workshop where the youth created a banner for the future of Kosovo as well as many other interactive activities, which created a very friendly environment.”

More importantly these camps are appreciated by its young participants. Sevgi Sunguri from the Eqrem Çabej Gymnasium in Vushtrri/Vučitrn seemed to have enjoyed every minute of it. “I really liked the Camp very much. I met a lot of new friends from different parts of Kosovo such as Prizren, Mitrovica, Ferizaj and other Kosovo towns,” he said. “As much as we have learned form the camp we learned from each other by discussing different school topics and shar-

ing information among ourselves about the places we come from.”

Joint activities with KPS officers seemed to have had an unforgettable impression on the young future leaders. “To be among the KPS Officers it means to be in a very secure place, where you have no fear of anything and anybody,” says another participant, Arbër Rrustemi from Mitrovica. “We freely discussed with KPS Officers different subjects such as sports, music and we talked a lot about their work, and the good things and the bad things that come with being a police officer.”

“This camp was a good opportunity for us all, regardless of our ethnic background and from which part of Kosovo we come. We expressed our ideas on how to solve different problems which we will encounter as future leaders,” said Sevgi. “This also showed that we can associate with our peers from different communities such as Serb, Roma and Turkish community living in Kosovo. This was a good indicator that showed that there should be no divisions between people of different ethnicities or religious beliefs,” he added.

Camps participants share their experiences with people in their local communities and that makes the camps even more so unique. “Everything I learned here I am going to share with my friends from my hometown because I think they are very useful things that will help us to go on with our life in the future,” emphasized Arbër.

Youth camps send these same messages to high ranking officials. Former Kosovo Prime Minister, Bajram Rexhepi, as well as international figures like OSCE heads of mission Fieshi and Wnendt visited these camps.

“We all should be citizens of Kosovo, because if Kosovo would be a mono-ethnic place it would probably be a monotonous place”, said Bajram Rexhepi, former Prime Minister, at the 120 participants big Future Leaders Youth Camp held in June 2004.

“During this year’s Youth Camp you’ll be encouraged to consider what you hope for in a future Kosovo. Will it be a place that has learned from the mistakes of the past? Will it be a place where all citizens, regardless of ethnic or religious background, can live peacefully and prosperously? Will it be a place that wins the respect of other nations as a tolerant, free and democratic society? You hold the answers to these questions.” These were the some of the questions from Steve’s welcome speech that challenged the young participant. One can hope that they will consider them all as Kosovo’s future leaders.



*At the Future Leaders Youth Camps organized at the Kosovo Police Service School young people meet leading political figures and establish direct communication with them.*



# Sesame Street Educates new Kosovo generations

One of the most successful children's TV series in the world, Sesame Street, was brought to Kosovo in December 2004 by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and UNICEF. The series is being broadcast by Radio Television of Kosovo, covering most of Kosovo's territory.

**Mevlyde Salihi, OSCE**

The Sesame Street series combine fun and learning, and teach tolerance and mutual respect. Fifty two episodes selected specifically for Kosovo were voiced over in Albanian and Serbian and supplemented with 26 locally produced live action films.

Radio Television Kosovo (RTK) airs the show in both Albanian and Serbian languages, Rruga Sesam and Ulica Sezam respectively. But, with the aim to better reach the audience outside RTK's reach, shows in Serbian are also aired by DTV, TV Most and TV Herc.

The idea behind the project was to introduce an education tool that utilizes TV as its main medium, but can also become part of a curriculum for pre-primary and early primary education, since pre-school children are show's main target audience.

"The education objectives of the show, specifically set for Kosovo, are divided into 5 blocks," says Lucia Elmi Programme Coordinator with the UNICEF Office in Kosovo.

According to her, the first main block relates to human diversity. It includes themes such as appreciation of ethnic and cultural diversity, respect for different religions, gender equality, and appreciation for different languages and special needs.

The second block evolves around human emotions – happiness, sorrow, and grief, expressing those, and being able to exercise self-control, and maintain self-esteem.

The third curriculum block focuses on social relations, friendship, empathy, making decisions, understanding human rights, cooperation, and conflict resolution.

"The third block in particular highlights skills that are necessary for children, between ages three to six, to develop social relations," Elmi added.

