

Këshilli Rinor i Komunës së Kërçovës
Младински совет на Општина Кичево
Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo

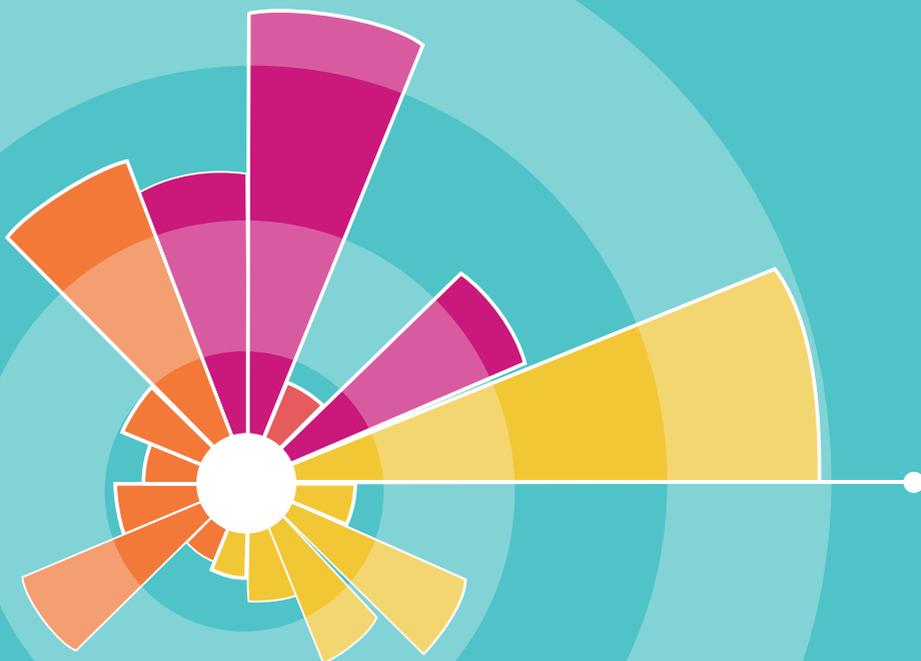


Komuna e Kërçovës
Општина Кичево

YOUTH STRATEGY

of the Municipality of Kicevo

2017 - 2022



YOUTH STRATEGY
OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF KICEVO
2017 - 2022

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The youth are the largest wealth of a nation, leaders of tomorrow and hope for a better future. Active youth can strengthen democracy, address inequality and contribute to sustainable social development. Where the youth are engaged, success is inevitable.

This Strategy has been prepared by young people who are part of the Youth Council, which makes it of exceptional value for us. We will use it as a guide for development and support of projects for youth wellbeing. Creating opportunities for personal development of young people and their active participation in the development of social life of our municipality will remain in the focus of our work.

Municipality of Kicevo
Mayor,
Fatmir Dehari

Ahead of you is the Youth Strategy of the Municipality of Kicevo whose purpose is to improve the position of young people and application of their rights in this Municipality. This Youth Strategy is a joint effort of youth organizations, young people and all other stakeholders in the Municipality of Kicevo. This advocacy document will establish the long-term and strategic commitment of the Municipality of Kicevo and the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo to work on the promotion of youth issues and fulfilment of youth needs.

This Youth Strategy holds the vision for the youth of the Municipality of Kicevo to become part of the decision-making processes that concern them, at all levels, but also to include all young people in the implementation of activities and fulfilment of their rights. This Strategy should ensure youth satisfaction with the quality of their life in the Municipality of Kicevo, but also youth engagement as partners of the municipality when addressing all challenges.

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LOCAL YOUTH STRATEGY OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF KICEVO

At the beginning of 2016, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo and the Municipality of Kicevo, in cooperation with and with the support of the OSCE Mission to Skopje, started preparing a youth strategy of the Municipality of Kicevo. All members of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo participated in the preparation of the local Youth Strategy.

The purpose of drafting this document is for the Municipality, together with the Youth Council, to have a coordinated and continuous approach to addressing youth issues and challenges at the local level, but also to increase youth participation in the process of drafting, application and evaluation of youth policies. This Youth Strategy covers all youth-related issues and the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will work on these issues in the forthcoming period and foster the promotion of active and responsible citizenship of both the youth and the youth sector.

The most relevant issues for the forthcoming period were detected using a special methodology, i.e. by conducting questionnaires and desk review of all relevant research and documents, both at the national and at the local level. In order to adequately approach the questionnaire design and select the relevant areas to be included in this questionnaire, at the very beginning, desk review was conducted, including all existing and relevant documents in the country related to youth-relevant problems and issues. Following the desk review, the questionnaire was designed, aimed at surveying the perception of the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo in relation to various topics, so as to address the largest challenges and most pressing issues to be resolved at the local level. To that end, 353 questionnaires were distributed among the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo, representatives of civil organizations and university and secondary school students. These questionnaires included all youth categories and age groups in order to obtain adequate responses and guidelines for the operation of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo. The questionnaires were conducted in the three official languages of the Municipality: Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish.

Having implemented the questionnaires and obtained the responses, a public consultation with all stakeholders was organized on the results obtained. Thus, the councillors of the Municipality of Kicevo were consulted for the purpose of their familiarization with the youth strategy and the issues listed as most relevant by the

youth. Then, public consultation with secondary school students was organized during which they had the possibility to express their opinion on the problems they are faced with and to propose adequate solutions to be applied in the future. Meetings were held with young people from the Municipality of Kicevo, as well as with representatives of local-level institutions that work with the youth or on youth-related issues. The purpose of these meetings was to obtain a comprehensive overview of youth-related problems and challenges, but also to adequately address them.

All these institutions gave their contribution to the drafting of this Strategy by presenting remarks for the purpose of designing better activities that will be implemented together with the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo and which will assist the youth in the improvement of their quality of life at the local level. The overall process of the drafting of the Strategy, as presented above, was conducted into several stages, as follows:

- Desk review of the existing documents, research and analysis of the country's youth policies.
- Questionnaire to identify the needs and problems of the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo.
- Stakeholder mapping in the Youth Strategy consultation process.
- Analysis of responses obtained from the questionnaire.
- First consultative meeting with the Council of the Municipality of Kicevo.
- Consultative meeting with representatives of local-level institutions.
- Second consultative meeting with the Council of the Municipality of Kicevo.

The Strategy attempts to provide an overview of the position of the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo, but also the conditions, infrastructure and opportunities for the youth in the local community. The Strategy reflects youth opinions and perceptions of youth policies and challenges in the Municipality of Kicevo.

In order to attain the strategic priorities and the overall commitments in line with the areas included in the Strategy, the Youth Council will draft Action Plans that will include specific activities and actions.

YOUTH IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF KICEVO

Throughout the countries of the world, there is a lack of a commonly agreed definition of the term “youth”, as well as the age limit for youth as a category. The age limit in particular differs among different countries and changes over time. Thus, in 2006, the EU Youth in Action programme introduced the age limit from 15-25, but as time went by, this age limit was extended. Thus, when the Youth Strategy was adopted in 2009, the age limit was extended to cover the age groups of 13-30.

In our country, there is lack of legal regulation of the term “youth” but the first definition of this term is provided in former National Youth Strategy 2005-2015¹. Thus, in line with this document, it is defined as “[...] socio-ethical category of population aged between 15 and 24 [...], [...] any serious youth action or program should take into account also the persons aged 24 to 30 [...].” However, this Strategy is no longer valid and a new National Youth Strategy 2016-2025² was adopted, with a broadly extended youth age limit. Thus, “youth” is defined as any person aged 15-29. It is a category of great potential and a key resource for social progress, but also of great vulnerability to the socio-economic changes in the society. Similar definitions and age limits can also be found in several local youth strategies.

The Municipality of Kicevo is one of the 81 municipalities in the country. It is located in the western part of the country. According to the State Statistical Office³, in 2015, the Municipality had a population of 56,645 inhabitants. Nearly 25% of the total population of the municipality is represented by youth aged 15-29 (14,169). In the Municipality of Kicevo, there is a significant increase in the number of young people from 2012 to 2015. This significant increase in youth (nearly by half) happened in 2014, after the municipalities of Zajas, Oslomej, Vranesnica and Drugovo joined the Municipality of Kicevo⁴.

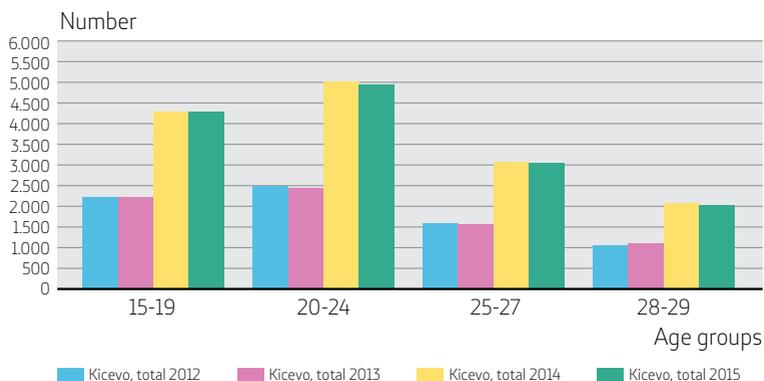
1 National Youth Strategy 2005-2015

2 National Youth Strategy 2016-2025

3 Mac Stat database, www.stat.gov.mk

4 Population on 30.06.2016, presented per specific age groups, sex, municipality; www.stat.gov.mk

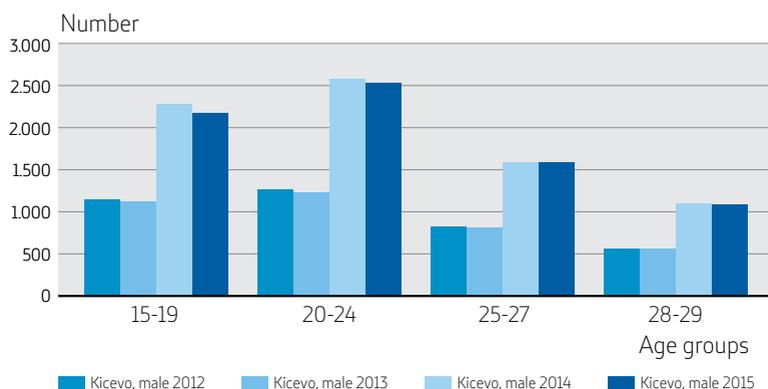
Population on 30.06.2016, presented per specific age groups, sex, municipality, year



According to the latest statistics, nowadays the age group 20-24 is the most numerous one with 4,965 young people, followed by 4,102 young people aged 15-19, 3,067 aged 25-27 and 2,035 aged 28-29.

The number of young males, compared to the number of young females, is relatively balanced in the Municipality of Kicevo.

