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Participation of Youth in Non-Formal Education and Community Development in Kosovo

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Abstract:

This study aims to provide information about the importance of formal and non-formal education in developing human resources as the most essential factor in the development of society. Using Kosovo as an example, we examine how this model helps young people develop the skills needed to strengthen society. A mix of different research methods was used in this study. Library research and contemporary publications related to the topic. A comparative study compared scientific theories with data collected by other research methods. Quantitative methods included distributing questionnaires and conducting surveys; qualitative methods involved in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Data were processed using SPSS V26. Research has shown that many youths participated in non-formal education, enhancing social capital and community development. The skills they developed from their participation were soft skills, critical thinking, tolerance and diversity, voluntary work, health protection, and philanthropy. The area covered by this

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study is important because it shows the development of human resources using methods other than formal education. It is helpful for other disciplines related to this study, such as the history of education in the country, statistical analyses of youth participation in formal and non-formal education, and new curricula needed for developing human beings and society at large. This study is essential for developing young people's skills, strengthening cooperation within the community, and developing society by creating social capital. This study is new in non-formal education of youth, non-governmental organizations, local communities, and central and local governments.

科索沃青年參與非正規教育和社區發展

摘要:

本研究旨在提供有關正規和非正規教育在發展人力資源作為社會發展最重要因素方面的重要性的資訊。以科索沃為例，我們研究了這個模式如何幫助年輕人培養加強社會所需的技能。本研究混合使用了不同的研究方法，與該主題相關的圖書館研究和當代出版物。一項比較研究將科學理論與其他研究方法收集的數據進行比較。定量方法包括發放問卷和進行調查；質性方法涉及深入訪談和焦點小組討論。數據使用 SPSS V26 進行處理。他們透過參與而培養的技能包括軟技能、批判性思考、寬容和多樣性、志願工作、健康保護和慈善事業。這項研究涵蓋的領域很重要，因為它顯示了使用正規教育以外的方法來開發人力資源。它對與這項研究相關的其他學科有幫助，例如該國的教育史、青年參與正規和非正規教育的統計分析，以及人類和整個社會發展所需的新課程。這項研究對於培養年輕人的技能、加強社區內的合作以及透過創造社會資本來發展社會至關重要。這項研究對於青少年、非政府組織、當地社區以及中央和地方政府的非正規教育來說是一項新研究。

关键词: 參與、青年、非正規教育、社區、科索沃

1. Introduction

The development and social changes of today's world have made contemporary society live between social dynamics, fast changes, and, to some extent, technological developments from the viewpoint of communicology, all of which were revolutions. Therefore, education is critical for these dynamics, putting modern people into social dilemmas. On the one hand, the need for formal and non-formal education, and on the other hand, challenging people with the development of new technology, defied the future of old professions. Johan Gunther has stated that due to the latest development in the era of digitalization, people can be divided into two categories: a) local digitals and b) immigrant digitals. The first group of people are individuals who have grown with the informative technology, specifically with the virtual one, whereas the second category is people who face difficulties adjusting to the rapid changes of this technology (Gunther, 2008). Therefore, we are witnesses that the world has moved forward very fast with social dynamics that were unimaginable some time ago. However, there is a growing concern over whether the conventional classroom approach successfully achieves educational goals and objectives. Our society is changing rapidly and becoming more complex than ever

before. People must be much more mobile – occupationally, socially, and geographically – than in the past. This requires enormous flexibility and social skills achieved through adult informal education (Ouane, 2003). By looking into the development trends, nowadays, it is very much needed for general education, as the word education means in its origin. The word 'education' is derived from the Latin word *educare*, meaning 'bring up,' which relates to 'bring out potential,' and *ducere*, which means 'to lead' (Parhi, 2016). According to Arslan (2018), education consists of two categories: formal and informal. There is no specific line to distinguish one from the other because formal education, to some extent, consists of informal education.

