



Youth Challenges and Perspectives in Kosovo



January 2021

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**The study has
been commissioned
by UNDP Kosovo.**

Prishtina
January 2021

The views expressed in this document are those of the opinion poll respondents and do not necessarily represent the UNDP views

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List of Acronyms

KAS	Kosovo Agency of Statistics
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing
EC	European Commission
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
FG	Focus Group
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBF	UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund
PP	Percentage point
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNKT	United Nation Kosovo Team
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Kosovo Youth Study 2020 seeks to contribute to the understanding of the attitudes, perspectives and challenges of young people in Kosovo¹ regarding the topics of migration, education, employment, inter-ethnic relations, and views about the future of Kosovo.² This study is commissioned by UNDP in Kosovo and is intended to offer UNKT agencies and national and international stakeholders information and analysis that can help them gauge the progress made in addressing youth issues, assess past and ongoing efforts, lessons learned and develop policy responses. To this end, this report follows up the 2018 *Youth Study* and compares and contrasts new data collected through a survey and focus groups conducted between November and December 2020.

It should be highlighted that this study was done at the end of a year marked by the continuation of political instability in Kosovo in combination with the impact of the **Covid-19 pandemic**. The challenges wrought by the pandemic have made youth, women and marginalized communities more vulnerable. The pandemic has brought an extraordinary emergency by putting extra pressure on the healthcare system and it has exacerbated the pre-existing fragility of the economy, increasing inequality and social divisions. Therefore, it is important to place the findings of this study in the context of a multifaceted crisis and its impact on the social, education, employment, financial, future opportunities and mental health concerns for young women and men in Kosovo.

This study will begin by presenting some of the main findings and highlights, followed by an overview of the Kosovo context in relation to youth and a summary of the methodology. The main part of this paper will then examine in details the data on the principal social, economic, security and political concerns for Kosovo youth, and their perspectives on key factors and solutions for dealing with issues in the areas of education, employment, religion, inter-ethnic relations and safety.

MAIN FINDINGS

More than half of the young people who were interviewed felt that **Kosovo was going in the wrong direction in 2020 (52%)**, an increase of 20 percentage points (pp) compared to 2018 findings, while one in four felt that the situation in the country was stagnating (24%). Moreover, **the lack of job opportunities (81%)**, **poverty or poor economic situation (68%)**, and **nepotism/corruption (42%)** remained the top three challenges for young people in Kosovo. Another 20% referred to the general political situation and 17% mentioned the low quality of education. While these problems were also voiced as top issues in 2018, an increased ratio of young people mentioned the lack of job opportunities (an increase of 21 percentage points (pp)) and poverty or a poor economic situation (an increase of 19 pp) in 2020. At the same time, qualitative findings clearly showed that regardless of ethnicity, age, or gender, focus group participants agreed that **unemployment** was the number one challenge for youth in Kosovo. The mismatch between labour market needs and the profiles of new graduates, as well as nepotism in recruitment processes, were also stressed as prominent issues.

The complexity and severity of issues that youth in Kosovo cope with were also reflected in findings on

¹All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

²Also referred to as Youth Study throughout the report.

mental well-being. Three in four young people in Kosovo (77%) expressed slight to extreme concerns about coping with stress, and 83% felt that physical and mental health were essential in their life. Focus groups also revealed that mental health problems are often perceived as not sufficiently addressed and acknowledged in Kosovo.

Aspirations to migrate were still a widespread phenomenon in 2020 in Kosovo, with 53% of young people declaring that they are definitely or likely to consider **emigration**. On the plus side, this is lower than the 58% share in the 2018 survey. However, a higher percentage of young people declared to definitely consider migration in 2020 (32%) more than in 2018 (27%). Findings further revealed that the lack of job opportunities (67%), the lack of personal perspective (45%), as well as the general unfavourable economic situation (39%) were perceived as root causes for over half of the young people who considered leaving Kosovo in the next three years.

On **education**, similar to the 2018 Youth Study (48%), about half of all young people who took part in the 2020 survey were attending school or university at the time of the interview (49%). Data from 2020 also revealed that 44% stated to have dropped out from educational institutions. In addition, findings indicate that the most common reason for dropping out or not furthering education is the need to work to supplement the family income (39%), an increase of 9 pp compared to 2018 findings. Nonetheless, the majority of young people still in school aspired to complete a university degree in the future (87%), which portrays an increase of 17pp compared to the 2018 Youth Study.

While most respondents aim to go to university, data revealed that youth in Kosovo had to cope with a variety of barriers when doing so. One of the key barriers identified by young people **is the lack of finances**, as indicated by two in three respondents (67%). This represents a substantial increase compared to 2018 when only 28% stated that the lack of finances stopped them from accessing further education. It also stood out that only 2% reported to have received public funding. Some focus group participants criticized Kosovo's central level institutions for the lack of financial support for students and declared that even those who received support, it was not enough for sustaining a living.

Another positive finding is that most young people between the age of 14 and 17 years old did not report any problems with **social inclusion** at their schools. However, it should be noted that focus group participants shared examples of bullying and discrimination at schools towards youth who were part of the Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian communities.

Another key finding is that, in comparison to 2018, a higher number of young people in Kosovo were satisfied with **the quality of education** received in 2020. More precisely, around 63% stated to have found the quality of education somewhat satisfactory (57% in 2018) and 33% very satisfactory (up from 18% in 2018). However, Kosovo Serbs focus group participants were significantly more satisfied with the quality of education received than the majority of Kosovo Albanian participants who evaluated the quality of education often as poor. Some of the key reasons given for this were outdated teaching methods and the lack of adequate learning resources. Other main obstacles experienced during education by survey respondents were related to the poor economic situation (35%, an increase of 17pp compared to 2018, difficulties with the lack of literature (24%, an increase of 2pp) and the poor quality of the programme (23%, a decrease of 5pp).

Young people appeared slightly more hopeful in 2020 when asked whether they believed that their **education would be useful in obtaining a job**. Around one in three thought their education to be very useful, twice as many as in 2018 (34% vs 15% in 2018). Nonetheless, 22% of all respondents felt that

their education was either not useful or not useful at all when aiming to secure a job.

Data results from 2020 also showed that 58% were not engaged in any type of **employment**. Compared to the findings of 2018, this portrays an increase of 41pp. Of the unemployed young people, 30% declared to actively seek for a job (increase of 20pp), while 28% of the unemployed stated not to be seeking for any jobs (increase of 22pp). Young women and respondents between the age of 18 to 24 years old were significantly more likely to be unemployed while not seeking for any jobs (39% and 44% respectively) than young men or those of the age-group of 25 to 35 years old (18% and 12% respectively).

Another concerning finding of the study is that 77% of the respondents who were unemployed also lack any work experience. Focus group participants highlighted that for career starters it was nearly impossible to secure a job given that most employers expect potential employees to already have a certain working experience. Overall, unemployed young people identified the following main obstacles to find work: the lack of jobs available (33%), corruption (32%), nepotism in the recruitment process (31%), and their lack of professional qualifications as well as required level of working experience (27% each). Lastly, more than one in three unemployed young people were not confident at all that they would find a job in the next six months (35% vs 38% in 2018).

Turning to the topic of **inter-ethnic relations**, the findings in this study show that young people in Kosovo have various opinions about the relations between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. However, a considerable number of young people still viewed the relations as tense: around 21% felt that the relations were tense, but some improvements took place in the recent years (28% in 2018), 16% stated that the relations were tense but considerable improvements have been made (16% in 2018 as well), and 15% thought that the relations were tense and would continue to be so. On a positive note, in 2018 significantly more young people felt that the relations were tense and would continue to be the same (27%).

One in three mentioned **the impact of conflict memories** as the main reason contributing to tense relations (33%), while nearly as many declared **the influence from older generations** as the main reason (29%). Focus group respondents also highlighted the influence of the older generation and the of their prejudices to younger generations as a contributing factor. However, some Kosovo Albanian participants highlighted that young people were improving their approach compared to older generations regarding issues like racial or ethnic biases.

In order to **improve relations**, more than two in five of the respondents (42%) mentioned increasing tolerance and understanding for one another, while 30% cited providing equal opportunities for participation in the ongoing political, economic and social processes. Another 18% felt that having both Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs participate in joint activities could help improve the relations. Several focus group participants mentioned that they used to hold prejudices but attending joint summer schools and other youth programmes helped them overcome those partialities. During the 2018 Youth Study, more young people mentioned an educational approach (41%), programmes of intergroup education (37%), joint activities (25%) and integrated schools (19%) as suggestions for improvement. Only 23% mentioned increased tolerance and understanding in 2018.

On the topic of **religion**, findings showed that around one in three young people (34%) declared to practice religion from time to time. More young people declared to practice it on regular basis (28%) compared to 2018 (16%) and around 19% stated to practice it rarely (24% in 2018), while 14% do not practice it at all (16% in 2018). Religious extremism was experienced as very or somewhat prevalent by

over half of the respondents in 2020 (53%). However, fewer felt that religious extremism was very prevalent (6%) compared to two years ago (13%).

On a positive note, comparative data between the 2018 and 2020 studies indicate an increase with regards to youth **perception about safety**. Around 86% reported to feel very safe or somewhat safe in their neighbourhood (increase of 14pp) and three in four young people (78%) declared to feel very or somewhat safe when going out (11pp). Also, around two thirds (68%) felt very safe or somewhat safe at school (-2pp) and 54% felt very safe or somewhat safe at their workplace (-1pp). While both men and women reported to feel safer in 2020, more men felt very safe in different areas among the respondents.

Overall, **future expectations** of young people in Kosovo remained fairly low. Similar to the 2018 Youth Study, around two in five respondents felt that it was somewhat unlikely that youth in Kosovo would have a better life in around five years' time (40%). Around 12% perceived this matter as not likely at all. In 2020, young people in Kosovo appeared especially pessimistic regarding improvements in access to employment and the political situation. Around one in three felt that improvement in accessing employment would be somewhat unlikely (34%) or very unlikely (29%). The ratio of respondents who felt that this improvement would be very unlikely in 2018 stood at only 5%. The majority of all focus group participants, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or age, agreed that five years was not enough time for any substantial change or positive development to take place in Kosovo. Even though many participants remained pessimistic, a considerable number of young people felt hope for the future of youth in Kosovo in the years to come.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe which is potentially a great advantage as their numbers, exuberance and creativity could be a strong force for development. (UNICEF, 2019)

The Western Balkans Labour Market Trends (2020) report by the World Bank and Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies highlighted that in 2018 around one fifth of young people in the entire region were not employed or in education or training (NEET). When comparing data between different Balkan countries it becomes visible that Kosovo had the highest level of general unemployment (25.7%) as well as the highest youth unemployment in the region (46.4%) (European Commission (EC), 2020a).

Furthermore, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has put additional stress on the already weak economy and labour market in Kosovo. **Economically**, young people have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic given the increasingly high unemployment rates and the fact that people under the age of 24 are more likely to be in precarious employment. The already alarming numbers of young people of 15 to 24 years old neither employed nor in education or training (NEET) have been expected to increase due to the impact of COVID-19 and necessary preventive isolation measures.

The OECD emphasized in its report on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in the Western Balkans that women and youth were projected to “suffer the most from business shutdowns in a number of sectors where they are typically overrepresented, such as restaurants, hotels, passenger transports, personal care services and leisure services” (OECD, 2020). Furthermore, according to the European Commission youth unemployment has risen from 46.4% in the first quartile of 2020 to 49.4% in October (European Commission, 2020a; European Commission, 2020b).

In relation to this, the 2019 report on Kosovo by the European Commission criticised the lack of substantial steps taken by Kosovo's central level institutions to implement the 2018–2022 sector strategy and action plan to counter youth unemployment. The report further highlighted the ongoing issue of misalignment between the education outcomes and labour market needs (European Commission, 2019). This was reiterated in their 2020 report, where the EC criticised the low implementation rate of the strategy, despite the fact that its targets were considered modest from the start. In addition, the 2020 report also saw undeclared work as one of the key reasons for Kosovo's high unemployment rates among youth (European Commission, 2020b).

Besides the challenge of unemployment, Kosovo youth are also opting to emigrate because of the lack of quality education, restricted opportunities to participate in social and political life, and inadequate support services (UNICEF, 2019). Among these issues, youth concerns about their education are particularly worrying given that only 23% of those who took part in the FES Youth Study in 2018 declared that they were satisfied with opportunities for quality education (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2019).

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has also affected Kosovo youth in other areas of their lives. As part of containment measures, all schools and universities closed on 12 March (OECD, 2020a). Schools reopened again on 14 September, utilising in-person and distance learning programmes, and institutions of higher education were holding online courses (OECD, 2020b). As a result, according to World Vision (2020) findings, some students were not only struggling because they did not have internet access and devices for distance learning, but also because of the lack of direct social contact with their teachers and classmates. Thus, the closure of the educational system and the problematic

transition to distance learning can negatively impact youth learning, access to nutrition, and consequently, graduation rates. Disruption to education have a particularly adverse effect on poorer students, and the situation is especially serious for girls and young women who are disproportionately excluded from education (UN DESA Policy Brief 2020). Young women and girls from non-majority communities and those living in poverty already had low school attendance rates, which risks being further exacerbated by the pandemic. Unforeseen consequences may also include a rise in child marriages, an issue mainly associated with Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. In addition, the pandemic has also accentuated the rates of domestic violence and the lack of access to victim support groups and social services.

It has also been recently reported that Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb youth (and those of other non-majority communities) often still do not interact with each other because of deeply rooted prejudices and the lack of a common language (UNICEF, 2019). Nonetheless, the majority of Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb youth interviewed in the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Youth Study 2019, did not consider it was necessary to learn each other's languages. Next to these issues, matters of poverty, lack of trust in public institutions, high levels of emigration and the long process of transition have taken a toll on young people in Kosovo (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2019; European Commission, 2020b).

In response to the need to address the issues discussed above, UNDP-UNV, UNICEF and UN WOMEN have jointly implemented the "Empowering Youth for a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Future in Kosovo" project funded by the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). The project has aimed to decrease the influence of conflict narratives and prejudice by directly engaging young women and men from divided communities to work together on issues of shared interest, build trust, social inclusion and social cohesion. Therefore, within its strategic framework, the project has monitored youth perception regarding key social, economic and political issues, and, in particular their views on education, employment, religion, safety and inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo. This study was thus conducted in order to survey and better understand the Kosovo youth perspectives and challenges in 2020. At the same time, the research design and approach of this study allows to compare its findings with the similar research undertaken in 2018 by UNDP and USAID, entitled "Challenges and Perspectives of Youth in Kosovo". In addition to utilising the results and data from this study to reflect on the project's impact and lessons learned, this study also offers recommendations and will help to develop future targeted, responsive interventions.

METHODOLOGY

This mixed methods research³ is based on a Kosovo-wide, representative survey of 506 respondents between the ages 14 and 35, in combination with qualitative data from seven focus groups conducted with a total of 43 participants aged between 17 and 35 years old. For the survey, the sample included 48% women and 52% men. As regards to ethnicity, most respondents were Kosovo Albanians (46%), one third were Kosovo Serbs (33%), and 21% represented other non-majority communities (Ashkali, Roma, Turk, and Egyptian). In addition, both survey respondents and focus group participants were from all Kosovo regions: Prishtina/ Priština, Gjakova/ Đakovica, Ferizaj/Uroševac, Gjilan/Gnjilane, Prizren, Mitrovica/ Mitrovica and Peja/Peć.

3.1 QUANTITATIVE COMPONENT

For the conduction of the national representative quantitative survey with N= 506 respondents, the CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) method was applied due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as opposed to face-to-face interviewing. A system specifically developed for this method generates and guarantees random mobile number selection. Once a number was generated the respondent answered a short screening questionnaire to ensure that he/she fits the sampling requirements. Upon checking and verifying the quota the main interview was conducted⁴. Pre-existing data collection tools from the previous Youth Study in 2018 were amended and used for this study in close cooperation with UNDP. The fieldwork was conducted in November/December 2020.

Non-majority communities are slightly overrepresented to enable statistically significant results.

Otherwise, the sample distribution of interviews was based on official data from Kosovo Agency of Statistics (See www.askdata.org and related reports for details).

Table 1. Sample distribution per region

Region	Percentage	Interviews N=506
Prishtina/Priština	29%	145
Prizren	20%	100
Mitrovica/Mitrovica	12%	60
Gjilan/Gnjilane	11%	55
Ferizaj/Uroševac	10%	49
Peja/Peć	10%	49
Gjakova/Đakovica	9%	48
Total	100%	506

³The Youth Study 2020 is a replication of the study conducted in 2018, therefore the methodological approach strictly adheres to the previously developed methodology in order to enable data comparison.

⁴In the case of underaged respondents, the parents' or guardians' consent was obtained before starting the interview.

The distribution by ethnicity was as follows:

Table 2. Sample distribution by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Percentage	Interviews N=506
Albanian	46%	233
Serbian	33%	165
Ashkali	9%	47
Roma	6%	28
Turk	4%	18
Egyptian	3%	13
Bosnian	0%	2
Total	100%	506

The age distribution of the interviews is as shown below⁵:

Table 3. Sample distribution by age

Age groups	Percentage	Interviews N=506
14-17	12%	59
18-24	45%	228
25-35	43%	219
Total	100%	506

The gender distribution of the sample consisted of 48% young women, 52% young men, while the geographical distribution stood at 61% rural and 39% urban. With an estimated population of 704,338 young people in Kosovo based on the Census 2011 and 2019 and ASK estimations, the margin of error for a total sample of 506 interviews in Kosovo is $\pm 4.35\%$.

3.2 QUALITATIVE COMPONENT

In order to complement the quantitative method, seven (7) focus groups were conducted, thus enabling deeper insights into issues which were of interest for this report. The focus groups were held in November and December 2020. Suitable candidates were identified through a screener and only those who met all the requirements set out by the desired quotas were invited to participate. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the groups were conducted online via Skype. A moderation guide was developed in close cooperation with UNDP to ensure that all topics of interest were captured sufficiently. The focus group parameters are in line with the quota set by UNDP beforehand and can be found in the annex section of this report.

⁵Age pursuant to only youth population 14-25. ASK data 2019 estimations

RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the quantitative survey with 506 young people in Kosovo and was enriched with qualitative findings from seven focus group discussions. The structure of this chapter adheres to the different thematic sections of the data collection tools (questionnaire and moderation guide). Where applicable, results were compared to the Youth Study conducted in 2018 in order to measure changes over time.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

With regards to the demographic profile for the participants, there was an almost equal distribution by **gender** (51% men and 49% women). At the same time, the **age groups** varied with around 45% of participants between 18 to 24 years old, 43% between 25 to 35 years old and 12% belonging to the youngest group (14–17 years old)."

Figure 1.
Gender distribution of the respondents

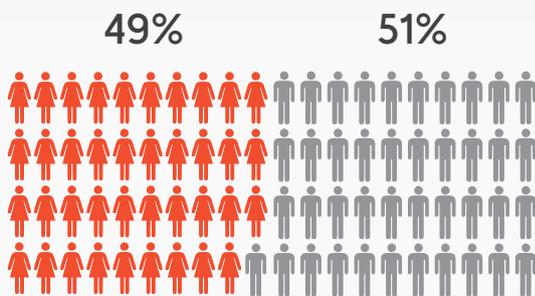
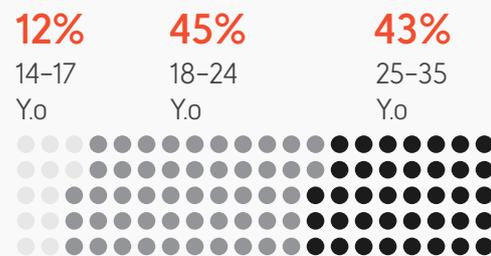


Figure 2.
Age distribution of the respondents



By **ethnicity**, nearly half of the respondents were Kosovo Albanians (46%), while one third were Kosovo Serbs (33%). Around 21% were part of other non-majority communities⁶ in Kosovo (namely 9% Ashkali, 6% Roma, 4% Turks and 3% Egyptians). The study also sampled participants located throughout Kosovo regions, with almost one third of the respondents residing in Prishtina/Priština (29%), 20% in Prizren, 12% in Mitrovica/Mitrovica, 11% in Gjilan/Gnjilane, 10% each in Ferizaj/Uroševac and Peja/Peć, and 9% in Gjakova/Đakovica.

⁶When mentioning "other non-majority communities" throughout the report, it refers to Ashkali, Roma, Turks and Egyptians.

Figure 3.
Ethnicity distribution of the respondents

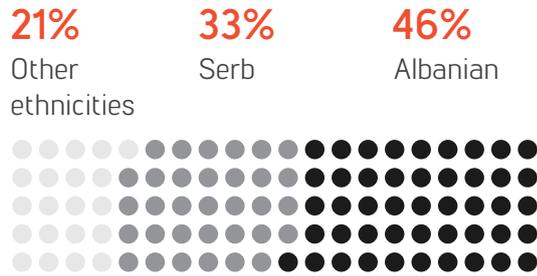
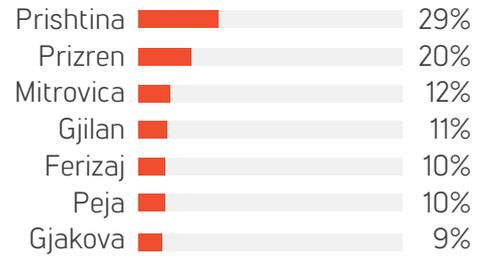


Figure 4.
Regional distribution of the respondents



In addition, young people who were above the age of 18 years old were asked about **their civil status and personal income**. Nearly three in five declared to be single (57%), one in three were married (33%) and only 10% were living with their partner or they were cohabiting.

In regard to **personal income**, around half of the surveyed young people declared that they did not have any income (51%), while 19% declared some earnings. The average income among respondents who declared to have some was 356 Euro per month, but at the same time, it should be noted that nearly one third declined to answer this question (30%).

Figure 5.
Civil status of the respondents above 18 years old

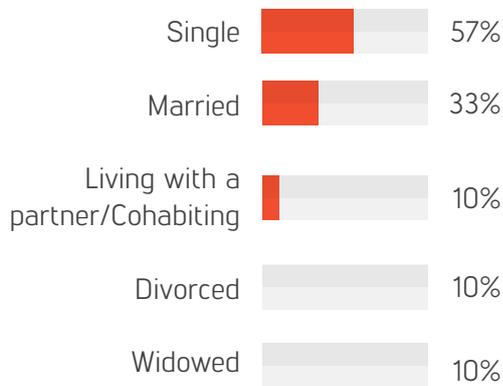
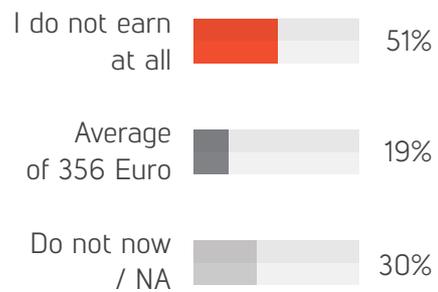


Figure 6.
Personal income of the respondents



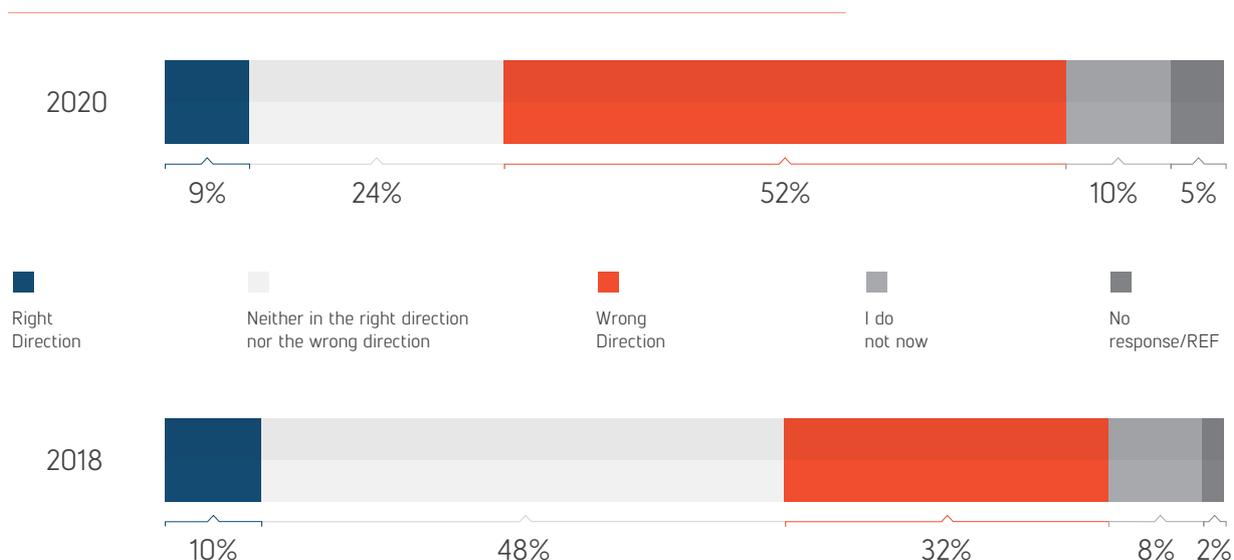
4.2 ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR KOSOVO YOUTH

This section of the report assesses matters of concern for young people in Kosovo. It analyses factors that influenced the lives of young people, their concerns, and whether they have considered. Where applicable, the data was compared to the results of the 2018 Youth Study survey and the same applies to the subsequent sections of this chapter.⁷

⁷Increases or decreases in percentage points (pp), always refer to the comparison with the 2018 Youth Study throughout the report.

