

POLICY PAPER

YOUNG PEOPLE IN KOSOVO

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Disclaimer: As always in Kosovo's current data situation, this report must be read with some caution because the quality of the data used is generally poor. Many factors contribute to this situation. There has not been any accurate general census since 1981. Most surveys available were conducted independently and did not follow the same methodological standards; therefore it is hazardous to compare figures.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Youth Situation in Kosovo

In today's environment, the younger generations are shaping the society. This is the case with Kosovo as much as it is in the rest of the world. Young people are important components in development and, in many cases, catalyst of social, economic and political change.

In Western Balkans, these are societies struggling to move away from the legacy of the war, instability and insecurity. The youth of Kosovo as other countries in SEE face challenges common for all citizens in a region where peace and stability still work on fragile premises; lack of democracy, environmental degradation and high unemployment. In addition, there are other youth specific problems like an inadequate educational sector, drug abuse and lack of opportunities and access to influence and form an independent and autonomous life and future.

Kosovo is a society in which over half the population is under the age of 24, and with the highest birthrate in Europe, it is clear that Kosovo's young people are a strong and valuable asset that, like young people everywhere, want to be put to work want to be productive, and want to be "invested in" through education and training.

Youth in Kosovo is marginalized, as they are affected by economic as well as social and political conditions. One of large obstacle for the young people is trouble getting listened to by the "adult" politicians in becoming an active force in shaping their future society.

This lack of opportunities for youth participation is de facto lack of democracy, and a major hindrance for openness, respect, and the will to cooperation as a viable alternative to prejudices and the remains of old conflicts. Youth involvement is a necessary element in creating stable, peaceful and democratic societies.

The Young people in Kosovo are affected also, from current legal status issue, in their free movement in regional and European level; there is lack of contact and interaction with their peers from Europe, sometimes enforced by strict visa regimes.

As it mention in this report, YVG Kosovo considers the problem of quality of education and employment as biggest problems that the young population of Kosovo is facing today. The proper education system and vocational education and training for the youth are vehicles to attain an efficient integration in a today's complex world.

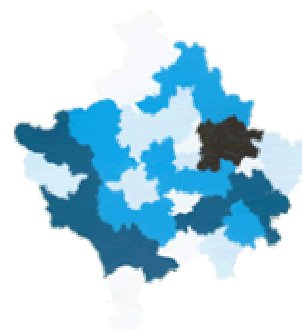
We consider the organizing this meeting with government and donor community as first initiative that YVG Kosovo is taking for raise issues of youth interest. Youth should take the responsibility to become active citizens when they take action and not only passively wait to be invited by their governments. YVG through its Analysis and Research Program will produce the valuable policy papers that will ensure attention of government institutions, donor community and youth organizations by using methods such as advocacy, and dialogue with main stakeholders of society.

II. SUMMARY OF THE ACTUAL DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION

2.1 Some key indicators on population

The population in Kosovo is one of the youngest in Europe: one-third is under 15, and about half is under 24. Only about 6 percent of the population is older than 65. If we consider our starting point to be, that youth include young people between the ages of 15 and 29 then data taken from the 2004¹ indicates that youth form 60% of the total population of Kosovo. High population growth after World War I came to a halt in the 1990s². Ethnic and political tensions in the region resulted in reduced fertility, increased mortality, and induced many individuals to emigrate. While in Kosovo still, the natural rate of increase is believed to be one of the highest in Europe, and the lower population growth in the 1990s may therefore be a temporary phenomenon. Population growth in the sub-region is highest in Kosovo, which has and will continue to have the highest total fertility rate for the next 15 to 20 years³.