This leads to the understanding that education is an important asset, social, cultural, national, and international because it helps the individual to explore the world even further. Both types of education have played an essential role in contemporary times. Formal education is closely connected with base education, where the individual obtains psychological, social, and cultural attributes, and non-formal education is connected to learning other skills needed for life. On the other hand, the community has to deal with a group of people or societies with a common goal and a feeling of

social and identity belonging. The community is fluid; it is variable, and usually, when we speak about it, we mean a group of people who have a common purpose, mutual trust, and a sense of social belonging because they belong to a particular community (Kamberi, 2023).

According to the annual report published by the Agency of Statistics of Kosovo for the year 2023, 1,095,786 belong to the age of 0-34 years from the total population of 1,739,825 (ASK/KAS, 2024), a large portion belongs to the youth category. Taking into consideration that Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe, the need for formal and non-formal education is very much needed because, among other things, non-formal education also covers the development of soft skills: the development of communication, the development of empathy for people, the empowerment of social cohesion, critical thinking, volunteer work, and other characteristics that have an impact on the development of the community. Youths are the future of society, and investing in the development of non-formal education is crucial. With their participation, they contribute to the development of the community, increase solidarity, and decrease deviant behavior in society. Therefore, by taking into consideration the close relationship between the need for education of the youth in Kosovo and the empowerment and development of the community, the ultimate goal of this paper is to research and analyze the participation of youth in non-formal education organized by public institutions and NGOs, and the impact of the youth with their experience in enhancing the relationship and cooperation between the local communities or a type of 'drain brain' for the collective common good. This work also aims to reach the following objectives: conceptualizing the actual situation of youth participation in non-formal education; the development of curricula where the youth will be participants and their contribution to the development of the community; and analyzing the role of informal education in developing the skills of young people and their contribution to the development of the local community, contributing to the overall development of society. The questions raised in the form of the hypotheses that will be researched and answered in this work are as follows: What is the participation of youth in non-formal education? What types of non-formal education do youths participate in? What is the correlation between youth and non-formal education? What is the impact of their participation in youth today in Kosovo? This study employs a theoretical and empirical approach using contemporary methodology to reach objective results. This study will impact the youth, students, community, public institutions, NGOs, and society, as it may be the model for other cultures and societies.

2. Literature review

Education, as an important social component, plays an important role in the development of individuals' personalities. It is through education that individuals become educated and create social and cultural relations with others. It helps developing psychologically, socially and culturally, education also opens a new 'map' for understanding the other worldviews. Likewise, non-formal education is an important part of a person's identity, and in many instances, it is also known as informal learning, but in fact it has to do with education. In the global world, where we see rapid changes, in the waves of migration where culture, politics, economics, and societal changes challenge the traditional way of life, education plays an important role in promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence (Gjipali et al., 2018). Thus, education and, more specifically, non-formal education have a greater impact on empowering social cohesion, first, within their peers to know each other and lower the prejudices and stereotypes, and second, in promoting the activities within their own community by promoting and developing their own community and society at large. Nevertheless, there are different theories about informal education and their relationships with the development of the community. Non-formal education became part of the international discourse on educational policy in the late 1960s and the early 1970s and was correlated with concepts such as continuous learning and lifelong learning. While the latest concepts are related to the expansion of education and lifelong learning, non-formal education involves recognizing the importance of education, learning, and training that takes place outside educational institutions (Ionescu, 2020). The theory of social learning developed by the social psychologist Albert Bandura suggests that observation and modelling play a primary role in how and why people learn. Bandura's theory goes beyond the perception that learning is the result of a direct experience with the environment. According to Bandura, learning can occur simply by observing others' behavior. Hence, according to this theory, people learn from each other through observation, imitation, and modelling. The core concept of SLT is that people learn by observing the behavior of others, their attitudes, and the results of those behaviors. Most human behavior is learned observationally through modelling; from observing others, a person forms an idea of how new behavior is carried out, and on subsequent occasions, this encoded information serves as a guide to action. Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of the continuous mutual interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences (Firmansyah, 2022). Based on this theory, we can reach the following conclusions: first, people learn from one another on how to do things; second, they take into consideration the advantages and disadvantages of the experience of others; third, by repeating the same actions, people

understand that the same thing can happen to them as well, so they compare their behavior and take measures to succeed in what they are doing. Another important theory in this context is the connection and relation of the capacities within the structures of community and benefiting from each other's experiences, which is also known as the theory of social capital. Prominent researchers in this field have developed this conceptual framework of social capital for the organizational context to show how it creates value. The framework unites two views of aspects of social relations that build social capital, namely, the formal structure of the ties that make up the social network (see also the entry on Social Network Theory) and the content of those ties. It also defines three sources of social capital: 1) opportunity (the actor's network of social ties), 2) motivation (the willingness of the social ties to help the actor), and 3) ability (whether the social ties are able to help the actor) (Van Bakel & Horak, 2024).

