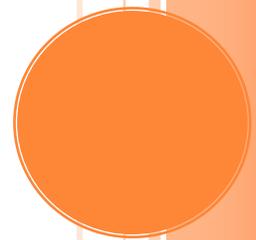


ANNUAL REPORT OF THE YOUTH INITIATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS FOR YEAR 2016

YIHR KS

3/3/2017



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE YOUTH INITIATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS FOR YEAR 2016

During 2016 YIHR has conducted a series of activities which have had a major impact in addressing important issues and problems in Kosovar society. Along with the development of these activities, changes in the management, YIHR has developed its capacities and has involved new people to give a fresh breath and to push further the organization. YIHR KS is a leading human rights organization and a place of activist gatherings, for public debates and movie nights, but also for using the space to brainstorm their ideas for future activities. This report intent is to briefly introduce the work of YIHR during 2016.

During 2016 YIHR KS had 7
staff members

In 2016, YIHR KS Assembly has appointed Teuta Hoxha as new acting director. The number of donor have meen increased has provided to stronger the existing human rights program and making YIHR KS one of the leading organizations in non-formal education, youth activism and an important pillar of human rights advocacy in the Kosovo society. YIHR KS has secured all organizational costs.

YIHR Kosovo Programs

I. HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM

Trainings on Human Rights and documenting cases of human rights violations

YIHR KS organized two- two days trainings in Prishtina. Both trainings had the same methodology and content. The participants had the opportunity to learn about the concept of human rights and the international laws and mechanisms of protecting human rights. The training was mainly focused to Human Rights in Kosovo, and how it applies to individuals and communities. The participants, after the theoretical understanding of human rights had the opportunity to learn how to document human rights violation cases by having a tutor to guide them.

For years YIHR KS has trained law students on human rights and anti-discrimination however it was noted that students in other fields were lacking information regarding human rights concepts and protection, moreover, they were lacking a network of sharing information with each other and joining forces to react when human rights are being violated. YIHR KS decided to offer the opportunity to anyone, regardless their field of study, to be equipped with necessary information regarding human rights, hence increasing the number of active citizens.

Visit institutions and organizations that protect human rights

YIHR KS organized 7 visits to institutions and organisations which are protecting human rights. Through these visits students had the opportunity to gaining first hand experience and learn the addresses where to report cases of human rights violations and moreover to learn how to do so.

Human Rights Platform- 4 Informative Sessions

YIHR KS managed to establish a platform of faculty students across Kosovo, by establishing connection with public and private universities/colleges. YIHR KS has signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Universum College to hold lectures on human rights and anti-discrimination. As a result 60 participants registered themselves as activists of My Initiative via a traditional form after the session.

Ten screening of Human Rights Movies

YIHR KS has become a place where young people gather once a month to watch and discus about human rights, history, social movements and different kind of topic related to social justice. Movie

movie nights have become a well known cultural activity in Kosovo, since for each movie a public invitation is made and different young activists, journalists, professors, NGO workers and invited as guest speakers. Movie night host can be any activists who propose a movie and are willing to host the night. Moreover, film/documentary directors/co-directors were invited to participate in the discussion. Thematics of each movie were chosen in that way that it incites and develops critical thinking and love for cinematography. During the year of 2016 more than 191 people participated in such events.

Youth Linc

In co-operation with YIHR in BiH, Montenegro and Croatia, the Center for Regional Policy Research and Cooperation Studiorum in Macedonia and the Interior of BiH, YIHR KS has continued with the implementation of the Youth LINC project, which aims to increase the capacity of Young people to deal with human rights problems, establish cooperation between young people from the countries of the region, giving them the opportunity to create innovative online platforms.

