

# Active

CITIZENSHIP  
KOSOVA



# ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP



Syri i Vizionit

OLOF PALME  
INTERNATIONAL  
CENTER



SWEDEN





# ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP



# “Concept of active citizenship,”

The concept of active citizenship is a very wide concept, whereas there are many opinions and formulations about it. The thing that almost all agree more or less about and we think of here is the concept, according to which, engagement of individuals and groups in public life and issues is implied.

Furthermore, there is a general accord that active citizenship deals with involvement of individuals in public life and issues that might be done in local, national and international level.

The term is specifically used in the local level to refer to citizens that would get involved actively in communities' life, on tackling issues that might bring changes or to resist against unwanted changes. Active citizens are all the ones that develop knowledge, skills and understanding in order to be able to take informed decisions regarding their communities, and jobs with aim to improve quality of life there.

At the national level, this engagement starts from participation in voting to involvement in campaign, pressure groups, through to being a member of a political party.

At the international level, active citizenship might be included in movements for environment protection, fostering of fair trade, to decrease poverty and eradication of slavery.

An active citizen is not necessarily a “good citizen”, in the sense that he/she follows the rules or behaves in dignified manner.

An active citizen might challenge existing rules and structures, although he/she should remain within boundaries of democratic processes and not be involved in violent acts. There is a group of values and general provisions that might be related to active citizenship, including respect of democracy, judiciary and rule of law, transparency, tolerance, courage to defend views and willingness to listen, work and rise up with the others.



## “Some characteristics of active citizenship,,

A number of key characteristics of active citizenship might be identified:

- Community participation (involvement in a voluntary activity or engagement with local governance authorities)
- People's empowerment to play an active role in decisions or processes affecting them, in particular in relation to public services and policies
- Knowledge and understanding of political, social and economic context of their participation, in order for them to take informed decisions
- Capability to challenge policies or actions and existing structures based on principles such as equality, inclusion, diversity and social justice.

## “About active citizenship,,

Active citizenship is not an engagement for someone else, but it rather is an involvement for ourselves, for each and every one of us, same as it is an engagement for authorities, businesses, organizations, community.

It is the way how we engage with one another and create together a system of joint values for a better society.

Active citizenship is referred to capacity that citizens and communities have to voluntarily work together, directly or through elected representatives, to exercise power at the function of achieving joint goals.

A good part of today's inventions were created with initiatives of volunteer groups which are either community groups or profiled groups in unions, political parties, religious groups, NGOs and community groups in general. At its greatest part, the social reform that we enjoy today was promoted by promoted by volunteer groups.

Nowadays, due to different changes in society, governments have recognized the importance of volunteer movement and they are concerned about the notable attraction that active citizenship does.

What is accepted today is that the nature of volunteerism is changing. Citizens' activation is neither a refusal nor a lack of trust on institutions, but it comes from the idea that individuals and groups might feel that they are not sufficiently heard in relation to changes that have impact on community.



# “How to be an active citizen?”,

## INDIVIDUAL

Join an activity or a group that is working to improve your community, or that is treating a national or an international issue.



## BUSINESS

- Develop a formal program for initiatives' support
- Support community projects or volunteer activities
- Allow your staff to join different organizations
- Adopt accrediting and acknowledgement systems

## MEDIA

Promote awareness of community activities by covering them wider in local and international mediums

Explore new ways of community linkages

## GOVERNMENT

Promote active citizenship and work with active citizens.

Reinforce the ethics of public service.

Promote group insurance schemes.

Provide assistance to cover meetings' costs.

Support trainings at the national and local level.

Provide time-off schemes.

Recognize voluntary activities and community activities during applications for work.

Present a topic of active citizenship each year.

Present national, presidential awards to recognize outstanding contribution in civic life.

Explore new ways of community linkages.

Involve citizenship in school curriculum.