In this respect, social capital can be important for community development, but not always. In fact, those with such capital may use it to exploit others in the same locality. A "map" of the social interconnections within any of the communities in the above examples would reveal one or both of the following: a) Individuals with no ties to other individuals in the community, but to those outside the community. For example, many of the wealthy members of the developing society, such as residents of the gated community, may have strong ties with business and social associates in locations throughout the world, and b) highly cohesive social networks among one or more subsets of the community, with no strong ties between any of these networks. For example, members of criminal gangs may maintain strong ties with one another, and wealthy elite residents in an area may do the same (Phillips & Pittman, 2009).

Like infrastructure and other economic resources, social capital also plays a significant role in community development; it refers to the attributes related more to social structure and the quality of social relations within the community. It also includes a positive product of social interactions that can be a source of benefit for individuals, social groups, and society in general. Based on the analysis of the two theories of social learning and social capital, it can be concluded that both have their own advantages and disadvantages. Thus, social learning is a cognitive psychological theory from which individuals benefit, bringing their experiences to their community and strengthening the community. However, this model may not happen often because individuals can be influenced by other factors, and their experiences can be brought somewhere else and not for the needs of their own community. On the other hand, the other theory of social capital plays an important part in developing members of the community and empowering their relations, as well as the feeling of social belonging. However, on the other hand, all these

theories may have their own disadvantages and negative aspects as well. Members of criminal groups within a community can be empowered or sacrificed specifically through the sentiments of belief and social belonging, where the individual dissolves within the community and sacrifices for the community. An example for this phenomenon can be mentioned the case of Japanese society and the type of 'altruistic' suicide where an individual as a moral act for the sake of community and humanity commits suicide. Of course, there are other examples, specifically cases of religious cults where an individual is sacrificed for the sake of the ideals of the community. Therefore, each of these scientific theories has an important role; if they are analyzed from a progressive or pragmatic perspective, they relate and contribute to the empowerment of relations within the community by impacting the youth through non-formal education to be a very powerful link in building the connection bridges between communities. From a social perspective, it is known that the more powerful the community, the more progressive society is. To this powerful society, undoubtedly, individuals have an impact by bringing their social capital, which is achieved through different experiences and non-formal education.

3. Methodology

This research aims to bring facts through careful examination of studying these facts and expose the results derived from the study. It is through the methodology and research works that we can arrive at objectivism and from objectivism to the truth. Thus, research is an academic activity, and as such, the term should be used in a technical sense. According to Clifford Woody, research comprises defining and redefining problems; formulating hypotheses or suggested solutions; collecting, organizing, and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and, finally, carefully testing the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulating hypothesis (Kothari, 2015). Considering the role and importance of this work, we foresee the use of mixed methodologies to obtain the most objective results. Initially, contemporary literature on this topic was consulted as one of the obligatory components of scientific research. Through a literature review, the theoretical aspect of the discourse on the scientific theories about the models of learning and the other theories of social capital are discussed. The other important research methodology employed in this research is legal analysis, through which the legal basis for non-formal education in Kosovo has been checked, specifically for youth and community development.

The other important method used in the research is the comparative method, which has helped compare the scientific theories used in this work with other important

data. Likewise, there are sources used in the research that belong to the primary and secondary levels that are linked directly to the discussion in the research. As it is known, statistics is the field of study whose objective is the transformation of data (usually sets of numbers along with identifying characteristics) into information (usually in the form of tables, graphs, and written and verbal summaries) that can inform sound policy decisions (Holland, 2009). Therefore, statistical analysis was one of the most important analyses used in this study. At the end of the research, there were two research methodologies: quantitative and qualitative (Enas et al., 2021).

