

Violent Rhetoric amongst Children in Kosovo

1. Topic of the strategy

Formulate and describe the topic of your strategy regarding gender mainstreaming in Kosovo (e.g. equal pay, equal parental leave, protection against gender-based violence, equal property rights, and so on...)

Many sources define bullying as “Acts or written or spoken words intended to intimidate or harass a person or to cause physical harm to a person or their property.” or “To frighten or hurt a weaker person; to use your strength or power to make somebody do something.” It is a problem that mostly children are facing, not only from others but also from their own parents. Bullying has a lot of negative impacts, such as PTSD, anxiety, depression, self-harm, self-image issues, and unhealthy relationships with themselves and with others. Bullying isn’t always in spoken form, but also in written form. A good example nowadays is the internet and its internet culture. Some internet cultures are not inherently bad, but some of them are spiraling toward anti-blackness, anti-roma and anti-native rhetoric, which can lead to racism, discrimination, transphobia, transmisogyny, etc. All of these things are negatively affecting children and their development, and they can cause damage in the future. That’s why there are parents and teachers with their roles as safe-keepers and providers of good development. Unfortunately, this does not always happen. Society as a whole should be more aware of this problem and should provide more help in order to eliminate it.

2. Current situation

Describe the current situation relevant to your chosen topic in Kosovo. What issues does the society face concretely?

Kosovo is currently lacking education regarding parenting. This results in regular abuse at home, which can lead to the normalization of abuse in the whole society. Another big issue in Kosovo is the power imbalance between men and women, as in between adults (parents) and children, which definitely does not help this issue.

A lot of posts about this topic have been published not only in recent years, but also almost 10 years earlier. It shows that bullying and violence among children have not arisen now but have been around for a long time. The data even shows that in 2022, about 35.5 % of children felt bullied or harassed. They also expressed a need to do more in order to prevent cyberbullying, which means they need to be more informed about internet safety and how they can protect themselves on it.

With this to be said, it's all the more important to start addressing this as soon as possible.

3. Objective of the strategy

Formulate the objective of the strategy. What do you want to achieve? Is awareness-raising your goal, or do you want to use international human rights mechanisms to push through a change? Identify the obstacles on your way to achieving your goal.

We want to change the way people treat others, but mostly the way people treat children or the way children treat themselves.

Studies have shown all the negative effects of bullying, since there are no positives. The outcomes of children raised in a safe, non-bullying environment are confidence, trust, and comfortability, among others. As already mentioned, it is not only today's problem. It has been here for a long time, and the children want to do something about it. They do not feel safe, they are stressed and scarred.

It is important to change and strengthen the existing legislation because these situations can result in the infringement of human rights.

We also intend to cooperate with the state in order to provide therapy in schools. We do not live in a vacuum; our actions impact others.

4. Means to acquire your goal

What is the action plan? What steps do you see as necessary to reach what you have set out in the previous question? Design your campaign.

Firstly, our idea of how to raise awareness is to create a short movie regarding our topic – children's self-awareness. The goal is for children to see how bullying affects the lives of others.

The movie will not be any ordinary movie because we intend to portray the bullies in the role of the bullied so we can show them how the victims are feeling and what bullying can cause.

It will be shown in all primary schools and all-over social media.

Secondly, we also want to educate more about this topic. Education regarding social- and self-awareness should be included in schools, it could also be supplied by NGO's and most importantly, it should be accessible to parents and teachers.

Last but not least, we want obligatory access to competent and free therapy in schools. It is currently legally required but not practiced, which is a big problem. Because of that, we want all schools to provide therapy in schools (competent and for free) and monthly or yearly check-ups. A good example of how it should work are Kosovo Maarif Schools.