Population	
Total Population	1 900 000 est.
Population density	175 p/sq. km
Ethnic groups	
Kosovo Albanians	88%
Kosovo Serbs	7%
Other ethnic groups	5%
Age distribution, total	
0-14 years	33%
15-64 years	61%
65 and older	6%



Source 1: Statistical Population Division of SOK

¹ Statistical Population Division of SOK and UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA) – Pristina, Kosovo, Population estimate: Profile: Kosovo

² Document of the World Bank, KOSOVO Economic Memorandum Report No: 28023-KOS

³ The World Bank, Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development, Social Development Team, Europe and Central Asia Region: *Young People in South eastern Europe: From risk to empowerment*

III. EDUCATION

Investing in education is important to the future of Kosovo. This is especially true given the young age of its population. Although there already is strong potential that can be tapped for Kosovo's growth, at the same time such capacity should not be over-estimated or taken for granted. The investment in education generates high rates of return to individuals in the form of higher earning and society returns from which be faster and sustainable economic growth and development. The human capital embodied in Kosovan population as been consider by many scholars and policy makers as nation's most important economic asset. The Human capital is even more important for transition countries as these countries are reforming their economies toward market economies.

3.1 Formal Education System

Youth spend a majority of their time in a formal educational system where they acquire knowledge and many important social skills. The Kosovo educational system focuses on providing great amounts of information and little attention is directed to the development of critical thinking. Teachers and professors often base their approaches on sanctioning rather than on motivating students. Methodology applied in secondary and higher education is generally out-dated while technical conditions are often inadequate. All of these problems are reflected on the quality of education in Kosovo, which is not up to European standards.

In 1991-92 the majority of ethnic Albanians left the formal education system in protest over Belgrade-introduced policies, and entered what has become known as the parallel education system. The 1999 conflict brought further dislocation, extended closures and widespread damage to school facilities. Since then, under the UNMIK and PISG administrations and with support from donor community, schools and university facilities have been repaired and children and students encouraged back into the formal system. However, the young people (aged 15 to 19) are most affected by these disruptions by facing the difficulties finding a job in the labor market today.

The education structure in Kosovo now consist of: (i) Preschool education; (ii) Primary education; (iii) Secondary education; (iv) Higher education (undergraduate and postgraduate)

3.2 Primary Education

According to official 2001 data, school attendance is nearly universal, with 97% of children of compulsory school age enrolled¹. Things are not as simple as they sound, however

Primary schooling in Kosovo is treated as a universal right for each child. The law provides for compulsory basic education from age 6 to 15 and nonattendance entails consequences to the parents. In the 2000/01 school year, compulsory education was extended from grade 8 to grade 9. This brings the Kosovo school system in compliance with those of most EU countries, which consist of 5 years of primary school, 4 years of lower cycle, and 3 years of higher cycle of secondary schooling.

In primary schools in Kosovo, there are classes in 5 languages: Albanian, Serbian, Bosniak, Turkish, and Croatian. The total number of students included in the education system in 2000/01 was 308,940, which is an increase of about 20,000 over the 1999/2000 school year. Out of the total number of 962 primary schools, 87% are taught in Albanian, 9.5% in Serbian, and 3.5% in other minority languages. Serb minority children attend a parallel education system organized in enclaves, where classes are still taught according to the curricula from Serbia⁴.

Equal access to a modern education system is also a major factor in promoting equity and social welfare as well as raising the well-being of minority and disadvantaged groups.

3.3 Secondary Education

Secondary education in Kosovo consists of grammar-gymnasiums and vocational schools. Four-year secondary schools prepare pupils for work or continuing studies, whereas three-year secondary schools prepare pupils only for work.

According to available data in the 2002/2003 school year there were 140 secondary schools. In 72.5% of these the teaching is in Albanian, in 22% in Serbian, in 4.5% there is teaching in more than one language, and in one secondary school in Turkish (0.7%). The total number of pupils enrolled in secondary education is 86,830 (55.1%). According to the ethnic group, 90.8% of enrolled pupils are Albanian, 7.9% Serbs and 1.3% of other minorities. Participation rate varies according to the source of data used to calculate it. OECD (2001) claims for 37-38% participation rate for those 16-18 years old. The World Bank (2001), based on the LSMS survey, estimates the participation rate for those 15-18 years age as follows; for Albanian 65%, for Serbian 90% and for other ethnic groups 46.4%.