To start with, young people (above 18 years old) were asked **whether they believed that Kosovo was going in the right or wrong direction**. A key observation here is that while only 9% felt that Kosovo was going in the right direction (10% in 2018), a high proportion of the respondents (52%) felt that Kosovo is going in the wrong direction (a significant increase of 20pp compared to the results from 2018). Altogether, it is clear that young people feel increasingly pessimistic towards the direction Kosovo is going in, with around one in four (24%) considering that the situation was stagnating (down from 48% in 2018).

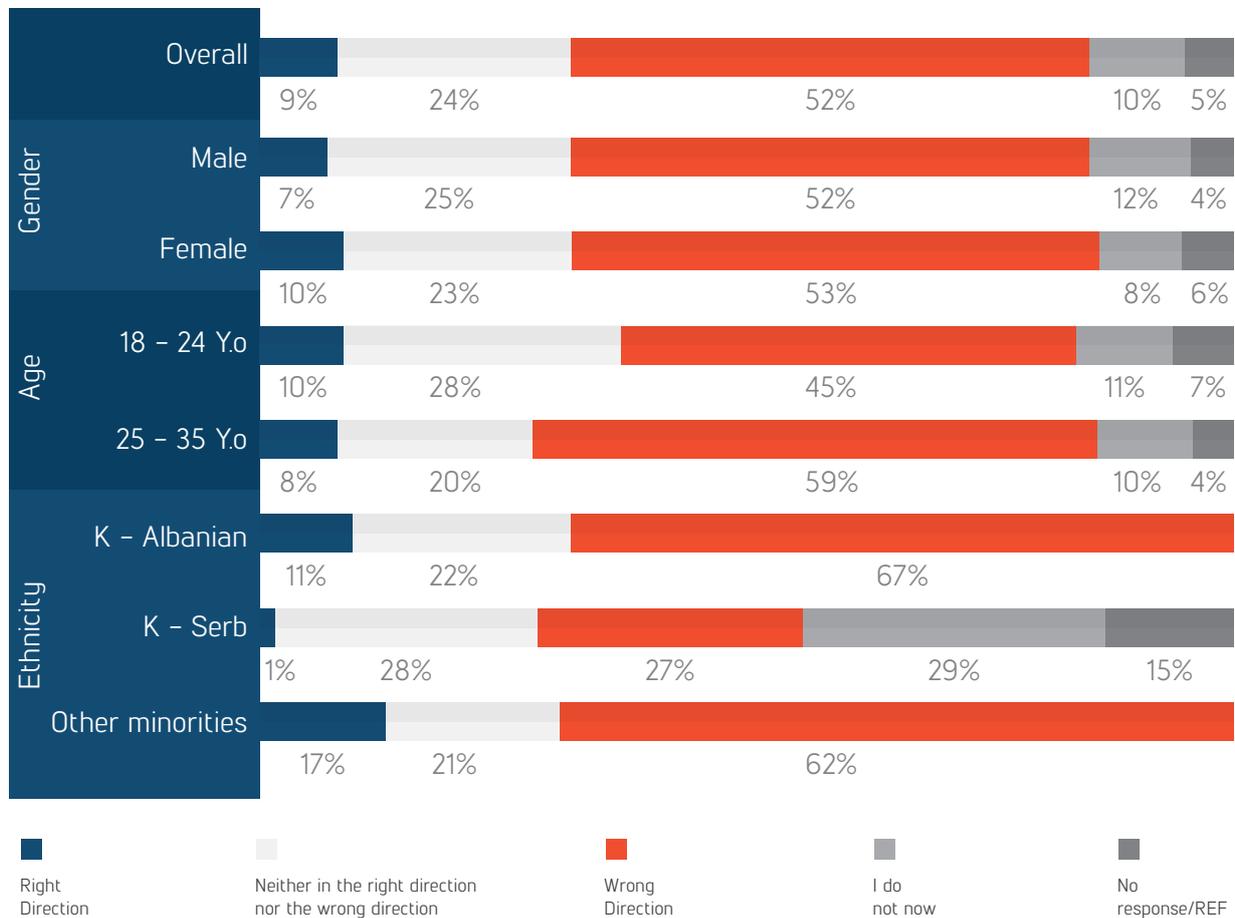
Figure 7.
Respondents' opinion whether Kosovo is going in the right direction



The rate of Kosovo Albanians who felt that Kosovo was going in the wrong direction was higher (67%) when compared to Kosovo Serbs (27%), while around 28% of Kosovo Serbs and 22% of Kosovo Albanians perceived the situation as stagnating. Only 1% of Kosovo Serbs thought Kosovo is going in the right direction, compared to 11% of Kosovo Albanians. It should be noted that 44% of Kosovo Serbs respondents did not provide an answer to this question, while none of the Kosovo Albanian respondents declined to provide an answer regarding this matter. Other non-majority communities showed themselves also largely pessimistic (62%), while around 21% felt that the situation was stagnating. On a positive note, 17% of respondents of other non-majority communities felt that Kosovo is going in the right direction.

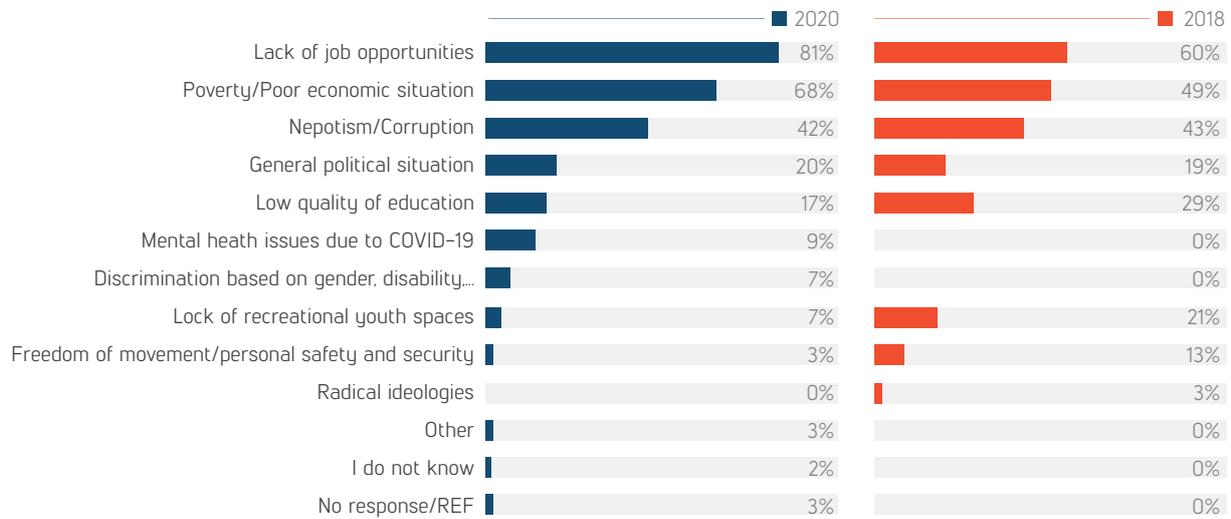
Focus group (FG) findings underlined the above results as nearly all of the Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serb participants felt that Kosovo was going in the wrong direction. Some attributed this to the general political situation in Kosovo, politicians were often perceived as self-centred with little care for. Others mentioned the socio-economic situation, the general lack of opportunities and unemployment as the main reasons for a pessimistic outlook. Younger (17-19 years old) Kosovo Albanian FG participants expressed themselves somewhat more hopeful than others. They believed Kosovo's youth, through activism and protest, might be able to bring about positive change.

Figure 8.
 Respondents' opinion whether Kosovo is going in the right direction,
 by gender age and ethnicity



The lack of job opportunities (81%), poverty/poor economic situation (68%) and nepotism/corruption (42%) were the **top three biggest challenges** mentioned by young people in Kosovo (above 18 years old). Another 20% mentioned the general political situation and 17% the low quality of education. In comparison to 2018, more young people mentioned the lack of job opportunities (81% in 2020 vs 60% in 2018, an increase of 21pp), poverty (68% in 2020 vs 49% in 2018, an increase of 19pp) and around the same percentage of respondents mentioned nepotism/corruption (42% in 2020 vs 43% in 2018, a decrease of 1pp). On the other hand, the low quality of education was mentioned by 29% in 2018 and only by 17% in 2020 (decrease of -12pp).

Figure 9.
Top three challenges of young people in Kosovo

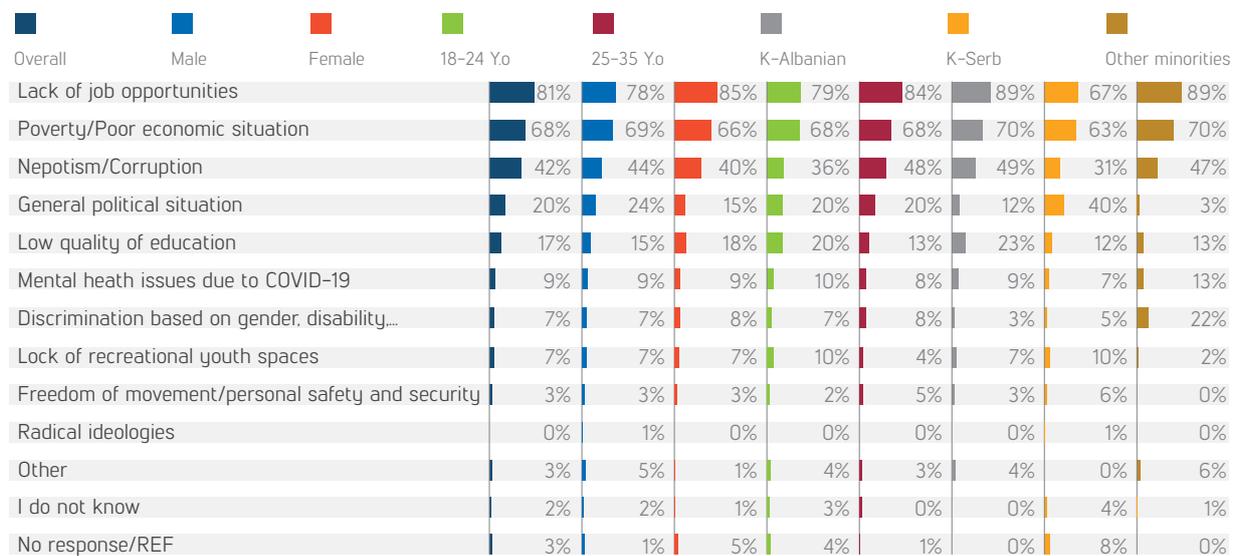


Qualitative findings clearly showed that regardless of ethnicity, age, or gender, FG participants agreed that **unemployment was the top challenge for youth in Kosovo**. The mismatch between labour market needs and the profiles of new graduates in Kosovo was mentioned as an important factor. Nepotism was mentioned throughout the focus groups as a prominent problem, with many who felt that securing a job was only possible when one had well-established connections. Some of the participants between the age of 17 and 19 years old felt discriminated against due to their young age. Focus groups with Kosovo Albanians revealed that poor quality of education, most commonly due to outdated teaching methods and incompetent/old educational staff, was also often experienced as a major challenge. This was opposite to Kosovo Serbs participants who were mostly satisfied with the quality of their education.

Young women who took part in the survey more commonly mentioned **the lack of job opportunities** as a challenge (85%) than young men (78%). Conversely, men cited the general political situation more commonly as a big challenge than women (24% vs 15% respectively). Differences in age groups were also visible. More respondents of the older age group (25–35 years old) mentioned the lack of job opportunities (84%) than those belonging to the age group of 18 to 24 years old (79%). Older respondents were also more prone to mention nepotism/ corruption (48%) than younger ones (36%).

Fewer Kosovo Serb respondents felt that the lack of job opportunities were a big challenge (67%) compared with Kosovo Albanians (89%). The same applied to challenges pertaining to poverty and nepotism/corruption. However, significantly more Kosovo Serbs felt that the general political situation posed a big challenge to young people in Kosovo (40%) when compared with Kosovo Albanians (12%). Kosovo Serbs focus group participants also highlighted the non-recognition of diplomas from Kosovo by other countries as a concern.

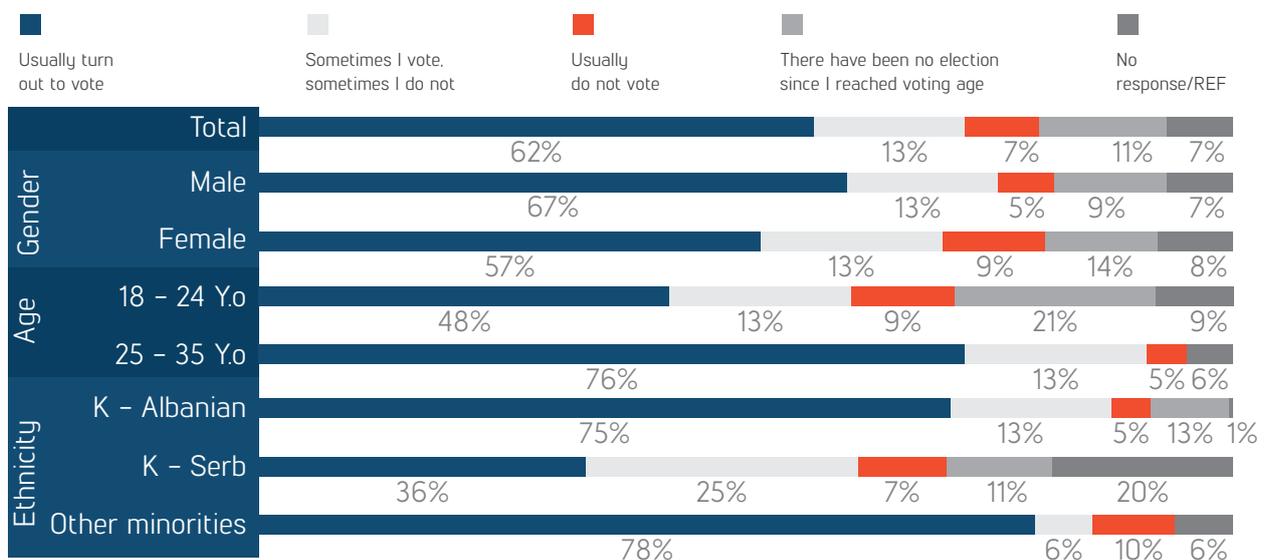
Figure 10.
Top three challenges of young people in Kosovo,
by gender, age and ethnicity



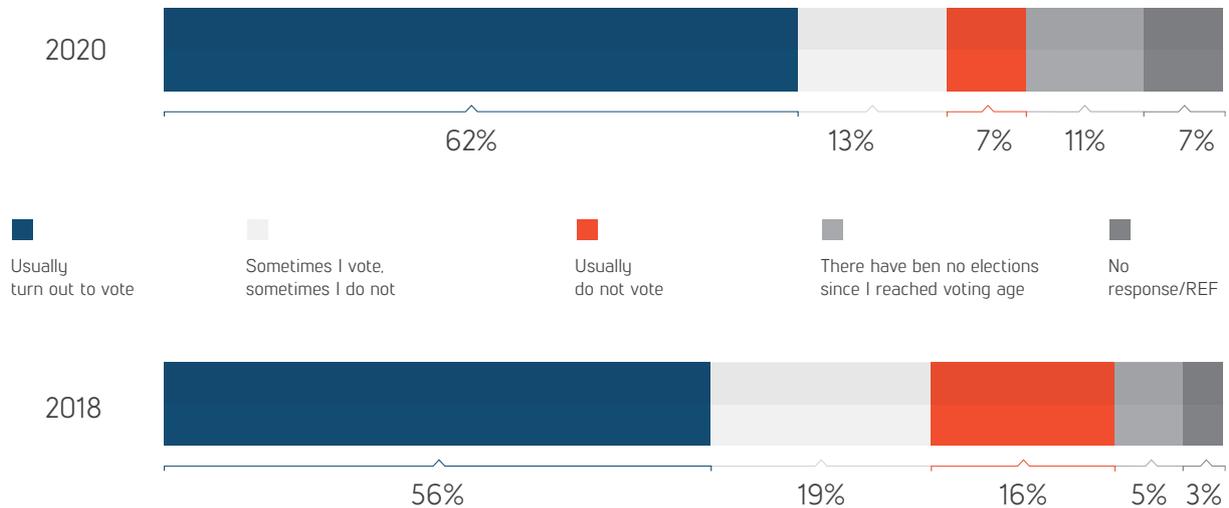
Next, young people above the age of 18 years old were asked **whether they have voted in local and national elections in Kosovo**. Nearly two in three declared to usually vote (62%), while around 13% have sometimes voted and only 7% declared to usually not take part in voting processes.

Young men (67%) and those belonging to the age group of 25–35 years old (76%) were more likely to have voted than young women (57%) or those belonging to the younger age group (48%). Kosovo Serb respondents showed a higher share of those who have only sometimes voted (25%), compared to Kosovo Albanians (6%). Overall, more Kosovo Albanians and respondents from other non-majority communities usually turned out to vote (75% and 78% respectively) than Kosovo Serbs ones (36%). It should be noted that 20% of Kosovo Serbs respondents did not provide an answer to this question.

Figure 11.
Voting behaviour in local and national elections in Kosovo



In 2018 a higher share of young people declared to usually not vote (16%) than in 2020 (7%). Subsequently, slightly more stated to have usually voted in 2020 than in 2018 (62% vs 56%).

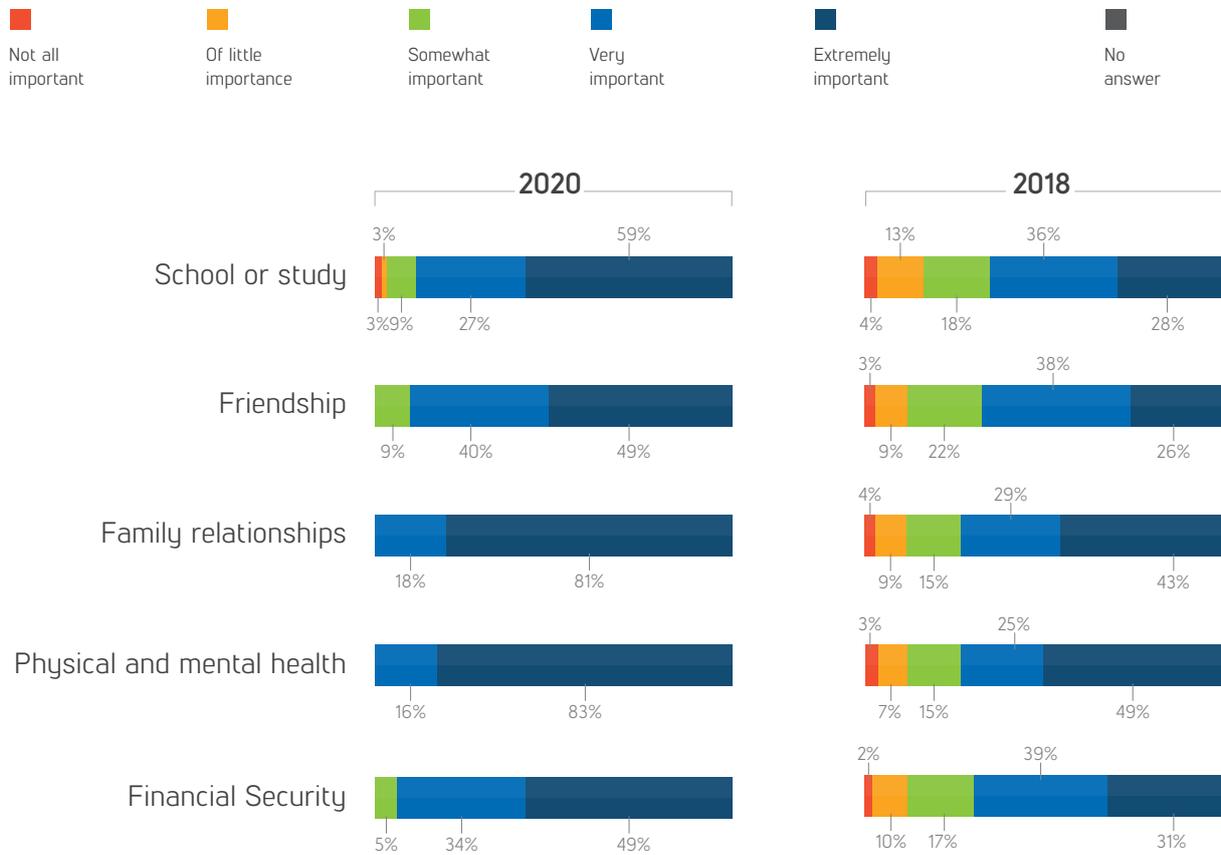


Next, respondents were asked to rate the importance of certain topics in their life such as health, family, school and financial security. Around eight in 10 young people felt that **physical and mental health** were extremely important in their life (83% vs 49% in 2018) and nearly as many declared **family relationships** as extremely important (81% vs 43% in 2018). Around 59% also felt that **school or studying and financial security** were extremely important aspects in their life (vs 28% and 31% in 2018 respectively). **Friendships** were declared as extremely important or important by 49% while only 26% declared the same in 2018.

Overall, compared to 2018 all aspects are more commonly perceived as very important in the lives of young people in 2020. Some Kosovo Albanian FG participants also highlighted the importance of addressing and recognizing mental health issues among young people in Kosovo.

“...a very important problem is mental health and people do not talk about it. People refuse to visit psychologists. Our parents may not understand us currently, as they had completely different lifestyles when they were young, and they do not understand depression. (Young Kosovo Albanian man (21) from Gjilan/Gnjilane)

Figure 12.
Important aspects in the life of young people

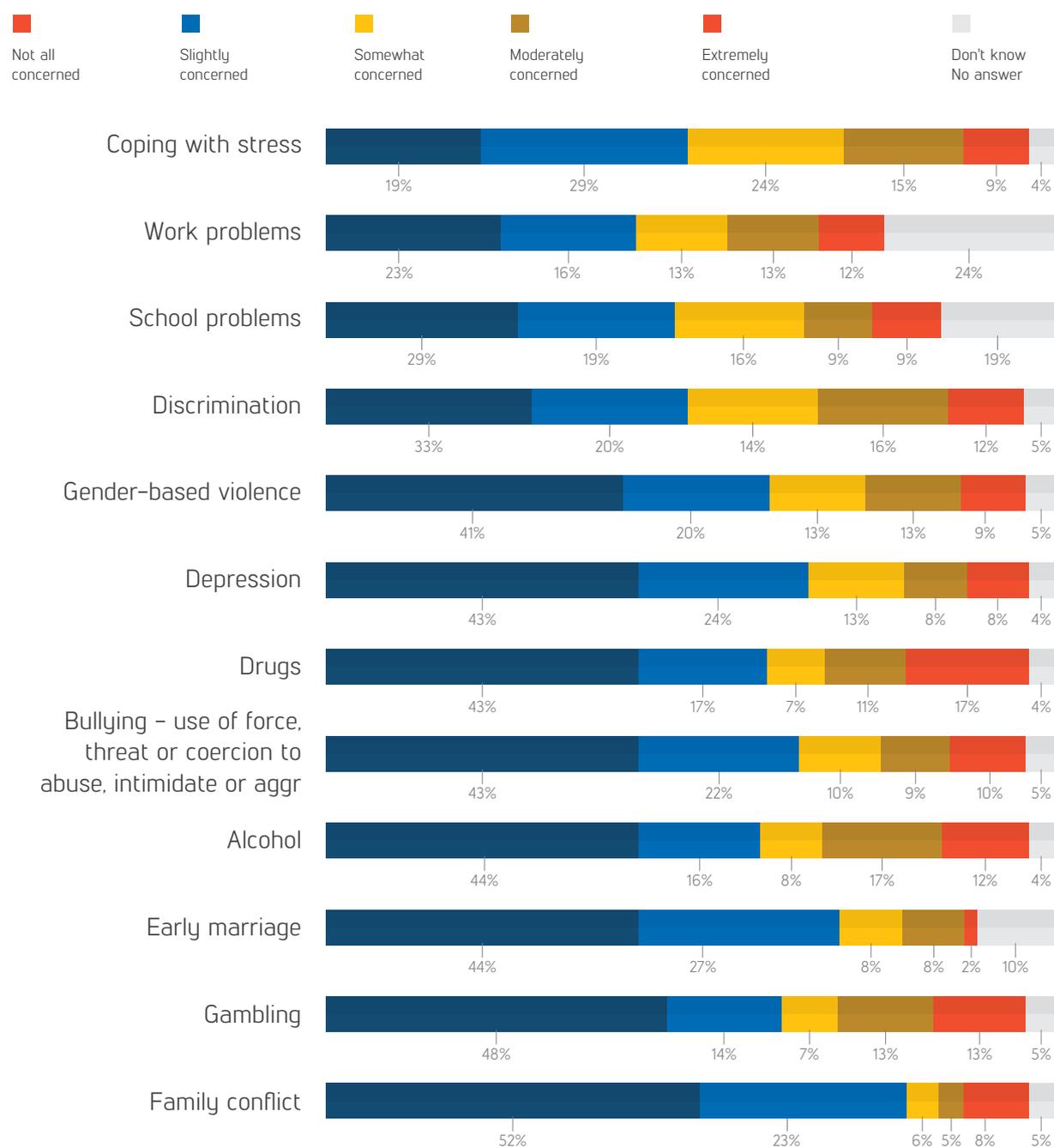


When assessing **personal concerns of young people** in Kosovo regarding various issues, data revealed that 77% expressed slight to extreme concerns about coping with stress, over half of them expressed slight to extreme concerns regarding work problems (54%) and 50% towards school problems.