The remaining two curriculum blocks address social groups and institutions, home, family, neighborhood, environment, as well as health and nutrition, visits to doctors and illness prevention, and healthy life style.

"These are the educational messages that are being passed on to children through the Sesame Street series," Elmi said.

Furthermore, locally produced live action films address Kosovo specific issues, one of them being

the use of the different languages, Albanian and Serbian. These sections of every episode expose young viewers to the language of the other ethnic group.

Although the show is being aired by four broadcasters, there are still a few mountainous areas where no TV signal reaches.

To overcome this shortcoming and transmit the messages of tolerance and respect, and to provide for equal education opportunities, the OSCE Mission began taking the Sesame Street series to children whom would otherwise have no access to it.

The Kosovo Albanian-inhabited village of Çabër/Çabra, located in the Zubin Potok municipality in the very north of Kosovo, and Dragash/Dragaš region in the very south, are not covered by any of the four broadcasters.

The OSCE Office in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica provides technical support by taking videotapes, a video player and a projector to the local school in Çabër/Çabra, where Sesame Street is shown to pre-school and early primary school children.

Meanwhile, earlier this year, the OSCE-established Community Centre in Dragash/Dragaš began implementing a Mobile Cinema project, taking the Sesame Street series to some of the most remote villages.

"The kids have welcomed this initiative because it's the only way they can get familiar with different shows and cartoons," said Elvir Ilijazi, project co-ordinator in the Community Center in Dragash/Dragaš.

While the show continues to be aired by the four broadcasters, as do the screenings in the far north and south of Kosovo by OSCE's special projects, the children of Kosovo grow laughing and learning with Sesame Street.



*Sesame Street will soon mark a year of airing in Kosovo.*

# Building a vision of trust

They live in nearby towns and villages, but seldom do they interact. They are Albanian, Croatian, Gorani, and Roma, and it is because of this small, but unique difference that many of these young people never get to know one another.

**Chris Cycmanick, OSCE**

In an effort to bring these youth together, the OSCE's office in Lipjan/Lipljan partnered with Youth Vision, an NGO in the nearby town of Janjevo/Janejeve, in providing sponsorship for a programme that would encourage interaction.

This type of activity was of great interest to the OSCE as it reflected the Mission's commitment in working to re-establish and improve the relationships between different communities living in Kosovo. In this process, it is often most important to reach people at a young age.

The concept quite simply was to promote dialogue and trust in a relaxed, informal environment.

Youth Vision, established in 2001, was chosen as the OSCE's implementing partner in the region as their work focused largely on youth activities for all ethnicities including workshops for pre-school children, computer trainings, language courses, and field trips for teenagers.

The six-month programme, which concluded in April 2005, brought selected children between the ages of 13 and 15 together to participate in a series of art classes in schools in Janjevo/Janejeve, Lipjan/Lipljan, and Aklap/Oklap. The groups, consisting of approximately 15 persons, met three times per week, two hours per day in the late afternoon and on weekends.

Ramiz Gashi, the head of Youth Vision and the director of the project, couldn't have been happier with the outcome of the initiative.

"I was surprised at the amount of talent I saw and at just how well the children interacted. Of course, they come from many communities and speak different languages, but this was not a problem. The children often used body language to communicate and they found it fun learning words and phrases in a new language," Gashi remarked.

The highlight for the children was an art exhibition held at the end of the course and attended by members of each of the respected communities. On display were the children's drawings, paintings, and wood crafts.

The long term results of the programme have yet to be determined, but it's a step in the right direction in building trust and turning those who might have been strangers into new found friends.

# “WORKING FOR THE GOOD OF THE PEOPLE WE SERVE”

Articles written by Radka Betcheva in cooperation with Joseph Flood, Silvia Eckert, Alan Skurbaty, Jade Duchesneau-Bernier, Ljubiša Simić, Shpetim Mustafa and Nikola Gaon

## Inside the OSCE Office Gjilan/Gnjilane

“None of us is as smart as all of us together,” says Joseph Flood, Head of the OSCE Office in Gjilan/Gnjilane. He keeps repeating these words to his 57 big staff on daily basis. He says that this is the core idea behind his management style.