Population on 30.06.2016, presented per specific age groups, sex, municipality, year



Population on 30.06.2016, presented per specific age groups, sex, municipality, year



The following sections of the Youth Strategy present the analysis of each of the areas that the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will focus on over the next 5 years. Each of the areas has been analysed in line with the existing documents related to the state of affairs with the youth at the local level, but also statistical data obtained from the questionnaires conducted and filled in by the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo. The last part of each thematic area includes recommendations and future commitments of the Youth Council in relation to the drafting of the annual action plans. Thus, further in this Strategy you will find the analysis of the following areas: education, social standing, migration, health and prevention phenomena among the youth, interethnic integration, youth information, youth participation, urbanism, culture and sports.

EDUCATION

Education is a fundamental human right. Education is also a guaranteed right. It provides children, youth and adults with the ability for well supported reasoning, making choices and improving their lives. It breaks the vicious circle of poverty and is a key element of the economic and social development⁵.

The education system of the country is regulated by special laws for each level of education (preschool education, primary education, secondary education and higher education). Over the past years, education has gone through a series of changes and reforms in order to keep up with the international and European standards. However, this fast reform pace makes it impossible to conduct proper assessment and recognize the relevant needs of the education processes.

In view of the education process, there are 34 primary schools in the Municipality of Kicevo, established in line with the Law on Primary Education. At this education level, in the school year 2015/2016, a total of 3,695 pupils were enrolled for instruction in Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish.

There are two municipal secondary schools⁶ on the territory of the Municipality of Kicevo: OSU "Drita" Kicevo and OSU "Mirko Mileski" Kicevo. The total number of secondary school students enrolled in 2014/2015 in both secondary schools is 2,011 students. In both schools, there are secondary school organizations, or secondary school communities that advocate for the rights of secondary school students in the education processes.

Secondary education is regulated by the Law on Secondary Education and the Law on Secondary Vocational Education. These laws prescribe mandatory and free secondary education in public secondary schools, where teaching curricula are implemented for general and vocational education.

One of the most important processes in this country is the complete decentralization and the possibility given to municipalities to be autonomous in their operation. Thus, (primary and secondary) education is the most important category affected by decentralization. The most significant changes in the sphere of education involve transfer of ownership of schools from the central to the local government, allocation of finances and financial assets, election of school principals and organization

5 National Youth Strategy 2016-2025

6 For the purposes of this Strategy, only the situation and challenges related to secondary and higher education will be considered, in line with the definition and age limits of youth as a category.

of transportation. Even though municipalities gained increased autonomy with the decentralization process, some problems and challenges emerged within the municipalities: very poor condition of some of the school facilities that were taken over, lack of cadastral record keeping, lack of administrative capacities for planning and management of funds, lack of participation of the municipalities in the drafting of secondary education contents, lack of coordination with the central government etc.

Like in the previous National Youth Strategy, in the latest National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, a special section of the area of education is dedicated to non-formal education and commitment to the improvement of the situation with the non-formal education. Furthermore, a lot of education-related research reveals that students who attended non-formal education can be positively distinguished from the ones who were only part of the formal education process. Therefore, it is important to work on and encourage students' participation in non-formal education processes.

The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo can greatly contribute to this area.⁷ The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo can greatly contribute to this area.

In terms of education as a thematic area, the youth stated that their greatest necessity is more libraries and study rooms in the town, which are otherwise well equipped with books. As many as 90.3% of the respondents assessed this necessity as the greatest one and the most urgent one to be addressed in the forthcoming period. Even though the maintenance of libraries and study rooms outside school premises is not within the main competence of the municipality in the sphere of education, the youth still expressed this to be one of their greatest necessities, according to the results. Furthermore, in the sphere of non-formal education, the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo find that more non-formal education (workshops, trainings and summer schools) is needed in the Municipality, which means that civil organizations working on youth-related issues must dedicate more time to activities that will involve the interested youth in their operation. Considering the fact that 73.6% of the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo stated that non-formal education educates young people about their rights, we can imagine how important non-formal education is for this community and for the youth in general. As many as 74.5% of the respondents from the Municipality of Kicevo stated that non-formal education (workshops, trainings and summer schools) that is being offered to them is in line with their needs and young people are interested in participating. In fact, the prevalence of non-formal education is seen as a challenge for the operation of the Youth Council as young people highlight its great importance. In

⁷ The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo consists of representatives of youth civic organizations and forms of youth association.

line with other research on this topic⁸ the local self-government should be particularly interested in the promotion of the state of affairs with non-formal education. Thus, in order to encourage non-formal education, the local self-government should investigate young people's needs for non-formal education and provide the required financial assistance. All these matters were taken into consideration when drafting this Youth Strategy, and they will have a great impact on the drafting of the annual action plans for the implementation of the Youth Strategy of the Municipality of Kicevo.

Education in the Municipality of Kicevo does not only include the realization of the education process within the facilities, i.e. the instruction and non-formal education; it also involves the fulfilment of all necessary requirements for the implementation of the education process. Thus, the transportation that students are provided with in line with the Law on Secondary Education was also in the focus of our research and 65.1% of the respondents stated that young people from rural areas are faced with problems in relation to transportation to the school. Students' transportation to the school is in the sole competence of the local self-government and therefore these data are particularly relevant for the future drafting of documents. The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo should focus on improving the transportation for rural youth to the schools in order to facilitate students' access to schools and thus ensure the same rights as the ones of the urban youth.

School violence is one of the topics in the main focus of civil organizations and the international community, considering the developments and the ethnic tensions that have emerged over the past years, but also the emergence of hate speech. Therefore, significant part of the questionnaire was dedicated to school violence and the types of violence that occur within schools as one of the main topics in the focus of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo. Thus, the majority of respondents, 38.81% stated that they have noticed that some students were deliberately harassed and called names; 12.46% of the respondents stated that they mostly spotted physical violence, whereas 10.20% reported seeing degradation of school property or facilities. These data obtained by the youth of the Municipality of Kicevo are identical to the data presented in the UNICEF national level research on this subject matter⁹ These conditions reveal that education on violence prevention is of particular importance. Knowing that secondary school students highlighted increased non-formal education as one of the tools that are most indispensable in the sphere of education, there is room for non-formal education to act along the formal education process and contribute to reducing and preventing

8 "Nonformal Education in the Republic of Macedonia: States and Perspectives", Buova E., Dodovski I., Youth Cultural Centre Bitola, 2009; available on <http://mkcbt.org.mk/mkc/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/MKC-BitolaNFOpublikacijaMK.pdf>

9 Algoritam centre, Bureau for the Development of Education, "Baseline study on violence in primary schools in Macedonia", 2009.

school violence and school property degradation. These data are of great relevance for the drafting of future actions and activities for the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo.

In the Municipality of Kicevo, the youth is given the possibility to continue their education at the higher level – there are higher education institutions that offer tertiary education. Thus, the following studies are found in the town: Faculty of Technology and Technical Sciences at the University “St. Clement of Ohrid” - Bitola; Law Studies at the Faculty of Law – Kicevo, as part of the University “St. Clement of Ohrid” – Bitola; dispersed studies of the Faculty of Law at the State University of Tetovo; dispersed studies of the Faculty of Economics, Department of Accounting and Finances at the State University of Tetovo, as well as dispersed studies in English language at the State University of Tetovo.

Within the frames of higher education, in the Municipality of Kicevo there are student communities, or student parliaments that represent students in the decision-making processes related to higher education. However, higher education possesses a specific feature, regulated by the Law on Higher Education, and that is the autonomy of this education level, and as a result, local authorities have no right and authorization to participate in its organization and implementation. This is the reason for the lack of activities and research in this sphere. Yet, there are some issues (youth organization and information) that are in some ways indirectly related to this education level.

Over the next years, when drafting the action plans for the implementation of the Youth Strategy, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will specifically consider the issues that the youth pinpointed as challenges that absolutely need to be addressed.

The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will try to enrich the collections in libraries and study rooms, especially with books that young people need as part of the formal education, but also with interesting professional literature that would assist them while studying. Furthermore, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will focus on organizing a series of events (book exchange, street libraries etc.) that would help build a larger and more comprehensive book collection that would meet young people’s needs in this sphere.

With regard to non-formal education, in the following years, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will encourage all civil organizations to engage in adequate cooperation with them and promote non-formal education and conduct much more trainings, workshops and seminars for the youth in the municipality. The focus would be on trainings dealing with subject matters that are related to civil, youth, university and secondary school students’ rights, knowing that this is the form that young people most frequently use to get educated on these issues. In addition to the cooperation with civil organizations, in its action plan, the Youth Council of the Municipality of

Kicevo will also include a series of activities related to this subject matter as part of the non-formal education that the Youth Council will provide to meet young people's needs and to address all the challenges that they are faced with.

When designing the activities for school violence prevention, the Youth Council will specifically consider the activities and guidelines that are part of the Strategy for Reducing Violence in Schools 2012-2015¹⁰. Even though the Strategy is past its validity period, it contains a set of activities whose implementation should also continue in the forthcoming period. Furthermore, the Youth Council will also engage in all activities that are related to the drafting of a new strategy of this kind. When designing the activities in this area, the data and activities from the project "Together for Schools Free of Violence" will also be taken into consideration, a project that resulted in a website that publishes news and activities for schools, parents, teachers and students¹¹. The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will also address the issue of hate speech through various campaigns and relevant training.

When designing the action plans for the implementation of the activities foreseen in the Strategy, there will also be room for new and topical issues that concern the youth in the sphere of education.

Council will work together with the secondary schools on its territory, the higher education institutions, the Ministry of Interior, as well as with the civil organizations at the local level.

¹⁰ National Strategy for Reducing Violence in Schools 2012-2015 <http://arhiva.vlada.mk/registar/?q=node/411>

¹¹ Together for Schools Free of Violence, www.beznasilstvo.mk



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF EDUCATION

- Increased frequency of transportation for secondary school students from rural to urban parts of the Municipality of Kicevo, and vice versa.
- Support for non-formal education and youth civil organizations in the Municipality of Kicevo.
- Increased number of workshops, trainings and summer schools for the youth from the Municipality.
- Promotion and increase in the number of young people who participate in non-formal education in the Municipality of Kicevo.
- Increased library fund and number of libraries and study rooms in the Municipality.
- Improved youth awareness of school violence and school violence prevention

SOCIAL STANDING

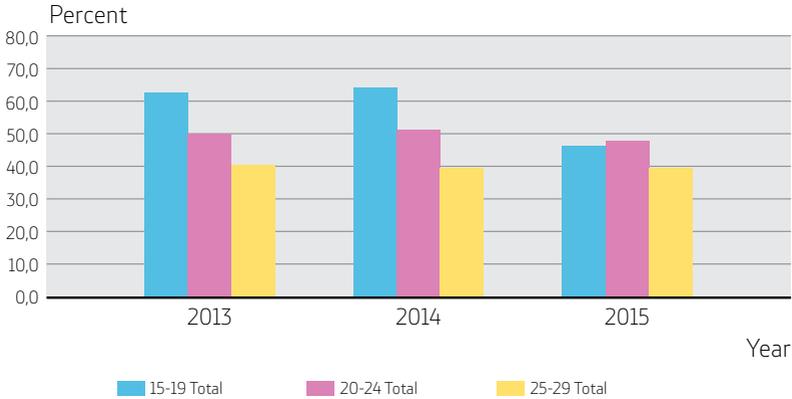
Social standing is a very broad area that encompasses many youth-related issues, starting from the youth employment process, all the way to them settling down in their own home. This topic is of great importance to the youth because in many countries worldwide, young people enjoy many benefits as a result of their status in the society. In this area, the issues that were reviewed together with the youth for the purpose of their inclusion in the Strategy include youth employment and self-employment, youth benefits in the society as well as the issue of housing for young people and young married couples.