Focus group participants additionally expressed that they did not feel well-represented by their central level institutions. Strategies to support and include youth were often well formulated on paper, but implementation was experienced as poor.

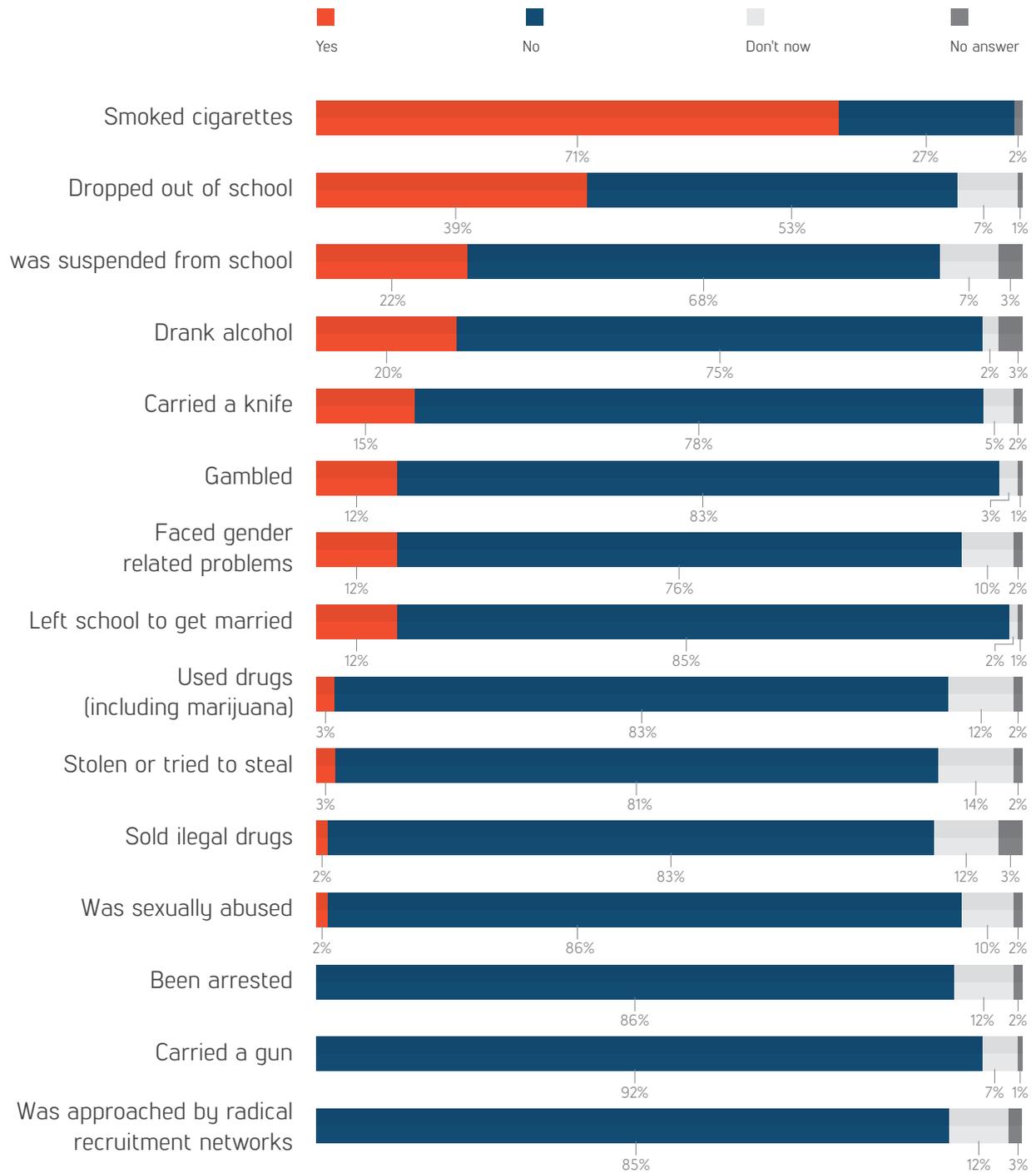
Furthermore, it should be noted that when taking a closer look at only those who expressed moderate and extreme concerns, the following five issues stood out the most: drugs (38%), alcohol (29%), discrimination (28%), gambling (26%) and work problems (25%).

Figure 13.
Personal concerns of young people in Kosovo



Youth often position themselves within their peer groups and observe as well as adopt behaviours exhibited by others. Therefore, it was important to explore whether respondents have witnessed their friends engaging with any type of risky behaviours or experiences during the last 12 months. Nearly three in four young people have witnessed some of their friends smoking (71%) during the past 12 months. Around two in five declared that some of their friends have dropped out of school (39%) and 22% have witnessed a friend getting suspended from school. Drinking alcohol (20%), carrying a knife (15%), gambling and gender-related problems (12% each), were also issues which were witnessed by a considerable number of the respondents in their peer groups.

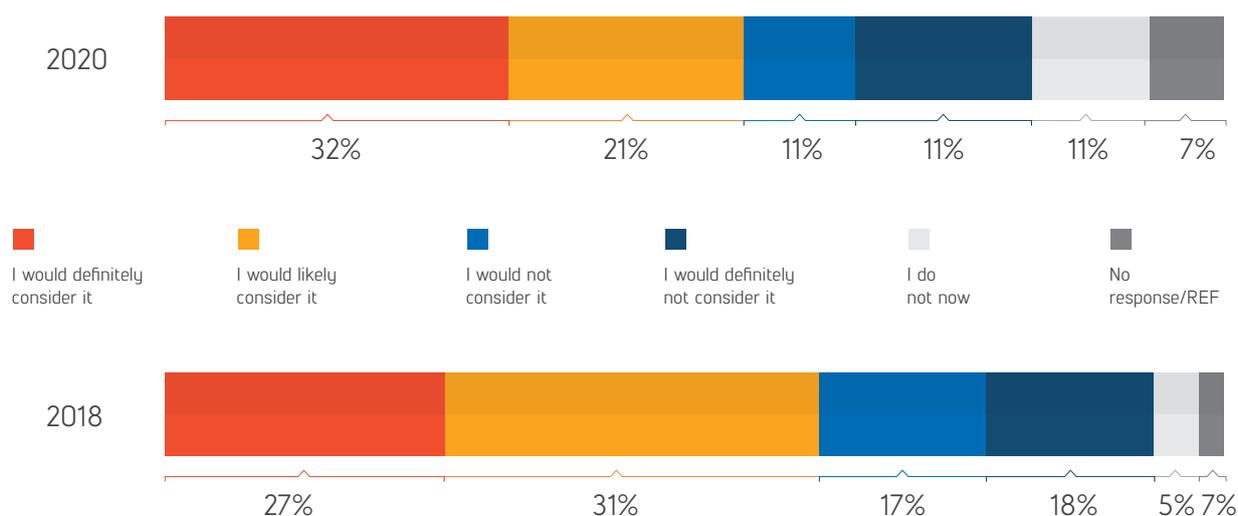
Figure 14.
Respondents who had friends involved in risky behaviours or experiences during the last 12 months



Aspirations to was still a widespread phenomenon in 2020 in Kosovo, with 53% of young people who declared to either consider migration or who were likely to consider migration. In 2018 the share amounted to 58%.

Specifically, in 2020, around one in three young people would “definitely consider” migrating within the next three years (32%), another 21% stated to “likely consider it”. Compared to 2018 a higher share of young people declared to definitely consider migration (27%).

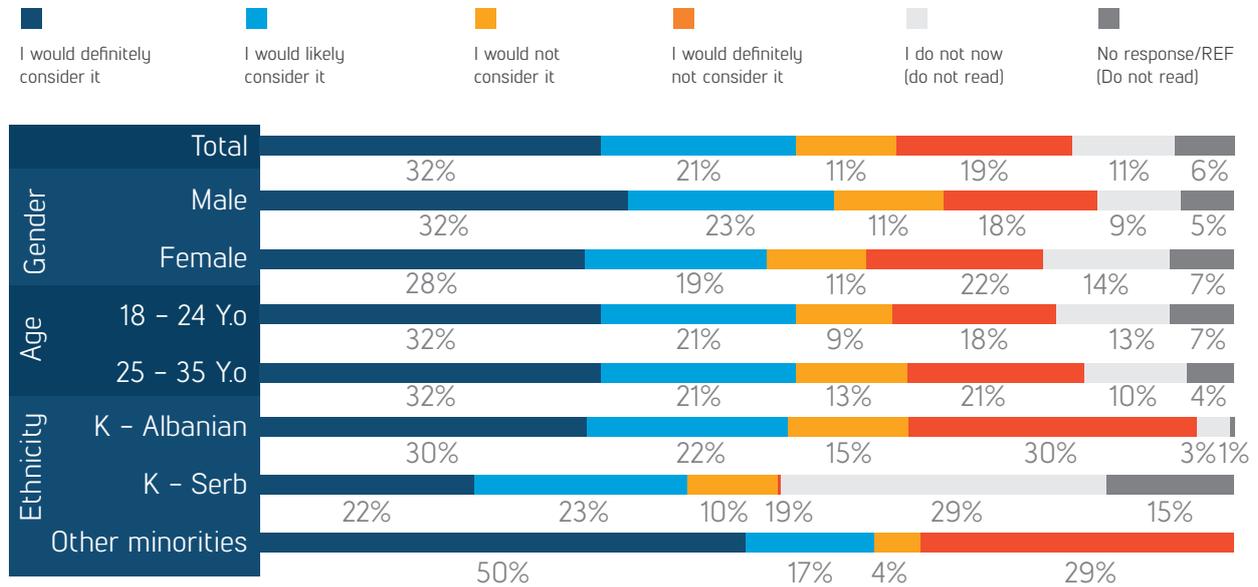
Figure 15.
 Respondents answers on whether they will consider migrating within the next three years



More young men (35%) would definitely consider migrating than young women (28%). Disaggregated data by ethnicity showed that young Kosovo Albanians more commonly opted for migration (30% definitely, 22% likely) when compared to young Kosovo Serbs (22% definitely, 23% likely). Half of those belonging to other non-majority communities declared to have definitely considered migrating within the next three years (50%).

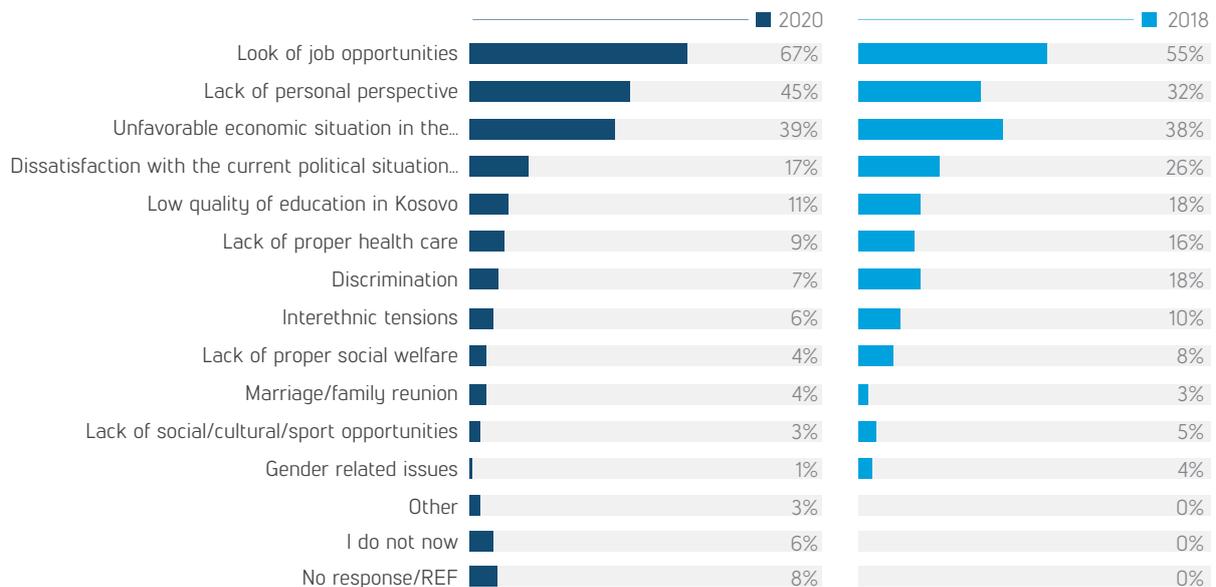
Many Kosovo Albanian focus group participants have also considered migrating; however, often with the intention to return after some time (circular migration). Some expressed the preference of remaining in Kosovo in order to contribute to local development and stay connected with their families. Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb participants agreed that migration was a widespread phenomenon in Kosovo, though Kosovo Serb participants were more prone to only consider migration in the future should the current situation not improve.

Figure 16.
Respondents' answers on whether they will consider migrating within the next three years



The number one **reason for considering emigration** was still the lack of job opportunities in Kosovo according to 67% of the respondents (55% in 2018). Another 45% stated the lack of personal perspective to be the reason (32% in 2018) and 39% mentioned the unfavourable economic situation in the family/low level of income (38% in 2018). Focus group findings further underlined the above-mentioned issues, many mentioning the lack of employment, financial hardship and lack of perspective. In addition, a considerable number of participants would consider migrating for educational purposes.

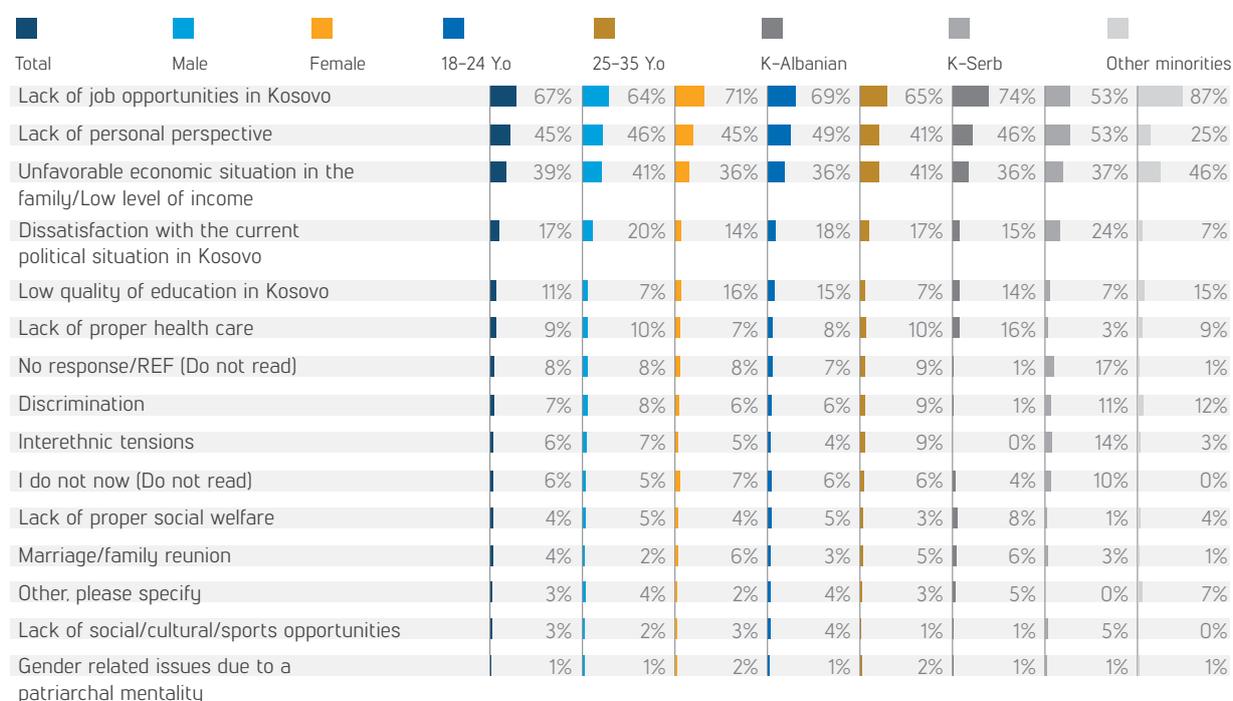
Figure 17.
The top three reasons for emigration



The lack of job opportunities was more commonly mentioned by young Kosovo Albanians (74%) than young Kosovo Serb respondents (53%). More Kosovo Serbs mentioned the lack of personal perspective and the dissatisfaction with the current political situation in Kosovo (53% and 24% respectively), than Kosovo Albanians (46% and 15% respectively). More Kosovo Serb FG participants expressed a general lack of hope for the future of youth in Kosovo, mostly highlighting the perceived unstable political situation, lack of opportunities, feelings of uncertainty for the future and lack of employment.

The lack of job opportunities and low levels of income were most commonly mentioned by young respondents of other non-majority communities (87% and 46% respectively).

Figure 18.
The top three reasons for emigration,
by gender, age and ethnicity

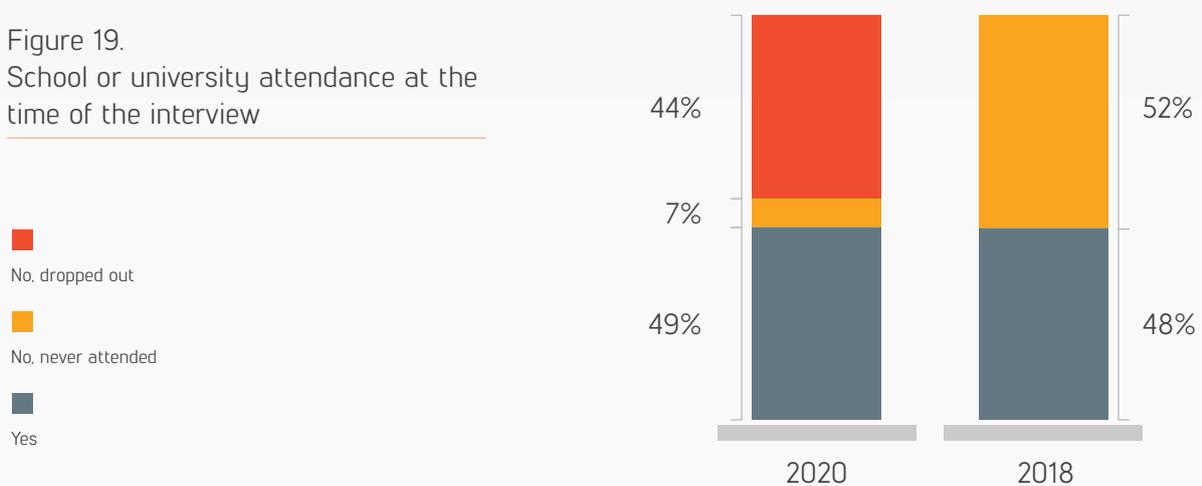


4.3 ACCESS TO EDUCATION

This thematic section pertains to matters of education. Among others, it analyses access to education, satisfaction with the quality of education, as well as barriers to engaging in higher education.

Similar to the 2018 Youth Study (48%)⁸, about half of all young people who took part in this survey were **attending school or university** at the time of the interview⁹ (49%). Data from 2020 also revealed that 44% have dropped out, while another 7% stated that they have never attended school or university. The great majority of those who never attended school or university did not plan to engage with education within the next two years (94%).

Figure 19.
School or university attendance at the time of the interview

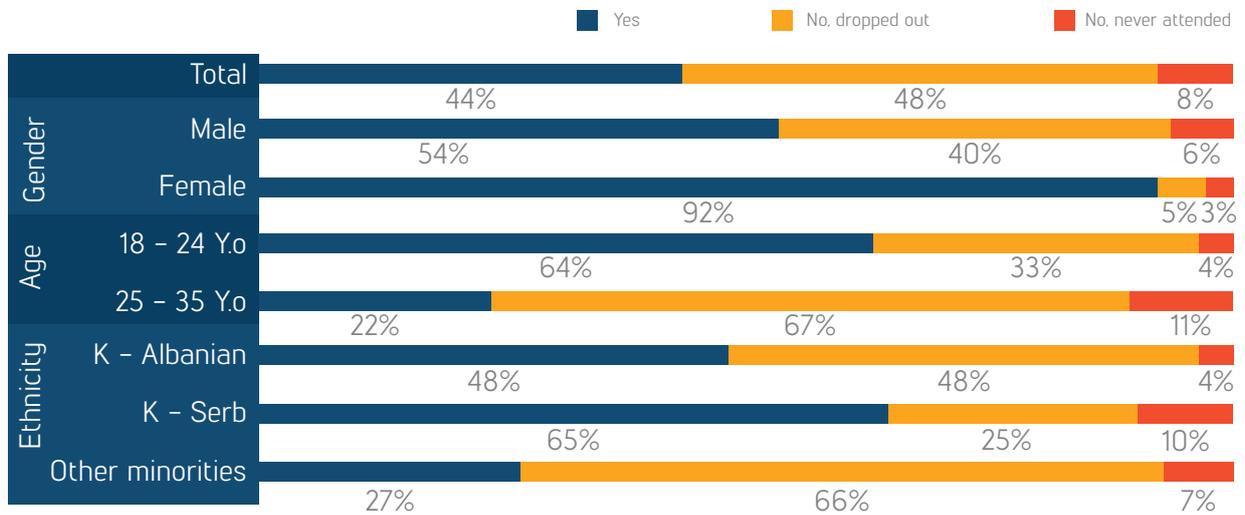


The ratio of young men who **dropped out of school or university** was higher (48%) when compared to young women (40%). Drop-out rates were especially high among older respondents between the age of 25 and 35 years old (67%), those belonging to other non-majority communities (66%) and Kosovo Albanians (48%). Only one third of 18-24 year-old respondents (33%) and 25% of Kosovo Serbs reported a drop out.

⁸This question was edited in 2020. In 2018 the response options were “yes” or “no” to whether the respondents attended school/university. In 2020, the response options were “yes”, “no, never attended” and “no, dropped out.”

⁹Survey interviews and focus groups were conducted in November/December 2020

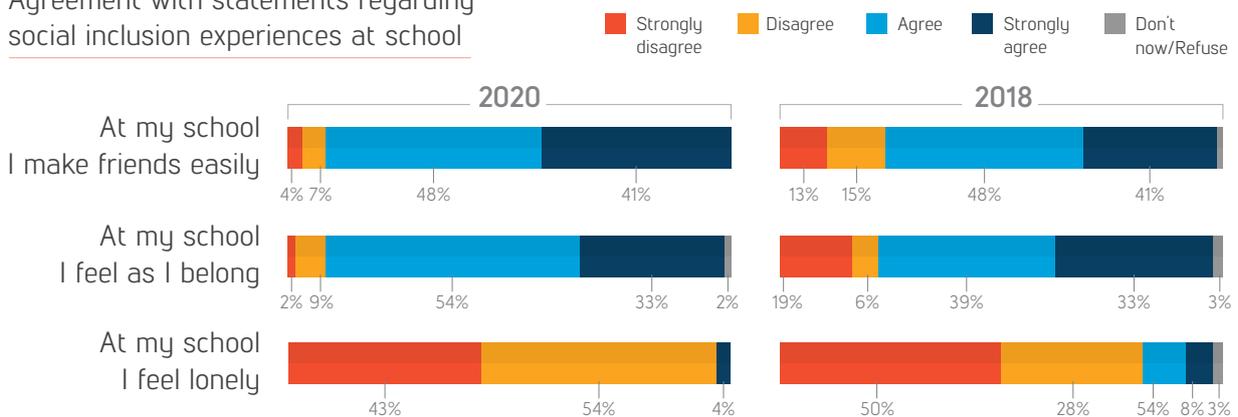
Figure 20.
School or university attendance at the time of the interview, by gender, age and ethnicity



Most young people between the age of 14 and 17 years old attended school at the time of the interview (92%), all of those attended school regularly (100%). Young people of this age group were presented with three statements regarding their experiences and feelings of social inclusion at school and were asked whether they agreed or not.