Internship Program for Young Human Rights Defenders

The internship program, has recruited two interns for two months. The interns were the previous participants of the one week training on Human Rights for students of Law, held in 2015. After winning the moot competition on defending their argument by practicing anti-discrimination law, Ardit Ahmetaj and Gjylmser Nallibani gained a two months internship at YIHR KS. Both of them were also engaged as researchers in the Human Rights report for the year 2016, they learned how to do desk research, identifying and collect important data. They both had the opportunity to interview relevant stakeholders for the purpose of the research. After they finished the internship, Gjylmser Nallibani remains on YIHR KS as a staff member as a project assistant via other projects. In the past, YIHR KS had a positive practice of hiring interns who showed good performance, will to learn and the desire to become a human rights defender.

Third Edition of Human Rights Week

The third edition of Human Rights Week has been traditionally organized in the first week of the December. Even though in 2016, there were many activities organized by CSOs to mark Human Rights Day, the one week concept dedicated to human rights that YIHR KS practices for three years now, is still unique in Kosovo. On this third year in the row HRW has become a more visible public activity and memorized by the public, important stakeholders, activists and media. The executive director was invited in local TV to talk about the activities. The HRW program that started on 5 December and finished on the 10th December.

YIHR KS has been actively present in Kosovo media by organizing several public events such as public debates, movie nights and street activities, which have been covered by the media. YIHR KS also had been vocal towards hate speech used in public and have sent strong press release which condemns such expressions. YIHR KS had opportunity in several media articles to express their stands in human rights violations, social movements and identifying the necessary social changes.

YIHR KS has been a strong partner to local and international NGO, University of Prishtina, Universum College, with whom has also signed a memorandum of cooperation and has continued its long lasting cooperation with the Office of Ombudsprson and the Office of Good Governance. A positive cooperation is established and reinforced with Ministry of Education, regarding curricula and text books.

YIHR KS has also been involved in the institutional level by leading the inter-government working group on dealing with the past and reconciliation for CSO sector and participating in the Advisory Coordination Group for LGBTI+ rights.

Launching Human Rights Resource Centre

YIHR KS has organized a public event to present this idea to My Initiative activists. The main idea is composed in four pillars, 1.) Department of Research, Monitoring and Evaluation 2.) Department of Human Rights Education 3.) Advocacy Department, 4.) Development and Outreach Division. The HRRC is foreseen to be a unique place for academics, policy-makers and practitioners to engage in robust academic research that strengthens knowledge, analysis, understanding and advocacy for current human rights issues in Kosovo, including social, economic and political issues related to human rights. The public event was used to present detailed the idea behind HRRC, and to receive feedback and comments from My Initiative activists.

My Initiative activities

Street action; National day against Corruption, 9th of December

Among Human Rights Day street action, this edition YIHR KS managed to organize two street actions, to mark the 9th of December, the National Day against Corruption. The action is realized in a symbolic way to show the contradictory reality that actually exists in the discourse of politics and the judicial system in the aspect of corruption, which is a widespread phenomena in all segments of society: socio-economical, institutional, in education and health system. Kosovo is perceived as a country with the highest corruption problem in Europe, and the judicial system is slow, not effective and without strong will to realize the duty in investigations, to prosecute high official's cases and other individual or organized crime groups that are involved in a corruptive affair.

The street action was performed in a follow order: a cube in a form of a prison cell was put on the main square of Prishtina, this symbolize the empty prison cell which shows the necessity of our prisons to have persons convicted for corruption affairs which are causing great damage to Kosovo in economic and social development, and it is a strong obstacle to European Integration. Near to the prison cell eight banners were put with public declarations and promises of high state officials from President, Prime Minister, the President of the Assembly, Head of Kosovo Judicial Council and the Chief Prosecutor of the State regarding to corruption and how to fight it, but also next to the promising questions several citations from the affair "Dosjet e shefave" (chief dossiers) were quote in the banners, these quotes exposed several high state officials, members of the ruling parties in corruptive and nepotism action.