# “How to establish an NGO?”,

## Notion of NGOs in Kosovo

Domestic NGO is domestic association or foundation established in Kosovo to accomplish the purpose based on the law, either for public benefit or mutual interest. Furthermore:

The notion of NGOs in Kosovo (according to the Law on Freedom of Association in Nongovernmental Organizations, Article 5 which explains the notion of NGOs in Kosovo)

Domestic NGO is domestic association or foundation established in Kosovo to accomplish the purpose based on the law, either for public benefit or mutual interest.

An association is a membership organization. An association may be established by at least three (3) or more Persons, at least one of whom has a residence or seat in Kosovo.

A foundation is an organization without membership established to manage properties and assets. A foundation may be established by one or more Persons, at least one of whom has a residence or seat in Kosovo.



# “Establishment”

An NGO is established with the establishment act which is signed by at least three persons.

Establishment of Associations and Foundations in Kosovo (based on the Law on Freedom of Association in Nongovernmental Organizations, Article 6 that deals with establishment of nongovernmental organizations)

An association or foundation is established by a founding instrument which shall contain the following records:

- the official name, official acronym and the official logo of the organization;
- its organizational form (association, foundation);
- the organization's address;
- the organization's purposes and activities;
  - the names and addresses of the founders; and
  - the name, address and other contact information of the Authorized Representative, and
  - timeframe for which the organization is established, if there is one.



A foundation may also be established by a will, bequest, if it includes the information set forth in paragraph 1 of Article 6 of this Law

An association or foundation shall have a statute containing the following information:

- the name of the organization;
- the purposes of the organization;
- the name of the highest governing body;
- if the NGO is an association, the procedures for selecting and removing members, the conditions for membership, and if the organization is to have a Board, the procedures for electing and removing members of the Board and the allocation of powers and responsibilities between the General Assembly of members and the Board;
- if the NGO is a foundation, the procedures for electing and removing members of the Board;
- the authority and responsibilities of officers, if any;
- the way of decision-making;
- rules and procedures for:
  - amending the founding instrument and statutes;
  - for merging, splitting up, or dissolving the organization; and
  - distribution of any assets remaining after such dissolution. -

A statute may contain any other rule, provision, or procedure that is not inconsistent with the requirements of the current law.

Rules and procedures of internal governance included in NGOs statute shall comply with democratic principles.

An association or foundation shall have only those powers, and be entitled to engage in those activities and purposes, consistent with its Founding Instrument and statute and which are permitted by Law.



# “Statute drafting,”

In order to function each NGO should have its statute. A model for organization's statute drafting might be taken at the office of the Department of Registration and Liaison with NGOs, or at the official page of Ministry of Public Administration.

## Organization's statute

Organization's statute serves for governing the organization. The easiest way to draft a statute is by taking the orientating sample form for NGOs statute, that might be taken at the Department of Registration and Liaison with NGOs, or the official page of Ministry of Public Administration

This sample has some important points or articles of the statute that each NGO should determine in line with the mission and vision it has:



### Name, form and address

This Article includes records for name, abbreviation, address and a brief description of organization's profile.

### Establishers

This Article determines the natural or legal persons that are establishers of the organization, one of which shall be authorized representative of the organization in Kosovo.

### The Goal

In this Article should be written the reasons for organization's establishment and its goals, same as envisaged activities through which this goal will be achieved.

### Membership

One or several articles determine the organization's membership, the way how membership can be gained or lost, obligations of members, functions and responsibilities of Members, meetings of the Assembly of Members, etc.

### Board of Directors

Roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors, including election of the board and its mandate, etc.

## Officers and Employees

In this Article might be explained the ways how organization will appoint officers or other persons who will take over completion of organization's daily duties, the way of their organization, compensation, etc.

## Other Articles

Reporting, finances, change of statute, dissolving of the organization, etc. are envisaged in the articles of the statute.

Besides these necessary articles, establishers of the association might also enrich the statute with other issues considered necessary for functioning of the association



# “To register an NGO,,

NGO registration is done at the Department of Registration and Liaison with NGOs, under the Ministry of Public Administration.