Employment is a very significant step for any young person, especially for the purpose of self-realization and transformation in the society. Employment is most frequently the first step towards reaching a financial and social independence [...], closely related to the quality of life of young people, their self-confidence, the opportunities for mobility but also practical decisions related to housing, settling down and setting up a family and paving the road for future professional and career development¹². However, youth unemployment in our country remains very high and therefore both the central and the local government need to engage in activities in order to improve this situation. The state of affairs in relation to youth unemployment at the national level is presented here below¹³.

¹² National Youth Strategy 2016-2025

¹³ Unemployment rate of the population aged 15+, presented per sex and age, per year www.stat.gov.mk

Unemployment rate of the population aged 15+, presented per sex and age, per year



One of the key challenges that affect the youth unemployment rate is the general economic condition in the country which, above all, results in lack of adequate employment both in terms of quantity and quality. Quite frequently, employers highlight that young people do not possess the skills demanded on the labour market. According to the Youth Employment Action Plan, in 2015, despite of the increased level of education, most young people in the country are faced with the problem of labour market integration, i.e. uninterrupted transition from education to employment, mostly due to the lack of harmonization of the education output and labour market demands¹⁴. According to the World Bank research "Demand for Skills in FYR Macedonia" which included 1,700 companies, domestic employers suggest that young people as participants in the labour market lack skills such as responsibility, motivation, communication, customer care and team work compared to their specific knowledge¹⁵. The National Employment Strategy from 2015¹⁶ and the corresponding Action Plan highlight the commitment of the Government to address the issue of youth unemployment because of their vulnerability and exposure to social exclusion. The challenges identified include 1) increased economic growth and investment rate for the purpose of increased number of job openings; 2) improved overall level of employment, especially for youth, long-term unemployed and individuals with low level of education; 3) improved relevance of the education and training system in relation to the labour market; 4) reduced informal employment. Dealing with these challenges requires synchronized policies in

14 Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Youth Employment Action Plan 2015, available here: www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/vrabortuvanje_mladi_akciski.pdf

15 Rutkowski J., "Demand for skills in FYR Macedonia", 2010.

16 National Employment Strategy 2015, available at: <http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/dokumenti.nsp>

the spheres of investment, entrepreneurial promotion, education and training, social dialogue and active labour market policies.

Over the past years, several measures were applied in the country which subsidized youth employment, but also joint projects with the UNDP that subsidized youth self-employment. This is the reason why these measures were included in the questionnaire that reviewed the issue of social standing in the Municipality of Kicevo. These measures included a series of activities for the promotion of young people's employment skills so that they would be able to find a job more easily and better address any job-related challenges. In fact, employment skills and lack of training that increases youth skills are in fact the largest and most urgent challenge for the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo, as stated by 85.8% of the respondents. Furthermore, 50.7% of the respondents stated that they were not sufficiently informed of the calls, i.e. job advertisements and self-employment measures for young people, which leaves room for the Youth Council to work together with the Municipality of Kicevo and the Employment Agency and focus on dissemination and submission of all employment-related information to the youth for the purpose of increased employment and improved working skills of the youth in this municipality. Hard work and focus in this area will lead to improved social standing, too.

Providing one's own place to live is a cycle in young people's life that is directly dependent on their employment and standard of living. Over the past years, the central government introduced measures to help provide youth and young married couples with their own homes ¹⁷. These opportunities are particularly important considering some research data that indicate that nearly 80% of the youth aged 18+ stated that they still live with their parents, as opposed to 14.5% of the respondents who stated that they live with their partner, and only 3.2% who stated that they live alone. The reasons are mostly of practical nature, or there are no specific reasons why young people still live with their parents: 35% of the respondents stated that they live with their parents for practical reasons, and there are as many respondents who did not list a specific reason why they live with their parents ¹⁸. Therefore, these issues were also included in the questionnaire for the purposes of the drafting of an adequate Youth Strategy of the Municipality of Kicevo. According to the respondents, youth housing and the provision of one's own place to live were highlighted as the largest problem related to the social standing. Thus, as many as 82.4% of the respondents stated that it is very difficult for young people to provide their own place to live and to separate from their nuclear family. The inability to afford their own home was highlighted by the respondents as the largest problem that young married couples are faced with.

17 Project titled "Buy a house, buy a flat" www.kupikukakupistan.gov.mk

18 Topuzovska-Latkovikj M., et al. "Youth Study Macedonia" 2013, Fridrich Ebert Foundation, available on www.fes.org.mk/pdf/pub-mk-13.pdf

Thus, 78.19% of the respondents stated that young married couples can hardly afford their own place to live, whereas 68.8% of the respondents stated that young married couples are not well informed of the measures and subsidies offered for the provision of one's own place to live. Youth housing and provision of one's own home are also seen as a serious problem and a challenge for the Youth Council in the forthcoming period.

Another segment of youth social standing is represented by the measures and benefits they enjoy in a given society. These benefits can be related to the education process for pupils and students, but they can also be in the form of special measures earmarked for the youth in general and which enable them to have a better quality of life in a given community. There are also benefits related to the free public transport for the youth, but also youth benefits related to cultural events etc. When asked about the social youth benefits that they enjoy, as many as 75% of the respondents stated that they do not have any social benefits. The lack or absence of social benefits has a direct impact on the quality of life of the youth and their direct social engagement within a community.

In order to foresee and include activities in the Strategy that are related to this area, the Youth Council will be faced with great challenges, especially considering the fact that youth unemployment is one of the most important and most serious challenges that the country is faced with. However, adequate promotion of the employment and self-employment measures and dissemination of information to all young people will be some of the tasks that the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will be working on over the next period. Increasing and improving youth skills to better address their job related challenges is another objective of the Youth Council for the forthcoming years. By introducing proper cooperation with the competent institutions, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will strive to fulfil the highest goals in this area.

Adequate presentation, information and use of youth housing measures will have a special place in the activities of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo. The Youth Council will try to help provide assistance and advice on the use of housing measures, as well as relevant support.

As in any other area, there will be room for activities related to the ongoing issues and challenges that the youth are faced with at the local level. In order to successfully implement the activities from this area, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will cooperate with the Employment Agency, the relevant central government institutions, as well as the relevant local level cultural institutions, civil organizations and the youth in general. The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will also cooperate with the education institutions at all levels for the purposes of this area and for improved youth skills.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF SOCIAL STANDING

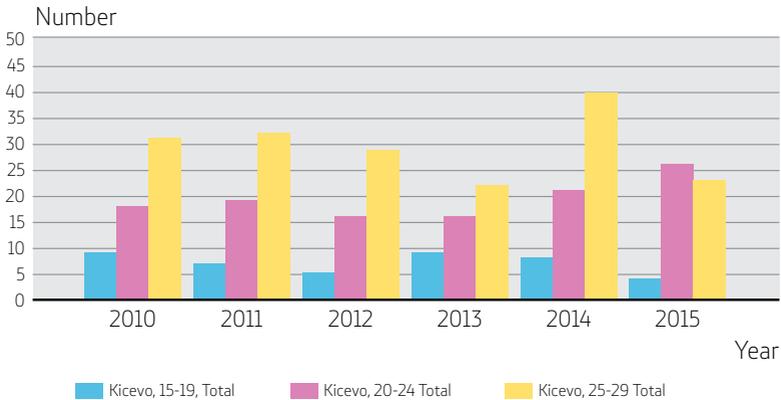
- Providing information and support for the youth in relation to youth employment and self-employment opportunities.
- Support and development of local community volunteering.
- Information and support for the youth regarding the use of housing opportunities for young people and young married couples in the Municipality of Kicevo.
- Providing youth social benefits to improve the quality of life of the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo.
- Establishing cooperation with the relevant institutions to overcome youth related challenges and improve the position of the youth.

MIGRATION

Migration is a thematic area that is rarely discussed in the country, but frequently alarmed about. Migration can cause various flows within the economy and thus also influence the quality of life of youth in certain regions. In fact, this area is one of the most alarming and most worrying areas for the youth of the Municipality of Kicevo, according to their answers provided in the questionnaire.

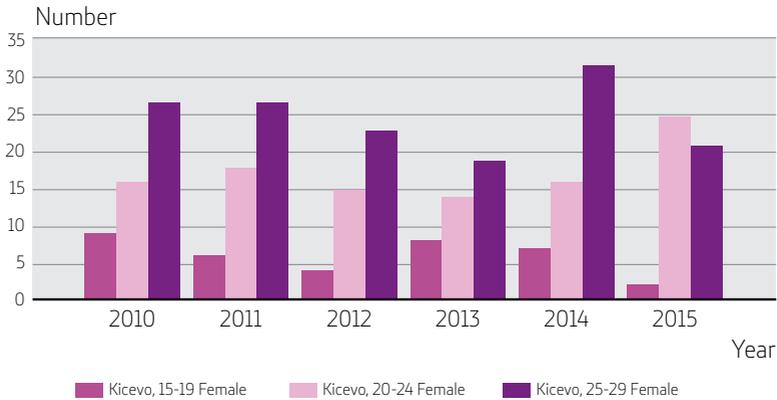
According to the official data of the State Statistical Office, the number of young people who have moved out of the Municipality of Kicevo has been increasing over the past years. This increase in numbers might be related to the merger of four other municipalities with the Municipality of Kicevo, as previously discussed in the area of education. According to these data, these statistics only include those young people who have officially moved out of the municipality (by changing their address). Data are not provided on young people who leave the municipality to study in another town.

Internal migrations: Number of citizens who have moved out, presented per sex and age, per municipality and per year.