Quantitative studies often use statistical models and statistics for research, producing more objective analytical data. Qualitative research findings characterize relationships, offering responses such as a partnership that is acceptable, good, or excellent; the relationship is therefore not quantified by qualitative analysis studies.” Thus, in the framework of quantitative research, 350 young people were surveyed N=350 from seven different main municipalities of Kosovo: Prishtina, Prizren, Mitrovica, Ferizaj, Gjakova, Peja, and Gjilan. Both genders were included in the research: 43% of the respondents were female and 57% were male. The age of the respondents belonged to the age of 15-35. The sample was a random method and was carried out through a virtual method in Google. In addition, other demographic information was included, and the questionnaire contained approximately 10 questions. The research instrument was a questionnaire, and the research technique was a virtual method provided in the social networks that the youth answered positively to being part of the research. In the framework of the questionnaire, there were clarifications about the objectives of the research and the respondents willingly accepted their participation in the research, knowing all the specifics and that their personal details would be confidential, as per the international standards of ethics in research.

After collecting all the data, they were analyzed and cleaned properly and then processed in the SPSS program No=26, creating a quantitative database. However, the design of the data has been treated through Microsoft Office Excel. The main purpose of this research was to measure young people’s evaluations of non-formal education and their relationships with the local communities where they live and work. In addition, to obtain the most objective and trustworthy results, this qualitative research was conducted with a total of five people (three females and two males). The target of the research was trainers who came from social society and non-governmental organizations and were focused on non-formal education, and the other targets were two leaders of local communities. The research was conducted with the intention of obtaining results on the impact of non-formal education in capacity building

on the younger generation and their relation to the community. The qualitative research instrument was an in-depth semi-structured interview, which, in addition to the biographical data, contained six more questions. In addition, the research was conducted face-to-face. Those that were targeted to be part of the research were informed in advance about the aims of the research and willingly agreed to be part of the research. Due to confidentiality, the participants in the research requested that only the abbreviations of their data be public, which we respected. The research was conducted during the current year 2024, specifically from April to June. After collecting the data, they were carefully analyzed, and depending on the specifics of this article, they were cited as part of the discussions.

Figure 1 shows the flowchart of the research methodology.

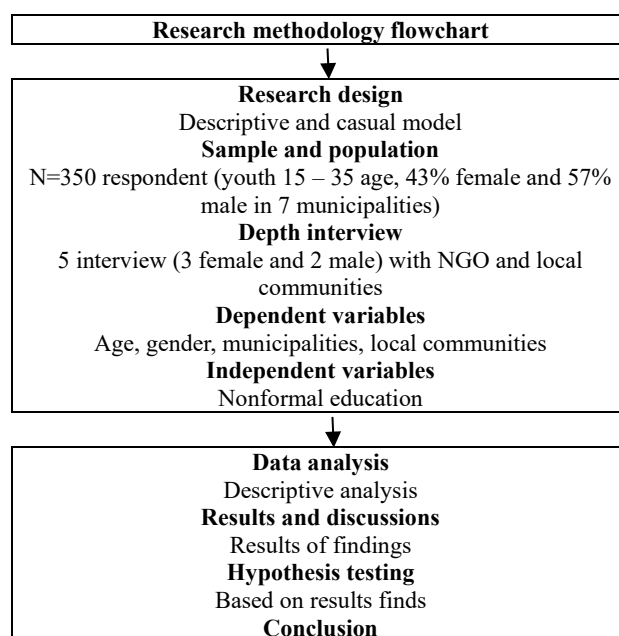


Figure 1. Flowchart of the research methodology (Developed by the authors)

4. Results and Discussion

The general results underline that non-formal education plays an important role not only in the individual development of youth as the future of Kosovar society but also by contributing and influencing the development of social capital, which is a prerequisite for the empowerment and development of a community. Also, during the discussion, it is clear that non-formal education has a developmental focus on young people; they see it as something positive and necessary for the time we are living in. On the other hand, the community is pragmatically open to new innovative ideas from young people, who are undoubtedly the social capital of local communities.