Around 89% either agreed or strongly agreed that they make friends at school easily, while 87% strongly agreed or agreed that they feel as they belong at their schools. Nearly all (97%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement “At my school, I feel lonely.”

Figure 21.
Agreement with statements regarding social inclusion experiences at school



However, some focus group findings shed light onto the issues of **bullying and discrimination** at schools in Kosovo, especially in relation to young people from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities.

“ You have no idea how much judgment, discrimination and bullying they face with, these being the key factors for them [Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians] leaving school [...] the majority of families in Kosovo use our communities as 'bad examples'; for instance, if a kid does not behave well, they tell him or her “don't be like a gipsy” (“mos u bo si maxhup”) and this makes kids grow up with prejudices and think that the youth of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities do not have manners, are not clean, etc.” (Young Ashkali man (27) from Shtime)

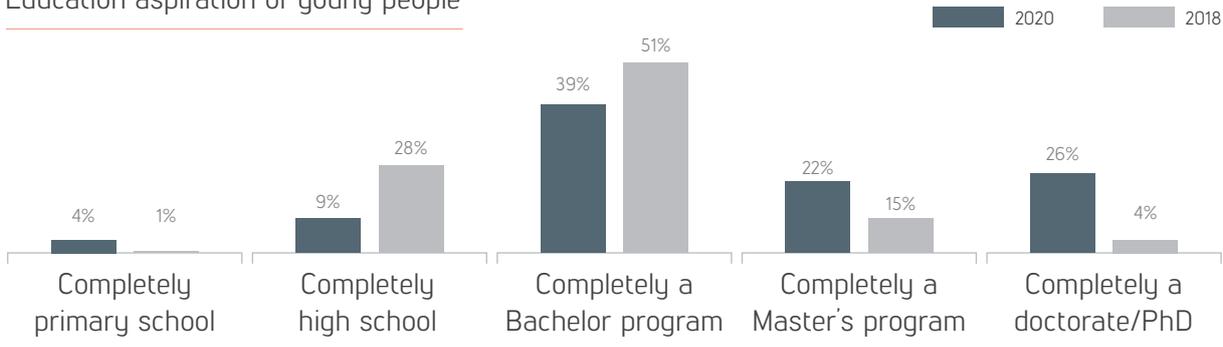
Data findings also showed that young people spent considerable amount of time on the internet (20.8 hours per week on average), while spending few hours on reading (8.7 hours on average). The youngest respondents and men spent time the least on reading (7.9 and 7.7 respectively) when compared to women or older respondents.

Table 11.
Weekly hours spent on different activities

	Hours per week spent on:					
	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	14 - 17 y.o.	18 - 24 y.o.	25 - 35 y.o.
School and homework (14 - 17 y.o. only)	25.0	22.0	26.7	25.0	-	-
Internet (including social media)	20.8	23.1	18.4	20.7	24.2	17.3
Reading	8.7	7.7	9.8	7.9	9.6	8.1

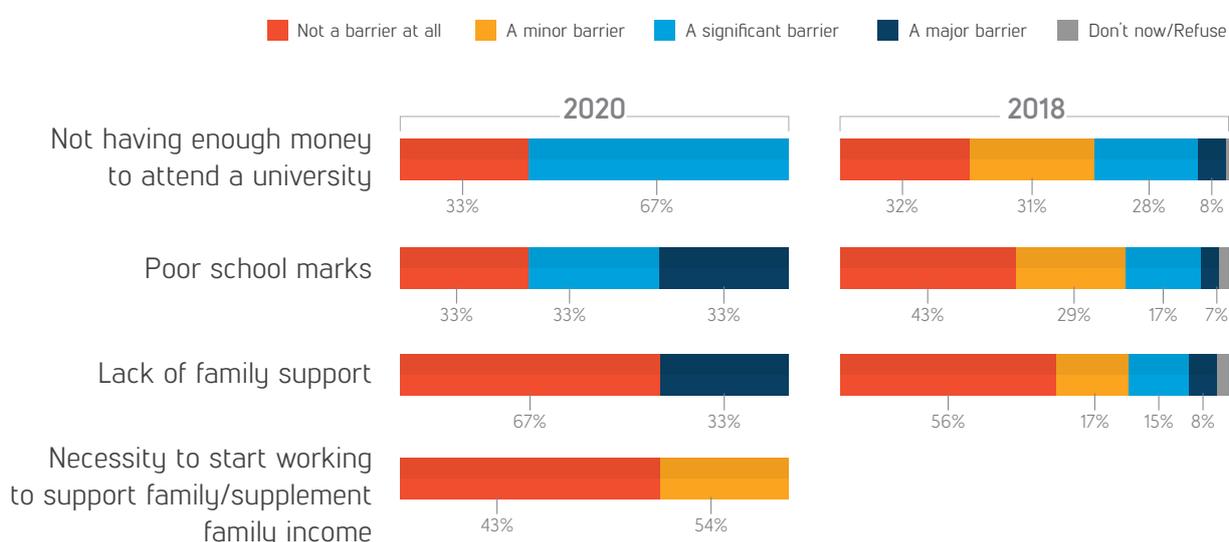
The great majority of young people between the age of 14 and 17 years old **aspired to complete a university degree** (87%). This portrays an increase compared to the Youth Study conducted in 2018, then 70% aimed to obtain a university diploma. Around two in five would like to complete a Bachelor programme (39%), while 26% declared to aim for a doctorate/PhD. Another 22% reported to aspire completing a Master programme.

Figure 22.
Education aspiration of young people



A variety of **barriers** affected whether young people in Kosovo were able to take part in higher education beyond high school. Data suggested that **the lack of finances was perceived as a significant barrier for attending university** for two in three young people (67%)¹⁰. This portrays a substantial increase compared to 2018 when only 28% stated that the lack of finances posed a significant barrier. Two in three also reported poor school marks as a significant or major barrier in furthering their education (66% combined, in 2018 this ratio stood at only 24%). An increased number of young people also viewed the lack of family support as a major barrier in aspiring to engage with higher education in 2020 (33%), when compared to the results of the Youth Study in 2018 (8%). The necessity to start working in order to support family/supplement family income was mentioned as a minor barrier by 33% of the young people.¹¹

Figure 23.
Barriers to furthering education
beyond high school



Overall, when asked about the **highest completed education**, 42% declared that they graduated from secondary school, 21% obtained a Bachelor's degree and 13% completed primary school. Around 39% of those respondents who dropped out from school or did not further their education beyond secondary school reasoned on having to supplement the family income. In 2018, this reason was mentioned by 30% of the respondents.

Other reasons for drop-outs in 2020 were having to take care of younger family members (9% of respondents) and starting a family (also 9%). By contrast, in 2018 significantly more mentioned starting a family (27%) as the reason for not engaging with education or dropping out.

Furthermore, nearly all focus group participants knew someone who had dropped out of school due to financial issues and many reported that they did not return to their education at a later point in time.

¹⁰This question was addressed to respondents between the age of 14 to 17 years old.

¹¹This response option was added to the survey questionnaire in 2020.

Figure 24.
Highest completed education

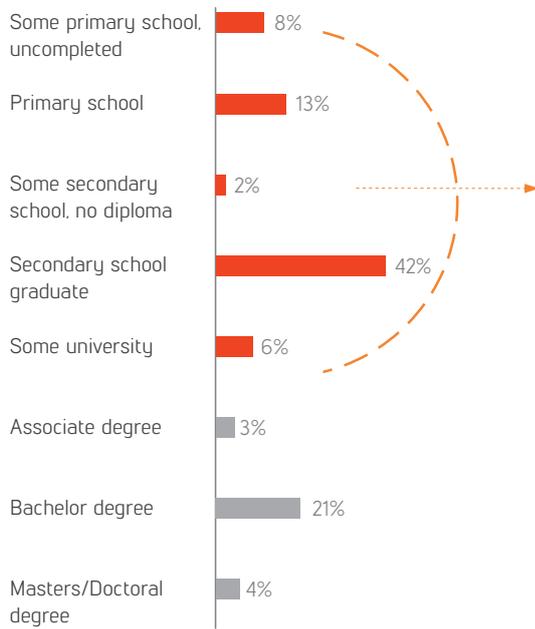
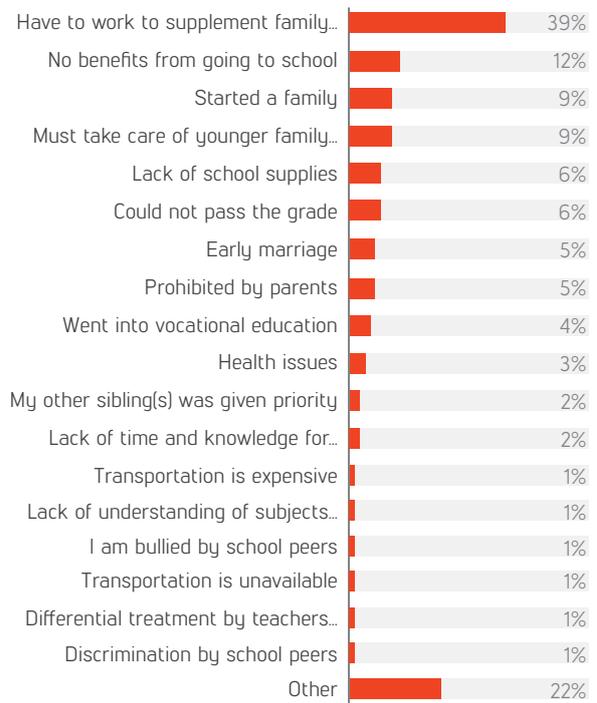


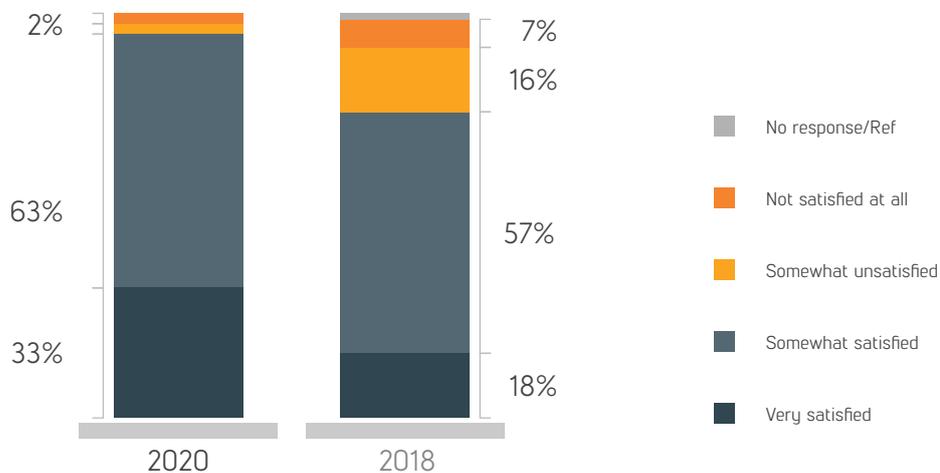
Figure 25.
Reasons for dropping out from school or university



Respondents who obtained an Associate degree, Bachelor's degree or Master's/Doctoral degree were next asked whether they have been satisfied with the **quality of education** received. Comparative findings showed that the satisfaction with the quality of education has increased overall.

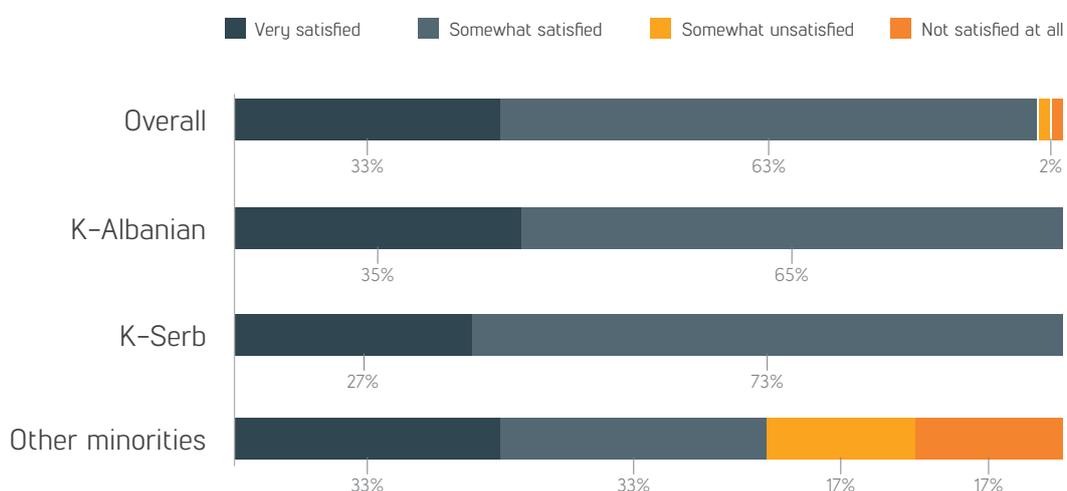
Around 63% stated to have found the quality of education somewhat satisfactory and 33% very satisfactory, as opposed to 2018 where only 57% and 18% respectively stated the same. Only 2% were somewhat unsatisfied or not satisfied at all in 2020.

Figure 26.
Satisfaction with higher education received



When taking a closer look at the disaggregated findings by ethnicity, it can be observed that all Kosovo Albanian and all Kosovo Serb respondents were either very or somewhat satisfied with the quality of their education. Only some of the respondents who come from other non-majority communities stated to be either somewhat unsatisfied or not satisfied at all (17%). However, focus group discussions revealed a different picture than the quantitative data findings; Kosovo Serb focus group participants were significantly more satisfied with the quality of the education received than the majority of Kosovo Albanian participants who often evaluated the quality of their education as poor. Most commonly mentioned reasons by Kosovo Albanian participants were the outdated methods of teaching, a focus on “learning subjects by heart” over understanding the logic behind it, and old/unprofessional educational staff. Adequate resources for learning and the lack of literature posed issues as well.

Figure 27.
Satisfaction with higher education received,
by ethnicity



Respondents appeared more hopeful in 2020 when asked whether they believed that **their education would be useful in obtaining a job**.

Around one in three thought about their education as very useful, around twice as many as in 2018 (34% vs 15% in 2018), while 40% evaluated it as somewhat useful (49% in 2018). Nonetheless, 22% combined either felt that their education was not useful or not useful at all when aiming to secure a job. Especially older respondents (25 to 35 years old) were less optimistic; 17% thought about their education as not useful and 12% felt that their education was not useful at all when trying to secure employment.

Focus group findings revealed that while some decried the mismatch of graduate profiles and labour market needs, others felt that their education has been useful in obtaining a job. However, Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb focus group participants alike experienced that without sufficient connections and contacts, securing a job can be onerous (nepotism).

Figure 28.
Usefulness of education for obtaining a job

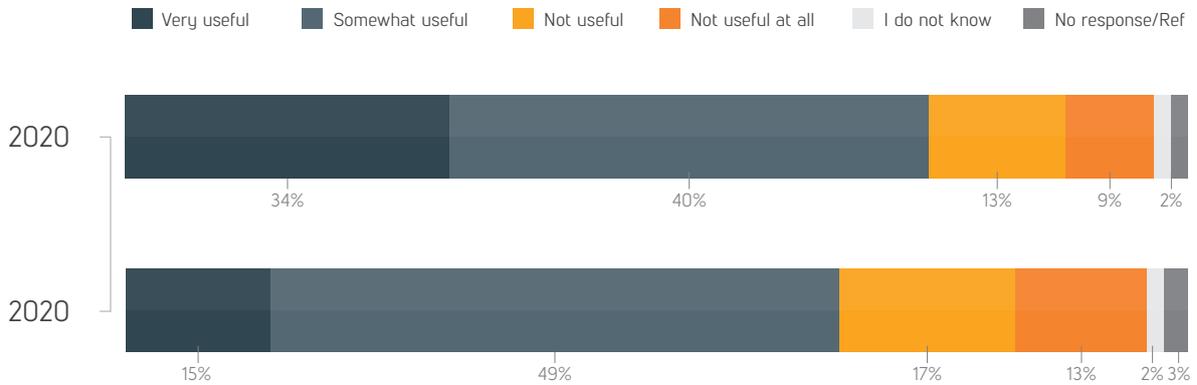
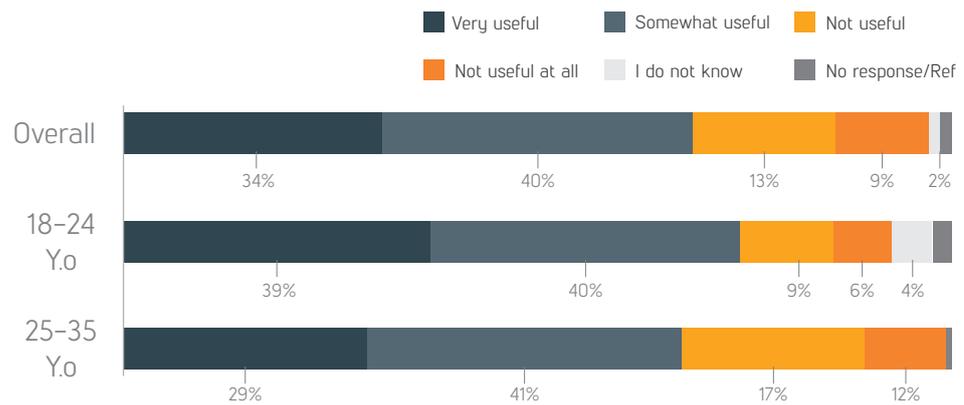


Figure 29.
Usefulness of education for obtaining a job, by age

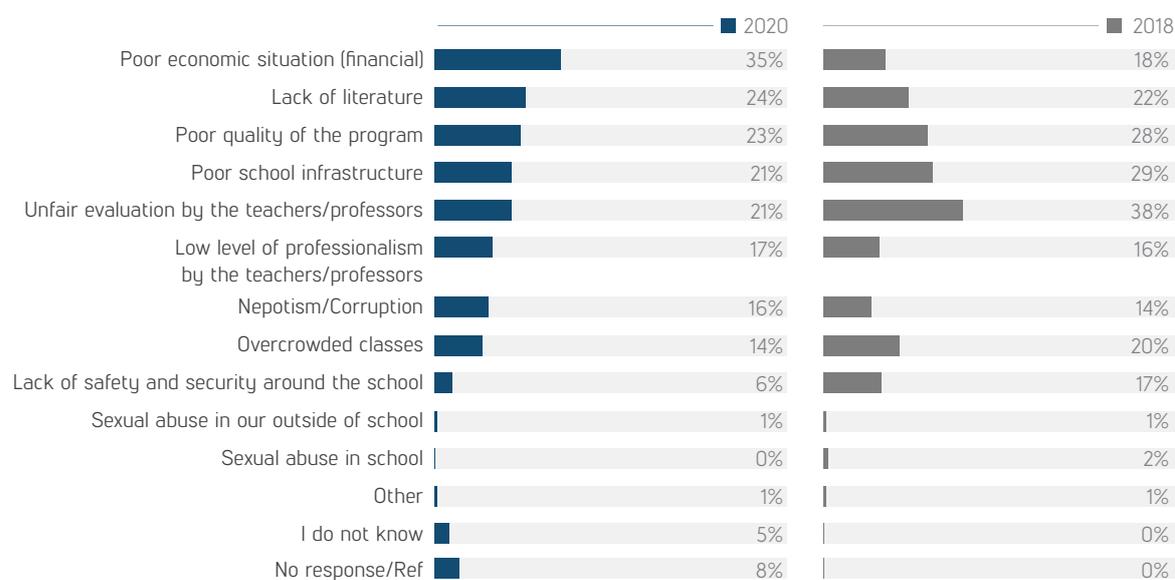


Young people in Kosovo faced a variety of **obstacles while engaging with education**. More than one in three experienced a poor economic situation (35%, an increase of 17pp compared to 2018), around one in four had difficulties with the lack of literature (24%) or the poor quality of the programme (23%). Unfair evaluation by teachers or professors and poor school infrastructure were also mentioned as main obstacles by 21% of the respondents. Another 17% and 16% respectively mentioned the low level of professionalism of educational staff and nepotism/corruption in 2020. Focus group participants also highlighted that the lack of financial means posed a challenge to many, most knew someone who had to abandon their studies due to financial issues.

When further comparing these results to the 2018 youth pulse, it was observed that more young people felt that the low level of professionalism by the educational staff (38%), overcrowded classes (20%) and the lack of safety and security around the school (17%) were obstacles, compared to 2020. While Kosovo Serb focus group participants were more satisfied with their overall quality of education received, some also highlighted issues. Among others, female Kosovo Serb participants stressed the problem of corruption in the education system in Kosovo.

“A student showed me a message where he sorts out an exam with a professor and negotiates the price in cubic meters of wood. That means, how many cubic meters of wood the student should give to the professor, so the professor lets him pass the exam.”
(Young Kosovo Serb woman (26) from Gracanica)

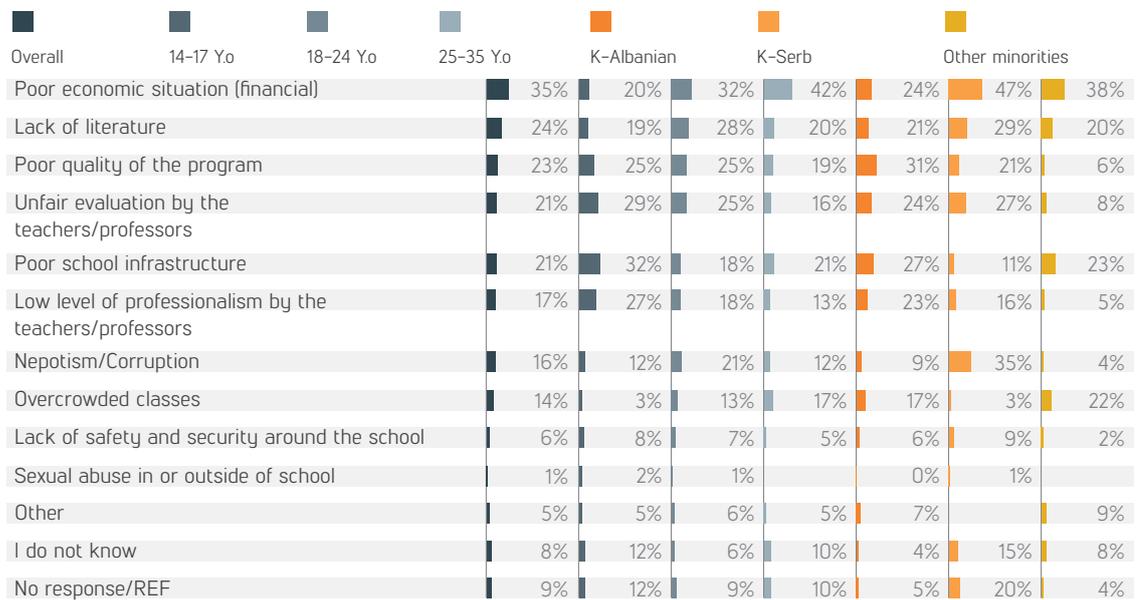
Figure 30.
Main obstacles witnessed during education



Disaggregated survey findings by ethnicity further show that Kosovo Serbs were considerably more likely to mention nepotism/corruption (35%) as the main obstacle witnessed during their education than Kosovo Albanian respondents (9%) or those who come from other non-majority communities (4%). Kosovo Serbs also more commonly faced with difficulties due to a poor economic situation (47%) compared to respondents who come from other non-majority communities (38%) or Kosovo Albanians (24%). On the other hand, Kosovo Albanians cited the poor quality of programmes (31%) and poor school infrastructure (27%) more frequently than Kosovo Serbs (21% and 11% respectively).