3.4. Higher Education (university and postgraduate)

⁴SOK/ UNICEF/DEST, 2001. Numbers based on the UNFPA/SOK/IOM, 2000 and MEST/UNICEF/SOK, 2002

The University of Prishtina is dominant higher education institution in Kosovo, consisting of 22 faculties and high schools. The total number of full-time and part-time students in the Prishtina University in the academic year 2002/2003 was 23,175⁵ (59% of them were male).

Table: The number of higher education institutions in selected transition countries (1999-2000 academic year, or the closest available)

Kosovo: 1 public institution, 2 small private institutions

Country	Number of institutions				
	Public %		Private %		Total
Albania	11	100.0			11
Belarus	42	73.7	15	26.3	57
Bulgaria	79	89.7	9	10.3	88
Croatia	93	97.9	2	2.1	95
Czech Republic	27	90.0	3	10.0	30
Estonia	14	40.0	21	60.0	35
Hungary	55	61.8	34	38.2	89
Latvia	20	60.6	13	39.4	33
Lithuania	15	68.2	7	31.8	22
The FYR of Macedonia	2	100.0			2
Moldova	13	32.2	15	67.8	28
Poland	104	36.3	182	63.7	286
Romania	57	40.7	83	59.3	140
Russian Federation	580	63.5	334	36.5	914
Slovak Republic	22	95.7	1	4.3	23
Slovenia	39	84.8	7	15.2	46
Ukraine	806	69.5	353	30.5	1159

Source 2: CEPES/UNESCO, Bucharest, Romania, 2002 (mimeo)

Table: The number of students per 100,000 inhabitants in selected transitions countries

Kosovo: 1,000

Country	Number of students per
---------	------------------------

⁵ <http://www.uni-pr.edu/statistikagrafik.html>

	100,000 inhabitants
Albania	580
Ukraine	971
The FYR of Macedonia	1350
Slovak Republic	1618
Czech Republic	1816
Romania	1957
Moldova	2292
Belarus	2341
Russian Federation	2435
Lithuania	2562
Croatia	2641
Hungary	2790
Bulgaria	3045
Poland	3673
Estonia	3677
Latvia	3892
Slovenia	4243

Source 3: CEPES/UNESCO, Bucharest, Romania, 2002 (mimeo)

Table: The ratio student/teaching staff in selected transition countries (1999- 2000) academic year, or the closes available)

Kosovo: 25:1

Country	Number of students per 100,000 inhabitants
Moldova	22.9
Slovenia	21.9
Croatia	21.2
Poland	17.7
Latvia	17.4
Czech Republic	19.1
Belarus	14.2
Estonia	13.9
Hungary	13.1
Russian Federation	12.7
FYR of Macedonia	11.2
Bulgaria	10.4
Lithuania	9.9
Slovak Republic	9.0
Romania	8.1
Albania	5.8
Ukraine	4.1

Source 4: CEPES/UNESCO, Bucharest, Romania, 2002 (mimeo)

3.5 Non-formal education

Non-formal education reposes on different principles and it is very often attractive for youth. Approaches and methodology in non-formal education motivates youth

towards critical thinking and self-initiative and nurtures proactive approaches to life. Due to restricted resources however, non-formal education cannot be a panacea for all existing problems in formal education.

Nearly a quarter of the Kosovo's population is participating in the education⁶.

Education in Kosovo is mainly public, while the participation of private education is still merely symbolic. Secondary and primary education is financed through grants of the Central Budget, which are transferred to the municipalities whereas higher education is financed directly by Kosovan Budget and by student's contributions in the form of tuition fees. The latter is fairly low compared to full market price of higher education. Private secondary education, such as the various private colleges licensed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, are financed by private sources.

3.6 Government Expenditure on Education

In 2003, 16% percent of government expenditure was allocated to education, which is high compared to the region. Education expenditure in the Kosovo Budget 2004 accounts for about 15% of the total budget expenditure. The preschool, primary and secondary education account for around 11.8%, special education 0.18% and higher education 2.1%). Education expenditure as a percentage of GDP was 5.2 (3.5% primary and secondary education and 1.2 higher education). In the developed countries, spending on primary and secondary education is largely covered by public sources (92.8%) with just 7.2% coming from private sources. In these countries higher education is financed by: public sources 78.6%, private sources 21.4% and 1.9%⁷ by subsidies.