4.1. Non-formal Education, the Youth and Community – the Example of Kosovo

Non-formal education is considered to be one of the most important components of the life cycle. The difference between formal and informal education is considerably high. Arslan (2018) adapted from Simkins (1977, pp. 12–15, cited in Fordham, 1993) making the difference between formal and non-formal education.

Table 1. Ideal type/models of formal and non-formal education;
Source: Arslan (2018, p. 4)

Differences	Formal education	Non-formal education
Purpose	- Long-term and general - Certified	- Short-term and specific - Certificate not necessarily the main purpose
Timing	- Long cycle - Preparatory - Full-time	- Short cycle - Recurrent - Part-time
Content	- Standardized or input centred - Academic - Entry requirements determine clientele	- Individualized/output centred - Practical - Clientele determine the entry requirements
Delivery system	- Institution-based, isolated from the environment - Rigidly structured, teacher-centred and resource intensive	- Environment-based and embedded in the community - Flexible, learner-centred and resource efficient
Control	- External - Hierarchical	- Self-governing - Democratic

Based on Table 1, it is clear that there are differences between formal and informal education, although both types of education clearly have an impact on the development and advancement of the individual. In the case of Kosovo, the institutions that deal with non-formal education are central-level institutions, mainly the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, local-level institutions; municipalities as basic units of local self-government and non-governmental organizations, especially youth centers, which are mainly supported by public institutions to promote and advocate for non-formal education.

Law No. 03/L-145 on Empowerment and Participation of Youth highlighted ‘Informal education is realized in all areas, as demand from young people in accordance with existing laws of the Republic of Kosovo. Informal Education should encourage the promotion of development and responsibility of conscientious citizenship, in accordance with principles in the interest of democracy, tolerance, humanity, environmental protection, historic identity, cultural development, intercultural differences, social and political dialogue, health care and physical education, for employment and promotion of young people’ (Assembly of Kosovo, 2009). However, Administrative Instruction No. 04/2015 for Informal Education of Youth states that the areas of informal education for

youth are democracy, tolerance and humanity, participation of youth in decision-making, environmental protection, youth safety, cultural and intercultural development, health protection, physical education and sports, employment, promotion, empowerment and networking of youth, volunteer work, and other areas of interest to youth development (Ministry of Culture, Youth, and Sports, 2015).

In addition, the role of non-formal education is underlined within the State Strategy for Youth 2024–2032 as part of the public policies of Kosovo's institutions, including the role of the central level, the local level government, and civil society organizations. Regarding the profiles or types of non-formal education, legislation has focused more on training, conferences, workshops, seminars, debates, and exchange of experiences. Voluntary work is one form through which there is a correlation within the community because youth are trained by various non-governmental organizations and then contribute to their experience in the community. As for the development of the community in Kosovo, until recently, the community has been viewed more from an ethnic perspective than as a social group. Thus, in most cases, the community in Kosovo is understood or perceived as a “ethnic minority” by referring to the local communities that live and operate in Kosovo. As a broader term of the community in the sense of the community or social group that live and operate in a certain location, Kosovo's legislation on local self-government refers to as “citizens.” The Law on Local Self-Government No. 03/L-040 in the description states that “Community means a group of communities belonging to the same ethnic, religious, or linguistic group” (Assembly of Kosovo, 2008), and the term “citizen” in the most cases is defined or it refers to the context of the community as a community or group of people having values or feelings of social and identity affiliation. Today, a community is defined as a social group of people who have a purpose, interaction, trust, and sense of social belonging and identity. Usually, we define a community as a locality comprising people residing in a geographical area, the resources such people require to subsist and progress, and the processes in which such individuals engage to distribute and exchange such resources to fulfil local needs and wants (Noor, 2024). Currently, Kosovo has 38 municipalities with their own authority in accordance with the law of local self-government. The local government system is one-tiered (central and local levels), and municipalities are considered the basic units of local self-government. In accordance with their power, municipalities establish councils of neighbourhoods, villages, and urban settlements, which play the role of organized communities as coordinators between local communities and local governments. According to Administrative Instruction No. 02/2019 on the