The Office in Gjilan/Gnjilane is one of eight OSCE Offices Kosovo-wide. The team spirit there is strong. Mr. Flood, or Papa Joe (from Joseph) as employees there call him, says that he is proud of his staff. According to him they are willing to accept the uniquenesses of each other and of the people they meet through their work, and to appreciate all that diversity. Gjilan/Gnjilane Office in addition to local staff, Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Serbs, Kosovo Bosniaks, employs international staff from nine countries.

The staff at the office is working for the benefit of local population. “We work for the good of people we serve,” says Mr. Flood. This appears to be the driving force behind the high motivation of people working in his office.

Mr. Flood says that it is important to effectively project the image of the OSCE as a

reliable partner, both internally and externally, and to keep in mind the “big picture” of the OSCE Mission’s goals and priorities in the field.

While the general mandate of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, as UNMIK Pillar III is the institution and democracy building and human rights and rule of law promotion, it places particular focus on aiding and monitoring the implementation of Standards for Kosovo.

Accordingly, the OSCE Office in Gjilan/Gnjilane is helping strengthen and develop the capacities of local leadership, NGOs, media organizations and citizens associations. It also works extensively with youth. All of this is to help Kosovo to develop as a democratic society where human rights are respected and rule of law established.

“Working on these issues of lasting impor-

ance is like planting the seeds,” says Mr. Flood. “Immediate results cannot be seen and time is need before a fruit develops.”

Nonetheless, Mr. Flood is very optimistic and says that the success of Office’s work will be measured through the way people from all communities living in Gjilan/Gnjilane region see their way forward. “I hope that they will start seeing the bigger picture and resolve to work together in ways they may never have done before.”

An incentive for local population and authorities to do so is now well embodied in the Council of Europe Award Gjilan/Gnjilane won for being the Best Municipality in May 2005. Being the only municipality to ever win such an award in Kosovo for promotion of European values it has a lot of work a head of it.

Papa Joe and his team are there to help.



The OSCE Office Gjilan/Gnjilane maintains close relations with local population. Office Director, Joseph Flood (in center), makes sure to stay involved with all office’s activities. He was proud to award certificates to journalism training graduates.

## Promoting gender equality

**Gender equality as a concept is based on the principle that every human being should be extended equal respect and be treated equally. On the other hand, many “traditional” societies put men in positions of power, influence and authority and leave women with as much liberty as to agree with what men have to say. This is often the case in Kosovo. A good indicator is a very small number of women being politically or otherwise active in social life.**

While promoting respect for human rights the OSCE Mission in Kosovo is also promoting gender equality. At the present time and at the local level, the OSCE Office in Gjilan/Gnjilane supports the work of the Municipal Gender Officer (MGO).

However, this support dates from beginning of 2005 when the OSCE Office first began lobbying with Municipal Chief Executive Officer to create the gender officer post.

In April this year the post was created. Over the last five months the OSCE office has provide number of trainings to the MGO that is now working to ensure gender equality principles are adhered to in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality. Creating equal employment opportunities is most probably a highest priority.

Further supporting the work of MGO, the OSCE helped organize in-house human rights training for municipal servants. Two gender equality conferences organized earlier this year lead to changes in municipal regulations that secure equal position of women in the municipality.

Fatushe Haliti, Municipal Officer for Cooperation and Coordination, writes in a letter of appreciation to the OSCE Office: “We have exchanged information and have taken the opportunity to benefit from the human rights expertise you provided. We corrected deficiencies in law and have improved our decision making processes.”

Simultaneously to assisting with building mechanisms that will secure gender equality in municipal dealings, the OSCE Office is addressing the issue of domestic violence – an issue present world wide, but more frequently in societies where women are traditionally subordinated to men.

Working with Municipal Gender Officer, in May this year, the OSCE initiated a regional information campaign to raise awareness about domestic violence and its effects. The campaign targets high school pupils, primarily young women. The campaign activities began this May with training of trainers, MGOs from municipalities in Gjilan/Gnjilane region and police officers who then organized workshops on domestic violence in schools.

Kosovo Police Service (KPS) Officer, Ramadan Avdyli, following one of the workshops said: “By being able to interact directly with the KPS officers in a friendly, informal manner, the youth will be less prejudiced against and more inclined to approach police in the future. The issue of domestic violence grabs the interest of pupils and we should use it for good purpose.”

