YOUTH CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IN THE BALKANS

Balkan Regional platform for youth participation and dialogue

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December, 2017

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FOREWORD

This Research study has been prepared in close co-operation between the research team composed of senior researchers Jasna Milošević Đorđević from Belgrade University, Pavle Pavlović from Podgorica University and the team members of ALDA and eight Local Democracy Agencies in the Western Balkans as project partners. Its main topic – youth cultural participation has arised as a natural continuation of the previous activities conducted at local level in LDA host cities and some forty towns and municipalities across the region. Culture is seen here as an incentive for youth participation, creativity, way of spending leaisure time, space of employment opportunities, but also for learning the skills of active engagement, culture of dialogue and participation in policy making. A very important feature of this publication is that its primary focus is on grass – root level thus providing an overview of state of art in youth cultural needs facing the reality check. Another important feature of the study is that it provides a comparative insight into legislative and institutional framework, but even more importantly into local practices in diverse cultural contexts across the region. Finally, the publication serves as a useful source of information on present prevailing trends in transformation of cultural value system among young generation in the Balkans as perhaps the most important actor of overall reforms within the EU integration process still to take place in the region.

This comparative study has been prepared also thanks to the regional team of Youth trainers and Youth engagement workers established and continuously trained within the project Balkan Regional Platform for Youth Participation and Dialogue. Their inputs and feedback are seen as valuable contribution to a deeper understanding of different aspects of youth cultural participation and also to defining the policy recommendations as the integral part of this study.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Cultural participation: conceptual and hypothetical framework

Cultural participation is a term closely related to both enjoyment of the fundamental human rights and to the concept of culture. Culture could be defined as a set of all changes and creations that have emerged in nature, society and human thinking as a result of human activity aimed to relief, extension or advancement of the human species. In a wider context, culture encompasses all the activities of a person outside his/her pragmatic-materialistic creativity.

Measuring culture requires a conceptualization and a closer definition of the same case studies. Since this research involves young people, the subject is more closely determined by their needs and creation. The closest conceptualized approach to culture corresponding to the subject of our research is the notion of cultural participation. Cultural participation patterns and rates across societies are included in the European Eurobarometer statistics, whilst the concept was also recognized by UNESCO, with the issuance of a guide to measuring cultural participation (UNESCO Framework for Cultural Statistics Handbook No. 2, 2009).

UNESCO defines cultural participation as: „Participation in the arts and everyday life activities that may be associated with a particular culture. It refers to 'the ways in which ethnically-marked differences in cultural tastes, values and behaviours inform not just artistic and media preferences but are embedded in the daily rhythms of different ways of life; and of the ways in which these connect with other relevant social characteristics – those of class and gender, for example' “ (UNESCO, 2017). Interest in culture is crucial for young people as the basis for their future individual development and participation in social progress, since culture is directly related to the progress of a society. Since the societies included in this analysis are in the process of transition moving from a hybrid system of semi-democratic regimes (political servilility as the dominant form of political culture) towards consolidated democracies, measuring culture, in particular cultural needs and creativity of Youth, has become increasingly important for perceiving and better understanding of the future trends and perspectives.

For the purpose of this research we define cultural participation as a concept consisting of three main components:

1) Cultural production - production of the cultural goods (amateur or professional)

2) Public cultural reception (visiting institutions of culture and cultural events)

3) Private cultural reception (watching the cultural events and content "from home" through the media, the Internet, television ...)

In many ways, this research represents a point of departure from the concept of cultural consumerism. The subject and main objectives of entire research are related to the cultural needs of young people and their cultural engagement within the existing societal contexts in the Western Balkans.

1.2. Methodology

The research used quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques and the sources were found in the methodology of aforementioned Eurobarometer and UNESCO methodologies. In order to collect and analyse approaches and local practice of cultural participation, the design of the research includes desk analysis and secondary analysis of the institutional arrangement in effect at national/local level, as well as a number of previous research conducted within our scope of interest. The main objective of the research is to help formulate policy recommendations and develop advocacy tools for regional thematic CSO networks and for grass-root NGOs.

The research was conducted in the following countries and local communities: Bosnia and Herzegovina (Prijedor, Mostar, Zavidovići), Kosovo* (Peja) , Montenegro (Niksic), The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[2] (Skopje and Kavadarci), and Serbia (Subotica and Knjaževac). The category of Youth includes young people aged 14 to 30.