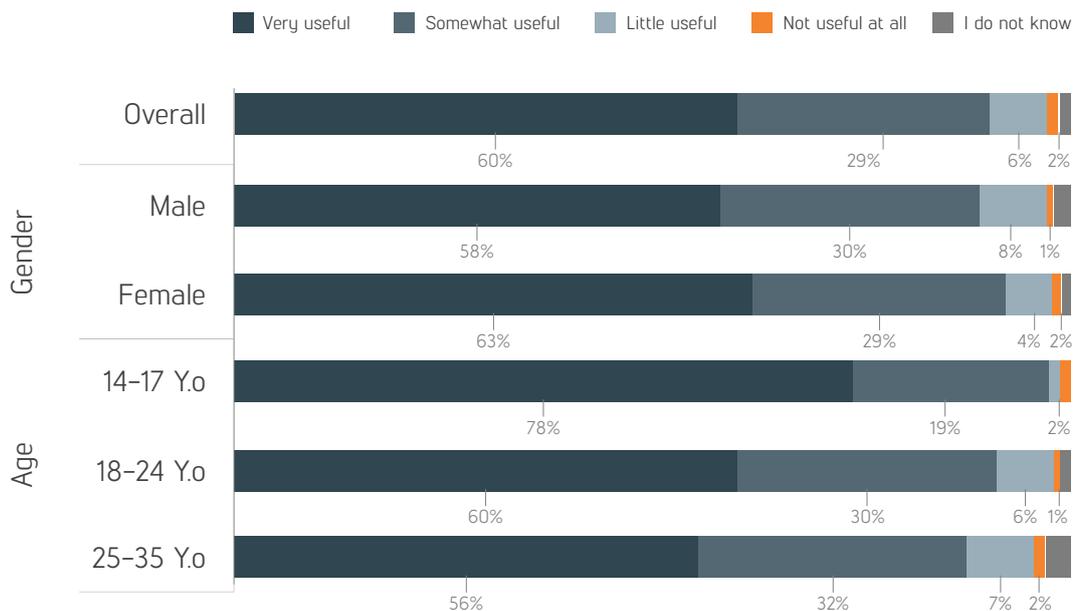
Taking a closer look at the variations in different **age groups**, findings show that more of the older respondents (25 to 35 years old) mentioned the poor economic situation (42%) as an obstacle compared to the younger age groups (18 to 24 years old, 32% and 14 to 17 years old, 20%). Respondents between the age of 14 and 17 years old more commonly mentioned poor school infrastructure (32%) and unfair evaluation by educational staff (29%) as the main obstacles witnessed during their education. The lack of literature and nepotism/corruption were most commonly witnessed by respondents between the age of 18 and 24 years old (28% and 21% respectively).

Figure 31.
Main obstacles witnessed during education,
by age and ethnicity



Three in five young people felt that vocational training would be very useful for their future (60%), another 25% believed that it would be somewhat useful. Especially those belonging to the youngest age group felt that vocational training could be very useful for their future (78%). Moreover, slightly more women (63%) perceived vocational training as very useful when compared to men (58%). Conversely, more men (8%) than women (4%) felt that vocational training has only little use for them.

Figure 32.
Perceived usefulness of vocational training
for the future of young people



Overall, despite some positive findings in this study as regards youth perception about the quality of their education, **more research is needed to reflect on the present and future of education in Kosovo**. For instance, the low quality of education resulted in the poor performance of students in the 2018 OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), placing Kosovo students at the bottom of the developing world and last in the Western Balkans. At the same time, as highlighted by different studies including the EU Commission 2020 Kosovo Report, the education system fails to provide youth with skills to meet the demands of the local and global market hindering their independence, further excluding those who are vulnerable, and contributing to political and economic disenfranchisement.

4.4 TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

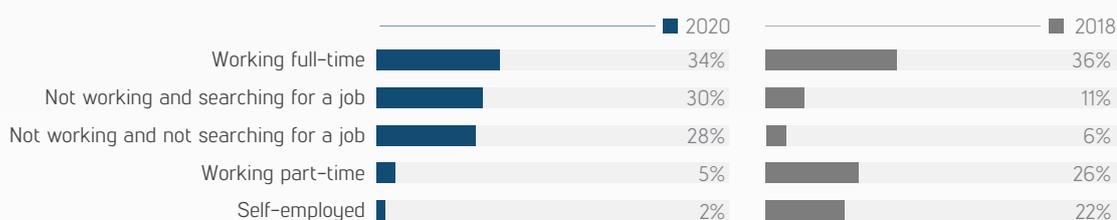
Respondents between the age of 18 and 35 years old were also presented with a number of questions pertaining to the topic of transition to employment. This included, among others, questions regarding their employment status, income, types of jobs they engaged in and difficulty faced when seeking for jobs.

When asked about their current work activity¹² the data revealed that 58% of the respondents were not engaged in any type of employment. Compared to the findings of 2018, this portrays an increase of 41pp. Out of the unemployed young people, 30% declared that they are actively seeking for a job (increase of 20pp), while 28% of the unemployed stated that they are seeking for a job (increase of 22pp).

The data findings from the 2020 study matched the overall reality in Kosovo when consulting official statistical data from the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (ASK); ASK data from 2019 showed that 49% of 15–24 years old respondents and 31% of 25–34 years old were unemployed (ASK, 2019a). The youth NEET share of youth population stood at 32% in 2019, more young women (34%) than young men (31%) were NEET in 2019 according to ASK (ASK, 2019b). Furthermore, when assessing data findings of 2020, the influence of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on the economy and people in Kosovo should be kept in mind.

As in the 2018 findings (36%), around one third declared to work full time (34%). However, part-time work has significantly decreased from 22% to only 5%, and only 2% declared self-employment compared to 22% of the respondents in 2018.

Figure 33.
Current employment activities of young people



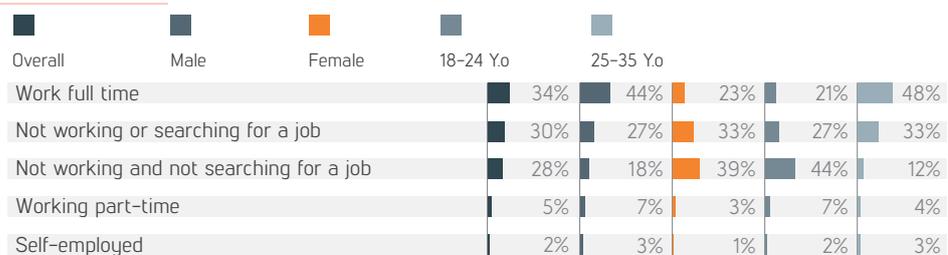
¹²At the time of the interview, November/December 2020.

Disaggregated data by gender showed that **young women were significantly more likely to be unemployed and not seeking for any jobs** (39%) when compared to young men (18%). Only 27% of young women were engaged with any type of work, compared to 54% of young men. When comparing 2018 and 2020 data, the share of young women who were unemployed and not seeking for jobs increased by 36pp.

It further stood out that **younger respondents (18 to 24 years old) were significantly more likely not to seek for jobs while being unemployed** (44%), than those between the age of 25 and 35 years old (12%). The latter age group was more commonly engaged with full-time work (48%) than that of 18–24 years old (21%).

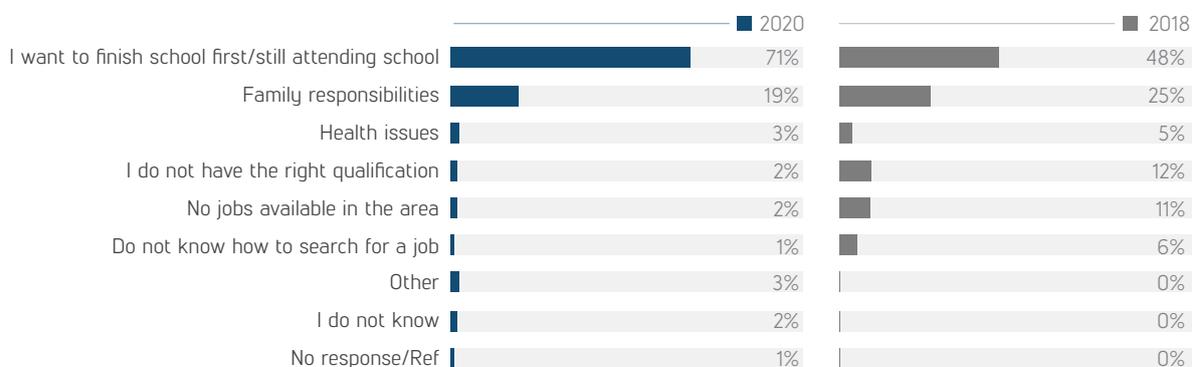
The young people who took part in the focus group were mostly unemployed (21), while 17 were employed. More Kosovo Serb focus group participants were employed than Kosovo Albanian participants.

Figure 34.
Current employment activities
of young people, by gender and age



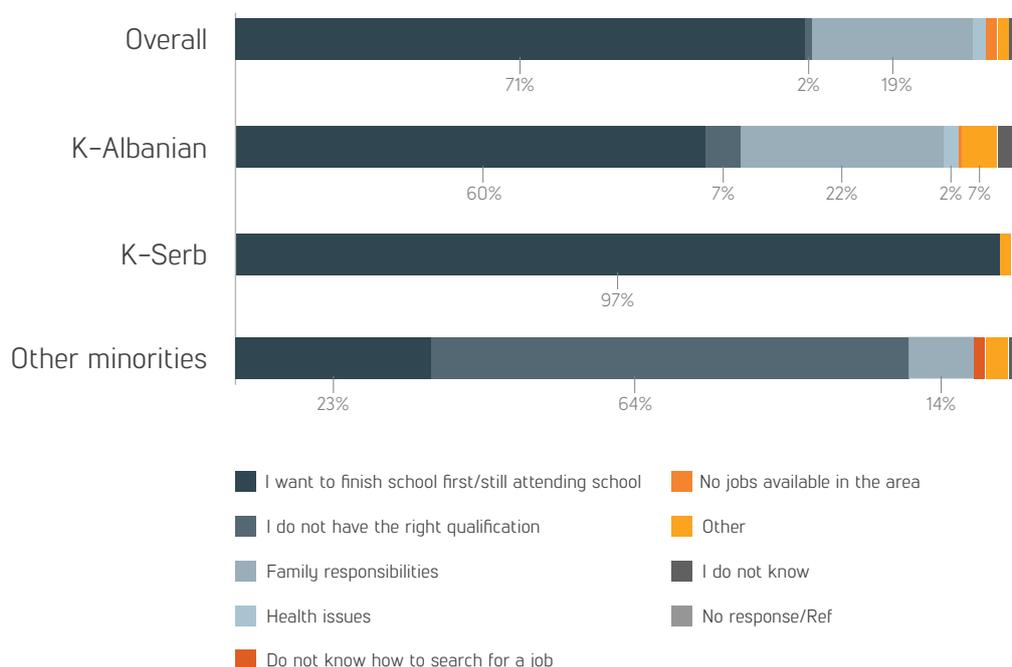
The most commonly mentioned reason why unemployed young people did not seek for jobs was wanting to finish their education first (71%, increase of 23pp). Another 19% of the respondents mentioned family responsibilities as the reason for not seeking for jobs. In 2018, young people more commonly mentioned family responsibilities (25%) and not having the right qualifications (12%) as the reasons for not seeking employment.

Figure 35.
Reasons for not seeking employment



Disaggregation by ethnicity showed that most Kosovo Serb respondents mentioned wanting to complete their education first as the reason for not seeking employment (97%). Less than two thirds of Kosovo Albanians stated the same (60%), while nearly one in four (22%) cited family responsibilities as the reason for not seeking for a job. The majority of respondents who come from other non-majority communities (64%) also mentioned family responsibilities as the reason for not trying to secure employment, while 14% mentioned health issues as the reason.

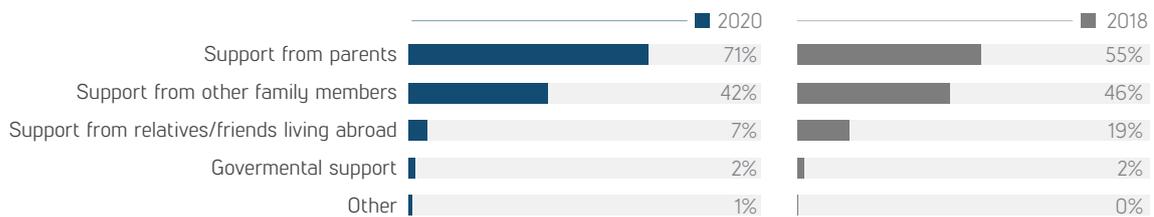
Figure 36.
Reasons for not seeking employment,
by ethnicity



Additionally, the lack of hope for a better future and the lack of perspective in general were mentioned by Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb focus group participants as reasons why some young people in Kosovo have lost their motivation to seek employment.

Nearly three in four young unemployed people received support from their parents (71%), another 42% received support from other family members. Compared to 2018 support from parents increased by 16pp in 2020. On the other hand, more young people received support from relatives or friends living abroad in 2018 (19%), when compared to 2020 (7%). Moreover, only 2% reported to have received public funding and some focus group participants criticized Kosovo institutions for the lack of financial support for students and declared that even for those who received support, it was not enough to sustain their living.

Figure 37.
How young unemployed people sustain themselves financially



Those who reported to be unemployed in 2020 were also asked a range of further questions to better understand their situation.

One factor which stood out was around three in four respondents no **working experience** (77% vs 67% in 2018). Most respondents have left their previous jobs because they were in short-term positions (43%) or because their positions were terminated (28%). In 2018, more young people mentioned termination (38%) and fewer short-term engagements (31%).

Focus group findings underlined the issue of working experience. Many young people, Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs alike, felt that as a career starter it was nearly impossible to secure a job due to high expectations on working experience by the employers. The lack of internship opportunities was also stressed out as an inhibiting factor to early career development in Kosovo specifically by Kosovo Albanians.

[...] people who just finished secondary school cannot have any experience. How to get it? So that's the key problem, everybody is asking for experience and no one wants to employ people so they can actually get experience.
(Young Kosovo Serb woman (19) from Gracanica)

While two thirds of young people who took part in the survey claimed to have never refused a job, nearly one third reportedly did (30%, compared to 21% in 2018). When asked whether the unemployed respondents would consider a low-income job, the opinions were varying as 34% responded with maybe, 32% with yes and 29% with no.

Figure 38.
Working experience of unemployed young people

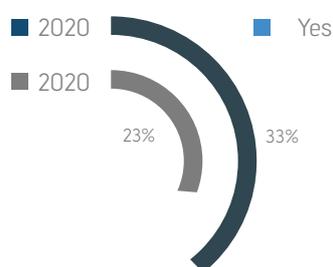


Figure 39.
Reasons for not working at previous jobs anymore

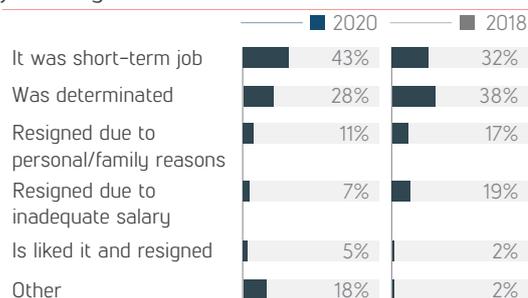


Figure 40.
Unemployed who have refused a job

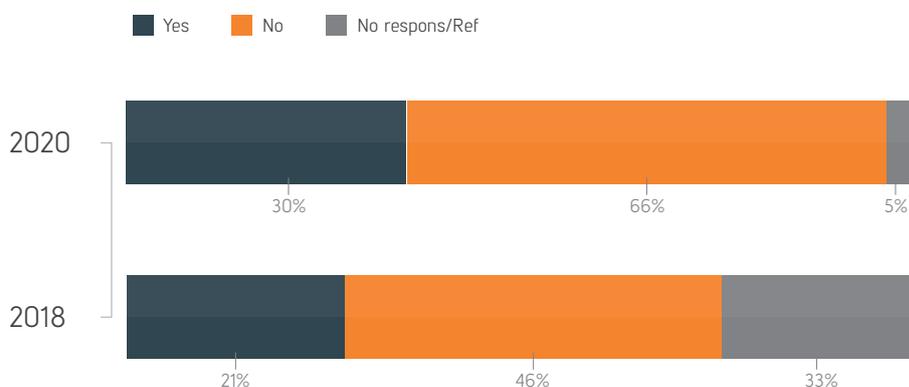
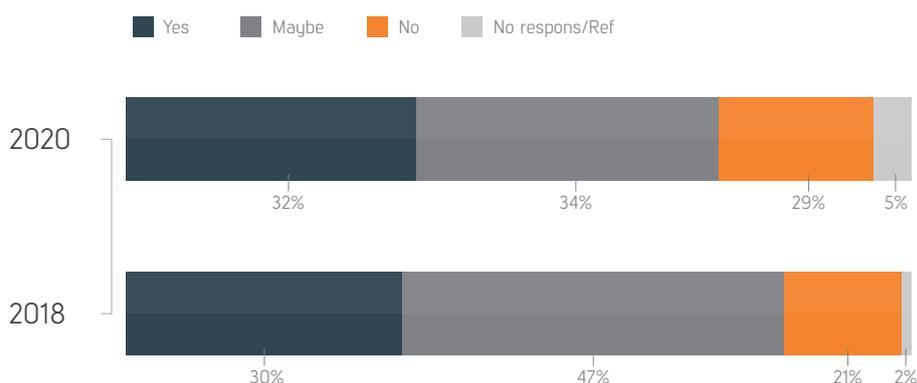
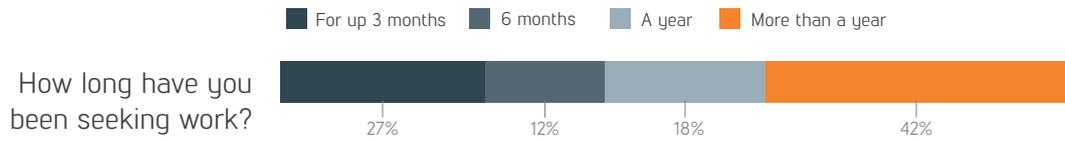


Figure 41.
Unemployed who would consider a low-income job



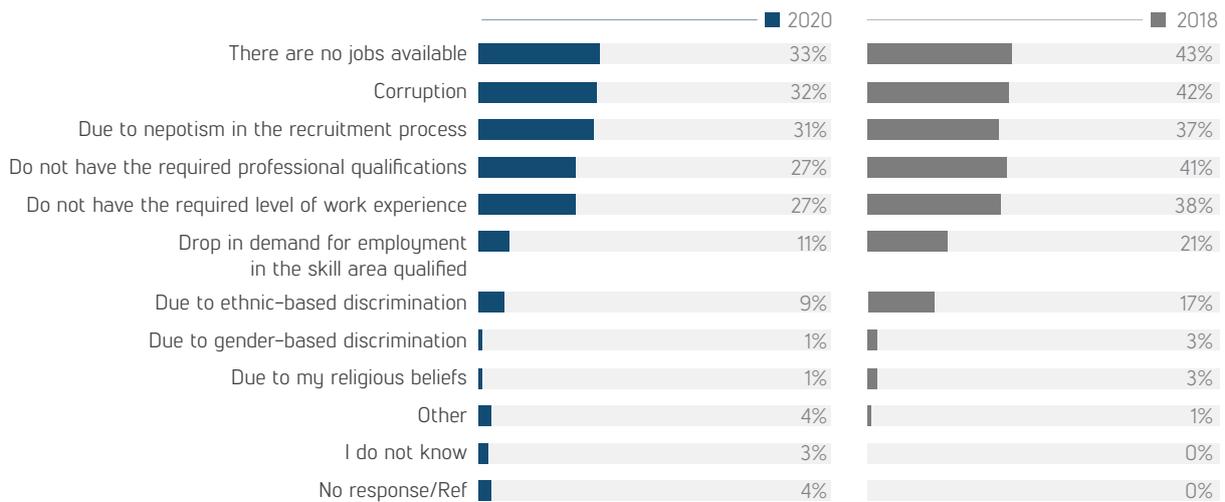
Around two in five young respondents who declared to be unemployed but seeking for jobs, declared to have searched for more than a year (42%). Another 27% reported to have searched for up to three months, while 18% reported to have searched for one year.

Figure 42.
Time duration of seeking for employment



Unemployed young people identified the main **difficulty in finding jobs** with the lack of jobs/positions available (33% vs 43% in 2018), corruption (32% vs 42% in 2018), nepotism in the recruitment process (31% vs 37% in 2019) and in the lack of professional qualifications or required level of working experience (27% each vs 41% and 38% respectively in 2018). As findings indicate, while the main reasons for difficulties in finding jobs remained the same, higher percentages of respondents mentioned them in 2018.

Figure 43.
Reasons for difficulties in securing employment



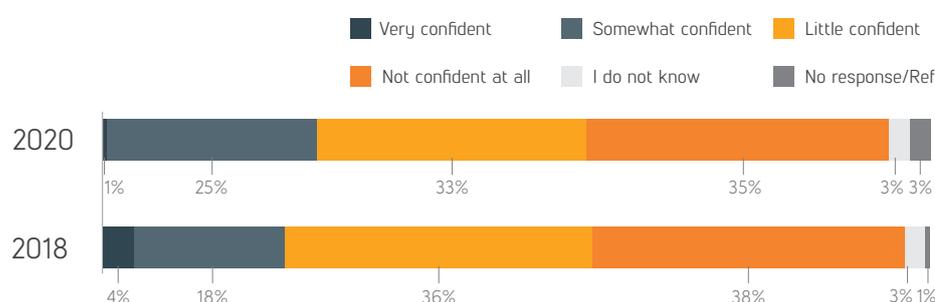
Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb focus group participants alike stressed the issue of nepotism and unfair recruitment processes, while some also mentioned problems with discrimination.

“ Only last year I applied to 40 vacancies, I was in four interviews, 2-3 responded that they were verifying my application. In all my interviews, my headscarf was mentioned.(Young Kosovo Albanian woman (30) from Kacanik) ”

Another issue of concern is that more than one in three unemployed young people **were not confident at all that they would find a job within the next six months** (35% vs 38% in 2018). Findings also showed that around two in five young women were not confident at all (39%), while slightly fewer young men expressed the same (31%).

One third had little confidence (33% vs 36% in 2018) and 25% felt somewhat confident in finding employment in the next six months. Only 1% expressed to be very confident to find a job within the next six months, while in 2018, 4% expressed themselves as very confident.

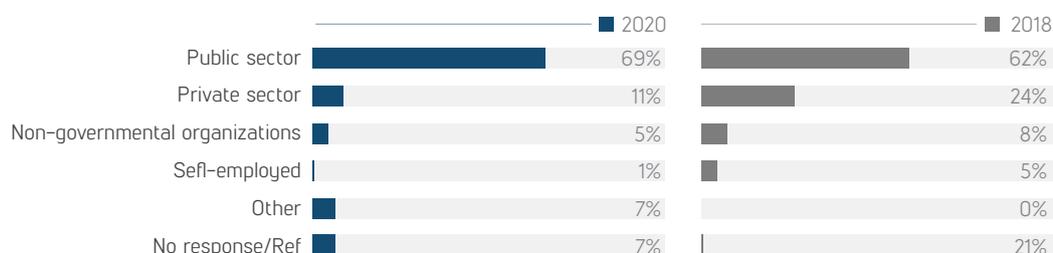
Figure 44.
Confidence in finding a job within the next six months



The public sector was still perceived as the most favourable potential employer for young unemployed people in Kosovo in 2020. More than two thirds of the unemployed respondents declared preference to work in the public sector (69% vs 62% in 2018) as opposed to the private sector (11%), NGOs (5%) or self-employment (1%).

The share of young people who showed preference towards the private sector or self-employment has decreased by -13pp and -4pp respectively, when compared to the 2018 findings. While some focus group participants highlighted that nepotism and corruption were issues in the public and private sector alike, some Kosovo Serb participants felt that the recruitment process in public institutions was fairer compared with the private one and was therefore a more desired employer.

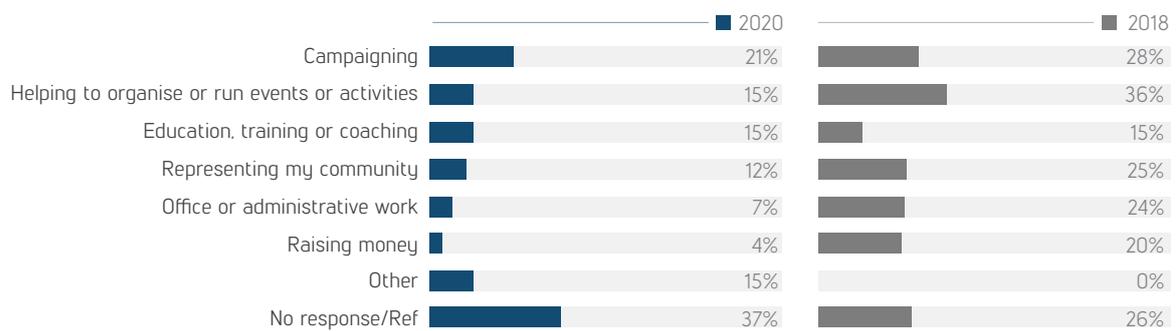
Figure 45.
Preference of work sector



When asked whether unemployed respondents have engaged in any unpaid work to help organizations, clubs, or groups of communities, 37% did not provide an answer to this question. Around 21% have engaged in campaigning, 15% each have helped with organising events/activities or have helped with education, training or coaching. Another 12% have engaged with activities to represent their community.