organization, functioning, and cooperation of the municipalities with villages, settlements, and urban quarters (Government of Kosovo, 2019), the local council means that the bodies are appointed to represent the community in an organized form of one or more villages, settlements, and urban quarters; based on the number of inhabitants, the municipalities have the to establish the councils that play the role of communities and as local communities, they play an important role in developing their social activities and life within their community (Hasani & Kamberi, 2024). Therefore, young people can have an impact on the development of local communities by participating in non-formal education through several aspects: raising local capacities for the community for the common good; in the development of projects in which everyone participates, through all inclusivism by involving marginalized groups and returning trust to a strong community, through the exchange of experiences between the old and new generations, thus overcoming the conflict of generations. Young people can be a model of social learning, as explained by Albert Bandure's model in relation to younger generations on how to contribute to the needs of the community because a strong community means a stable and strong society.

4.2. The Participation of Youth in Non-formal Education and Community Development

Young people are considered a valuable asset of Kosovar society, as they are the future of the country, and based on data; over half of the population is under the age of 35, something that Kosovo is the youngest population in the region. While conducting these two empirical studies, we have carefully analyzed the results from the field research and have come to some interesting results. Thus, young people are enthusiastic about participating in non-formal education, so about 67% of young men affirmed that they participated in non-formal education, while 33% did not. Of the women, 72% stated that they participated, while 28% stated that they did not participate or had not participated until now.

Table 2. Participation of youth in non-formal education (cross tabulation); Developed by the authors (2024)

Do you participate in non-formal education?			
Gender	Yes	No	Total
Male	67%	33%	100%
Continuation of Table 2			
Female	72%	28%	100%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Undoubtedly, there are a number of factors that influence whether young people participate in training or seminars on non-formal education, some of which include knowing and exchanging information and ideas

with each other, socialization, social learning, and other psychosocial aspects. In relation to this, (Johnson & Majewska, 2022) stated that non-formal learning (such as field trips) can have a holistic impact on learners, cultivating affective, cognitive, and social domains. In addition, during the research, we asked the respondents, what are the models of non-formal education in which young people participate? How much influence would this participation have on young people and the community today in Kosovo? Based on the responses from the respondents, about 23% of the respondents affirmed that their favourite models in non-formal education were soft skills, 17% critical thinking, 20% tolerance and diversity and volunteerism, 11% health protection, and about 9% philanthropy.

Table 3. Models of non-formal education; Developed by the authors (2024)

Valid answers	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Soft skills	80	22.8%	23%	23%
Critical thinking	60	17.3%	17%	17%
Tolerance and diversity	70	20%	20%	20%
Voluntary	70	20%	20%	20%
Health protection	40	11.4%	11%	11%
Philanthropy	30	8.5%	9%	9%
Total	350	100.0	100.0	100.0

If these findings are analyzed carefully, it can be clearly stated that there is logic in their relation; the main focus of today's youth is developing soft skills because they are needed for preparing for the work market or being prepared professionally to find jobs. What catches attention, is also the issues of tolerance, religious diversity, and volunteerism. In relation to this, research conducted by the students of the faculty of Islamic Studies in Kosovo shows that the issue of non-formal education is very much needed, and similar to our findings, it shows that around 90% of their respondents have participated in non-formal education for specific topics. The respondents in this survey were 120, and when asked if they had participated in any training about the importance of *waqf* institutions (endowment properties or institutions) as educational and cultural institutions and their role as non-formal education in different phases of our history, about 90% of them had confirmed it, and only about 10% of them said that they did not participate in such training.

Table 4. Participation of students of Faculty of Islamic Studies; Source: Nitaj (2024)

Have you participated during your studies, in any training organized by FSI on the issue of endowments as religious-cultural monuments in our country?		
Valid answers	Frequency	Percent

Yes	100	90%
No	20	10%
Total	120	100%

Regarding the influence and participation of young people in the community according to the results, we can see that 43% have emphasized that, in most cases, they participate in the community, 26% in half, 17% in some, and 14% in none.