Research was conducted in the following phases:

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*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Indipendence.

[2] Further in the text The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

1) Desk research of all relevant strategies and official government policy measures and action plans that are directly or indirectly related to culture and youth. The analysis was conducted on four levels: European level, regional, national, and local level. Organizational (program) analysis is also presented as an example of good practice of functioning and organization in the field of cultural participation of Youth. Evident lack of adopted local youth strategies or municipal action plans posed a specific problem and influenced the completeness of the comparative analysis.

2) Secondary analysis included survey and analysis of findings from previously realized and aimed to research cultural participation in the countries of the region. It is worth noting that, according to available data, this analysis seems to be the first, or one of the first comparative studies of regional character, thus making its findings and conclusions in particular those generated by the comparative study of the situation in the region, an important indicator of the current trends in cultural participation of youth.

3) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is organized with young people organized in all the countries that participated in the project, i.e. in most cities where the Local Democracy Agency operates: Mostar, Prijedor, Subotica, Knjazevac, Niksic, Peja, Kavadarci. Questions in FGD were structured to cover the following: free time, cultural reception, cultural production, sources of information. Previously, a pilot study was organized in Skopje (a regional focus group discussion) who helped to shape the focus group guides for the analysis.

4) Interview with stakeholders were organized with relevant stakeholders that are directly related to the process of creating cultural content or policies at the local level as well as members of the community dealing with cultural creativity. A total of 9 interviews were organized. The guides were structured to cover the following: personal perception of the state of culture in the community, the state of culture in the region, institutional efficiency in the field of cultural participation of young people, the role and position of young people in culture, the level of cultural offer, comparison with the EU countries, the current situation in culture.

5) Quantitative survey research with CAWI method. The sample of up to 250 respondents is envisaged in respective countries who directly filled in the questionnaire developed and uploaded online. That is why the selection of the sample is defined by the method of collecting data, which is in our case snowball sample. The collected quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS Version 20 software package while the databases were edited using the R programming language.

2. DESK ANALYSIS

2.1. European level

Culture has been officially incorporated in the EU legislation for many decades. Since the seventies, the EU's stance has progressed from treating culture as an indistinct area to the phase of an established strategic framework and models of cultural governance (European Agenda for Culture). In many ways, the Treaty of Maastricht paved the way towards the EU legitimate acting in cultural domain that has in the meantime evolved in one of the relevant public policies with clearly defined institutional architecture and governance models both at the Member States and EU level.

Today, culture is recognized as an important part of the EU's main cooperation programmes and instruments, and in the Union's bilateral agreements with third countries. It is also a key element of the co-operation developed with the Council of Europe, which for example, has allowed the joint implementation of the European Heritage Days as well as a number of actions in the Western Balkans (Commision of the European Communities, 2007). At the time, intercultural dialogue as one of the main instruments in support to peace and conflict prevention was among the basic objectives of such actions.

Today culture is one of the driving forces in the process of European Union development – as a source of jobs, social inclusion, and culture diversity. Article 167 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union defines the role of the European Union (EU) in the area of culture: it supports, coordinates or supplements the actions of member countries and seeks to bring Europe's common cultural heritage to the fore (European Commision (official website), 2017). The four main priorities are 1) Accessible and inclusive culture, 2) Cultural heritage, 3) Cultural and creative sectors: creative economy and innovation, 4) Promotion of cultural diversity, culture in EU external relations, and mobility.

Article 167 of the Lisbon Treaty (European Commision, 2007) states:

1. The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.

2. Action by the Union shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas:

- Improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples,

- Conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance,

- Non-commercial cultural exchanges,

- Artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector.

3. The Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe.

4. The Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaties, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures.

5. In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article.

Also one of the basis for the action of the EU in the field of culture lies in the article 151 of Treaty which states that (Commision of the European Communities, 2007):

-The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common heritage to the fore.
-Action by the Community shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action ….
-The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe.
-The Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures.

Culture as an important indicator of an overall development of society plays a significant role in economic development. Recent research shows that the sectors of culture and creative industries account for about 4.5% of EU GDP and 4% of employment (about 8.5 million jobs,

and taking into account the impact of culture on other sectors this estimation is much higher). Europe is the world leader in the export of creative industries. In order to maintain this position, it must invest in the sector's ability to act in a cross-border context (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2006).

Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 advocates key competences for longlife learning and one of the main competences is cultural awareness and expression which will help integrate culture in all learning activities in schools, youth organisations and training institutions (European Parlament , 2006).

Council Resolution from November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018) which states that young people's creativity and capacity for innovation should be supported through better quality access to and participation in culture and cultural expressions from an early age, thereby promoting personal development, enhanced learning capabilities, intercultural skills, understanding and respect for cultural diversity and the development of new and flexible skills for future job opportunities (European Council , 2009).

The importance of culture in the field of Youth strategy was introduced also by the Council's conclusions of 19 November 2010 on access of young people to culture which underlines:

—That access of young people to culture comprises two main aspects: young people as users, buyers, consumers and audience; and young people actively involved as active participants and creators of arts and culture,
— The importance of this for good cooperation between the field of youth and the field of culture,
— The importance of the knowledge, promotion, visibility and use of new information and communication technologies, including digitalisation of cultural content, for the purpose of increasing the access of young people to culture,
— That access of young people to culture is also about an experience of self-expression, personal development and confidence, innovation and creativity, enjoyment, and having an open mind to other cultures, including Europe's cultural heritage,
— The importance of the lifelong development of cultural competences of young people and all relevant stakeholders because it interlocks with other key competences,

— The relevance of culture as a means of promoting social inclusion, equality and the active participation of young people, as well as combating discrimination and poverty (European Council , 2010).

Culture is and will therefore primarily remain a responsibility of Member States; in some countries it is largely dealt with at the regional or even local level. Article 151 does not provide, for example, for harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States.

Work Plan for Culture (2015-2018) does not apply in any part to youth, but advocates work based on intercultural cooperation and diversity between the states and third parties (European Council, 2014).

The EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018 and the draft renewed one 2019-2027 promoting the principles of Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people) is based on recognition of culture as one of the key domains for youth engagegement, with entrepreneurship and innovation, as the areas opening up better future perspectives of young people. Creativity and innovation are one of the strategic goals of OMG (European Commision, 2009):

Young people should be encouraged to think and act innovatively and young talent should be recognised. Culture stimulates creativity, and entrepreneurship education should be viewed as a means to promote economic growth and new jobs as well as a source of skills, civic participation, autonomy and self-esteem.

EU Culture Programmes

The EU supports actions to preserve cultural heritage, and promotes cooperation and transnational exchanges between cultural institutions in member countries over the years, in order to support the development of the cultural sector, the EU has developed a series of programmes with the same goal. Below we will mention some of the most important programmes.

The two programs (**Culture Programme** 2007-2013 and the **Media Programme** 2007-2013) played a vital role in setting up the grounds for Program Culture Europe.

Programs were complemented with the role. The first (Culture Programme) was aimed at improving co-operation and cultural mobility between countries - all for the purpose of promoting culture (European Commission, 2017), while others meant supporting for cultural production (the greatest reach was achieved in the field of film industry) (Creative Europe , 2017). Although both this programmes were completed in 2013, their successor can also be found in the Programme Creative Europe.

The **Creative Europe Programme** is the European Commision's framework programme for support of culture and audiovisual sectors. The programme is designed to respond to this need by directing investments where their impact will be greatest. The programme is currently struggling with the challenges of globalization and the rise of digital technologies.

Currently, this programme aims to help certain sectors to take advantage of all the benefits in order to benefit from digitization, job creation and opportunities for developing an international career. Among other things, the main activities include: 1) Cultural initiatives: promoting cross-border cooperation, platforms to promote emerging artists, networking, and literary translation; 2) Audiovisual sector initiatives: promoting the development, production, distribution, or access to audiovisual works; 3) A cross-sectoral strand: including a Guarantee Facility to fund micro, small and medium-sized organisations and transnational policy cooperation (European Commission, 2017). The programme is managed by the Education, Culture and Audiovisual Executive Agency in Brussels.

Within the Creative Europe Programme, Media sub-programme is intended to provide financial support for the development, distribution and promotion of the European films, as well as the audiovisual industry. On the other hand, the Culture Programme enables cultural institutions and organizations to act at the international level and promote the cross-border dissemination of cultural works and the mobility of cultural actors.

All the countries of the region are included in Creative Europe Programme.