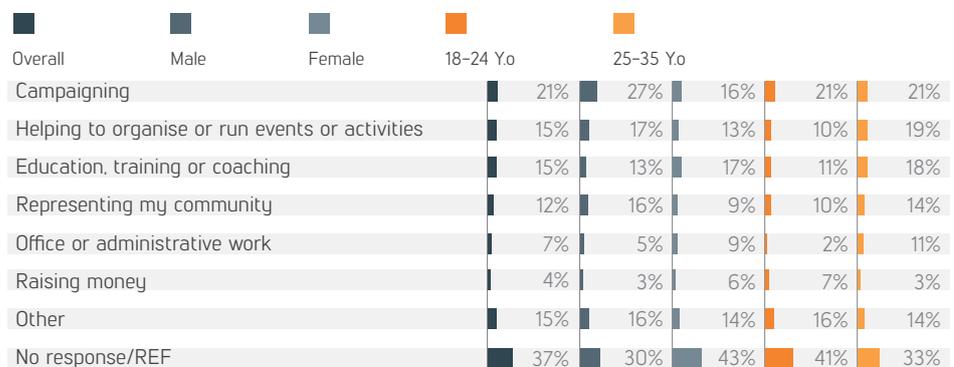
Overall, when comparing 2018 and 2020 data findings on this matter, the general **willingness to engage with volunteer activities** by young people have decreased.

Figure 46.
Engagement in unpaid activities to help organisations, clubs, groups or communities



Findings disaggregated by gender show that more men have engaged with campaigning (27%), helping to organise events or activities (17%) or representing their community (16%) than women (16%, 13% and 9% respectively). Women on the other hand have more commonly been involved with education, training or coaching (17%) compared to men (13%). While data revealed that 21% of both age groups engaged with campaigning, other types of volunteer work were more common among older respondents between the age of 25 to 35 years old compared with those between the age of 18 to 24 years old.

Figure 47.
Engagement in unpaid activities to help organisations, clubs, groups or communities by gender and age



Survey findings further show that Kosovo Serb respondents were more active in regard to campaigning (36%), helping to organise events and activities (21%) and representing their community (26%) compared to Kosovo Albanian or other non-majority communities. Kosovo Albanians more commonly mentioned engagement with education, training or coaching (18%) compared to Kosovo Serbs (14%) and other non-majority communities (12%). (Please note, the 43% of other non-majority communities who selected “other” most commonly specified that they did not take part in any type of volunteer/unpaid work).

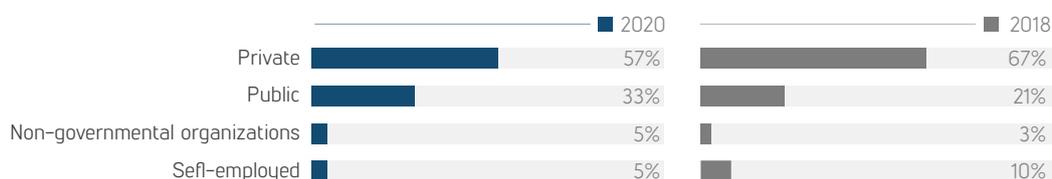
Figure 48.
Engagement in unpaid activities to help organisations, clubs, groups or communities, by ethnicity



While focus group respondents were not specifically asked about volunteer or unpaid activities, a few of the Kosovo Albanian focus group participants mentioned engagement in volunteer work and reported to have secured paid work for the same organisation after some time.

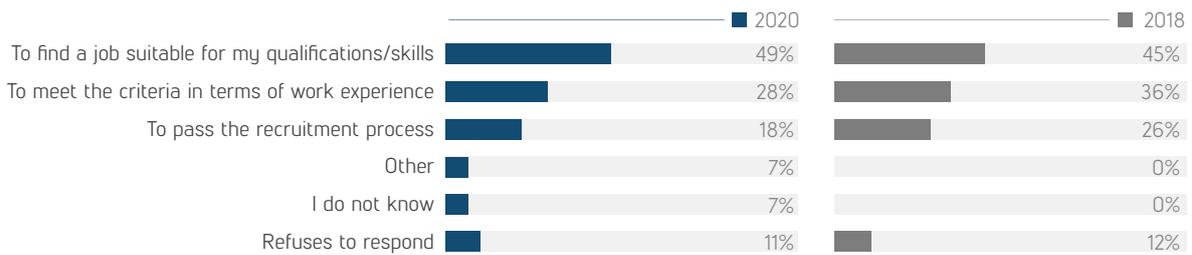
Among the respondents who were employed at the time of the interview, most worked in the private sector (57%, decrease of -9pp), while one third was engaged in the public sector (33%, increase of 12pp). Five percent worked at NGOs (increase of 2pp) or they were self-employed (decrease of -5pp).

Figure 49.
Type of workplace of the employed respondents



Finding a job suitable for the respondents' qualifications and skills have been the biggest challenge for 49% of those young people who were currently employed at the time of the interview (5pp increase compared to 2018). Another 28% felt that meeting the criteria in terms of working experience was the biggest challenge (decrease of -7pp) and 18% mentioned passing the recruitment process (decrease of -8pp). The lack of working experience and nepotism were also highlighted by focus group participants.

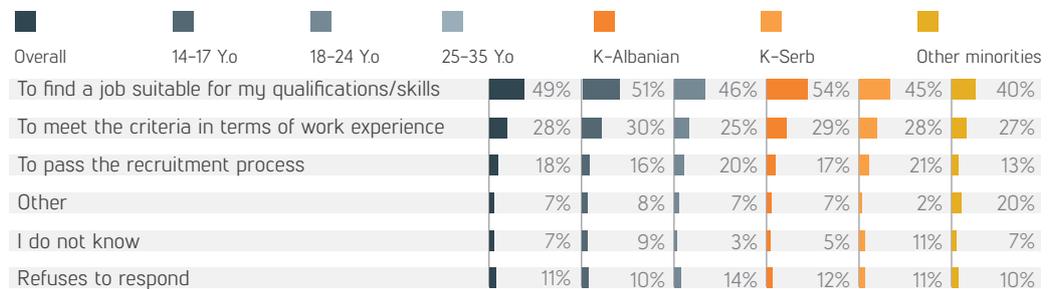
Figure 50.
Challenges in becoming employed



When taking a closer look at the challenges in becoming employed disaggregated by gender, findings show that slightly more men (51%) mentioned finding a suitable job for their qualifications and meeting the criteria in terms of working experience (30%) as a challenge, compared to women (46% and 25% respectively). Conversely, more women mentioned passing the recruitment process as a challenge (20%) than men (16%).

Similar observations were made when analysing the findings by ethnicity; more Kosovo Albanians mentioned finding a suitable job for their qualifications (54%) and meeting the criteria in terms of working experience (29%), compared to Kosovo Serbs (45% and 28% respectively) or other non-majority communities (40% and 27% respectively). More Kosovo Serbs cited passing the recruitment process as a challenge (21%) than Kosovo Albanians (21%) or other non-majority communities (13%).

Figure 51.
Challenges in becoming employed,
by gender and ethnicity



4.5 INTER-ETHNIC, RELIGIOUS AND SAFETY ISSUES

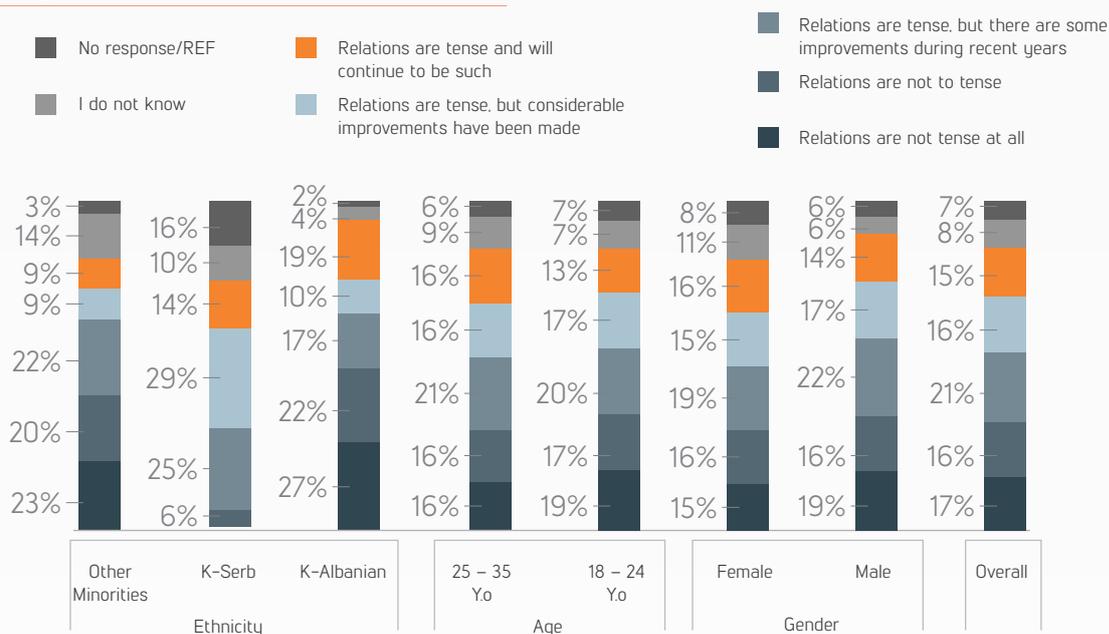
A substantial share of respondents (21%) felt that **relations among different ethnic groups in Kosovo are tense**, but considerable improvements took place in the recent years. Another 16% saw some improvements. Overall, 17% and 16% respectively experienced the relations as “not tense at all” or “not so tense”, on the other hand, 15% felt that the relations are tense and will continue to be so.

Although data disaggregated by gender on inter-ethnic relations did not show much variation, disaggregated data by ethnicity revealed significant differences. For instance, **while 27% of Kosovo Albanians felt that relations were not tense at all, only 1% of Kosovo Serbs stated the same**. Significantly more Kosovo Serbs perceived the relations as tense while considerable improvements have been made (29%) compared to Kosovo Albanians (10%). However, 19% of Kosovo Albanians and 14% of Kosovo Serbs still felt that the relations were tense and will continue to be so.

Focus group discussions revealed that **matters of the past** still play a role in this context. Kosovo Albanian and Kosovo Serb participants alike mentioned the **ongoing influence of parents and teachers** (the older generations) who passed on their prejudices and mistrust to younger people in Kosovo. However, some of the young participants of both ethnicities felt that the relations between youth have improved and that there has generally been some progress.

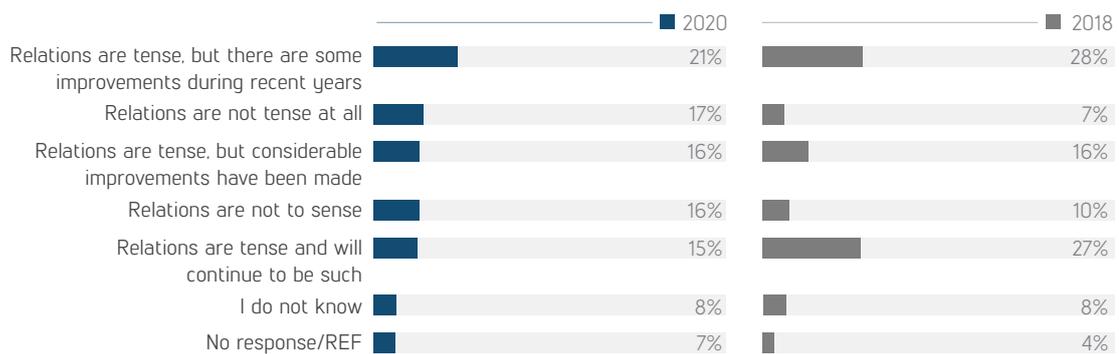
Most commonly, **those who had personal contact with the other ethnicity, had better views towards each other**. Some Kosovo Serb participants have never interacted with a Kosovo Albanian person, they also stated that the media often inhibited trust building between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs through speculative reporting. Some of the Kosovo Albanian participants also highlighted how taking part in common activities have changed/reduced their prejudices.

Figure 52.
Assessment of the relations between young Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs



When comparing the above discussed results from 2020 to the overall results from 2018, it can be observed that **fewer respondents stated in 2020 that relations are tense** while some improvements were made in recent years (21%) compared to 2018 (28%). However, more respondents stated that relations are “not tense at all” or “not so tense” in 2020 (17% and 16% respectively) compared to 2018 (7% and 10% respectively). Considerably fewer respondents in 2020 believed that the relations are tense and will continue to be so (15%) compared to findings of 2018 (27%).

Figure 53.
Assessment of the relations between young
Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs, 2020 vs 2018



Overall, the opinions that the respondents had towards the relation of Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs were based on personal experiences, according to 35% of the young people who took part in this survey. Nearly one third reported to have based their opinion on media reporting (29%), while 23% declared to have based their opinion on stories and experiences from friends and relatives. Only 10% mentioned recent history as the basis for their opinions. More young men declared to have based their assessment on the relations between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs on their own experiences (38%), compared to young women (31%).

Conversely, more young women declared to base their assessment on stories and experiences from friends and relatives (28%), compared to young men (19%). Considerable numbers of respondents of both genders mentioned media reporting as the basis of their assessment towards the relations between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs (31% women, 27% men). Assessment based on their personal experiences was slightly more common among older respondents (25–35 years old) when compared to younger ones (18 to 23 years old).

When taking a closer look at the data disaggregated by ethnicity, it was observed that Kosovo Serbs less commonly based their assessment on media reporting (11%), when compared to other non-majority communities (51%) and Kosovo Albanians (33%). Nearly half of Kosovo Serbs based their assessment on personal experiences (46%), whereas only 30% of Kosovo Albanians did the same.

Figure 54.
Basis of the assessment of relations between young Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs

	Male	Female	18 – 24 Yo	25 – 35 Yo	K-Albanian	K-Serb	Other minorities
Personal experience	35%	38%	31%	31%	38%	30%	46%
Stories and experiences from friends and relatives	23%	19%	28%	27%	20%	27%	29%
Recent history	10%	14%	6%	11%	8%	8%	14%
Media reporting	29%	27%	31%	29%	30%	33%	11%
Other	3%	2%	4%	2%	4%	3%	0%

The assessment of **relations with young people who come from other non-majority communities**¹³ was various. Around one in three experienced them as not tense at all (35%), another 17% felt that they were not so tense, while 15% perceived the relations as tense with considerable improvements and 12% assessed them as tense with some improvements in the recent years. Only 6% felt that these relations were tense and were likely to continue to be so.

When analysing **data results disaggregated by ethnicity**, it was observed that over half of young Kosovo Albanians perceived the relations with other non-majority communities as not tense at all (53%). Respondents who come from other non-majority communities also largely felt that the relations to others were not tense at all (53%). Young Kosovo Serbs stood out in this regard with only 1% stating that relations were not tense at all. Over one third assessed the relations with other non-majority communities as tense with considerable improvements (34%), while 24% experienced them as tense with some improvements in the recent years.

Kosovo Albanian focus group participants felt that discrimination and prejudices were widespread towards Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo. While many felt that their personal relations to these non-majority communities were good, they experienced that the prejudices of elderly Kosovo Albanian generations had severe effects on how some of the youth viewed members of non-majority communities.

“ [...] in the 7th grade, we had a guy in our class who came from Roma community and when he got to our class – he stayed there for a year or two. He was heavily discriminated, bullied, on the way he dressed, on the way how he always stayed alone, but at the same time nobody would hang out with him. One day, a professor of mine, told me to sit next to him; [...] then I was also bullied and offended because I sat next to him.
(Young Kosovo Albanian woman (17) from Prishtina/Priština)

¹³Referring to members of the Roma, Ashkali, Turk and Egyptians communities

Figure 55.
Assessment of the relations between young Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs and other non-majority communities



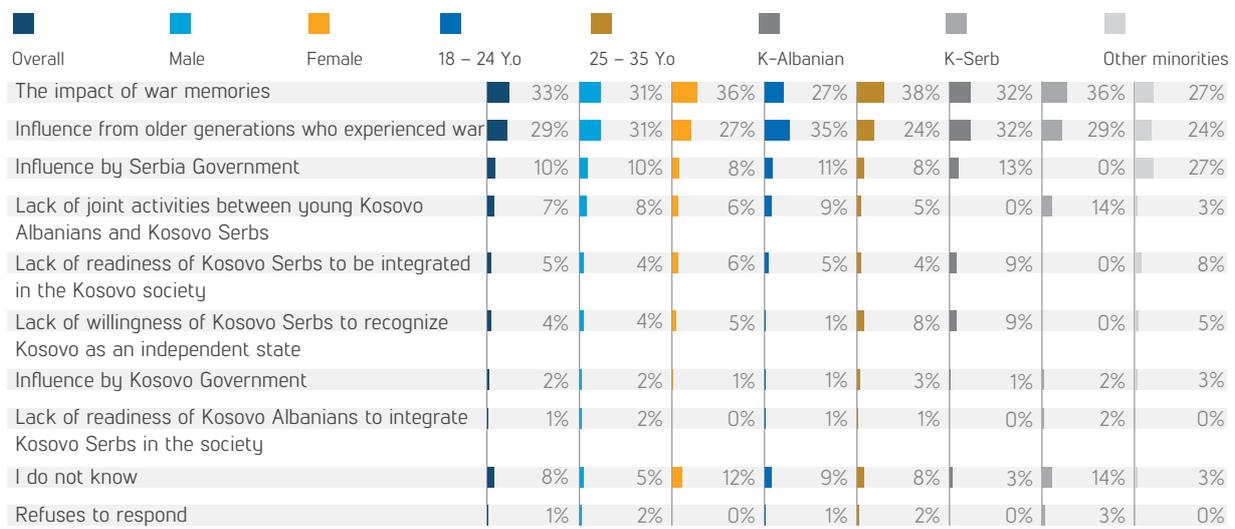
Next, respondents were asked about **the main reasons contributing to tense relations between different ethnicities** in Kosovo. One in three mentioned the impact of conflict memories as the main reason (33%), while nearly as many declared the influence from older generations who experienced conflict (29%).

Respondents between the age of 25 to 35 years old more commonly felt that the impact of conflict memories was a contributing reason to tense relations (38%), than those belonging to the younger age group (27%).

While 27% of respondents who come from other non-majority communities and 13% of Kosovo Albanians viewed the influence of the Serbian Government as the main reason for tense relations, none of the Kosovo Serbs respondents mentioned this factor.

Focus group findings overall confirmed the survey findings regarding this matter. As discussed above, the influence of the older generation and their prejudices were declared to be one of the main factors contributing to the ongoing prejudices of young people from different ethnicities towards one another.

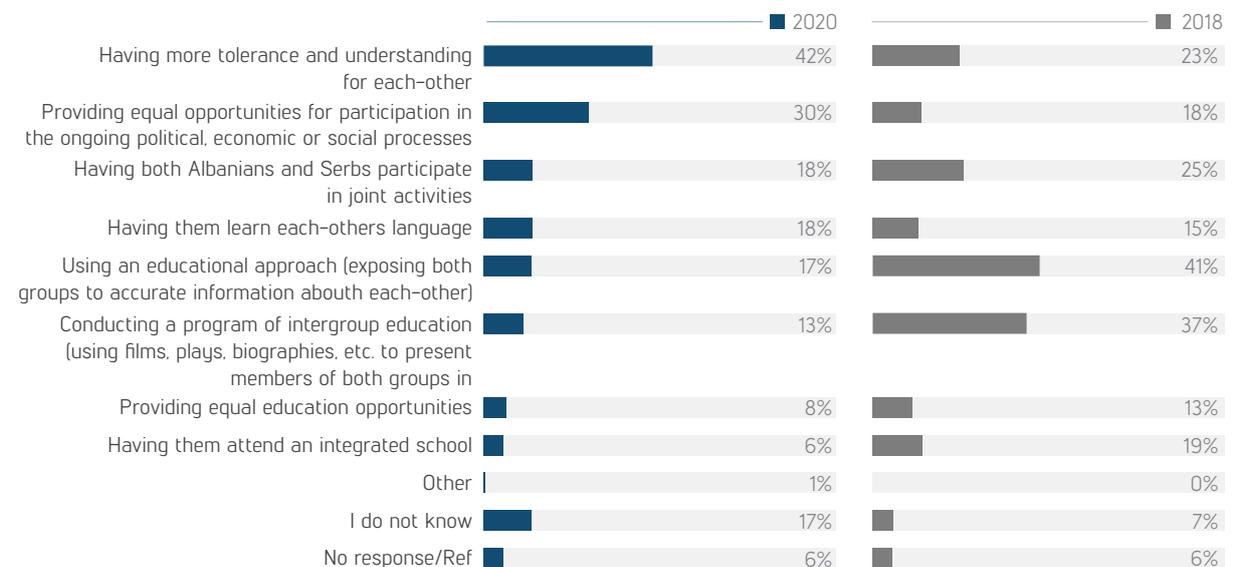
Figure 56.
The main reasons contributing to tense relations between different ethnicities in Kosovo



The survey also explored the opinions of young people on **how the relations between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians could be improved**. More than two in five respondents mentioned increasing tolerance and understanding for one another (42%) as a solution, while 30% cited the provision of equal opportunities for participation in the ongoing political, economic and social processes. Another 18% felt that taking part in joint activities could help improve the relations. Learning each other's languages was also mentioned by 18%.

During the 2018 Youth Study, more young people mentioned an educational approach (41%), programmes of intergroup education (37%), joint activities (25%) and integrated schools (19%) as suggestions for improvement. Only 23% mentioned increased tolerance and understanding in 2018.

Figure 57.
How the relations between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs could be improved



When consulting data **results disaggregated by gender**, it was observed that more young men mentioned increased tolerance and understanding (46%) than young women (37%). On the other hand, 20% of young women felt that an educational approach could help improve the relations (20%), while only 13% of young men thought the same. It should be noted that young Kosovo Serbs put significantly more emphasis on learning each other's languages (45%) than Kosovo Albanians (3%). Conversely, more Kosovo Albanians mentioned an educational approach (30%) or intergroup education programmes (19%) compared to Kosovo Serbs (2% and 3% respectively).

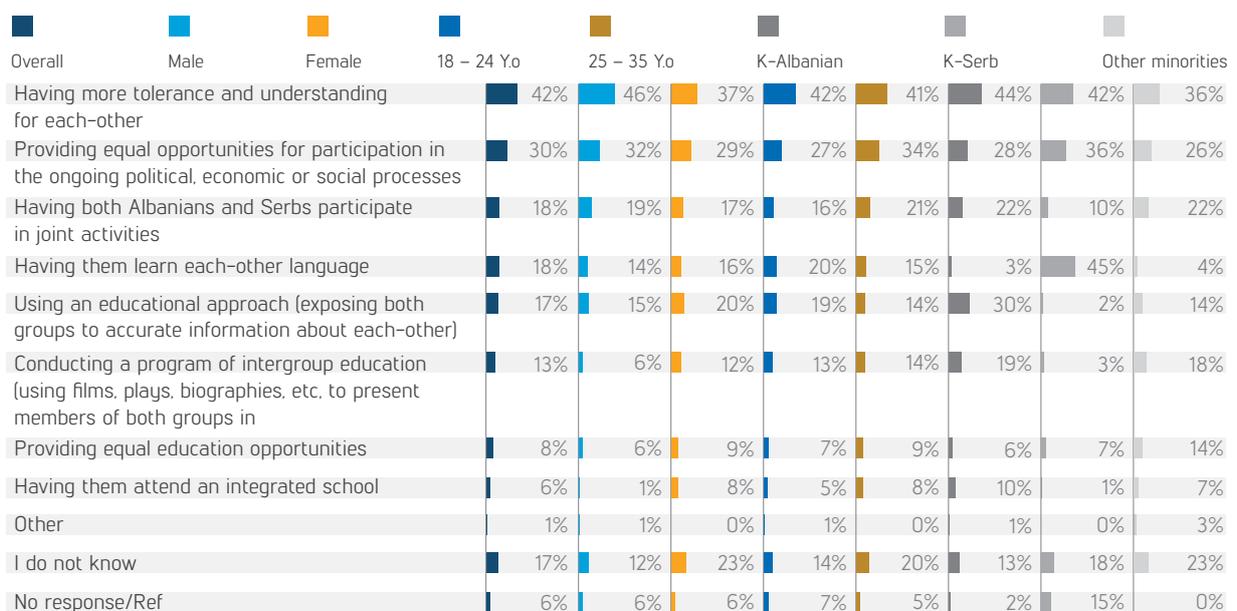
Focus group discussions also offered valuable insights on this matter. Several participants mentioned to have had prejudices but attending summer schools and joint youth programmes helped them to see each other as equals.