The following requests shall be met for registration in the ministry:

- establishment act
- statute of the organization
- photocopies of ID or passports of the NGO establishers.
- NGOs member list, completed with data
- official symbol -logo
- an elected person as authorized person
- address of the organization in Kosovo: name, address and contact – other information of the authorized representative
- request for NGO Registration and a written statement by an authorized representative of the NGO, showing goals of the NGO and a general description of the activities that the NGO plans to implement in Kosovo



NGO registration (based on the Law on Freedom of Association in Nongovernmental Organizations, Article 9 which deals with registration of nongovernmental organizations)

Every person, notwithstanding the race, nationality, colour, gender, religion, political views or others, national or social background, linkage with a community, property, economic condition, social, sexual orientation, birth, limited ability or another personal status, shall be eligible to register NGO under the terms and conditions of this Law. No person needs to register the NGO to exercise the right on freedom of association.

The NGO shall be registered to the competent body in at the Ministry of Public Administration.

The NGO shall attach to registration application an application form, founding instrument, and its statute.

An NGO shall designate in writing an Authorized Representative. All applications for registration must be signed by the NGO's Authorized Representative.



The establishment act is signed by three establishers

A local, foreign or international NGO registers by filing the following documentation:

- an application form;
- proof that it is a legal Person in another country;
- the organization's address in Kosovo; and
- a written statement from a representative of the NGO's headquarters with authority to provide such statement stating:
  - the purposes of the NGO;
  - a general description of the activities that the NGO is planning to carry out in Kosovo; and
  - the name, address and other contact information of the Authorized Representative.

Applications for the registration of NGOs shall be submitted to and accepted by the competent body.

Registration decisions and Registration numbers shall be taken and assigned by the competent body.

Documents submitted by an NGO in support of its application for registration shall be in corresponding languages in compliance with Constitution of Republic of Kosovo.

Notwithstanding paragraph 7 of this Article, documents submitted by a foreign or international NGO as proof that it is a legal Person in another country, shall be submitted in their original language, together with a translation thereof in corresponding languages in compliance with Constitution of Republic of Kosovo. Translation should be from the licensed authorized interpreter.

Any substantive or misleading difference between the original language and an unofficial translation is cause for withdrawing the organization's registration.

The Competent Body shall issue to an NGO a registration certificate or a written decision denying registration within sixty (60) days of receiving an application to register, unless the competent body requests in writing during that same time period further information or clarification. If registration is denied, the competent body shall include an explanation of the grounds upon which registration was denied.



If the Competent Body requests in writing further information or clarification in connection with an application to register, the sixty (60) day period within which the competent body must issue a registration certificate or a written decision denying registration shall cease to run as of the date of the written request. Upon receipt of the further information or clarification requested, the competent body shall issue a registration certificate or a written decision denying registration within:

- the number of days remaining in the original sixty (60) day time period for issuing a decision; or
- fourteen (14) days of receipt of further information or clarification, whichever is greater.

An NGO shall inform the competent body within thirty (30) days of any change to the information required in paragraphs 1. and 3. of Article 6 and paragraph 5 of this Article. Amendments to registration shall be subject to procedures, standards, and time limits equivalent to those applicable to initial registration. Amendments accepted by the competent body shall be recorded, registered, and publicly available under Article 12 of this Law.



**“In order to empower citizen's role in decision-making, Syri i Vizionit is implementing the “Active Citizenship” project, which aims at a general engagement of Kosovo people in being part of decision-making.”**

It started implementing since January 2012. In its first year, the project is concentrated in two Kosovo regions (Pejë and Prizren) that include 11 municipalities.

Objectives in which the project is focused on are:

Encouraging of civic initiatives through supporting initial ideas of individuals, informal groups, community organizations and other groups of civil society in Kosovo.

Capacity building of individuals and groups to advocate and take actions for improving their conditions, particularly groups in rural areas – youth, women and marginalized community.

Functionalizing of an assistance office that would elaborate initiatives and needs of the groups of interest.

Starting of an online communication to tackle on joint initiatives



Goal of the work in this project are individuals that had or undertook any initiative, informal groups, groups brought together ad hoc for a certain goal at the interest of the community, community organizations, NGOs, other groups of civil society with which interaction ways with local and central institutions, businesses, donors and other institutions were worked to be found.