Besides Creative Europe, the EU has developed other programmes to support co-operation initiatives in culture including the **European Capital of Culture** (2007-2019) which is designed to: 1) Highlight the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe, 2) Celebrate the cultural features Europeans share, 3) Increase European citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area, and 4) Foster the contribution of culture to the development of cities. The initiative was developed in 1985 and has, to date, been awarded to more than 50 cities across the European Union (Creative Europe, 2017). Rijeka (2020) and Novi Sad (2021) will participate in the initiative from the cities from the region. The initiative itself is a great opportunity for the towns to revive both through their reconstruction and creating a new image of the city.

Intercultural Cities Programme is an is a flagship Council of Europe programme that assists local authorities in designing policies based on the application of a novel diversity management model called intercultural integration (Intercultural Cities programme , 2017). Based on the notion of "diversity advantage" – treating migrants as a resource for local economic, social and cultural development, and not only as vulnerable groups in need of support and services. Intercultural integration implies a strategic reorientation of urban governance and policies to encourage adequate representation, positive intercultural mixing and interaction, and institutional capacity to ensure equal access to rights and opportunities for all. From the perspective of our research it should be pointed out that the Subotica is part of this program and through this program is a part of International intercultural Cities Network (Council of Europe, 2017).

In addition to the programs, it is also important to mention the digital platform for cultural heritage **Europeana**, which is a source of some 53,601,000 artworks, artefacts, books, videos and sounds from across Europe (Europeana Collections, 2017). More than 3,000 institutions across Europe have contributed to Europeana thematic collections containing some 52,145,189 artworks, artefacts, books, videos and sounds.

Regional level

As determined by the Lisbon Treaty (2007), regional cohesion contributes to a common cultural heritage (in addition to economic and territorial goals), but culture is perhaps the strongest link

when it comes to co-operation between the countries of the region. With a view to regional co-operation programmes, an important strategy linking cultural initiatives at macro-regional level is the Danube Strategy, (Stojović, 2012). One of Programme's priorities is culture and tourism (PA 3) promoting the Danube region as a cultural brand and the dialogue between the political/administrative and the cultural sector level in all EUSDR countries . Strategy itself does not explicitly mention youth, although civil society organisations are encouraged to participate.

Despite the lack of regional cultural "connectivity" it is important to mention the specific programmes that have made remarkable results. One of them is the Balkan Art Culture Fund design (http://www.artanglebalkans.net/balkans-arts--culture-fund-bac.html) as a support for independent cultural organizations and artists from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo*, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. Main goal of this fund is to help advancing the independent cultural scene through improving the environment for its growth (the European Cultural Foundation 2017).

Another important regional cultural co-operation initiatives are Balkan Design Network and the Balkan Theatre Network.

Balkan Design Network (BDN) was creted in a reaction to underdeveloped and unfavorable environment for the creative industry in the Balkans. As an innovative platform established by Mikser Organization from Belgrade, Croatian Designers Association from Zagreb and Public Room from Skopje, with the aim of articulating and providing strategic support for the development and promotion of the Balkan design, raising awareness of the importance of design in the processes of social and economic development and promoting design values in region, as well an on international level (Balkan Design Network, 2017).

Balkan Theatre Network for EU Integration is a regional co-operation programme that involves youth from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in creation of social community theatre highlighting their common European values, cultural and ethnic diversity (Network, 2017).

2.2.   National level

Culture as a paradigm of local development

Agenda Culture 21, (http://www.agenda21culture.net) represents the Platform of the United Nations and Local Government (UCLG, 2017) as the founding document of this association. We believe that priorities incorporated in the document are important to be elaborated although they are indirectly related to our analysis, given that the quality operationalization is a key precondition for a quality policy proposal.

The Culture 21 document sets a new cultural paradigm, determining the culture as a driver of the development of local communities as "culture will be key in the success of sustainable development policies, as the driver and enabler of development and people-centered societies. Poverty is not just a question of material conditions and income, but also of lack of capabilities and opportunities, including in cultural terms" (United Cities and Local Government, 2017).Cities and local spaces are here seen as "privileged setting for cultural invention which is in constant evolution,and provide the environment for creative diversity, where encounters amongst everything that is different and distinct (origins, visions, ages, genders, ethnic groups and social classes) are what makes full human development possible. Dialogue between identity and diversity, individual and group, is a vital tool for guaranteeing both a planetary cultural citizenship as well as the survival of linguistic diversity and the development of cultures".