The second phase of the project is now plan-

ned for mid September 2005 and the trainers will be supposed to deliver a total of 320 workshops to the secondary school pupils in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kamenica/Kamenicë, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo and Viti/Vitina. The project will be concluded by a production of a document highlighting the needs identified by the trainers and recommendations to municipal and central level authorities

on the ways and means of addressing those needs.

According to Jade Duchesneau-Bernier, Democratization Officer at Gjilan/Gnjilane Office, the campaign gave Municipal Gender Officers an opportunity to get actively involved in an issue they consider important and to develop their capacities in the area of project coordination and management.

## Engaging youth in politics

**Kosovo's population is very young. Over 60 percent are under age of 26 and some 70 percent are under 35. Having in mind that a person can vote once she/he reaches 18, one can say that youth can make and break the elections if politically active.**

To develop the capacity of young people to engage in political life the OSCE Mission implements the project called Youth Assemblies. The goal of the project is to include youth in decision-making processes at local and central levels.

But to actively engage in political life youth must first learn about the political system they live in. Youth Assemblies do just that. At their meetings young people simulate work of municipal assemblies, or educational and political establishments. Through the simulations they learn how to resolve real-life problems.

And though immediate results can not be seen the experiences from many countries in transition show that young people who had participated in similar activities have become a driving force for positive changes.

Silvia Eckert, Democratization Team Leader at OSCE Office Gjilan/Gnjilane believes that tomorrow's Kosovo leadership will be recruited from today's Kosovo youth. “Mission's activities that involve youth offer them an opportunity to develop and be engaged in the decision-making process, as well as to compensate for the lack of a common language that is all too often missing among youth from different communities.”

The OSCE Office Gjilan/Gnjilane has conducted series of trainings for the Youth Assembly members dealing with topics like the composition and structure of the municipalities and effective meeting management.

To utilize the Youth Assembly to its full extent, the OSCE Office also provides them with training in project writing and implementation. As a result, the Youth Assemblies Gjilan/Gnjilane had organized number of sporting tournaments and International Human Rights Day celebrations. In an effort to make direct impact in their community, Youth Assembly rallied many youth organizations and promoted voluntarism and more

active engagement of youth in all spheres of social and political life in Kosovo.

“I meet a lot of people of different ethnic backgrounds from all over Kosovo, and I am happy to say that I made friends with many of them,” said Miloš Jovanović, a Kosovo Serb member of the Youth Assembly Gjilan/Gnjilane. “Participating in the OSCE funded production of a Documentary covering the issue of the freedom of movement I got some practically useful technical knowledge that I can use in my day-to-day life,” he added. Young Miloš had a chance to cooperate with several NGOs, and eventually get involved in their activities. “Overall, I have to admit that I am very glad to be a member of the Youth Assembly Gjilan/Gnjilane,” he concluded.

An additional OSCE's effort to help youth to get a hands-on experience with functioning of the democratic institutions and monitoring their work for compliance with international human rights is the establishment of Human Rights Youth Group (HRYG). In Gjilan/Gnjilane, this project was launched in 2001 with an aim to raise and promote human rights awareness among youth. The HRYG is composed of 17 young people, pupils of the secondary school/gymnasium of Gjilan/Gnjilane town.

The HRYG was instrumental in establishing a Kosovo-wide Human Rights Clubs Network. It has conducted number of activities in raising awareness about human rights in their own schools as well as in a wider society. Lirije Maliqi, of HRYG Gjilan/Gnjilane said that being a member of the human rights group is an extremely good opportunity to learn about and live out the democratic values in our present life in Kosovo.

For her and other group members in Gjilan/Gnjilane and other Kosovo towns Human Rights Youth Groups are an effective tool to bring about changes in their local communities.

## Providing for the information needs

**Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities are amongst the most disadvantaged groups living in Kosovo. The level of their integration in mainstream society is at a very low level which results with poor information flow to and from these communities.**

In an effort to break the information lock-down and help increase level of their integration in the society the OSCE Office Gjilan/Gnjilane engaged in number of projects that led to the empowerment of RAE media and an increase in local TV programming in Roma language.