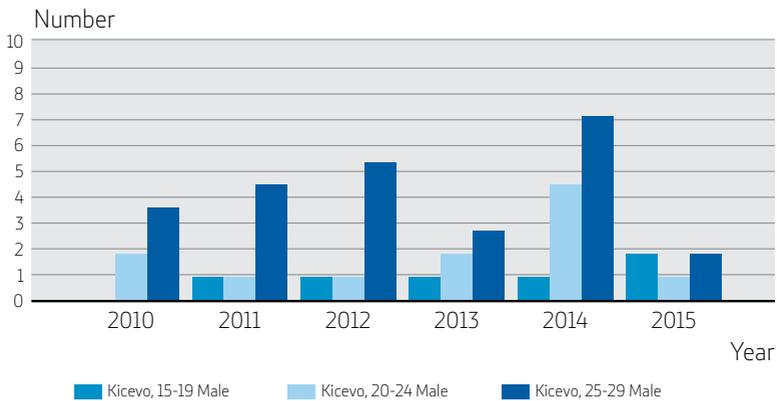


These statistical data taken from the official website of the State Statistical Office reveal that there the number of female citizens who move out of the municipality is much higher compared to the number of young men.

Internal migrations: Citizens who have moved out, per sex and per age, per municipality and per year



Internal migrations: citizens who have moved out, per sex and per age, per municipality and per year



Precisely because of these data, but also because of the nation-wide trend of youth migration this topic had a special place in our questionnaire. Questions were included in relation to youth migration for work or studying purposes, their returning to the municipality etc. This section of the questionnaire and the questions in it are divided into two parts, or migration as a result of moving out of the Municipality (moving to another town or state) and migration within the Municipality (migration from a village to a town, and vice versa). It is important to highlight that migration and migration-related issues were assessed as the one of highest concern and a large problem for the Municipality of Kicevo. In the forthcoming period, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will have to work hard on this issue that has been assessed as the largest challenge. Thus, as many as 93.7% of the respondents stated that youth migration in

the Municipality of Kicevo is for the purpose of finding a job in another country. This specific question and the high percentage reveal that the most frequent reason for young people to move out is employment, but in another country. The respondents also highlighted that young people leave the Municipality in order to study. Thus, as many as 91.7% of the respondents stated that migration also occurs due to the entry in the higher education process. These data should also be considered in relation to the higher education institutions in the Municipality of Kicevo, especially during the preparation of the Strategy and the activities by the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo. In line with the previous question, as many as 87.2% of the respondents expressed concern about youth leaving the Municipality to find a job in another town. These answers and the exceptionally high percentages reveal that young people are particularly worried about this issue in the Municipality of Kicevo. Furthermore, the youth also highlights another problem of great concern – young people who leave the municipality to study or find a job rarely go back to their municipality to continue their life there. This problem was highlighted by 83.29% of the respondents.

The second part of the questions refer to youth migration within the very Municipality, but also young people's needs that can cause migration. Therefore, one of the challenges indicated by the youth, that the Youth Council could work on in the forthcoming period, is the improvement of opportunities (culture, sports, entertainment, education) for young people living in rural areas, but also improving the regular public transport for from rural to urban parts of the Municipality. Providing these preconditions will affect the quality of life of young people, and thus also migration as one of the challenges that the Municipality of Kicevo will have to work on over the forthcoming period.

In the years to come, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will need to focus on this issue and on meeting the needs of young people, but also youth education on this topic. In line with the possibilities and competences of the relevant local authorities, and thus also the competences of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo, the activities will refer to the promotion of the quality of life of the youth in the rural, but also in the urban area, as one of the ways to reduce migration in this municipality. By promoting the quality of education, social standing but also the opportunities available to young people, the Youth Council and the youth in the municipality can engage in a series of activities to raise a red flag about the challenges and problems the Municipality of Kicevo is faced with in terms of migration. It is of great importance to take into consideration the youth perception in terms of young people returning to the municipality after completing the studies, as these returns are mostly related to employment and quality of life that the youth will have after the completion of their education process. In this sense, there is also the possibility and commitment of the Youth Council to identify youth needs in the sphere of higher education and the

reasons why they move to other towns for their studies. This leads to another question, whether this is due to the need for different types of education than the ones offered at the local level, or if it is a quest for a better quality education and better ranked universities and faculties.

These data and the focus of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo in this area in the forthcoming period will help promote the position of the youth and ensure information that will be used in the strategic approach for the purpose of reducing youth migration in the Municipality of Kicevo.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF MIGRATION

- Promoting the position of the youth within the Municipality.
- Identifying the needs of the youth in the Municipality for the application of adequate measures to prevent the youth from moving out of the Municipality.
- Increased youth opportunities to improve their quality of life.

HEALTH AND PREVENTION

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity¹⁹. This broad definition of health incorporates various issues, such as adequate health institutions, sexual education, use of various vices in young people's lives, traffic protection, sense of security in the community etc. The goal of the activities and questions in this area was to list the relevant youth needs in order to implement adequate activities that would focus on preventive programmes, exchange of information, youth education, promotion of healthy lifestyles etc.

Good health in the adolescence is essential for the wellbeing, but also a foundation for better health later on in life. Yet, we do not invest sufficiently in prevention and early intervention with youth aged 15-29, and when problems occur, they are faced with barriers in their access to the needed care. There are encouraging trends, such as the reduced number of smokers and HIV/AIDS related activities, but there are also great inequalities related to the healthcare. Some issues are hardly ever discussed in the country, and even less addressed. Some of the issues of this kind include mental health issues (including anxiety and self-hurt), substance abuse, diet and encouraging healthy relationship with social media. As for services, there is still need for youth friendly/peer support, more skilled labour working on training for the development of adolescent cohort and better understanding of confidentiality rules²⁰.

Unfortunately, in our case, health statistics is not included in official data and is rarely segregated per ages. That makes it much more difficult to obtain an objective image of the situation with youth health, especially when it comes to the ones who are marginalized on any grounds.

However, in line with the research conducted by different stakeholders in the society, the state of affairs in terms of health and prevention among youth is good. Thus, the general health condition of youth aged 15-29 is at a very satisfactory level (85% of the respondents stated that they are in "excellent" or "very good" health). Based on the data obtained using the mental health score of the WHO instrument, the youth demonstrate proper emotional harmonization between their life activities and their efforts to achieve psychological stability (92% demonstrated "moderate mental

19 Definition provided by the World Health Organization.

20 Analysis of the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, www.strategijazamladi.mk

health” or “highly pronounced mental health”) ²¹. However, even though the youth consider themselves to be in a good health condition, there are still many challenges that they are faced with in this area.

In relation to the healthcare system and the rights resulting from the healthcare system in the country, the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo are only slightly familiar with it and they are not satisfied with its quality. Thus, 71.1% stated that they are not satisfied with the quality of healthcare that is provided to them when needed. In order to reach maximum satisfaction and cost-effectiveness of healthcare services offered to the youth, they need to be thought through in line with their needs and in some cases, they need to differ from the ones offered to adults. They should also be aimed at providing relevant information on the promotion of health and prevention of diseases, as well as psychological and social support. Adolescence is a period of great changes and experimenting that any person goes through. Health-related habits and behaviour adopted and learnt in this period have an impact later on in life. These habits include dietary habits, smoking, alcohol consumption, drug abuse and abuse of other psycho-active substances, physical health and sexual habits ²². One of the ways to increase satisfaction with healthcare protection in a country is to properly inform the youth of all rights and obligations resulting from it. Over the past years, in our country, certain social measures were introduced which either incorporate or touch on healthcare protection rights, especially among youth. This is the reason why we researched youth familiarization with the rights related to healthcare protection and the existence of new benefits. However, what is of great concern is the lack of knowledge of health protection rights by the youth, and the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo can contribute in order to improve this state.

Thus, 75.9% of the respondents stated that they were not familiar with the possibility of losing free healthcare protection. Therefore, proper education is required in this sphere so that the youth would be able to fulfil and protect their rights.

Based on the consultations held with the councillors of the Municipality of Kicevo, but also with the representatives of the relevant health institutions, in this area, great concern was expressed in relation to certain deviant phenomena, with a special emphasis on alcohol and psychotropic substance abuse by minors. In line with the statements given by the relevant authorities, over the next period, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will have to implement a series of activities to raise youth awareness of the harmful effects of these two phenomena.

21 Institute of Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, “Report on Youth Trends”, December 2014.

22 Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2009.

In the area of health and deviant phenomena among the youth, for the purposes of this local youth strategy, the following issues were researched: youth satisfaction with their lifestyle, obtaining health protection, deviant phenomena among the youth, safety within the community and school safety. Based on the results obtained and the processing of different types of questions related to young people's feelings of safety and security, several places were proposed, such as their neighbourhood, school, bus stations, places where they spend their free time etc. Their answers lead to the conclusion that young people feel safe when they move in those parts of the community that they are familiar with (school, centre, their settlement, nearby bus stop). The place where they feel most secure is the settlement where they live (81.3%). These data related to the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo coincide with the national-wide data where 90% of the young people who participated in the study stated that they feel most secure in the place where they live, and there are no differences in terms of the respondents' ethnicity, sex, age, place of residence and region²³. According to the data obtained from the questionnaire for the Youth Strategy of the Municipality of Kicevo, the second place where the youth feel most secure is the centre of the municipality (77.3%). Bus stations are generally assessed as places where young people feel safe (71.6%), as well as schools (69.1%). In line with all the answers obtained, there is a general belief among the youth that the municipality of Kicevo is a safe municipality. However, the young participants in this survey also listed certain issues related to their safety, especially in terms of road traffic safety. The level of safety decreases when it comes to road traffic. Thus, 66.5% of the respondents stated that their movement in the municipality as pedestrians is made difficult, whereas 77.6% of the respondents stated that driving a car in the Municipality is difficult because of the low level of traffic culture. According to the data and announcements of the National Council on Road Traffic Safety, the category of young drivers is the one that least respects speed limits. In relation to the participation in road traffic accidents, youth aged up to 25 are prone to participating in such accidents. The risk can be observed in several aspects: firstly, their inexperience; then, them being prone to risky behaviour and finally, the beginners' mistakes that new drivers make. During the first years, generally speaking, young drivers are not aware of the risks they will face in the traffic²⁴. For these very reasons, but also the reduced feeling of safety among young people, in its programme, the National Council on Road Traffic Safety has included a series of activities for young people in relation to road traffic safety, with a special emphasis on young people as users of cars,

23 Topuzovska-Latkovikj M., et al. "Youth Study Macedonia 2013", Fridrich Ebert Foundation, available on www.fes.org.mk/pdf/pub-mk-13.pdf

24 Platform "Youth and Road Traffic Safety", Kumanovo. More information available on <http://www.rsbsp.org.mk/rsbsp-na-tribina-na-tema-mladite-i-bezbednosta-vo-soobrakjot-vo-kumanovo>

motorbikes and as pedestrians²⁵.

In line with the aforementioned conclusions, young people need to be educated about their rights resulting from health care protection. This education should be comprehensive and include all problems and challenges that a young person can be faced with (drug and alcohol abuse, sexual education, health care rights and obligations, students and health care etc.). Therefore, one of the activities of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will be connecting different youth categories with the issues covered by health care. That will encourage adequate use of the rights and opportunities offered in our country. The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will regularly monitor the statistics and problems related to youth health and prevention, but also challenges that the youth are faced with at the local level and which are not part of their strategic document.