“

I have friends who are Serbs and we have a friendly relation and this was made possible due to the fact that we were part of summer schools and workshops; everyone should have this privilege to experience this interaction with all the other communities so they can become friends. (Young Kosovo Albanian man (18) from Prishtina/Priština)

”

Figure 58.
How the relations between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs could be improved, by gender, age and ethnicity

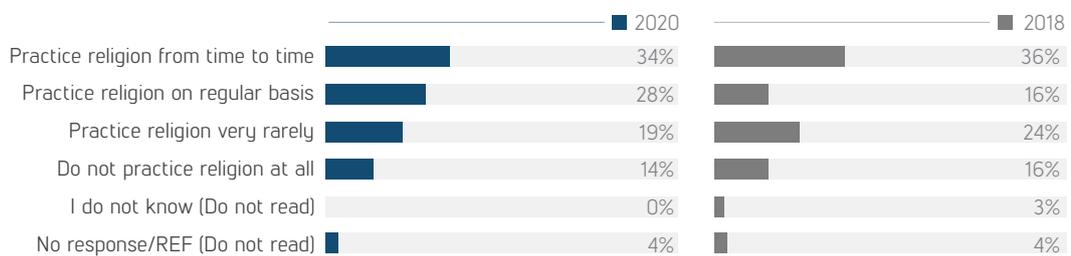


Religion

The next topic pertained to religion and assessed the religious practise of young people in Kosovo. Same as the 2018 findings, around **one in three young people stated that they practised religion from time to time** (34%). More young people declared to practise it on regular basis (28%) compared to 2018 (16%). On the other hand, 19% stated to practise it rarely (24% in 2018) and 14% do not practise it at all (16% in 2018).

The majority of Kosovo Serb focus group respondents declared to be religious and stated that it played a considerable role in their lives. Whereas Kosovo Albanian focus group participants had varying opinions towards religion, most stated that they did not practise religion but stressed the importance of respecting the religious beliefs of others.

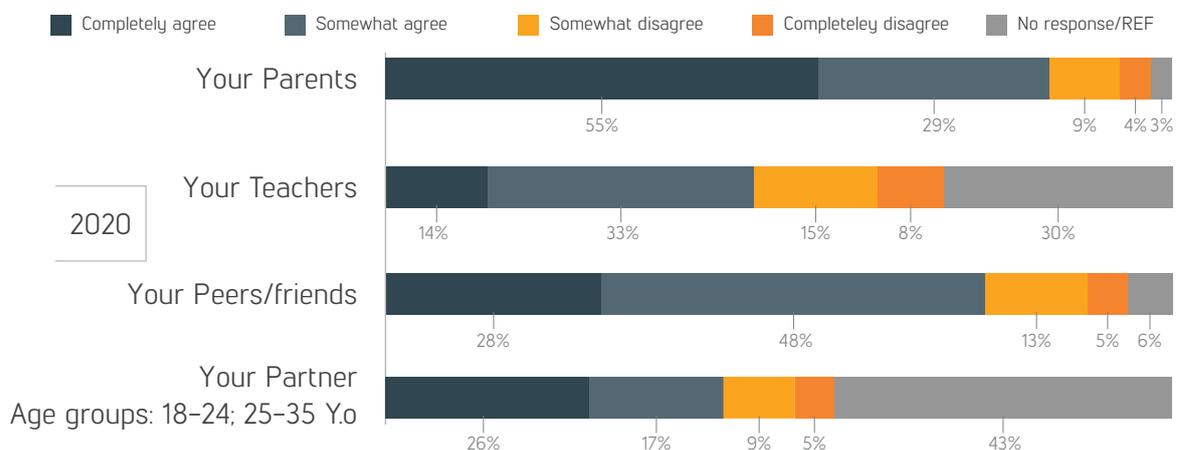
Figure 59.
Practising religion

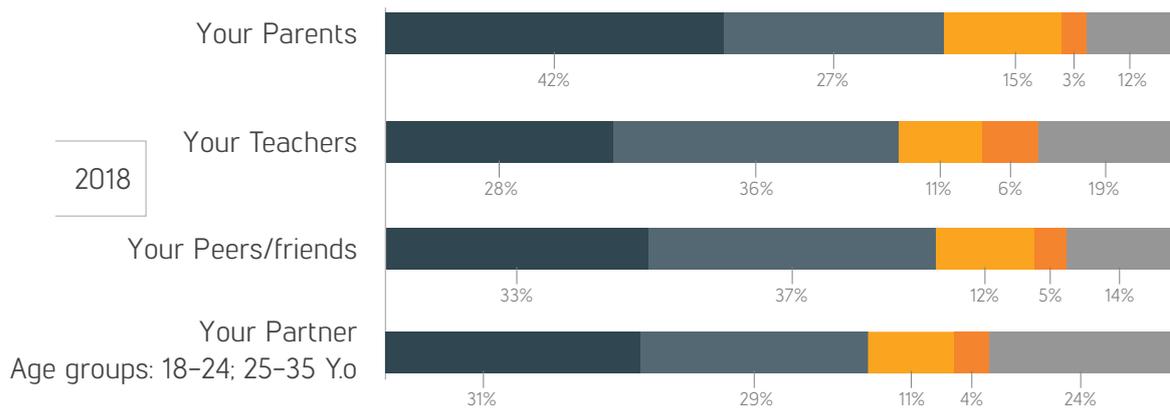


More than half of the young respondents declared to completely agree with their parents' religious views (55%), while 29% somewhat agreed with their parents' views. An increased percentage of young people completely agreed with the religious views of their parents compared to 2018 findings (13pp).

Agreement with the religious views of teachers, friends and partner have overall decreased. Still, a considerable number of young people completely (14%) or somewhat agreed (33%) with their teachers' religious views, while 28% and 48% completely or somewhat agreed with their friends' views respectively. Those above the age of 18 years old were also asked whether they agreed with their partner's religious views and 43% did not provide an answer, while another 43% agreed with their partner's views to some extent.

Figure 60.
Agreeing with the religious views of other people

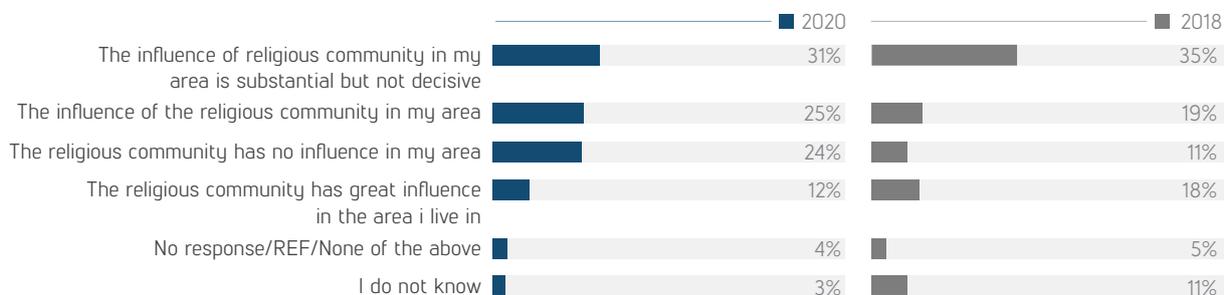




Young people who took part in this survey were also asked about **the influence of religious communities in their area**. Nearly one third stated that the influence of the religious community in their area was substantial, but not decisive (31%), while 25% declared that the influence of the religious community in their area was small. Around one in four (24%) said that the religious community had no influence at all.

On the other hand, 12% declared that the religious community had great influence in the area they lived in, which compared to the 2018 youth pulse, portrays a decrease of -6pp. In 2018, only 11% declared that the religious community had no influence in their area at all.

Figure 61.
Influence of the religious community in young people's area

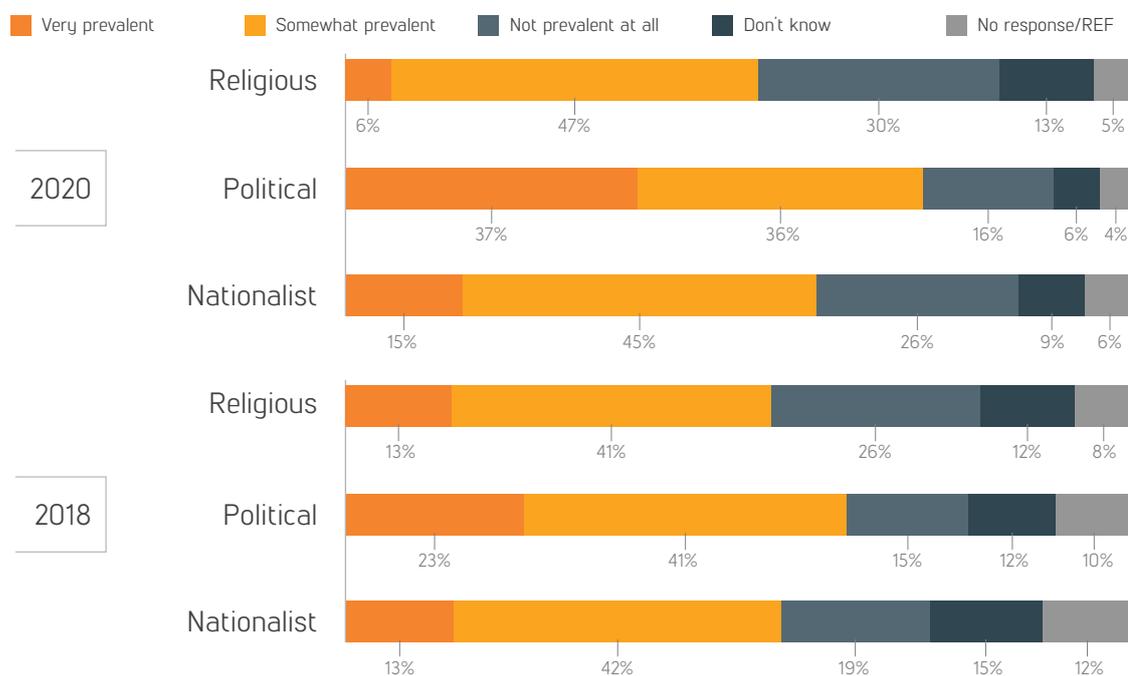


As with the survey results of the 2018 Youth Study, **religious extremism** was experienced as very or somewhat prevalent by over half of the respondents in 2020 (53%). However, fewer felt that religious extremism has been very prevalent (6%), compared to two years ago (13%).

Over one third of young people felt that political extremism was very prevalent (37%, increase of 14pp) and nearly as many described it as somewhat prevalent (36%). While 54% of all young people experienced nationalist extremism as very or somewhat prevalent in 2018, in 2020 this ratio increased up to 60%.

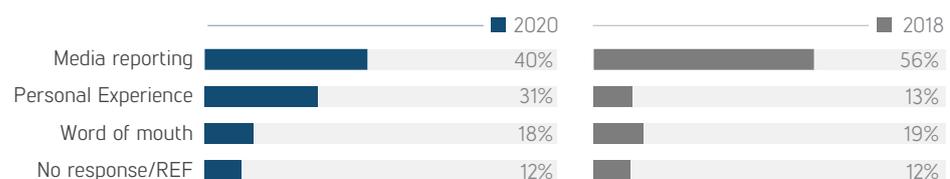
Kosovo Serb focus group participants either felt that religious extremism was not prevalent in Kosovo or stated that it only exists within the Islamic community. Kosovo Albanian participants felt that religious extremism in Kosovo exists to some extent.

Figure 62.
Youth perception on prevalence of different types of extremism in Kosovo



Media reporting was most commonly referred to when asked about what young people based their assessment regarding extremism in Kosovo (40%). However, compared to the 2018 Youth Study, this portrays a decrease of -16pp. Data results from the 2020 revealed that significantly more young people based their assessment on personal experiences (31%) than in 2018 (13%). Around 18% declared that their assessment was based on the word of mouth (18%).

Figure 63.
Basis of the assessment regarding the perceived level of religious extremism in Kosovo



Safety

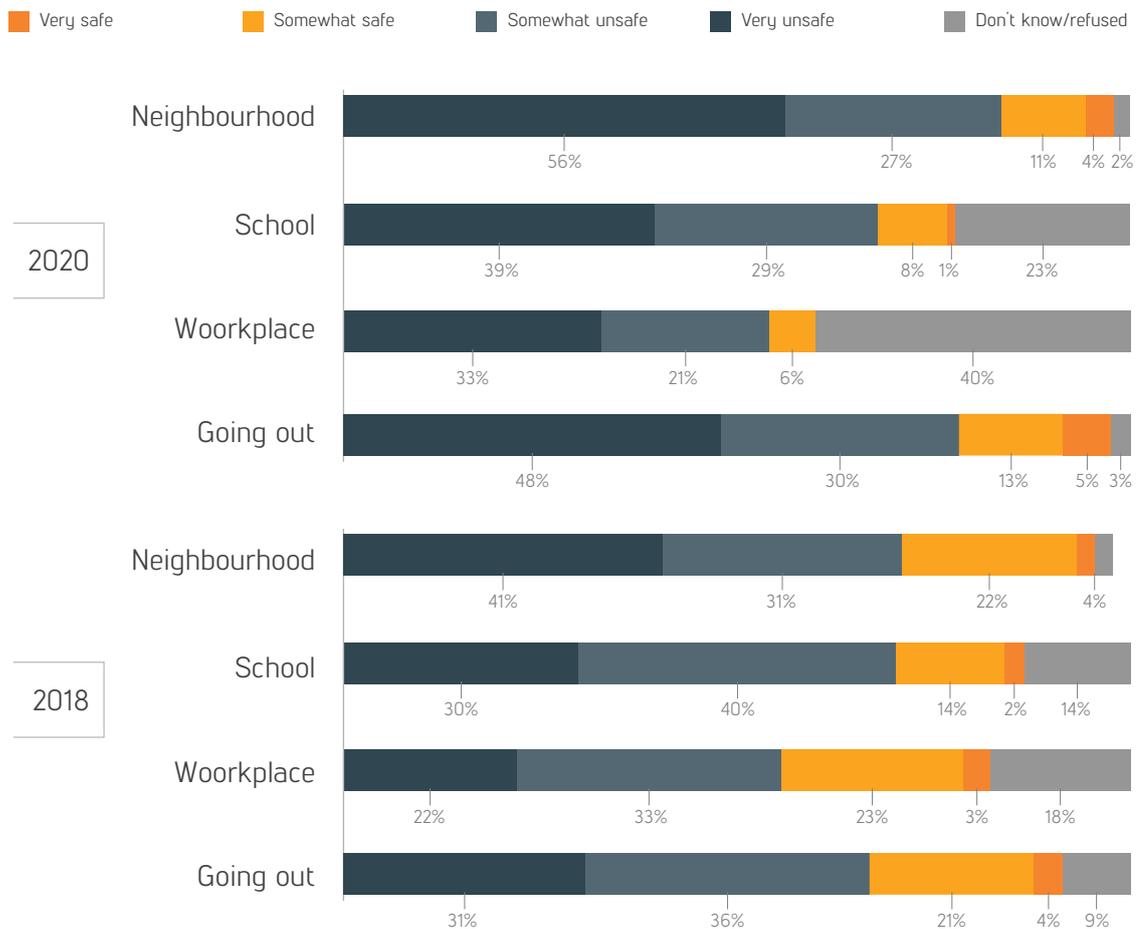
The survey also assessed whether young people in Kosovo felt safe in their neighbourhoods, schools, workplaces and when going out. Comparative data between 2018 and 2020 Youth Study showed that, overall, **young people feel more positive about safety**: 86% reported to feel very safe or somewhat safe in their neighbourhood (increase of 14pp), 78% declared to feel very or somewhat safe when going out (11pp), 68% felt very safe or somewhat safe at school (-2pp), and 54% felt very safe at their workplace (-1pp). Moreover, while in 2018 more young people reported to feel somewhat safe in these locations more reported to feel very safe in 2020.

Focus group discussions revealed that while many declared to feel safe in their immediate environments, some of the Kosovo Serb participants declared not to feel safe. Prevalence of crimes such as theft, violence and sexual harassments have contributed to the lack of safety according to the Kosovo Serb respondents.

Moreover, long response and processing times of police when working on such cases, paired with insufficient sentences, were mentioned as additional reasons for not feeling safe by several participants. Kosovo Albanian focus group participants who belonged to the LGBTQI community reported to feel less safe due to being part of a marginalised group.

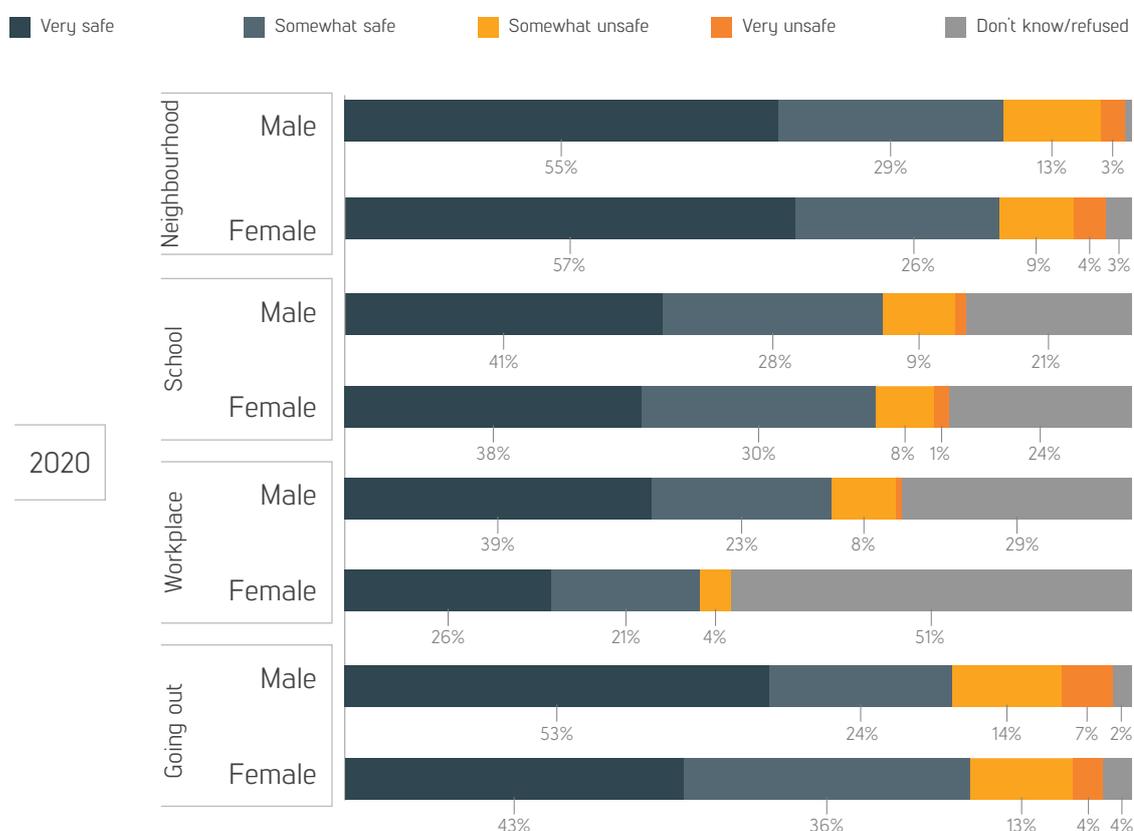
“As far as theft, sexual harassment, verbal harassment to degrade a person due to his/her gender or age are concerned – they happen quite often. [...] I believe that this kind of harassment is quite prevalent and the reporting is not taken seriously.
(Young Kosovo Albanian woman (22) from Decan)”

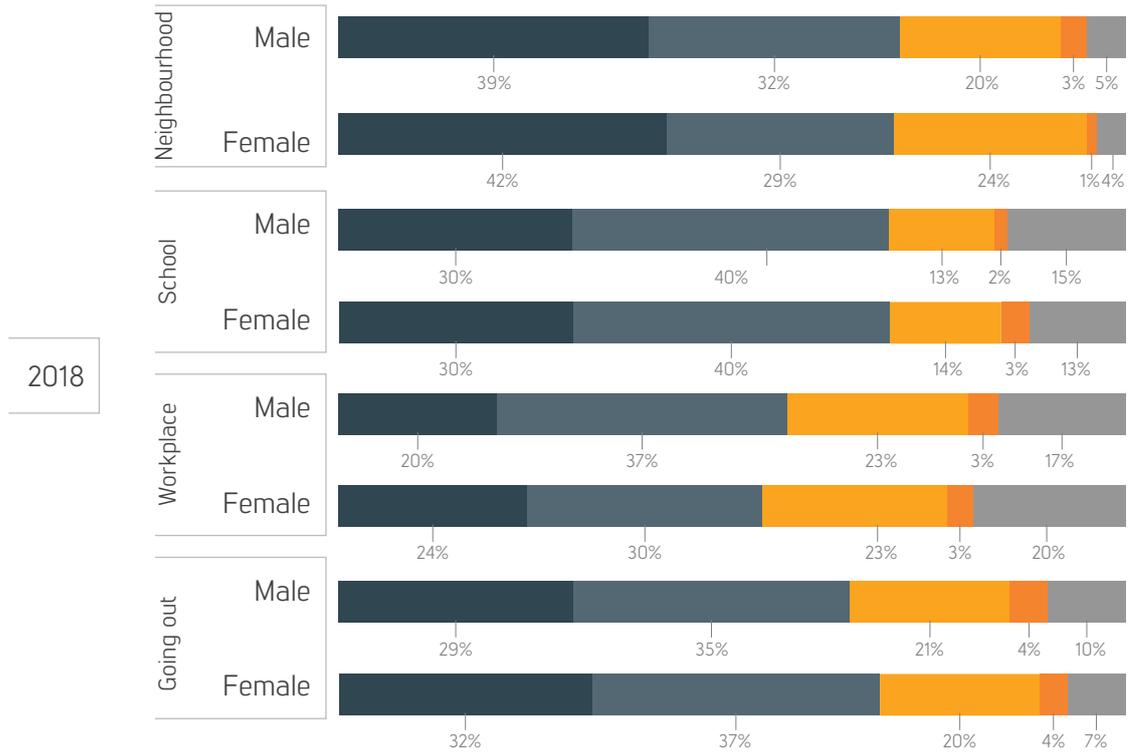
Figure 64.
Feeling of safety of young people in Kosovo



Survey findings also revealed **that respondents of both genders felt safer in 2020 compared to 2018**. Nonetheless, men felt safer than women in different areas among the respondents. Overall, more women (57%, increase of 15pp) and men (55%, increase of 16pp) declared to feel very safe in their neighbourhood compared to two years ago. The ratio that felt very safe at school or when going outside has increased for men by 11p and 24pp and by 8pp and 11pp for women. It stood out that while significantly more men reported to feel very safe at their workplace in 2020 (increase of 19pp), the result for women almost remained the same (increase of 2pp). However, it should be noted that the majority of women did not provide an answer regarding workplace safety mostly due to a higher rate of unemployment.