The idea of the street action is precisely to show the contradictive way of fighting corruption in Kosovo, as the one who promised to fight corruption did do nothing to fight it inside of their ruling party, institutional and government. The street action was highly covered by Kosovo media, while the installation had remained for a whole week in the city center. The activity was co-funded by CRD and National Center for State Courts.

Street Action; Human Rights Day, 10th of December

YIHR KS and My Initiative activist network marked the 10th December, the Human Rights Day, also the final activity of the Human Rights Week Program. This year, the aim of our street activity was to tackle the violations of human rights in Kosovo educational system, in which youngsters face issues such as violence, racial segregation, lack of transportation, discriminatory language in textbooks.

Violence still remains a widespread phenomenon. Pupils in Kosovo, on everyday basis, face physical, emotional, and psychological violence. In addition, racial and ethnical segregation is evident in schools throughout Kosovo, with cases of classes separated based on race/ethnicity, or different school hours for different ethnicities.

Many schools in Kosovo are not fully accessible for persons with disabilities, making it difficult for them to access and attend school on a regular basis, or access it at all. As a result, they are forced to go to special schools or stay at home missing the chance to socialize with their peers in a friendly environment. On the other hand, public schools do not provide transportation for all pupils of Kosovo, which affects mostly children from low income families and/or children situated in remote areas (e.g villages). This manifests in a large number of children missing, or dropping out of school.

School text books in many subjects are reinforcing traditional gender roles and promoting sexism. In addition, they exclude the historical presence of non-majority communities, and they deny the existence of other communities such as the LGBTI+ community.

The street action was done in a form of public performance, My Initiative activists and students that participated in the training have brainstormed the idea of improvising a school class in the square of Prishtina where six classroom desks were put. In each, two activists sat and for each desk a banner was put with a particular message to tackle a problem in educational system mentioned above. The messages were:

Our schools are not a safe space!

In our schools exists racial segregation!

“Male brains do, and women brain talk” quote from the official Psychology book used in 11th grade

Public schools do not provide school transportation!

Our schools do not provide access to persons with disabilities!

The educational system is not inclusive!

The messages were exposing the reality which is happening in Kosovo schools; activists sitting on the classroom desks shared the copies of the joint declaration to the citizens. Near the classroom desks a white school board was placed for citizens to express their wishes, concerns and comments regarding the education system in Kosovo, in this way the performance has achieved interaction with the public where some of the citizen messages were:

“I want for my Roma friend not to be treated differently from us!”, “I want for my mute brother to share a class with me!”, “To not have discriminatory school textbooks!”, "Due to lack of transportation, I lost my desk mate.", "I want to express myself freely!", "I want to have a psychologist in my school!", "The large backlog hinders us.", "To have sexual and reproductive education in schools!", "Beside theory, to have also practice!", "I want the bags to not be so much

loaded with books!", "I want my school to have a better external infrastructure!", "I want to have labs in my school!", "To have labs with tools for professional work!", "De-politicization of education!" etc.

After the performance ended, the messages of the citizen were put in front of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, and the citizens' messages were shared via social media platforms. In this particular street action many participants from the two days training on HR and documenting HR violation cases have participated in the performance.

Marking the International Day of forced disappearance

YIHR KS has organized a public screening in the main square of Prishtina, more than 150 people had watched the documentary made by the Serbian author Ognjen Glavonic, the film reviles the facts about the mass grave discovered in the suburb of Belgrade with more than 700 bodies of Kosovar Albanian civilians. After the screening "the black box" projecting all names of minors still missing, was lit.

Travel to Europe Project: Promotion of the freedom of movement in Europe

YIHR KS has organized the project "Travel to Europe" again during 2016, marking a decade since its beginning. 15 students from different Kosovar towns and universities, traveled for one month through many European states. The first destination was Berlin, as usual, from where students continued their journey to other European states according to their choice. Within this projects, students are equipped with Schengen visas, health insurance and one month Inter-rail ticket. The project is supported by the Robert Bosch Foundation, Balkan Trust for Democracy and German Embassy in Prishtina.