In July this year project was launched to establish Roma editorial office at local TV ZOOM. Under the project, one hour of TV programme in Romanes will be produced daily and provide information about issues that are high on their agenda, like education, employment, health care and so on. The programs will be produced by a group of six young Roma journalist who want to make difference in their community.

During 2004, the same group, in co-operation with TV ZOOM, produced nine documentaries about life of Roma in Kosovo. The public broadcaster RTK aired one of their movies as a part of a TV show.

To assist their professional development the OSCE Office provided a number of media trainings and has organized visits to other Roma editorial officer in Kosovo to help with journalists networking.

Zecie Demiri, Roma journalist, is convinced that establishing the Roma editorial in a local TV is a very encouraging step towards

a protection of Roma identity. "Roma community was deprived from being informed in its own language, particularly after the beginning of the conflict in 1999. Our biggest wish is to provide Roma community with detailed information important for our every day life and for creation of incentives for the Roma return process," she said.

Prior to establishing co-operation with TV ZOOM, back in 2004, the OSCE Office Gjilan/Gnjilane began supporting publishing of Romani Rota, a newsletter produced in Roma language. As a means of disseminating information to RAE communities it covers topics such as municipal affairs, return process, RAE community meetings, and their social activities. The newsletter comes out every month and is distributed to and covers Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kamenicë/Kamenica, Novobërdë/Novo Brdo and Viti/Vitina.

The editors of the Romani Rota are also coordinators of the Civic Education Hub (CEH), which opened in Gjilan/Gnjilane in February 2003, as part of the RAE Advocacy Hub Network, a project run by the OSCE Mission.

The CEH hosts bi-weekly meetings between international agencies, RAE leadership and communities' members. Their aim is to exchange information on the ongoing proj-

ects and issues of concern to the communities. Problems like unemployment, poor social conditions and discrimination of the RAE in the labor market are often being discussed in these meetings. These problematic issues are then brought up to the attention of the decision-making bodies at municipal level.

All these information sharing mechanisms are helping establish better co-operation between local authorities and RAE communities.

Further helping integrate RAE and other minorities in the society the OSCE Office worked with the Gjilan/Gnjilane Municipal Community Officer to include one Roma and one Turk in the work of the Office. The two latter became full staff members. The same recommendation was made to municipal authorities, and the understanding was reached that in the coming year, 2006, the employment roster of the municipality would be more balanced and proportionate to the existing ethnic ratios.

One is to hope that constant information sharing and coordinated efforts of both RAE communities and local authorities will yield better quality of life for all inhabitants of Gjilan/Gnjilane region.

## Professional and responsible media

**Mass media in this day and age play a major role in shaping public opinion. Many social processes, if supported by media, can take place much faster. Here, these processes can be monitored through the level of Standards for Kosovo implementation.**

Media serve public best when they perform professionally, respect Code of Conduct for Media, and reach the stage of self-sustainability that frees them of political or other influences. The OSCE Office Gjilan/Gnjilane is assisting local media in all these areas.

In January 2005 the OSCE Mission began implementing Local Media Networking project that comprises of three main groups of activities: advisory assistance, theoretical assistance and practical assistance.

Media Democratization Officer in Gjilan/Gnjilane Office, Radka Betcheva, provides professional advice to the local media on issues concerning their day-to-day work. She organizes regular meetings with managers and journalists in the region and discusses their operations. Once areas of concern are identified they move to organize trainings or meetings with local institutions.

Shyqeri Halabaku, Editor at Radio "Zeri I

Pozheranit" said that meetings and trainings organized by the OSCE Office Gjilan/Gnjilane have greatly contributed to the mutual cooperation between media and public institutions such as police, electrical company or post and telecommunications company. "For the first time, for instance, the KPS leaders openly discussed the possibility of co-operation between police and media."

The Local Media Networking project also includes workshops, co-productions of radio and TV programs and advertisements, organization of a competition for the best journalistic piece, and so on. These activities help to create an environment for co-operation and networking among the local media outlets. According to Ms. Betcheva, building networks between local media outlets and creating consortiums will help them to produce programs at a competitive price and survive in the oversaturated media market.



*Professional and responsible media conduct is key to democratic developments at local level. Through trainings and consultations the OSCE Office Gjilan/Gnjilane is helping local media establish and maintain such practices.*