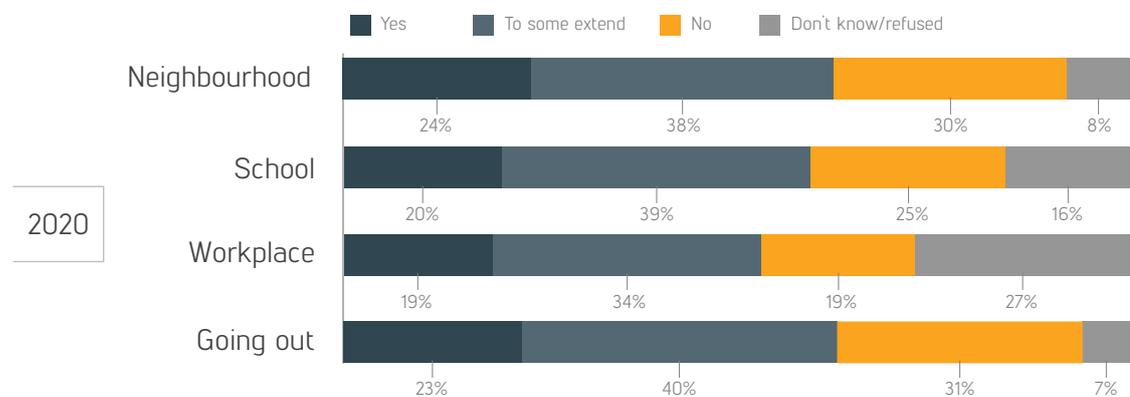
Figure 65.
Feeling of safety of young people in Kosovo, by gender

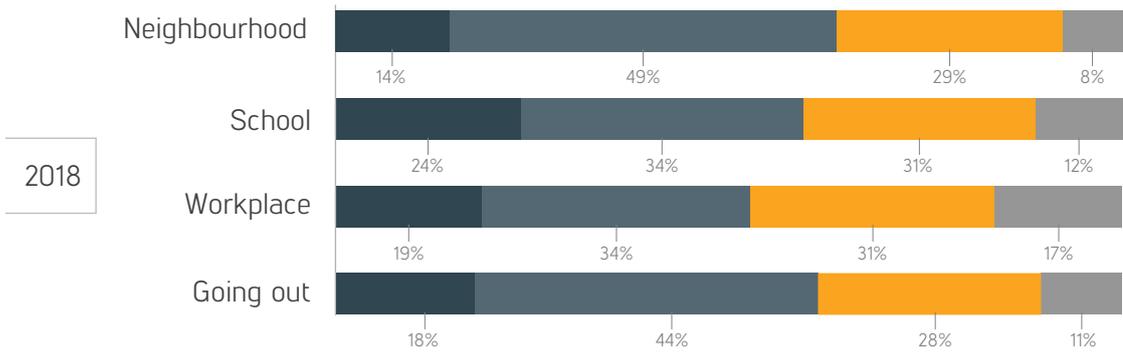




Most young people felt that Kosovo central level institutions were either doing enough (24%, an increase of 10pp compared to 2018) or were doing enough to some extent (38%) in order to increase the feeling of safety in their neighbourhood in 2020. Around 63% reported the same in regard to streets, 59% in relation to their school, and 53% regarding their workplace (enough and enough to some extent combined). Nonetheless, it should be noted that around one in three felt that central level institutions are not doing enough in order to increase the feeling of safety on the streets (31%) or in their neighbourhood (30%), in their schools (25%) and workplace (19%).

Figure 66. Perception on whether the Kosovo central level institutions are doing enough for young people to feel safe in different places

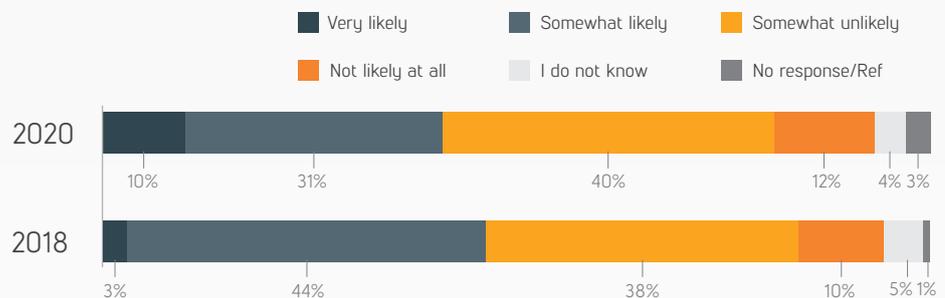




4.6 FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

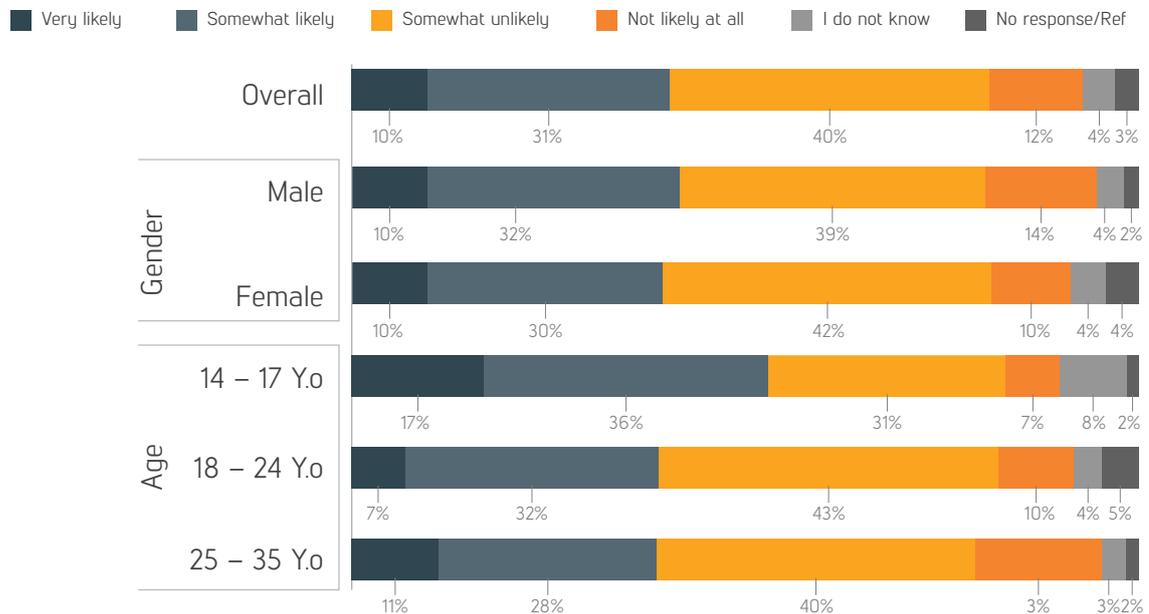
Overall, the future expectations of young people in Kosovo appeared to be fairly low. As with the 2018 study, around **two in five respondents felt that it was somewhat unlikely that youth in Kosovo would have a better life in around five-years' time** (40%). Around 12% perceived this matter as not likely at all. While fewer felt that a better life would be somewhat likely (31% vs 44% in 2018), slightly more declared that life would very likely be better in five-years (10%, increase of 6pp).

Figure 67.
Perceived likelihood that youth in Kosovo will have a better life in five years



The youngest age group that took part in this survey (14 to 17 years old) expressed themselves more hopefully; over half of them felt that youth was likely (36%) or very likely (17%) to have a better life in five-years' time.

Figure 68.
Perceived likelihood that youth in Kosovo will have a better life in five years, by gender, age



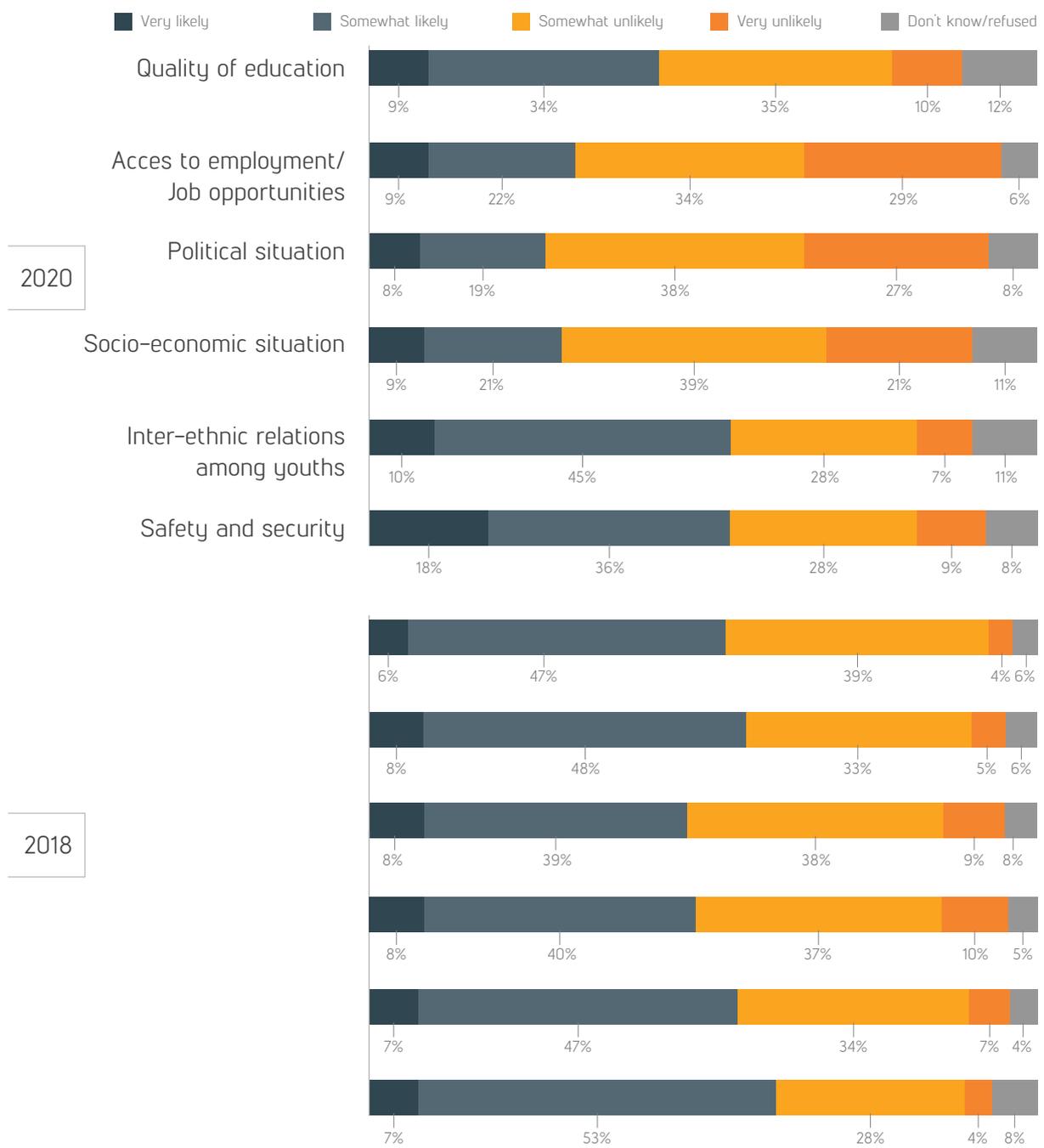
In 2020, **young people in Kosovo appeared especially pessimistic when it comes to the improvement in access to employment and the political situation.**

Around one in three felt that the improvement in accessing employment was somewhat unlikely (34%) or very unlikely (29%). The ratio of respondents who felt that this improvement was very unlikely in 2018 stood at only 5%.

While 9% felt that the improvement of the political situation was very unlikely in 2018, in 2020 this percentage rose by 18pp (27%). Furthermore, 39% and 21% felt that it was somewhat or very unlikely that the socio-economic situation would improve respectively. In 2018 only 9% felt that socio-economic improvement was very unlikely.

The majority felt that **inter-ethnic relations among youth were somewhat likely (45%) or very likely (10%) to improve.** Data suggests that opinions seemed to differ regarding the likelihood of improvements of the quality of education; 34% felt that this improvement was somewhat likely and 35% felt it was somewhat unlikely. Slightly more young people felt that safety and security was very likely to improve (18%) when compared to the results of 2018 (7%).

Figure 69.
Perceived likelihood regarding the improvement of various issues in Kosovo



The majority of all focus group participants, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, or age, agreed that five years was little time for any substantial change or positive development in Kosovo. While some expressed themselves negatively, a considerable number of young people felt hope for the future of youth in Kosovo.

In the next five years I want to think that it will get better, as this is my homeland and I want to see it prosper. Hope dies last, five years are not enough for the state to get developed, but I hope that step by step Kosovo will be a good place to live in.
(Young Kosovo Albanian man (21) from Gjilan/Gnjilane)

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The findings from the 2020 Youth Study showed that youth in Kosovo remained challenged by various factors in different areas of their lives. Many of the young people who took part in this research had a **pessimistic outlook into the future**, they felt that was going in the wrong direction and reported a lack of personal perspective. When comparing the findings to 2018, while several of the key problems and issues remained the same, some improvements were also noted.

The lack of job opportunities, poor economic situation as well as nepotism and corruption were the main challenges that were already present in 2018 and appeared to have worsened in 2020. The majority of young people were unemployed (58%) and considered, or were likely to consider, migrating in the next three years (53%). However, compared to 2018 this portrays a decrease of 5pp in young people who considered leaving Kosovo (58%) and the lack of job opportunities remained the number one reason for aspiring to emigrate (67%). This will continue to be the major concern given that more than one in three unemployed young people were not confident at all in being able to secure employment within the next six months.

Another important finding of this study is in the relation to concerns about **stress and other mental health issues** which were prevalent among youth in 2020, and clearly affected by the consequences of the pandemic. Moreover, an increased share of young people had to support family income which led to their terminations of education efforts, and the lack of finances was perceived as a significant barrier to furthering education or was experienced as a challenge while engaging with education. In relation to this, it should be noted that few received financial support from public institutions.

Considerable shares of youth from different communities still perceived inter-ethnic relations as tense and the main root causes mentioned pertained to **the impact of conflict memories and the influence of older generations**. Furthermore, in 2018 significantly more respondents felt that the relations were tense and would continue to be tense (27%) compared to 2020 (15%). However, while many perceived the relations as tense, a considerable number of respondents also stated that there have been improvements in the recent years. **Increasing tolerance and understanding for each other was the top suggestion for improving relations** according to the respondents in 2020. Qualitative findings on the other hand highlighted the importance of shared activities such as joint summer schools, workshops and sports events and several participants reported to have decreased their prejudices when taking part in such initiatives.

When asked about **future perspectives**, most young people in Kosovo felt that positive change was unlikely to happen within the coming five years. However, while most focus group participants agreed that five years is not enough time for significant improvements, a considerable number of young people felt hope for the future of youth in Kosovo in the years to come.

Lastly, **the immediate and long-term impact of the COVID-19 crisis** needs to be carefully considered when reflecting on the main youth issues and concerns revealed by this study. For instance, without policy intervention and immediate action, the pandemic and economic recession could further erode trust among communities, reinforce the existing divisions and ignite new ones at the intra-group level. The new economic challenges, the limited freedom of movement, and the intense social media exposure

to polarising propaganda and hate speech, have been added to the toll of known social cohesion inhibitors in Kosovo (conflict legacy, antagonist conflict narratives provided in two parallel education systems, extremely limited cross-community interactions). Taking everything into consideration, the uneven impact of the pandemic (especially regarding gender inequality and vulnerable communities), should inform the comprehensive policy response to this crisis. Otherwise, given the high number of young people and their role for the future of Kosovo, it will be very difficult to recover economically, socially and politically, while also struggling **to leave no one behind**.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations were offered in the 2018 Youth Study report which aimed at addressing main challenges and consolidating the position of young people in Kosovo. Despite some encouraging changes in youth perception, the majority of recommendations are still relevant within the context of the 2020 findings. Challenges are manifold, including working towards an inclusive society where youth can cooperate to better understand each other and to improve their quality of life. Nevertheless, many young women and men in Kosovo are prepared to take this brave leap to work together towards a better, brighter future. Therefore, **this study encourages key stakeholders to prioritise youth concerns and interests and makes the following suggestions with the aim of complementing the existing measures:**

Kosovo institutions and local authorities are encouraged to:

- Promote economic development, reduce poverty and develop strategies to fight nepotism and corruption.
- Implement the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) 'Action Plan for Youth Employment 2018–2022' to counter youth unemployment. The European Commission in its 2019 and 2020 country reports highlighted the lack of implementation of substantial steps towards making progress in this regard.
- Increase financial support for students who are in education in order to counter high drop-out rates due to the lack of financial means.
- Address informal employment and create adequate working conditions and promote fair recruitment in both public and private sectors.
- Strengthen the private sector, which employed most youth in 2020, through improvements in applicable legislation. This could be done for instance through tax deductions for employers hiring Kosovo Youth or through the employer incentives to hire or train young people, as well as offering wage subsidy schemes which support employers hiring young unemployed people. Other matters such as credit availability can also be improved.
- Ensure effective implementation of the draft Law on Economic Recovery (Kosovo Assembly, 2020 and Pristina Insight 2020) to counter the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on businesses in Kosovo and subsequently help youth to keep and secure employment in the context of an ongoing pandemic.
- Develop new interventions and programmes together with other relevant stakeholders such as NGOs, political parties and schools, which aim at reducing stress and addressing

mental health issues, as well as problems related to work and school environment. Stakeholders should also involve youth in decision-making processes regarding the design, planning and implementation of the programmes themselves. As observed in previous initiatives, youth participation across the board can enhance their lasting empowerment as active citizens.

- Work on further strategies together with other relevant stakeholders to support legal and especially circular migration of youth in Kosovo.
- To further collaborate with municipalities, schools, NGOs and the Ministry of Education to improve education curricula, professional education, career guidance and skill development activities and programmes. While survey findings showed that more young people were satisfied with the quality of education received in 2020, issues such as outdated teaching methods still remained to be a problem.
- In relation to the point above, the Ministry of Education should consider the benefits of reforming some key aspects of the educational content and delivery, including developing a strategy for how to better equip youth with 21st century skills (digital literacy, collaboration, problem-solving, and critical thinking).
- In line with the recommendations of the European Commission (2020b), increase the provision of quality vocational education and training for professions in demand. This measure should also be used in response to the impact of the Covid-19 crisis so as to make young people more adaptable to the changing labour market by developing relevant skills.
- Prioritise measures to improve access to internet and IT equipment for unprivileged communities and develop programmes targeting digital literacy for youth and educators alike.
- Work together with municipalities, schools and other relevant stakeholders in order to develop more opportunities for joint activities between youth of different ethnic backgrounds to counter tense relations and prejudices. Joint summer schools, workshops and sports activities were reported as helpful for overcoming prejudices towards young people of other communities.

Kosovo youth are encouraged to:

- Get involved in programmes and campaigns against poverty, nepotism and corruption, and raise awareness of the impact these factors have upon young people's lives.
- Take part in meetings, workshops and debates in order to contribute to curricula development and subsequent improvement of the quality of education.
- Participate in activities such as workshops, sport events and summer schools together with youth from other ethnicities to foster cooperation and friendship, and counter prejudices towards one another.
- Develop youth educational and professional networks across Kosovo to share ideas and work together towards overcoming common issues.
- Develop a network of young insider mediators to facilitate dialogue and consensus building.

International actors present in Kosovo are encouraged to:

- Closely monitor and report on the implementation of the Action Plan for Youth Employment (MLSW) and other strategies and plans to counter youth unemployment.
- Offer support to Kosovo institutions through advice and expertise on tackling issues and challenges related to youth.
- Offer, together with other relevant stakeholders, joint youth activities to foster inter-ethnic cooperation and reduction of tensions.
- Work together to strengthen institutional and policy capacities to mainstream social cohesion in the Kosovo action plans oriented to the empowerment of youth and women. To that end, implement activities that provide skills to officials and build mechanisms that institutions could rely upon when building policies for youth rights and gender mainstreaming.
- Address issues prevalent in Kosovo, such as nepotism and corruption, through awareness campaigns and encourage youth to take action and speak out when witnessing such conduct.

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ANNEX

Table 4. Parameters for Focus Group No. 1, Albanian
Date: 20.11.2020 Time: 17:30–19:45

Gender	Level of education	Age	Village/City	Municipality	Region	Employment	Ethnicity
M	High School (Bachelor student)	19	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Employed	Albanian
F	High School (Bachelor student)	19	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Unemployed	Albanian
M	High School (Bachelor student)	19	Vushtrri	Vushtrri	Mitrovica/ Mitrovica	Unemployed	Albanian
F	Primary School (High School student)	17	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Unemployed	Albanian
M	High School (Bachelor student)	18	Prishtina	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Unemployed	Albanian
F	Primary School (High School student)	17	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Unemployed	Albanian
M	High School (Bachelor student)	18	Ferizaj/ Uroševac	Ferizaj/ Uroševac	Ferizaj/ Uroševac	Unemployed	Albanian

Table 5. Parameters for Focus Group No. 2, Albanian
Date: 21.11.2020 Time: 11:00–13:15

Gender	Level of education	Age	Village/City	Municipality	Region	Employment	Ethnicity
F	Bachelor (Master student)	29	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Unemployed	Albanian
F	Master	30	Kacanik	Kacanik	Ferizaj/ Uroševac	Unemployed	Albanian
F	Master	30	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Unemployed	Albanian
M	Master	30	Prizren	Prizren	Prizren	Unemployed	Albanian
M	Bachelor	26	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Employed	Albanian
M	High School (student at the Bachelor Level in two majors)	27	Shtime	Shtime	Ferizaj/ Uroševac	Employed	Ashkali

Table 6. Parameters for Focus Group no. 3, Albanian.

Date: 07.12.2020 Time: 11:00–13:00

Gender	Level of education	Age	Village/City	Municipality	Region	Employment	Ethnicity
F	Bachelor	21	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Unemployed	Albanian
M	Bachelor	21	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Unemployed	Albanian
M	High School (Bachelor Student)	22	Henc	Fushë Kosovë	Prishtina/ Priština	Unemployed	Albanian
F	Bachelor	22	Istog	Istog	Pejë/ Peç	Employed	Albanian
M	High School	22	Gurrakoc	Istog	Pejë /Peç	Employed	Albanian
F	Bachelor	22	Deçan	Gjakova/ Đakovica	Gjakova/ Đakovica	Employed	Albanian
F	Bachelor	25	Gjakova/ Đakovica	Gjakova/ Đakovica	Gjakova/ Đakovica	Employed	Egyptian

Table 7. Parameters for Focus Group no. 4, Albanian

Date:11.12.2020 Time: 15:00–17:20

Gender	Level of education	Age	Village/City	Municipality	Region	Employment	Ethnicity
M	Bachelor	32	Podujeva	Podujeva	Prishtina/ Priština	Employed	Albanian
F	Master	33	Podujeva	Podujeva	Prishtina/ Priština	Employed	Albanian
M	Master	34	Gjakova/ Đakovica	Gjakova/ Đakovica	Gjakova/ Đakovica	Employed	Albanian
F	Bachelor	35	Drenas	Drenas	Prishtina/ Priština	Unemployed	Albanian
F	Bachelor	31	Ponoshec	Gjakova/	Gjakova/	Employed	Albanian

Table 8. Parameters for Focus Group no. 5, Serbian

Date:23.11.2020, Time:18:00

Gender	Level of education	Age	Village/City	Municipality	Region	Employment	Ethnicity
F	Bachelor	25	Orahovac	Orahovac	Gjakova/ Đakovica	Employed	Serbian
F	Bachelor	25	Banjska	Zvecan	Mitrovica/ Mitrovica	Employed	Serbian
F	Bachelor	26	Gracanica	Gracanica	Prishtina/ Priština	Employed	Serbian
F	Bachelor	30	Ugljare	Prishtina/ Priština	Prishtina/ Priština	Employed	Serbian
M	Master	30	Sevce	Strpce	Ferizaj/ Uroševac	Employed	Serbian
M	Bachelor	30	Mitrovica Veri	Mitrovica Veri	Mitrovica/ Mitrovica	Employed	Serbian

Tabela 9. Parametrat për Grupin e Fokusit Nr. 6, serbë
 Data: 23.11. 2020, Ora: 20:00

Gender	Level of education	Age	Village/City	Municipality	Region	Employment	Ethnicity
M	Bachelor	23	Partes	Partes-Pasjane	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Employed	Serbian
M	High School	25	Zvecan	Zvecan	Mitrovica/ Mitrovica	Employed	Serbian
F	Bachelor	25	Lesak	Leposavic	Mitrovica/ Mitrovica	Unemployed	Serbian
F	Bachelor	23	Banjska	Zvecan	Mitrovica/ Mitrovica	Unemployed	Serbian
F	Bachelor student	22	Strpce	Strpce	Ferizaj/ Uroševac	Unemployed	Serbian
F	Secondary School completed	21	North Mitrovica	North Mitrovica	Mitrovica/ Mitrovica	Unemployed	Serbian

Table 10. Parameters for Focus Group no. 7, Serbian
 Date:25.11.2020 Time: 20:00

Gender	Level of education	Age	Village/City	Municipality	Region	Employment	Ethnicity
F	Secondary School	18	Ranilug	Ranilug	Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Unemployed	Serbian
F	Bachelor student	18	Mitrovica Veri	Mitrovica Veri	Mitrovica/ Mitrovica	Unemployed	Serbian
F	Bachelor student	19	Gracanica	Gracanica	Pristina/ Priština	Unemployed	Serbian
M	Bachelor student	19	Strpce	Strpce	Ferizaj/ Uroševac	Employed	Serbian
F	Gymnasium student	16	Zvecan	Zvecan	Mitrovica/ Mitrovica	Unemployed	Serbian
M	Bachelor student	19	North Mitrovica	North Mitrovica	Mitrovica/ Mitrovica	Employed	Serbian

Youth Challenges and Perspectives in Kosovo

**The study has
been commissioned
by UNDP Kosovo.**

Prishtina
January 2021

The views expressed in this document are those of the opinion poll respondents and do not necessarily represent the UNDP views



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