In order to increase road traffic safety for young people, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will focus on adequate youth education by organizing workshops, actions and activities that will raise the awareness of both among the youth and the general population, too. The Local Youth Council will try to implement these activities together with the relevant institutions in this area in order to increase youth satisfaction with health care, their familiarization with health care rights as well as the sense of security in their municipality.

25 The 2015 Annual Report on the Implemented Activities of the National Council of Road Traffic Safety, www.rsbp.org.mk



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF HEALTH AND PREVENTION

- Informing the youth of the rights and obligations resulting from their health insurance
- Promotion and education on healthy lifestyle among youth.
- Promotion and education on the harmful effect of all types of addictions among youth.
- Raising the awareness and providing training on road traffic culture among the youth.
- Raising the awareness of road traffic culture within the community.

INTERETHNIC INTEGRATION

Interethnic integration is very important for our society, especially considering the fact that it is also regulated with the highest legal act in the country. Thus, Article 8, line 2 and Amendment VI of the Constitution prescribe adequate and equitable representation of the citizens of all communities in the state administration bodies and other public institutions at all levels²⁶. In addition to the Constitution, there are also other national laws that reflect the multi-ethnic reality (Law on Primary Education, Law on Secondary Education, Law on the Local Self-Government etc.). Despite all the measures that the state has implemented in order to improve interethnic integration, only a small part of these measures are related to the youth. When it comes to the youth and interethnic integration, the main focus is placed on interethnic integration in education, believing that it is the most appropriate way to meet the goal. In fact, multiculturalism should be promoted through the education process in order to contribute to the improvement of the multi-ethnic relations in the country. Addressing multiculturalism and interethnic relations in education represents the foundation of shared understanding and building a cohesive society. Even though the aspirations for EU/NATO membership are shared by all citizens in the country, it is still debatable whether our students are prepared to live in the multicultural and multi-ethnic family of the EU. Students from our country first need to understand, accept and respect differences in their own country in order to integrate in their own society. Then, they can strive for a full integration in the European family²⁷.

In reality, though, there is an ever increasing ethnic segregation in education. In his statement given during the 718th plenary meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities stated that there is an “alarming trend of separation along ethnic lines”²⁸. According to him, this separation in some cases results in violence. The High Commissioner submitted to the Minister of Education specific Recommendations on Promoting Integration through Education²⁹.

²⁶ Constitution <http://www.sobranie.mk/ustav-na-rm.nsp>

²⁷ Violeta Petroska – Beska, Mirjana Najcevska, Nicolina Kenig, Safet Balazi and Ana Tomovska “Study on multiculturalism and interethnic relations in education”, 2009.

²⁸ Statement by Knut Vollebaek, OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, The 718th plenary meeting of the OSCE Permanent Council (2009).

²⁹ Recommendations on Promoting Integration through Education, OSCE Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities, 25.1.2008.

The report highlights that segregated education is very expensive when we try to build cohesive societies and that integrated education is not only about bringing children from different ethnicities in a single classroom, but also democratic and decentralized school management, interesting and inclusive textbooks, extracurricular activities, as well as depoliticized curricula and textbooks. According to the Commissioner, this is an area where the country is lagging behind and therefore interethnic tolerance should be placed back on the agenda, and education should become part of a much broader national strategy for promotion of integration in the building of a multi-ethnic society. These conditions and alarms will continue in the years to come, especially knowing that ethnic tensions among students are quite frequent. However, there are some municipalities that try to promote activities in order to increase interethnic integration and have successful projects.

Considering all of the aforementioned, the Youth Council decided to include this topic in its research, too. The Municipality of Kicevo is a multi-ethnic municipality where several ethnic communities live. Until 2016, there were two official languages in the Municipality of Kicevo – Macedonian and Albanian. On 30 June 2016, the Turkish language became the third official language of the Municipality. Thus, the Municipality of Kicevo sent a signal to the public and among its citizens that it wants to build itself as a multi-ethnic municipality with equal rights for all communities living in it.

Multi-ethnic integration is an issue that is very important in an environment such as the one of the Municipality of Kicevo, but also for the youth who live in this municipality and spend their time together every day. Therefore, this issue should have a special place in the Strategy as the activities in this area concern all young people. The general picture from the research data shows that young people socialize and engage in activities together. Thus, 82.1% of the youth stated that young people socialize with and have friends from different communities. Throughout the education process in schools and at university, the youth from different ethnic communities engage in joint activities. Interethnic integration also continues with the implementation of activities by civil organizations in the non-formal education process. All of this points to the conclusion that in school and at university, but also outside the education institutions, young people spend their time together, which is a great opportunity for the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo in the implementation of the recommendations resulting from this Strategy.

What is worrying regarding the results of the interethnic integration is the prevalence of hate speech among the youth of different ethnic communities. The answers provided in the questionnaire lead to the conclusion that even though young people stated that they socialize and spend part of their free time together with friends from different ethnic communities, there is still room for the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo, as a youth representative body, to work on the improvement

and promotion of the current state of the interethnic integration in this municipality. This state reveals that even though young people socialize and spend time together, they still use ethnic-based hate speech.

The youth in the Municipality of Kicevo spend their free time together and socialize with other young people regardless of their ethnicity, but still use hate speech. This phenomenon will serve as a basis for the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo to gain in-depth information on the way hate speech is used and whether it causes other adverse conditions among the youth. In addition to finding out the causes of hate speech and the reasons for its use, over the next years, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will also work on its mitigation and eradication. The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo, which consists of members of different ethnic communities, is a successful example that the goal can be achieved if young people work together for the promotion of the position of youth. At the local level, the Youth Council will also implement activities to promote interethnic integration among the youth in order to eradicate hate speech.

The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will implement activities together with representatives of the local civil society organizations, representatives of the local institutions, the education institutions and special committees within the municipality that address or are related to these issues, all in line with the annual action plans that it will prepare. Through these activities, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will strive to reach different categories of youth (secondary school students, university students, unemployed) in order to adequately reach its goals.

The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will strive to take part in the preparation and realization of all strategic documents at the local and national level that deal with these issues.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF INTERETHNIC INTEGRATION

- Raising youth awareness and knowledge of different ethnic communities and the harmful effect of using hate speech.
- Increased activities for promotion of and education on interethnic integration and co-existence among youth from various ethnic communities.

YOUTH INFORMATION

When it comes to the state of affairs and analysis of the area of youth information, it usually refers to the activities and information that are of youth interest and that need to be adequately disseminated to them. In this process, it is particularly important to present the youth with quality information which might assist them in the adequate decision-making and realization of their rights. Consequently, youth information includes many activities, media and institutions that need to participate in the communication process from the institutions to the youth and vice versa, but also among the very youth. This is the reason why this area is so complex.

In the EU states, there are youth information centres whose main purpose is providing and spreading information and providing advice in various spheres of young people's lives. Youth information centres are non-profit organizations that work in the interest of young people. The operation of youth information centres ensures dissemination of youth information in relation to job openings, volunteering in educational, recreational, cultural institutions and directorates, fulfilment of social rights, mobility, various trainings, requalification and travel, sports awards etc. This youth information system was initially applied in the early 1960s in several EU member states, and nowadays it is applied by more than 30 European states³⁰.

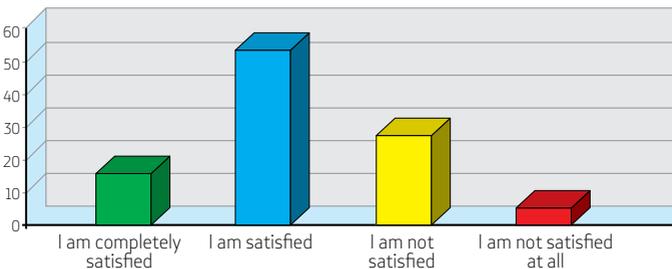
In the area of youth information, youth here are provided with general services, professional services, institutions and other sources of information that do not meet their needs. The general answer is that young people are not sufficiently informed, which can also be concluded from the aforementioned analyses of various issues (health care, social rights and benefits). There are no centres or institutions that would serve as a centralized source of information available to the youth. Furthermore, there are no organizations that would systematise, structure and adjust this information for youth purposes. There are no places where young people could obtain information on a wide variety of issues without special procedures and complications, or get advice and be referred to the right place where they could obtain the relevant information. Considering the fact that we are a multi-ethnic state, one of the challenges for youth information is the language in which information is available and the language used to disseminate information. With respect to the media used by the youth for information and other purposes, internet is ranked on the first position. Most of the youth read electronic news (76%) and use the internet (75%)

³⁰ Youth information analysis, National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, available on www.strategijazamladi.mk

on daily basis, whereas 67% of the respondents use the internet on their mobile phones. Television comes next and is used by 58% of the respondents, followed by radio, used by 40% of the respondents. As for print media, 14% of the youth stated that they never read print media, while 13% of the respondents never read books. When considering the demographic differences, it can be observed that female respondents read more books, while male respondents play more computer games³¹.

According to the ISPJR Youth Trends Survey ³²,the internet is by far the leading medium or communication channel, used by four fifths (80%) of the respondents. Television is a medium used “on daily basis” by nearly two thirds of all respondents (59.5%), and slightly more than one fifth of the respondents (22.9%) are frequently in front of their televisions. The largest number of respondents listen to the radio occasionally (39.5%), or often (23.3%). As expected, newspapers are the medium that is used the least on daily basis or frequently. When it comes to the contents that the youth want to be informed about, entertainment comes first, followed by music, film and sport-related information, and then a significantly lower number of respondents found public interest news, contents related to the political and economic developments and “heavier” contents related to culture, art and education to be “the most important” ones.

According to this survey, most of the respondents or, in aggregate terms, slightly more than two thirds of the respondents, believe that media provide sufficient information on the issues that they are interested in. On the other hand, nearly one third of the respondents had a critical attitude towards the quality of information: 27.4% of the respondents are “not satisfied” and 4% of the respondents are “not satisfied at all” with the quality of information they find in the media in relation to the topics or issues of their interest.



31 “National report on Macedonia from the research on Youth and Media”, Ignatova E., Dzambaska D., Bozinovska M., Bozovik S., 2014.

32 “Youth Trends in the Republic of Macedonia”, Institute for Social, Political and Juridical Research, December 2014.

These conclusions suggest that internet and television are the main or predominant communication channels used almost by the whole population and on daily basis. On the other hand, most of the surveyed respondents rarely or never use radio and newspapers.