Table 5. Influence and participate of youth in community; Developed by the authors (2024)

Valid answers	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
In most of them	150	42.8	43%	43%
Approximately in half of them	90	25.7	26%	26%
In some of them	60	17.1	17%	17%
Neither	50	14.3	14%	14%
Total	350	100.0	100.0	100.0

To compare the opinions of young people and their attitudes and evaluations of the trainers and the community, we also conducted interviews with trainers and members of the community. Thus, to answer the questions "How active are young people in non-formal education?" and "What is the demand for informal education modules?" trainers who deal with non-formal education have emphasized that, to some extent, young people are active, but the needs and requirements for other modules are welcomed. According to them, "Young people, mainly between the ages of 14 and 25, are the age group that mostly visit our organization, which offers various non-formal education trainings free of charge, but these trainings are of a basic level. Most of the young people are enthusiastic about attending the training, but if the training lasts more than a few days, the motivation drops, so we often have to change the plans and activities as part of our training" (Gashi, 2024).

Meanwhile, another trainer with whom we discussed and is part of the interview for this article, in the question about the modules and the requests for modules from the young people, underlines that *"the demand for current and new modules are increasing every time, but this obviously depends a lot on current trends, some of the modules that we offer as non-governmental organizations are: soft skills, development of critical thinking, training on tolerance and diversity, volunteerism, gender equality, advocacy, local decision-making, philanthropy, computer skills (basic) and AI, but also other modules. The youth also need other modules, which cannot be offered currently due to the high cost, since we are still a small organization, some of them mainly include the field of information technology and programs: IBM, Python, various databases, Photoshop, design, but also other modules, for which currently there is demand for them in the Kosovar market"* (Krasniqi, 2024). Based on the

needs of the market, these are the trends of the current modules, as Kosovo is the only country in the Balkans that uses the Internet significantly more than other countries per capita, and such training is in line with the needs of the market. According to official data on the results for the survey in relation to the usage of the informative technology and communication, about 98.6% of households had access to the Internet from home or apartment, while the age group that had access to the Internet with the highest percentage was the 16-24 age group, with 21,5% (ASK/KAS, 2023). To analyze the relationship between the community and young people who get new experiences from non-formal education, we have targeted even the representatives of the community in an interview, with whom we discussed this topic. How do you evaluate cooperation between young people and the community? What is the role of the youth in community empowerment? Representatives from the community have highly valued the role of young people, although they affirmed that cooperation with the community is still low. According to them, *"As for the role of young people in empowering the community, we consider that their role is extremely high and they are promoters of voluntary work and other work within the community, but unfortunately very few young people participate in the community, this might be because of time and the dynamics of life. There are cases when they contribute, by meeting them, they give us the idea of how they worked in different projects, but their biggest focus is on other activities that are paid, and it is understood that in the age of capitalism, payment is a stimulus for many young people. We think that local communities need new innovative ideas, new energy so that the community lives strong and this is taken also as a preventive measure against the appearance of negative phenomena in society and the reduction of migration trends, since migration after the liberalization of visas has increased significantly"* (Shala, 2024).

Based on these data and the interviews conducted with target groups, we can say that Kosovo has a young generation with high energy and potential, as well as enthusiasm for knowledge and science. New modules of non-formal education are increasing, although the modules, especially the new ones, require cost and commitment, as they also conform to the needs of the market. However, the community, on the other hand, is fluid and needs these new energies to cooperate with the common collective good. We have seen that the participation of young people in the community is very small, and this is also a result of the circumstances created in modernity, considering the trends of globalization, migration, the search for a better life, better pay in other countries, and other needs and demands that young people are looking for today.