Education expenditure / GDP (%)	
Developed countries (average)	4.8
United States of America	5.0
Europe	5.2
Countries with low income	3.2
Countries with high income	4.7
World	4.5

Source 5: World Resources Institute. Earth Trends (data for the year 1998)

Furthermore, there is no conclusive evidence that under funding education programs is associated with higher youth unemployment. Although further investigation would be needed to draw any conclusions it might be the case that the efficiency and

⁶ RIINEST, Research Institute, Education and Economic Development of Kosova, Research Report, 2004

⁷ OECD (www.oecd.org/edu/eag2003).

equity of spending is much more significant in youth employment than the overall level of spending.⁶⁶

3.7 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Kosovo Education System in order to face challenges for the 21st Century needs to meet the following objectives:-

- 1)** to improve the quality of education and increase the level of education qualifications of the population;
- 2)** to adjust the system to European models both in vital structural elements and internal organisation;
- 3)** to remove barriers that do not allow access to education and free movement within the system;
- 4)** to upgrade the system and increase its efficiency in relation to its “users”;
- 5)** to create a programme based on curriculum and to enable pupils to gain useful knowledge and to develop basic skills and literacy;
- 6)** to relate the system with the labour market, better education and capable workers and to create conditions for easier employment;
- 7)** to develop pluralism, democracy and active participation in civil society.

Specific Recommendation:

- Introduce evaluation of teachers and school curriculum by the students and ways of taking into consideration their suggestions and critique.
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Kosovo Education Centre)
- Introduce IT systems into all primary and secondary schools in Kosovo and introduce free on-line formal educational programmes and certificates with a free internet access
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology)
- Introduce IT education in the school curriculum from the 4th grade in primary schools (knowledge of basic computer programmes, use of e-mail and internet)
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology)
- Introduce models of simulation in the curriculum at every faculty (Graduate school of Economics and Business – firms, Law school – trial...)
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology)
- Organise presentations of NGO programmes in schools (one lesson per week) through presentational activities or non-formal education
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, non-governmental organisations)
- Create catalogue of non-formal programmes offered at local or national levels, and promote co-operation between schools and non-governmental organisations
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, NGOs)
- Create programmes stimulating greater mobility among faculties inside Kosovo and exchange with the students from abroad.
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology)
- Form a student council in all secondary schools representing the interests and needs of the young; provide the ways for implementation and monitoring of co-operation.
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology)
- Provide the criteria and the ways of evaluating and monitoring (in co-operation with NGO representatives and specialists) for certification of non-formal educational programmes
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, NGOs)
- Promote socially beneficial work through the school system and introduce ways of evaluation, e.g. registering within the record of voluntary activities
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, NGOs)
- Introduce sexual, gender and education on reproductive health in schools, organise professional training for educators who will lecture these segments, and introduce performance monitoring into evaluation of these programmes

(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Kosovo Education Center, NGOs)

- Introduce a larger number of elective subjects in schools and faculties, so that a student can choose a subject according to his ambition or interest
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, NGOs)
- Introduce into formal system of education non-formal educational principles such as: team work, avoiding ex-cathedra lectures, promoting discussion and debate, critical thinking and creative expression, tolerating other people attitudes (especially when differing from the professor's), workshops etc.
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, NGOs)
- Involve students in the work on the reform of educational programmes and introduce principles of democracy into decision making process of their concern (enable them to participate in the decision making process through democratically elected representatives, referendums, petition, ...)
(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, NGOs)
- Provide support and help system for the ones who stopped their education
(Ministry of Health and Social Welfare)

IV. YOUTH AND EMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is one of the most serious social problems we are faced with today, especially in transition countries amongst which is Kosovo. The growth of the unemployment rate in Kosovo is caused by the problems existent in Kosovar society aided by the structural economic crisis. Unemployment in the context of it being a problem of youth has specific repercussions where in the long term its influence prevents young people from taking an active role in society. Modern technological changes require a more flexible and qualified labour force while economic movements result in cyclical causes of unemployment which, above all, affects the young.