For all of the aforementioned reasons, youth information was yet another issue that was included in the questionnaire and in this Youth Strategy. In this area, there is always room for improvement of youth information by providing new information that would improve their quality of life and the fulfilment and protection of their rights. This part of the research covered various issues in order to assess the level of youth information. One of the conclusions is that young people are only slightly informed about the work of the local institutions. This might be a result of the low visibility of these institutions in social media and on the internet, the places where young people spend great part of their everyday life and where they get information about the latest events in their local community. Thus, 69.9% of the respondents are not informed about the services offered by the institutions. In the forthcoming period, strong commitment is needed by the institutions in the Municipality in order to find a way to provide the youth with relevant information so that they can be successfully implemented. As for the municipal authorities, the respondents are familiar with their work and activities that they implement, and 69.7% of the youth are informed about the work of the Municipality.

The youth additionally expressed the need for proper youth information regarding the implemented public consultations, because without proper youth information, the youth become passive and start lacking motivation, which lead to many other challenges that can only be addressed over a longer period, regardless of the local community faced with them.

When it comes to equal representation of men and women, the respondents stated that it is in place and is practiced. Thus, young girls from rural and urban areas have the same rights as young men and they can equally fulfil their rights, as stated by 69.1% of the respondents. When it comes to discrimination against young girls in terms of education, employment, promotion and independence, speaking in percentages, the respondents provided similar answers. Thus, 48.1% of the respondents believe that there is discrimination against young females in terms of the aforementioned rights, as opposed to 31.7% of the respondents who believe that there is no discrimination and that young men and women are equal regarding each of these areas.

Youth information needs to be at a very high level because the quality of information provided to the youth will affect the development in all other issues and areas. Adequate information provided to the youth helps them improve and fulfil their rights. Hence, if young people are informed of employment and self-employment opportunities, they will use these rights; if young people are informed about the rights resulting from their health insurance, they will use these rights; on the other hand,

lack of information leads to neglect, and sometimes even abuse of rights. All these considerations make this topic very important for the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo. The recommendations for each of these areas provided in this Strategy address youth information and education separately. The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will strive to achieve the same – improved youth information in each of these areas, especially considering their work and the work of the municipal authorities. Over the next period, the Youth Council will strive for improved information and access to information for the youth and offered by the institutions. Furthermore, in this period, the activities have to be aimed at gathering relevant information from the institutions and positioning the Council as one of the means for information of all young people. The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will have to act as a youth information service as long as it takes for the institutions to establish the practice of adequate dissemination of youth information.

In order to implement all the activities that will be part of the annual action plans, the Youth Council will have to cooperate with all local institutions, but also with some institutions at the central level, for the purpose of adequate youth information (employment and self-employment opportunities, education rights, health care rights and benefits, possibilities for using their own rights etc.)



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF YOUTH INFORMATION

- Increased information and cooperation with the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo regarding the work of the Municipality.
- Increased information and cooperation of the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo with the local and central authorities.
- Increased youth information regarding their rights.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Youth participation is understood as participation of youth in all the processes related to the design, decision-making and evaluation of and for the policies that are of their interest and that affect them. This alternative provides institutions as decision makers with the possibility to engage young people and hear their voice, the voice of the people for whom they adopt the policies. However, active participation does not only involve engagement in a certain activity; it is rather a process through which the youth identify their needs, search for solutions, plan and implement activities, but also have the possibility to make decisions within their communities and in society as a whole. Yet, youth participation is not an exclusive issue of mere cooperation between the youth and institutions; youth participation also covers youth participation in the civil sector and the various forms of youth association during the education process. There are many ways in which young people can participate in the decision-making processes related to issues that are important both for them, and for the overall community. The most frequent forms of youth participation include:

- Voluntary work,
- Participation in various forms of non-formal education,
- Peer education – inclusion of young people in the education of their peers,
- Youth councils, parliaments, forums and other structures – traditional manner of participation in the decision making processes in international, national, regional or local authorities, schools, clubs, non-governmental organizations etc.
- Co-management systems that exist in some institutions (e.g. the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe) where decisions are made together with representatives of the youth and the authorities, at an equal footing,
- Consultations – used in the decision-making processes, when expressing youth concerns and needs and making proposals.

Youth representation in institutions is not at a satisfactory level and where such representation does exist, they are rarely included in the decision making processes. At the local level, some forms of youth association can be observed, as well as some youth-related strategic documents in some municipalities, but there is no unified approach that is practiced everywhere. At the national level, there is also lack of

dialogue and communication channels between institutions and the youth, i.e. youth organizations, despite of the efforts made by the civil society for the establishment of youth representative bodies. Furthermore, local self-governments and government institutions do not allocate sufficient funds for youth needs and implementation of their ideas and they hardly encourage voluntary work among youth, even though the largest part of the youth population supports this type of youth engagement as a preparation for their future jobs³³.

In our country, over the past years, youth participation at the local level was introduced through the establishment of local youth councils, through the work of civil society organizations, and in cooperation with the municipal authorities. No different was the process of the establishment of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo, consisting of representatives of youth organizations on the territory of the Municipality of Kicevo. In the course of 2013, the Municipality of Kicevo, in cooperation with the Youth Education Forum and the Centre for Intercultural Dialogue, started activities for the establishment of the Youth Council in the Municipality for the purposes of representation of and advocacy for youth interests. Thus, the Municipality of Kicevo was one of the first municipalities to start this process in the interest of the youth population. The establishment of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo was conducted through a lengthy procedure that was slow and transparent, with great interest and involvement of youth, representatives of youth civil society organizations, as well as the political parties' youth in the Municipality. Consequently, at the level of the Municipality of Kicevo, a Youth Council was established which is now accepted as a formal body of the Municipality of Kicevo, or more specifically, as an advisory municipal body on youth-related issues and it consists of 11 members, eight of whom are from the civil sector, one from the union of secondary school students, one from the union of university students and one representative from the lines of the municipal administration of the Municipality of Kicevo, appointed by the Mayor and acting as a coordinator of the Youth Council. They have all been selected following an open call published by the Municipality of Kicevo, appointed by the Council of the Municipality of Kicevo, upon the proposal of the relevant committee at the Council of the Municipality of Kicevo. They have a two-year term. The Youth Council was established by the Council of the Municipality of Kicevo on the session held on 18.05.2015.

After the establishment of the Youth Council, the Municipality of Kicevo, in cooperation with the OSCE Mission to Skopje, continued working on the capacity building of the first composition of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo in the course of 2015. The cooperation and support of the OSCE Mission to Skopje continued throughout 2016 through the implementation of joint processes, such as

³³ "Youth Needs and Youth Organization in the Republic of Macedonia", Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA, November 2010.

the preparation of the Youth Strategy of the Municipality of Kicevo.

In addition to the Youth Council, in the Municipality of Kicevo there are youth organizations that are part of the education processes, such as the students' parliaments and secondary school communities, but also several different types of youth organizations such as folklore associations and political parties' youth as separate forms of youth association and engagement. All these forms of youth participation are an opportunity for the youth of the Municipality of Kicevo to participate in the decision-making processes and be active when policies are drafted that directly concern them. Therefore, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo also included this topic in this research, in line with young people's needs. Regarding this issue, the questionnaire contained questions related to the future engagement of institutions and the youth in any future activities.

The questionnaire also provided the possibility for the youth to give their recommendations about prospective future activities of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo. In this sense, as many as 80% of the respondents stated that the Municipality of Kicevo should organize open meetings with the youth at least once a month, so that they could become familiar with the work of the Municipality. These open meetings are seen as an opportunity for young people to express their problems and challenges and to work on their resolution. Furthermore, these open meetings would lead to an increased cooperation between the youth and the Municipality, as well as increased trust of the youth in the municipal authorities. Over the next period, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will strive to initiate such open meetings and increase their number over the years. These activities will be implemented in cooperation with the Council of the Municipality of Kicevo and the overall municipal administration.

In order to increase youth participation at the local level, young people believe that they should be consulted on the issues that the Municipality will be addressing over the next period. Hence, 84% of the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo believe that the Municipality should meet the youth at least once a year to ensure their participation when priorities of the Municipality are set for the forthcoming period. The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will strive to introduce this kind of practice as it would be an excellent opportunity for the youth to think about their issues and challenges and present them to the Municipality in order to improve the present conditions. Additionally, this kind of youth participation would ensure increased transparency and openness regarding its work and would generate fresh forces and fresh ideas coming from those who should stay in the Municipality and make it a good place for living, responsive to everyone's needs. Through these tools, the Youth Council, together with the Municipality, will help build active and accountable generations.

As for the transparency and work of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo, in this section of the questionnaire, respondents presented their remarks that the sessions of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo should be attended by all interested young people. Then, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will strive to publish the dates of its sessions transparently and to notify the youth so that any interested persons would be able to attend. Introducing such a practice will increase the interest of young people to participate in the Youth Council and jointly implement their activities. In this manner, they will raise the level of youth familiarization with their rights and activities, but also their participation in the drafting and application of certain policies.

In addition to the aforementioned youth participation in the drafting and application of public youth policies at the local level, as a partner of the Municipality, during the public consultations, the youth from the Municipality of Kicevo expressed the necessity of a larger number of civil youth organizations that would call attention to their needs. The youth believe that the existence of and participation in civil youth organizations will raise their quality of life, contribute to improved youth information, improved knowledge of their own rights as young people and help their development as active citizens. They also stated that youth organizations can use their non-formal education methods (trainings, workshops, campaigns etc.) to contribute to the reduction of hate speech that is being used.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

- Increased openness and availability of municipal bodies for the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo.
- Establishing channels for regular communication between the youth and the municipality.
- Use of various channels and media by the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo for the purposes of youth consultations.
- Increased democratic youth participation in the decision-making processes in the sphere of education.
- Support and promotion of activities of youth civil organizations.

URBANISM

The area of urbanism, as a segment of this Youth Strategy, encompasses very diverse topics regarding the existing local level infrastructure that young people need. Thus, it covers topics from the areas of environment, infrastructure for people with special needs, as well as specific preconditions for young people to lead normal lives. Whenever infrastructure and urbanism are mentioned, they are most probably referred to regarding the different opportunities and needs of the youth. Hence, this term primarily involves the infrastructure of the educational institutions. The respective educational institutions contribute to adequate and better quality education. This is a challenge that the municipalities encounter in the process of implementation of decentralization of education.³⁴ Moreover, young people need this infrastructure to fulfil their own needs in the field of sport and to spend quality time adequately on daily basis. In this sense, the way the youth from the Municipality of Kicevo are connected with the youth from other communities and municipalities is exceptionally important in this area.

In line with the data contained in the questionnaire, the greatest cause of concern for the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo is the lack of cycle lanes in the Municipality. Such has been the response of a high 76% of the young people who stated that they need cycle lanes and that they are lacking. In addition, 51% of the youth are of the opinion that their municipality is poorly connected with other towns and municipalities. The good connection of the municipality is indispensable for the proper development of any society, for exchange of good practices and promotion of the youth position. Hence, in the forthcoming period we need to devote ourselves to the promotion and enhancement of this position.