4.3. Non-formal Education Strategies and Their

Impact on Community

Contemporary society is in a new social dimension; new innovative ideas, new technological development, migration, the need for new non-formal education modules, and the development of small non-resident communities will become the new social dimension in this decade. Therefore, small societies like Kosovar society face huge challenges that they are facing today, including the demographic dimension, since every time there is a decrease in the birth rate and, on the other hand, there is an aging population, which will be a challenge in itself. In the Kosovar context, the need for community empowerment is significantly high. On the other hand, institutions in the country have created policies for the non-formal education of youth in order to provide social capital for the common good. Non-formal education strategies that can impact the community should be based on four pillars defined by UNESCO long ago: learning to be, learning to know, learning to do, and learning to live together. Therefore, the strategies of non-formal education must be based on essential principles of non-formal education, such as balanced coexistence and interaction between cognitive, affective, and practical dimensions of learning; planned, structured, and guided process with exact aims, goals, and objectives; linking individual and social learning, partnership-oriented solidarity, and symmetrical teaching/learning relations; participatory and learner centered, based on and led by the needs, interests, and expectations of participants; holistic, diversity-orientated, and process-oriented; close to real-life concerns, experiential and oriented to learning by doing, using intercultural exchanges and encounters as learning devices; voluntary and (ideally) open access; aims above all to convey and practice the values and skills of democratic life (Solidaires, 2018). Strategies of non-formal education should be based on inclusiveness, be contemporary, and conform with the needs of the job market, which is also linked with capacity building for the youth but also in cooperation with the local community. As we have seen, very few informal education modules deal with the issue of cooperation with the community. In any case, after an initiative taken by the central level institutions in cooperation with some non-governmental organizations, they launched the ideas of the project 'Social auditing' as an idea that has to do with the social supervision of the community in work at the local level government. It empowers local communities, promotes non-formal education, and influences the community to cooperate and develop, promoting ideas, initiatives, collaborations, and joint projects for the collective good. Therefore, the strategies that should be in this context should come from the institutions of Kosovo as a public policy in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and the community itself, focusing on several main points: empowering young people, advocating and promoting

culture and values, creating infrastructure for the development of community activities, equipping them with technology, creating public spaces, developing training, licensing, and creating groups of young people who will carry out the training and their experience in new jobs among Alumni, the stimulation of young people for non-formal education, the promotion of work in the community, success in the case of employment, and other principles, which may be necessary in the framework of strategies for the development of non-formal education and work in the community.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, we agree that formal and informal education plays a significant role in capacity building and the development of society. Education means to educate, guide, and progress towards morality and the formation of human beings and society. Non-formal education in Kosovo is still active, playing a critical role in educating society as an inseparable part of public life. In research, we have seen that non-formal education plays an important role not only in the personal development of individuals but also in the psychological and social aspects. This influences individuals to create a 'social network,' empowering their social relations, exchanging ideas and information, and strengthening their cooperation for social capital. We conclude that the country's institutions in Kosovo (at both the central and local levels) have created legal and institutional mechanisms to promote non-formal education, continuously subsidizing non-governmental organizations to increase and promote non-formal education as much as possible. During empirical research with 350 respondents, we observed that most young people (about 67% of young men) affirmed that they had participated in non-formal education, while 33% did not. Among the women, 72% affirmed that they participated, while 28% declared that they did not participate or have not participated. The main areas in which young people participate or would participate in informal education are critical thinking, soft skills, tolerance and diversity, volunteering, and other essential areas. Even during the development of in-depth semi-structured interviews with certified trainers for non-formal education and community members, we concluded that the interest of young people participating in non-formal education is high enough, including fields such as AI. Kosovo is the leader in Western Balkans for Internet use based on the number of inhabitants. However, from the community representatives, we have seen that the contribution of young people to the community is weak enough owing to various factors, including migration to other countries and the needs of young people. The community as a social group plays an essential role in the area where people live, as a strong community also means a stable society. In

general, we can say that young people need non-formal education with new modules for modern times and their development. The ideas and knowledge acquired through non-formal education can reflect the development of the community, thus creating social capital, which is necessary in contemporary society. This paper plays an essential role in future research related to the topic and presents an original and innovative contribution to informal education as social capital for the development of young people, emphasizing the development of their capacities. This contributes to the development of local communities in the societies in which they live by influencing their decision-making capabilities, leading to the development of society.

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Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. In addition, the ethical issues, including plagiarism, informed consent, misconduct, data fabrication and/or falsification, double publication and/or submission, and redundancies have been completely observed by the authors.

Author Contributions

IH, FK, and BH contributed to the design and implementation of the research, IH, FK, and BH to the analysis of the results and to the writing of the manuscript. IH and FK conceived the original and supervised the project.

Ethical Compliance

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

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