Local tier of government as the tier of government closest to citizens and based on subsidiarity principle – is perceived as a most adequate level providing space for inclusive policy / decision making , capable of meeting the diversity of cultural needs and creativity - the Council of Europe's 2020 Agenda is just advocating decentralization and policies at several levels, no part of the government should be neglected or marginalized (United Cities and Local Government, 2017). According to the UN Declaration on Human Rights Article 27, culture belongs to everyone. Cultural relativism is unacceptable.

Culture 21 identifies "myths" that perceive obstacles in developing a cultural background free of the stereotype thinking. By "breaking" myths, politics get a more and more comprehensive form, characterized by: reviewing the past, fostering human rights and democracy, sustainable development, accessibility.

Culture 21 proposes the following possible approaches to help promoting a greater participation of culture in policy making at local tier of government:

1) Broader legislative framework – reconciled sector-specific approaches with broad-based, intersectoral, people-centered policies, e.g. policy and programmes for "urban sustainability" are primarily about environmental issues and creating a "greener" city.

2) Delivering the "drinking" form of culture to the citizens - this would remove the prejudice that accompanies culture and its active participants that it is the privilege of individuals.

3) Measurement of culture - development of a methodological framework and standardization of cultural measurements, for example, the Council of Europe measures with its members the Indicator Framework for Culture and Democracy, also applicable for civil society organisations for cultural initiatives .

4) Greater participation of citizens in sector policy making, not only through decision making mechanisms, but also through broadening the societal spectrum of those involved. Participation of all citizens, without any prejudice in relation with gender, age, racial, ethnic, cultural background. The notion "all" is crucial. Creating conditions for institutionalized civic engagement, an adequate environment and space for education for active citizenship, also means creating conditions for the respect for cultural diversity , intercultural dialogue and social cohesion - in practice and not just as a concept. Therefore education for active citizenship through cultural participation of youth contributes directly to an improved culture of dialogue and a more credible EU integration perspective of the Balkans.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is composed of two entities: Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including also a self-governing Brcko District, which is formally under joint administrative control by both entities. The country is further divided into 10 cantons, each with its own government and powers assigned in areas such as education and health care, cultural policy, and establishing and controlling police forces. The complex government system in Bosnia and Herzegovina based on a power-sharing approach is centered around three constituent peoples identified in the constitution: Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. Each ethnic group is guaranteed an equal share of power in decision-making. This parity of constituent peoples is best illustrated in the Bosnian Presidency composed of three members: a Bosniak, a Croat, and a Serb. The society is divided on an ethnic basis, while the political system is dominated by national political elites who derive their legitimacy from self-identification as a protector of national interests. The constitutional and political system is the result of the necessary political compromise that should be made possible for unofficially functioning states (Marković, 2012, p. 43).

Most of the young generation in Bosnia and Herzegovina were fortunate to have avoided the experience of war conflicts, but they are growing up today in a society still largely burdened with the failures of the political system and the failures of reconciliation process and that ignores needs of young people. Estimations indicate some 54% of unemployment rate among the young people, not to mention that more than 56% of the population of the country left and that this brain-drain shows no sign of stopping.

At the state level, youth policy is regulated by the Law on Youth of the Federation of BiH, while on the level of the territory of the Republic of Srpska it is regulated by the Law on Youth Organization. Within the canton, youth policy is regulated by youth policy strategies, while in Republika Srpska it is regulated by municipal youth policies.

Youth Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina defines youth as a category that has from 15 to 30 years. The Law defines two categories: "youth strategy" and "youth action program", this law also defines the obligation that all levels of government in the federation

should adopt strategies and programs for youth action (Zakon o mladima Bosne i Hercegovine, 2009).

The authorities are responsible to enable young people to develop their undisturbed development and improvement, and one of the activities involves creative, artistic, sporting and cultural activities. This is why the authorities are responsible for, inter alia, the cultural and spiritual needs of young people. However, the cunning of cantonal administrations is modest in relation to this issue, since not all cantons have developed any youth policies.

Although the law defines the obligations of municipal and cantonal authorities (Article 12), their duties are not clearly defined (Article 13). However, there is a clear discrepancy between obligations and duties. In one part, it expresses support for research that would guide the development of strategies or strategies for young people (Article 14, paragraph 8). The law also defines the obligation to adopt a strategy for young people as well as the obligation that the said strategy contains a part relating to culture, sport, aesthetics, and ethics.