The lighting in the Municipality is a crucial precondition for normal movement of the youth and all other citizens as well, so that they may proceed with their duties and obligations in the evening hours. In this sense, 50% of the young people are of the opinion that the Municipality of Kicevo is well-lit in all areas, as opposed to 41,9% of the young people who believe that the lighting within the Municipality is not sufficient and can be improved. Having in mind that the vast proportion of formal education processes take place from the morning to the evening, young people have the opportunity to attend certain cultural events in the evening and spend their free time socializing or participating in non-formal education by attending a number of different classes or trainings. When all

³⁴ More information about this process may be found under the area of education.

these issues are considered, it is obvious why lighting is so important for the youth in all parts of the municipality. In addition, proper lighting creates a feeling of security, which is exceptionally important for the youth and for fulfilment of their rights and interests.

As for the special needs youth, 54.6% of the young people stated that there are proper conditions in the Municipality of Kicevo (with reference to institutions, schools, faculties, and streets) for their movement and them leading normal lives. This is of particular importance as it refers to a vulnerable group of young people and therefore the data from this area are very important. Knowing that the infrastructure and the basic preconditions for the normal lives of the special needs youth do not only refer to the provision of physical conditions but also quality in terms of the implemented programs, it is clear that there is always room for improvement in this area regarding the special needs youth and their inclusion in the everyday activities within the Municipality.

In this area, all the activities that the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo is to undertake in the forthcoming period are directly conditioned by the respective financial assistance of the Municipality and the central authorities. Having in mind that the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo represents the youth and creates opportunities for improvement of their state, this Council will always strive to have greater impact on the programming of projects within the Municipality and within the Municipal Council. Therefore, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will work on drafting and supporting more projects of the local and central government for youth purposes in all field of this area. Additionally, the Youth Council shall regularly examine and assess youth needs in terms of the necessary infrastructure so that they are respectively embedded in the annual action plans. For the purpose of proper planning and implementation of activities, greater engagement and support is required both on the part of the young people and the municipal authorities. The Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will advocate for the youth needs so that they are embedded in all projects and programs, both at the local and at the central level, in order to contribute to the improvement of the current state.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF URBANISM

- Enabling and promoting projects that will contribute to improved conditions for fulfilment of youth rights and improved quality of life.

CULTURE

This area encompasses measures and activities for improvement of the cultural-recreational life and the offer of cultural events for the youth in the country in relation to music, theatre, literature, publishing, painting, sculpture, modern dances etc. Despite of the broad scope of this area, youth related data are either scarce or non-existent. Strategic documents and projects do exist, and are implemented at the national and local level, but the youth are not specified as a target group. The Ministry of Culture is the competent institution for the implementation of activities, strategic documents and projects in this area. Several references to the youth are made in the *National Strategy for Development of Culture 2013-2017* but nonetheless, the main focus is youth engagement in cultural institutions, and analysis of youth cultural needs, creating conditions for appropriate education of talented youth staff and encouragement of artistic creations of young authors. What is remarkable about this area is the fact that there are municipalities that do not have the infrastructural preconditions so that cultural events could take place (lack of cinemas and theatres).

T-01: Cinemas according to the number of cinema projectors, employees and capacity

	Number of cinemas			Number of employees			Seating capacities
	Total	Number of cinema projectors		Total	Cinema operators	7 067	
		1	2				
	14	8	1	5	125	16	7 067
Centar	2	2	-	-	11	3	773
Karposh	2	-	-	2	23	5	1 551
Ohrid	1	-	1	-	48	2	540
Struga	1	1	-	-	8	2	630
Prilep	1	1	-	-	2	1	126
Stip	1	-	-	1	7	1	615
Sveti Nikole	1	1	-	-	4	-	420
Bitola	1	-	-	1	6	1	847
Kumanovo	1	1	-	-	4	-	265
Gevgelija	1	1	-	-	3	-	360
Strumica	1	1	-	-	4	-	564
Kriva Palanka	1	-	-	1	5	1	376

Professional theatres											
	Total theatres	Performed titles	Performances		Attendance		Employees ¹⁾				
			total	guest appearance	total	guest appearance	total	female	artistic	other ²⁾	
Professional theatres											
2014/2015	17	158	1 064	218	236 643	62 182	1 192	508	690	502	2014/2015
2013/2014	18	137	1 008	196	207 115	59 436	1 092	450	654	438	2013/2014
2014/2015 ----- 2013/2014	94.4	115.3	105.6	111.2	114.3	104.6	109.2	112.9	105.5	114.6	2014/2015 ----- 2013/2014
Skopje	7	74	501	96	142 959	34 873	764	362	462	302	Skopje
Bitola	3	21	223	50	36 344	8 319	94	35	62	32	Bitola
Veles	1	7	25	11	8 143	3 500	44	17	23	21	Veles
Kumanovo	1	10	52	9	6 938	2 750	53	19	33	20	Kumanovo
Ohrid	1	5	63	9	6 855	1 310	33	14	12	21	Ohrid
Prilep	1	12	75	16	16 510	5 890	44	17	24	20	Prilep
Strumica	1	6	38	9	4 770	1 670	54	15	20	34	Strumica
Tetovo	1	15	15	5	4 960	2 130	49	8	26	23	Tetovo
Shtip	1	8	72	13	9 164	1 740	57	21	28	29	Shtip
Professional youth and children's theatres											
2014/2015	2	26	203	13	23 001	3 221	64	32	47	17	2014/2015
2013/2014	2	24	212	31	24 746	6 490	64	30	45	19	2013/2014
2014/2015 ----- 2013/2014	100.0	108.3	95.8	41.9	92.9	49.6	100.0	106.7	104.4	89.5	2014/2015 ----- 2013/2014
Skopje	1	21	166	12	16 901	3 021	36	18	19	17	Skopje
Bitola	1	5	37	1	6 100	200	28	14	28	-	Bitola

35

35 The data presented in the tables are data of the State Statistical Office and may be accessed at www.stat.gov.mk

In the data presented, Kicevo Municipality is not part of both tables, from what we can conclude that the Municipality doesn't have the necessary infrastructure so that the youth can visit theaters and cinema. According to the State Statistical Office, in the Municipality of Kicevo there are only "amateur theaters".

T-02: Amateur theatres 2014/2015

	Total amateur theatres	Performed titles	Performances		Attendance		Active members	
			Total	Guest appearance	Total	Guest appearance	Total	Female
2014/2015	8	18	74	22	15 937	4 020	123	64
2013/2014	8	24	93	14	17 252	2 370	148	77
----- 2014/2015 ----- 2013/2014	100.0	75.0	79.6	157.1	924	169.6	83.1	83.1
Demir Kapija	1	2	19	15	2 840	2 220	22	10
Kochani	1	2	8	-	1 396	-	1	1
Kicevo	1	1	3	1	1 400	400	17	5
Kavadarci	1	2	17	2	4 200	500	15	5
Negotino	1	1	2	2	820	820	6	1
Makedonski Brod	1	3	5	2	503	80	6	4
Sveti Nikole	1	1	10	-	2 400	-	20	13
Struga	1	6	10	-	2 378	-	36	25

Consequently, the contrastive analysis of the previously conducted research³⁶ in the area of culture in the other municipalities indicates that young people do not attend cultural events primarily because they do not exist or because of the inappropriate offer of cultural events (festivals, concerts). In addition, according to the research titled *Youth and Media*, 34% of young people in the country have never been to the cinema. This state is mainly caused by the weak presence of cinemas at the national level, followed by the poor offer of cinema showings, as well as by the lack of benefits for young people to visit cinemas or attend any cultural events in general. The lack of

³⁶ Local youth strategies, accessible at www.sega.org.mk/web/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=290&Itemid=193&lang=mk

appropriate infrastructure represents a grave and major indicator of the conditions in each of the municipalities, but also of the fulfilment of youth rights in these areas.

The area of culture is included in the questionnaire of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo that was implemented within the framework of this Youth Strategy for the purpose of gaining insight into young people's opinions about culture and cultural events in general. The data obtained for this area are fully in line with the current infrastructure and cultural perspectives in Kicevo. Thus, 79% of the youth in the Municipality believe that there are hardly any cinema performances in this Municipality. Similarly, 70.4% of the young people believe that no theatre performances are staged in the Municipality of Kicevo. This high percentage seems logical having in mind the afore-stated data about lack or non-existence of cinemas and theatres within the Municipality.

The very area of culture encompasses many other topics besides cinemas and theatres. Young people want to spend their spare time attending exhibitions, concerts and many other events. As it is the case with any other country, there are young people who want to learn and participate in non-formal education that covers such skills. This explains the rather high 76% of the youth from the Municipality of Kicevo who stated that there are not enough courses that would enable them to get trained and further develop their skills in terms of various cultural-artistic trends (such as drawing and painting classes, playing musical instruments, photography, dancing, etc.)

What the youth from the Municipality of Kicevo need is an increased number of cultural events in their community. In this sense, 75% responded that more cultural events for young people are needed in the Municipality of Kicevo (such as concerts, exhibitions and performances). From their responses, it may be inferred that there are certain cultural events within the Municipality, but they are still insufficient.

In the organization of these events, the young are to be considered as a social category that is still financially dependent on their parents, and hence the financial expenses are to be aligned with their status in society.

Such a statement is the result of 59.7% of the youth who stated that they cannot afford the entrance fees charged for the cultural events organized within the Municipality.

In the course of the consultations with the councillors from the Municipality of Kicevo it was highlighted that the Municipality organizes and is making efforts to organize cultural events in line with young people's needs. On a number of occasions, for these events, relevant benefits were provided for university and secondary school students as the primary target group. There is considerable youth interest in cultural events, but they are insufficiently informed about them. In this sense, the focus should be on proper information for the purpose of stimulating greater interest and increasing youth attendance at these events.

In the area of culture, it is important to provide as many cultural events as possible, which would be attended by the youth and would be organized in cooperation with the civil society organizations and the competent institutions. In the forthcoming period, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo shall put in efforts for many more cultural events in the area of culture, in accordance with the existing infrastructure. At the same time, it will advocate for construction or upgrading of the present infrastructure. Nevertheless, various forms of non-formal education need to be proposed to the youth to acquire culture-related skills which may not be obtained in the course of the formal education process. In the forthcoming period, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo shall proceed with preparation of activities as part of the action plan which will contribute to the promotion of the current state of affairs in the area of culture and the opportunities available for the youth.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF CULTURE

- Increased youth information regarding cultural events organized within the Municipality.
- Support and promotion of cultural events within the Municipality.
- Support for civil society organizations in terms of provision of different practical skills and knowledge related to the cultural and artistic trends.

SPORTS

Sport is regulated by the Law on Sport ³⁷adopted in the year 2002. Pursuant to this Law, sport is an activity that involves all forms of sports activities of athletes of all ages, as well as citizens' leisure activities.

The comprehensive notion of sport implies a way of life of citizens and their increased engagement in sports and leisure activities, thus raising the quality of their lives in several segments, including fulfilment of the national aspiration for attainment of high international sports results by designing guidelines for development of big-time sport through promotion of the national and school system of competitions and inclusion of all age categories and social groups and appropriate acting in any respective sports issues related to the global trends and acts adopted as a result of the broad consensuses in the international sports arena, accredited and ratified by our country.