Most concerning is the relatively high portion of unqualified workers in the unemployment rate of youth seeing that in Kosovo, this category has limited access to education and lawful work (a very high portion of unqualified workers work on the “grey market”), and there are no direct measures to motivate their employment.

Another problem is the lack of availability of financial support for entrepreneurial initiatives. A lack of working experience is often the cause of unemployment amongst youth because employers usually consider inexperienced workers as unwanted. The insecurity of the market position of people who are looking for their first job is reflected in the fact that young people have a greater probability of signing working contracts for a defined period compared to more senior employees.

A noticeable lack of dialogue between social partners is evident as is co-operation between social partners which is still at an elementary level while the influence of individual social partners that can be realised through negotiation often depend on the quantity of political power they possess.

Co-operation between the education system and employment system and labour market is insufficiently strong and does not assist pupils and students or guide them to efficient professional orientation in the process of seeking a job.

4.1 Young Population and Low Labor Force Participation

As in other countries in Southeastern Europe Kosovo faces high unemployment rates among the youth. In fact the ratio of youth to adult unemployment rates in several neighboring countries is even higher than that in Kosovo, ranging from 2.2 (FYR Macedonia) to 3.9 (Romania). However, given the unemployment rates of youth are much higher than for adults, we examine in this section whether they face any additional supply-side constraints or barriers to successfully finding employment.

2002	
Unemployment rate (in %)	47.2
Males	36.9
Females	68.9
Aged 15-19 years	79.4
Aged 20-24 years	69.0
Youth unemployment (as share of total unemployed)	40.6
Long-term unemployment (as share of total unemployed)	73.1
Labor force participation rate (in %)	41.3
Males	55.5
Females	26.9
Notes: Long-term unemployment is for more than 1 year. Source: World Bank estimates based on LFS, 2002.	

More generally, youth unemployment is a particular feature of the labor market. Almost 41 percent of the unemployed in Kosovo is aged between 15 and 24 (both male and female) and 88 percent are first time job-seekers. The youth unemployment rate is approximately twice that of the adult unemployment rate.⁶⁴

In examining whether the youth face any particular constraints we consider the following possibilities (i) their skills are not appropriate for the labor market and (ii) the youth face particular barriers to entry to the SME sector where there has been most job creation.

An alternative hypothesis is that that job-seekers without a prior employment history have a greater risk attached to them by employers, as a result of an education signaling failure, caused by disruptions and lack of a tried and tested certification system for exit from education. However, business surveys find that the majority of employers have a higher regard for workers the higher their education level.

The majority considers the performance of workers with university education as very good, and secondary education as very good or average, suggesting the education system does still provide a reliable signaling effect. However, lack of practical knowledge was considered the main problem with recruiting new graduates. Lack of work experience especially when combined with low skills would, therefore, represent a barrier to employment entry for school leavers.

Table 5.2: Worker Evaluation by Formal Education Qualification		
Evaluation Criteria	University (%)	Secondary School (%)
Very Good	72.5	32.1
Average	26.2	60.9
Not Satisfied	1.3	7.0
N.A.	---	---
Total	100	100
Source: Promoting Economic Development Through Civil Society: Second Phase: Results of the Survey of Small and Medium Private Enterprises (SME) in Kosovo, RIINVEST, December 2002.		

The surveys conducted with SME sector do not find that the skills of the labor force are a major obstacle to their business. Given the majority of enterprises are engaged in low-skill operations this may not be surprising, and it remains to be seen whether new service-based enterprises, e.g., in finance or IT sectors would similarly consider the labor force, particularly the youth, as possessing adequate skills.

The predominance of the SME sector in job creation raises the question as to whether the youth face any particular barriers to self-employment such as **(i)** lack of business skills, **(ii)** difficulty in securing start-up funds and **(iii)** more limited social capital and networks. While this might be the case for other countries in the region it is not borne out by the evidence in Kosovo. The share of self-employment in total employment is actually higher for youths than it is even for adults. These are all issues that could benefit from further investigation, but go beyond the scope of this report.