Within the objectives will be included the activities such as: Direct meetings with citizens, establishment of focus groups, building of an interaction in local communities and municipalities, joint meetings of the community with institutions, technical support to actions undertaken by the community, trainings, administrative support for actions of the groups, experience exchange, assistance in functionalizing of the groups, coordination with other stakeholders, including institutions, donors, businesses, etc.

The project is a pilot one and it is being implemented in five local communities in Pejë and Prizren regions. It has impacted on stimulation of other groups to impact on decision-making. As such, the project has impacted on all citizens, in general. At the same time, local institutions were an important partner throughout the implementation of this project. It has impacted and will continue to do so in making municipal officials increase the level of transparency through meetings with citizens, as well as increase of their efficiency on involvement of citizens in decision-making.

Taking into account that a part of important competencies still have not been transferred from the central to the local level, there were also initiatives that came out directly from the focused groups to react in central level, as well. Through the liaison office that Syri i Vizionit is coordinating, it will be made possible that MPs from the municipalities included in the project will carry on with addressing of proposals and ideas coming from their regions to the national level.



## “Election and empowerment of heads of villages and their active role in decision-making,,

Following determination of villages and local communities throughout the five municipalities of Pejë and Prizren regions (Pejë, Istog, Klinë, Deçan and Rahovec) our organization held public meetings in each village of local community, initially to present the project, followed by the request on them to elect the head of their village, who will represent interests of all the residents of that particular village. Over two-hundred citizens of all ages and both genders took part in these meetings. The project was overwhelmingly well by the residents, and it was qualified as a hope for making changes in the places they live in.

Following the election of the heads of villages by the residents themselves, trainings were provided to empower these heads of villages. These trainings included the topics such as advocacy, where they were informed with opportunities and instruments which they might use to advocate to local and central institutions, depending on the issue they want to address to these institutions. Later on,



trainings on writing project proposals were provided, where the professional trainers on the field of writing project proposals were engaged. Besides the training of heads of villages about the form and possibilities of writing project proposals, practical work on writing project proposal was also done, making these heads of villages write the issues that they face as project ideas, and address them to institutions.

The final training through which went heads of villages of the five municipalities (Rugovë-Pejë, Grabanicë-Klinë, Vrellë-Istog, Isniq-Deçan and Xerxë-Rahovec), was fundraising and attraction of investments in their villages from foreign donors or Kosovo institutions.

This made these heads of village to be more skilled in addressing issues of their villages toward institutions and foreign donors, and their role to be more active in decision-making processes related to citizens' interests at the local and central level.

Upon completion of the trainings, numerous other joint meetings were held with these heads of villages where it was discussed about many issues that directly affected lives of residents in these municipalities, same as actions were coordinated for their addressing to respective institutions.



## “Perceptions of heads of villages,”

“We, as heads of villages lack the appropriate communication with local and central level institutions. We do not get informed on time with the decisions taken for issues that affect the citizen's interest, such as road repairs, sewage channelling or drinking water, same as the decision for the National Park. Thanks to your project, we have managed to create a stronger linkage with local and central institutions. However, there is still need for this linkage to become even stronger”- Ramë Nikçi, head of Shtupeq i Madh village, Rugovë- Pejë.

“As the head of village, without political bias, we have taken some self-initiatives for self-financing such as village drinking water system and road repair, since the municipality could not afford to do them. This year, we have also prepared a project for irrigation of lands, and we handed it over to the municipality. Your project has impacted on our empowerment to better address these issues”- Sali Ahmetaj, head of Isniq village-Deçan.

“As citizens that we are, we should be more active and organized, because when we get organized as a community, the Municipality also gets obliged to support our initiatives. Out of the work with 'Syri i Vizionit’, we have also learned how we can advocate and impact on municipality policies, however, we still need to be more active in addressing issues, requests to respective institutions” “ Sadri Zogaj” head of Kaliqan village-Istog.