Equal Rights for All Coalition (ERAC)

In 2016 YIHR KS joined the ERAC Coalition which brings together seven (7) NGOs that work in the domain of rule of law and fundamental rights that will work together with an additional nineteen (19) grass root NGOs, with a particular focus on the establishment of a sustainable network of NGOs that are active in the protection and promotion of the fundamental rights of vulnerable and/or marginalised groups (VMGs). The project special focus are the following groups: all minority communities in Kosovo, women, youth and LGBT community. By establishing structural cooperation between selected NGOs and providing formal opportunities for continuous learning, the action generates the sharing of knowledge and experience between NGOs (including on institutional matters), strengthen their capacities for advocacy with relevant central and municipal institutions, and increases their visibility.

II. REGIONAL COOPERATION AND DEALING WITH THE PAST PROGRAM

Regional Exchange Program

The regional exchange program - has continued by engaging various professional groups within the exchange between Kosovo and Serbia. Whereas, the Regional School on Nationalism is being developed. YIHR KS

continues to be committed in conjunction with other Initiatives in the region to foster the regional network of youth from political parties.

The Political Youth Network (PYN) is dedicated to the education of young politicians in the field of human rights and training of practical political skills aiming to encourage cross-border exchange of knowledge and experiences.

III. YOUTH PROGRAM: EDUCATION AND ACTIVISM

YIHR KS during 2016 made the education program a top priority. YIHR KS in 2016, re-started the Karl Popper debate clubs, by organizing trainings. The Karl Popper Debate format focuses on relevant and often deeply divisive propositions, emphasizing the development of critical thinking skills, and tolerance for differing viewpoints, of high school students. The training lasted to six months.

Through the education program YIHR KS managed to increase the number of activists by providing online registration for those interested to become activists and human rights defenders. As a result around 200 people from all Kosovo have registered and are constantly informed about YIHR KS activities, such as street actions and workshops.

Youth participation for inclusive education and human rights

Kosovo youngsters support the “European and western values” but they do not comprehend what those values exactly are. This is largely the result of an education system which deprives the youth from the capacity to critically assess the social and political reality surrounding it. It not only offer a low quality of information on subjects taught, but also doesn’t incite any kind of discussion or critical assessment on the information that is received. Moreover the education system in general has a discriminatory approach towards different social groups that are not dominant in Kosovo. The project intends to identify discriminatory language in the existing text books in pre university education institutions and by doing so will provide concrete recommendation to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology. YIHR KS organizes workshops with high school students and provides them with necessary information on antidiscrimination, legislation and practice, and will involve them by themselves identify discriminatory language in the books they use at schools. The project is supported by USAID, and implemented by ATRC.

Youth for Justice

Even though that Kosovo has conducted e significant steps toward improving legal and institutional framework on access to justice the main issue is that the Kosovo public institutions have failed to implement laws and mechanisms that respects, provides and enable Kosovo citizens equal right to access to justice. In this regard not all high school students are interested in justice or will pursue a career in Law, it remains of pivotal importance that all students receive knowledge regarding their rights and responsibility of citizenry, having their voices about their rights guaranteed by the Constitution, laws and other national and international legal acts together with knowledge of institutions and procedures in the case of violations of such rights.

IV. SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

YIHR KS managed to re-start the program of small grants, by supporting ideas that promote and increase accountability and transparency of justice sector towards Kosovo citizens through youth-driven interaction/ activities.

Small grants on “Idea farm”- Idea farm competitions will be organized to develop and implement their own education, monitoring or advocacy project. In order to deliver this YIHR KS within this project will establish small scale grants program and will provide up to 5 sub-grants for informal groups consisting of high school students in the amount from 1000 \$ up to 2500 \$. The projects will be focused in three main fields: Expanding youth Involvement in education, monitoring(Online youth engagement Platforms) and Advocacy (Street Actions).