4.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Economy and Employment

- Stimulate implementation of “career days” on faculties
(Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Welfare; University; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; firms, public institutions)
- Introduce system of transparent employment in public administration according to clear criteria of ability and knowledge
(Regional and local self-government, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Welfare)
- Initiate entrepreneur centres for youth (employment centres) together with educational (professional training and additional education) and promotional programmes organised in co-operation with local self-government, employers, schools and NGOs
(Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Welfare; public institutions, entrepreneurs and firms, NGOs, regional and local self-government)
- Legally regulate practical training (internship) during education, in business sector and in public administration, as well as, recording that experience into voluntary record (to be adopted and in accordance with the law on volunteers)
(Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Welfare, firms and public institutions)
- Implement programmes of stimulation for the youth: programmes of assigning non-refundable means, investments for the entrepreneurship of the youth/business plans (initial capital) and provide more affordable credit lines for firms founded by the young, provide affordable credits for the purchase of a first apartment, increase means for entrepreneurship of the youth
(The Government, Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Welfare, development agencies, banks, regional and local self-government)
- Create the means of monitoring the needs on labour market and determine the number for enrolment (that is, the number of vacant places per year)
(Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology)
- Provide support to NGOs that deal with employment of the youth i.e. providing them free use of city owned premises.
(Regional and local self-government, National Foundation for Civil Society Development)
- Provide free training of the skills necessary for employment and which are insufficiently present in educational programmes (writing CVs and letters of correspondence, active search for job, communication with business partners, etc.)

(Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, faculties and schools, Kosovon Employment Service and other employment agencies)

- Provide financing of additional education to unemployed persons, e.g. programmes of non-formal education organised by the NGOs (in case it's possible regarding the qualifications of an unemployed person) and voluntary work (e.g. in NGOs or public administration services) which will be valued.
(The Government, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare; Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Welfare)

V. YOUTH AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS POLICY

5.1 Youth Policy

Over the past several decades, a number of countries have initiated the design and implementation of national policies and strategies focused on youth. However, Kosovo do not have specific structures in place for effective youth policy generation. Neither has successfully managed to mainstream youth concerns, as the issues relating to young people fall across a variety of policy areas such as education, health or employment.

We urged to develop a long-term, consensus-based, integrated and cross-sector youth policy, but because this is a relatively unknown and underdeveloped field, there is a great need to share experience in this specific field of public policy and to produce tools to address youth issues systematically. There is a high potential for cooperation, particularly through networking of both governmental and non-governmental youth organizations on a regional and international scale. Furthermore, various international agencies are now providing assistance with the formulation of national youth policies and action plans, that Kosovo government should use for creating the national policy.

5.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *The Kosovo National Programme of Action for Youth* should contain clear and long-term determination to create social, educational, cultural, material and other conditions for the permanent well being of youth and their active, total and responsible participation in society.

Programme should be focused on:

- National youth policy
- Strategy for implementation of national youth policy
- Action programme (measures)
- Recommendations to non-governmental organisations and local and regional self-government

With the adoption of the NPDM, the Kosovo Government is obliged to realise the following strategic objectives as soon as possible:

- advance legislature that relates to the needs and problems of youth;
- define tasks for individual portfolios, relevant government bodies and public institutions in fulfilling international, constitutional and legislative obligations for the Government of Kosovo relating to youth;
- improve the quality of life for all its citizens, particularly youth, keeping in mind their interest and in line with European standards and MDG's and best practice models;
- include as many young people as possible in the decision making process about the needs and problems of youth;
- introduce new blood to managing social structures;
- mobilise all potential in society, particularly the young and most creative members of the community in creating new material and spiritual values for open and sustainable development, active role in the European integration processes and development of a democratic society and a rule of law;
- create conditions to reaffirm youth in Kosovo, decrease their emigration (brain drain) and motivate return of emigrants and their integration into Kosovo society;
- develop constructive and partner like relations with youth NGOs and local and regional self-government bodies in the aim of achieving the objectives of well being of youth.

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