“Our requests or issues aren't always included in priorities of the municipality. There were cases when donors came in to invest, but the municipality did not have funds ready for that purpose. If we, as a community, would have a project for that purpose, we would benefit from this. Now we have the skills how to prepare a project idea and with the help of 'Syri i Vizionit' we will manage to prepare projects that will



be submitted to the municipality. In general, there is a lack of appropriate communication with the municipal institutions, but we have now learned of new mechanisms how to approach them, and how to be more active and voiced on our requests”, Halil Berisha, head of Këpuz village- Klinë.

“Earlier we did not even know how to make an official request, since we were always used to present them only in meetings, but thanks to the work with 'Syri i Vizionit', myself as the head of the village, have managed to address four requests to the municipality, where I also found institutional support. As heads of villages, we still need support on different fields, such as in addressing requests, project proposals, etc. A similar initiative, such as this one of 'Syri i Vizionit' was missing earlier, although it was very necessary”- Sokol Dembogaj, head of Bogë village - Pejë.

“In order to be active, each village or neighbourhood should have its organized structure, to have its head, etc. They need to know how to make requests, how to approach institutions, because nowadays everything should be addressed in official form. The need for projects similar to this one of 'Syri i Vizionit' is present. Communication between the citizen and the municipality should increase further. We, as heads of villages or citizens, should not remain silent but rather give our contribution and engagement for the interest of the community,” Masar Papaj, head of Fortesë village-Rahovec.



## “Office for provision of assistance and counselling,,

Office for provision of assistance and counselling for citizens and civil society which was opened under the auspices of “Active Citizenship” project has played an important role, not only for citizens' empowerment, but also for empowerment of nongovernmental organizations operating in Pejë region and wider.

Office staff assisted civil society organizations in drafting financial reports, through providing counselling and practical work with them, same as it provided counselling for drafting project proposals and opportunities for applying to various donors.

It has also assisted different informal groups in preparing necessary documents for registering as NGOs, while it assisted in drafting internal regulations and statutes for NGOs.

Parts of the work of this office are also complaints, requests and project ideas that come from the citizens and get addressed to local and central level institutions. At the same time, although stationed in Pejë, this Office is at the service of all Kosovo citizens and different groups, NGOs, etc. who are able to seek help and advice from it through the [www.aktivizohu.org](http://www.aktivizohu.org) website. Upon receipt of the information through the website, office staff responds to requests of citizens and other groups of interest.

*Here are some examples of the support provided by the assistance office:*

### **Bosniak organization OAZA builds its finance capacities thanks to the support of Assistance Office**

Nongovernmental organizations have a constant need for increase of their management capacities, since with implementation of projects or activities some NGOs have difficulties in preparing their financial reports and reporting forms, irrespective to their enthusiasm and volunteer work, they do not have the adequate skills for this matter. Bosniak nongovernmental organization OAZA is an organization that sought the help of Assistance Office to build capacities of its staff in preparing the financial report. Assistance Office staff, under the financial officers of Syri i Vizionit, helped the finance service of OAZA organization through practical work on standard of preparing financial reports and reporting forms. This has impacted on capacity building of this Bosniak organization and improvement of its finance sector.



## Assistance to NGOs in applying for funds

Assistance Office, functioning under the Active Citizenship project, helped out Serb community NGO Studio Experimental from Gorazhdec of Pejë municipality in applying for funds and in preparing project proposals. Lack of knowledge and experience with big donors, which have standardized procedures and requests according to donors, made management of this organization seek the help of Assistance Office when applying in projects according to application standards with which NGOs must apply.

Assistance Office staff provided the help of experts that Syri i Vizionit has to build capacities of NGO Studio Experimental staff in drafting project proposals and financial planning. As an outcome, this organization succeeded in securing funds. The NGO thanked the Assistance Office for the readiness and contribution to empowerment of its staff.



## Informal groups assisted to register as NGOs

The Assistance Office functioning under the Active Citizenship project continues to help different stakeholders that need counselling, make requests, draft statutes to register as NGOs and their registration. The Office assisted informal group from Prishtinë that aimed at advocacy and inclusion of citizens in monitoring laws at the central level. Assistance was provided to this informal group in drafting the statute and other documentation to register as NGO. Currently, this informal group has been registered as "BIA" nongovernmental organization and continues to achieve its mission for advocacy and inclusion of citizens in legislation at the central level.