In addition to the existing Law on Sport, there is also a Strategy for Development of Sport at the national level which sets out the popularization of sport as the utmost priority for the young both at a national and at a local level. This Strategy also establishes the condition of the infrastructural facilities used for sports purposes. Namely, the state of the sports facilities is below the basic stipulated standards applicable not only to big-time sport events, but also to basic sports requirements. Major changes in this area are feasible in the event of construction of sports facilities for the purpose of raising the standards and creating basic conditions for mass sport ³⁸.

At the central level, the Municipality of Kicevo is involved in all projects implemented by the Agency for Youth and Sport intended for popularization of the sport at the local level. In this context, the Municipality of Kicevo is involved in the project for construction of 35 sports halls ³⁹, which means that young people will have the opportunity to train and do sports in a new sports hall. In addition to this, and within the framework of the projects, young people in the Municipality of Kicevo will have ancillary football pitches that are foreseen to be in the ownership of the municipality. The project for ancillary football pitches consists of: football fields with dimensions of 105x68 with ancillary facilities, such as changing rooms, stands, fence and lighting.

Another great opportunity for the young people in the Municipality of Kicevo is the construction of tennis courts through the project 100 *Tennis Courts* ⁴⁰. As it is the

37 Law on Sport, Official Gazette no. 29/2002.

38 Macedonian Olympic Committee, "Strategy for Development of Sport in the Republic of Macedonia", accessible at www.mok.org.mk/Default.aspx?id=7da8c558-b9c8-4d04-8c09-13624a306e63

39 Agency for Youth and Sport, 35 Sports Halls, accessible at <http://ams.gov.mk/proekti/35-sportski-sali>

40 Agency for Youth and Sport, 100 tenis fields, <http://ams.gov.mk/proekti/100-teniski-igralishta>

case with the previously stated projects, the Municipality of Kicevo is part of the plan according to which tennis courts have already been or are to be constructed for the purpose of popularization of this sport.

For the purpose of development and popularization of sports for all, the best way for creating conditions is through construction of multi-purpose playing fields⁴¹. These fields will be at the disposal of all citizens interested in doing sports, recreating themselves and competing. These fields could be used both during the day and night and will serve as a meeting point for the young generations, but also as a starting point for raising healthy generations of young people and excellent prevention against modern life vices. The Municipality of Kicevo is one of the municipalities involved in this project.

Nevertheless, despite the existence of legal regulations pertaining to sport, as well as strategies for its development, not each and every individual is able to take part in recreational sports activities. In addition, there is no certainty that the young people have the aptitude to acquire adequate physical education, instructions and prospects for mastering basic sports skills, such as motor skills, sports health, etc. For the sake of sport development and inclusion of all stakeholders, all activities must be implemented in cooperation with the competent institutions at the national and at the local level and in cooperation with the civil sector.

So far, there has been no connection of sport with any direct education about sport safety and health, sport hygiene, team work, responsibility, ethnic and moral values, non-violence, tolerance or sports ethics. As for the Law on Sport, the youth are only defined in the section Care and Support to School and Faculty Sports, which is the primary pitfall for neglecting the whole area⁴².

Using the questionnaire that was specially drafted for the purposes of this Youth Strategy, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo surveyed youth opinions related to the area of sport. The questionnaire was used to survey youth needs in the area of sport, as it was the case with other areas covered by this Strategy. In this context, 41,3% of the youth believe that the number of playing fields in the Municipality of Kicevo is sufficient, which is contrary to the opinion of 41,1% who state that the number of existing playing fields is not enough and there is an obvious need for more.

One of the ways of securing development of sport within the country is the number of sports clubs. In compliance with the legal documents in the country, sports clubs are registered as non-governmental organizations, with the exception of professional sports clubs which belong to the first league of the sport in question.

41 Agency for Youth and Sport, Multifunction sport fields, <http://ams.gov.mk/proekti/100-povekenamenski-igralista>

42 National Youth Strategy 2015-2025.

The existence of sports clubs in any community contributes to promotion of sport and building of sports spirit and raising the interest in it by people who do not have sport-related habits. In this sense, 51,8% of the youth believe that the number of sports clubs in the Municipality of Kicevo is insufficient, as opposed to 36,5% of the young who believe that the number of sports clubs is sufficient.

Upon the conducted consultations with the counsellors from the Municipality of Kicevo, it was highlighted that the Municipality of Kicevo is strongly devoted to the issue of popularization of sport within the Municipality and to the provision of appropriate playing fields in line with the youth interests. Furthermore, it was highlighted that in the past period there have been several achievements in the Municipality of Kicevo thus securing its leading role ahead of other municipalities regarding the development of sport at the local level. Additionally, the past years have been marked by emergence of a number of new football clubs and competitions, thus contributing to raised awareness and interest of the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo. Nonetheless, the poor youth information concerning such happenings causes a decline in the figures of young people.

When it comes to sporting, not every young person wishes to practise a given sports skill (football, basketball, handball, tennis, etc.). Many young people are interested in doing sports and developing sporting habits but without being members of any clubs of specific sports disciplines. This would be the role of fitness and aerobics centres which are not considered sports disciplines but, nonetheless, contribute to development of sports habits among the young population. The opinion of the young people in the area of sport was very relevant to us even with reference to this type of sporting activities. This explains the 53% of young people who are of the opinion that more fitness and aerobics centres are needed.

For young people to be able to do sports properly, they need to have an easy access to playing fields and any other sports facilities. Therefore, the sporting related expenses are of particular importance, especially bearing in mind that the vast majority of the young are unemployed and are financially dependent on their families. The price is of paramount importance when it comes to the issue of popularization of sport and affordability of any sports activity in the course of the day. As for the young people in the Municipality of Kicevo, 46.7% believe that the entrance fees for sports events are high and that they cannot afford them, as opposed to 19.55% who believe that the prices are reasonable.

In the forthcoming period, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo shall work on promoting the concept of sport and sports activities for the sake of its popularization. In the first place, proper assessment should be conducted of the needs for playing fields and other infrastructure that young people need for doing sports, followed by respective activities for their promotion. The Youth Council shall take

advantage of the opportunities offered by the projects run by the central authorities with the aim of providing more playing fields for the youth. In addition, the Youth Council shall cooperate with all relevant institutions for the purpose of securing benefits and privileges for the youth with regard to sporting. By means of such activities, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo expects to promote sports habits in an appropriate manner.

When drafting the annual action plans, there are always possibilities for inclusion of other priority topics in this field with the sole purpose of promoting and popularizing the sport among the youth.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES IN THE THEMATIC AREA OF SPORT

- Informing the youth about all sports events and opportunities in the area of sport.
- Youth support for utilization of all sports facilities within the Municipality.
- Promotion of sports among the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo.
- Drafting and supporting youth projects that involve enhancing youth opportunities in the area of sport.

PRINCIPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOCAL YOUTH STRATEGY AND DRAFTING OF ACTION PLANS

The following section of the Youth Strategy of the Municipality of Kicevo elaborates on the principles that will be used in the design of the action plans for implementation of this Strategy, as well as the principles that will be applied for direct realization of activities. Introducing such principles is necessary in order to determine the principles that will prevail in all thematic areas and which represent the basis for the drafting any future activities.

- **Better cooperation among the youth, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo and the Municipality**

This Youth Strategy will ensure the improvement of the position of the youth and the opportunities for addressing all challenges so that the youth can become partners in the drafting and decision-making upon all strategic documents at the local level.

- **Youth Opportunities**

For the purpose of securing quality youth engagement, the young must be provided with vast opportunities for upgrading the quality of their lives. As long as such opportunities are taken advantage of, the young people may become active citizens capable of creating and implementing public policies.

- **Youth engagement in the creation of public policies**

As it was stated above, youth participation involves more activities and stakeholders that need to be coordinated and work on the promotion of youth participation in policy making. In this sense, the following is needed:

- Civil society organizations need to promote youth participation and involve the youth in their activities.
- Young people need to be more present and active in civil society organizations, as well as in the institutions both at a local and at the national level.
- Enabling of processes and activities on the part of the local authorities aimed at youth participation in the drafting and implementation of the policies.
- Participation and consultation with the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo regarding any questions that concern the youth in the Municipality.

○ **Inter-ethnic integration and respect for differences**

The Strategy aims at including all young people in its activities without exercising any form of discrimination. The youth category is characterized by many diverse needs, different personal backgrounds and challenges, and they all need to be well considered in the drafting and designing of action plans so as to secure equal youth participation. The purpose of the Strategy also promotes the multi-ethnic character of the Municipality and of the youth residing in this community. During the implementation of this Strategy, due consideration is to be made to the inclusion of all ethnic communities and to the availability and access to information for all young people in the languages they speak.

○ **Providing space and support for realization of activities**

The future strategic commitments of the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo are included in the Youth Strategy, along with the current position of the youth within the society. All endeavours contained in the programme can be realized only if appropriate space and support are granted by all society stakeholders. Many of the areas that concern the youth require continuous and long-term support for their improvement and therefore provision of space and adequate support for realization of ideas is both necessary and crucial.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

For the purpose of securing continuity in the implementation of the Strategy and proper monitoring and evaluation of everything that has been implemented, the manner of reporting has to be determined.

For the purposes of the monitoring and evaluation processes related to this Strategy, the Youth Council will draw up one-year action plans in compliance with the objectives stipulated herein. These strategic plans will be drawn up upon consultation with the youth in the Municipality of Kicevo. In addition, these action plans will be public documents available to any interested stakeholders.

Every year, for the purpose of realization of the action plans and implementation of this Strategy, appropriate reports will be drafted and submitted to the Council of the Municipality of Kicevo. As a result of the commitment for cooperation with the youth and proper youth information, the Youth Council will publish these reports in the media to inform the youth about any activities that have been implemented by that time.

Furthermore, this Strategy will advocate for and promote the cooperation with the civil sector; therefore, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will organize meetings with the civil sector so that any stakeholders may voice their opinions regarding the manner of implementing the Strategy and the manner of devising the action plans. Such cooperation will ensure direct participation of civil society organizations in the overall process of the design, implementation and evaluation of the Local Youth Strategy of the Municipality of Kicevo.

The reports and action plans will be regularly published and available on the website of the Municipality. Youth organizations will also be asked to publish these reports and action plans for the implementation of this Strategy on their respective websites, if willing to do so.

The last year before the expiry of validity of this Strategy, the Youth Council of the Municipality of Kicevo will also devise the adequate methodology and manner for conducting evaluation of everything that has been implemented by then regarding this strategic document. The evaluation will not only measure the implementation of the Strategy, but also its impact, which will be used for the purpose of designing a new strategic document that will address youth needs and challenges.

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