## New journalists assisted to register as NGO

"Euro Peja" Initiative is composed of a group of young people that aim to develop journalism and bring the concept of journalism closer to youth willing to practice this profession. They called on Assistance Office to help them out with drafting of the statute and other internal regulations to turn into an NGO. Assistance Office and Syri i Vizionit staff from its experience in civil society and media assisted this informal group in drafting their statute and internal regulations to register. This initiative of Pejë youth "Euro Peja" carries on its activities in developing journalism with young people. Besides working with youth, this initiative has its own portal where it publishes different information from the region and Kosovo. Occasionally, this NGO consults with the Assistance Office staff about funding opportunities and application with project proposals to different donors.



## Assistance to informal group for development of tourism on its organizing and structuring as an NGO

Active citizens in different fields approach the Assistance Office for helping them out in achieving their goals everyday more. Seeing the need for organizing as an independent and nongovernmental institution, but lacking information for such an organization of an informal however very active group that aims to develop tourism in Dukagjini Valley, it called for help of the Assistance Office. It came across the help of this Office in preparing various documents (statute, internal regulations, etc.) to register as an NGO. At present, this informal group has managed to complete all necessary documents thanks to the Assistance Office and applied at the Ministry of Public Administration for receiving NGO status under the name of "West Gate". This initiative is also being assisted in preparation of projects proposals that they will apply with for development of tourism in Dukagjini area and wider, same as in building of its capacities.

## Assistance in preparing requests

So far, the Assistance Office has helped addressing their requests to respective institutions. Over four such requests were done with the head of Bogë village, from Rugovë in Pejë. Requests were related to rehabilitation and repair of village roads, channelling of sewage, drinking water system, etc. They were filed by the head of Bogë village officially to municipality of Pejë, namely to its respective directorates. Simultaneously, it was worked with the head of this village to build his capacities on preparing requests, complaints or project ideas, and the ways how to approach the institutions.

numerous citizens in preparing and



Foto Lajme



Lajme & Ngjarje

- 27.11.2012  
Rrugë e shëmtuar Shkupja i Madh në Rrugën e Rilindjes në Prishtinë pas një muaji.
- 26.11.2012  
Plyotari e bashkësive të cilët pajtohen se duhet të jenë shumë më aktiv për adresim të problematikave të tyre.

## “Website;”

This website is part of the “Active Citizenship” project which is implemented by "Syri i Vizionit" from Pejë, funded by the Olof Palme International Centre and supported by the Swedish Government. The website presents the issues faced by Kosovo citizens and different groups of interest, while it also serves as an advocacy tool for these issues toward the local and central level institutions. At the same time, best practices in solving issues or initiatives undertaken by individuals, informal groups, NGOs and institutions are shared through it. It also serves as an informative window for all the people that want to share their experiences related to issues they face with others, institutions and “Syri i Vizionit” staff that manages this website.

At the same time, all the ones that need counselling, assistance or counselling for different issues of active citizenship, the staff of this organization, with its experience and professionalism, provides assistance in addressing and sharing raised issues by citizens with all governmental and nongovernmental institutions at the local and central level.

This website also contains a special section “Get Active” for all the ones that have an idea to activate, the ones that have reached a result and want to share with others? What was the experience? What were the achievements? ... The ones that are willing to be part of communication in a group of active citizens, than this is the right section for them. Write to us and share your experience, bring examples from the community you live in. Become active.

[www.aktivizohu.org](http://www.aktivizohu.org)

[www.facebook.com/ActiveCitizenshipKosova](https://www.facebook.com/ActiveCitizenshipKosova)





This publication is part of the "Active Citizenship" project implemented by Syri i Vizionit from Pejë, funded by the Olof Palme International Centre, and supported by the Swedish Government. All contents of this publication represent the views of the authors, and not necessarily the views of Olof Palme International Centre.