Generary, youth policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are neglected. This is evident from the lack of strategies for both federal and cantonal strategies that deal with this population. Youth issues are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, and the process of creating a strategy for young people started in 2015. On this issue, the municipal authorities are lagging behind - there is a certain initiative, but the realization is going at a slow pace. A similar situation is also with an action plan that is the legal obligation of all municipalities, but all the search for the competent authorities ends with failure.
Evidences show that one of the most efficient ways to develop strategies and policies for young people is to create a youth council. So far, a number of local governments have created these councils and have successfully launched the policy implementation.

Ministry of Education and Culture has the competences for cultural policy in Republika Srpska. Within the ministry, there are administrative units and institutions for culture. However, in relation to the fields of action determined by law some drawbacks could be noted since for example the cultural heritage is defined as cultural space, while modernization and creation of new cultural values are fostered by artistic traditional creativity.

The Constitution of the Republic of Srpska (Article 11) stipulates that "the care of the youth is of general interest to the Republic and the general interest is achieved by creating the conditions for youth organization and care of the youth and the adoption and implementation of the established youth policy document in the republic, city and municipal level" (Ustav republike Srpske). However, the interest in this area is not clearly defined, and consequently, youth policies remain vague and without continuity or regularity of implementation or mechanisms established.

In principle, the element of support to youth policy is broadly defined, but lacking the clearly defined approach to the implementation. For example, the existence of infrastructure problems and the lack of certain skilled professionals in the field of culture, significantly influences the cultural offer. The need for development of young and professional staff is being promoted, whilst one of the intentions is to improve the curricula in elementary education that would enable more knowledge and skills in the field of culture (theatrical, musical, and visual).

Marketing of art products is an additional problem noticed whereas, for example, there is a lack of licensed galleries that would deal with the promotion of artists on the market through fairs, festivals, or through cooperation with international galleries. Insufficient government support in publishing projects is also evident, especially when young people are concerned. One of the strategic goals is the focus on the development of young professionals through cooperation between educational and cultural institutions.

The Integrated City Development Strategy 2014-2024 (Integralna strategija razvoja grada Prijedora, 2013) for the city of Prijedor contains provisions related to culture, here defined as a wide concept, promoting the values of multiethnicity, but also emphasizes its spiritual dimension through the manifestation of self-identity and national identity. Some of the needs identified by this strategy in the domain of culture are mostly infrastructural.

The Integral Strategy itself suggests that the future local self-government will focus on accessing EU funds to finance projects in the field of culture and youth. One of the strategic goals is also the support of young people for greater cultural participation.

The cultural offer in Prijedor is mainly created by local government and youth (mostly non-governmental organizations), which is at the same time the owner of youth cultural facilities or centers organizing the free time of youth, while youth organizations themselves are most often responsible for the content of these centers. This model is widespread in most municipalities in BiH. In many cases, the local government has been detached both from ownership over the facilities and the youth cultural programmes organised.

When we talk about strategic goals of youth policy, Zenica Doboj Canton encourage creativity of young people and create conditions for cultural and spiritual affirmation of youth. The strategy states the following: "This is in fact the area through which young people critically examine traditional cultural patterns and heritage as part of their identity and create new patterns and aesthetics creating a space for their own recognition and action" (Ministarstvo za obrazovanje, nauku, kulturu i sport) which is in oposite of Republika Srpska strategy or one step forward in re-examining the traditional values of the community and the formation of a new youth identity. The strategy identifies that one of the main problems in the cultural participation of young people is the lack of recognition of the local and cantonal tier of government of the importance and contribution that young people make in creating a cultural offer. Local self-government support is the key part, since infrastructure support is often lacking in the realization of ideas. The concept of free time is of great importance for young people since the absence quality free time is most often manifested through deviant behavior. A general lack and absence of a comprehensive youth information system is evident, including for example the leack of youth thematic magazines that can play a major role in the democratization of society and contribute to a somewhat different cultural and societal perspective. The current deadlock in key social, economic and cultural aspects of youth environment is leading towards further marginalization of the youth and their passivism.

The Culture Policy Strategy of the Municipality of Zavidovići (2011-2015) points out that culture is differently regulated at the cantonal and entity level of the federation, and often overlapping the competencies of the institutions and unpredictability of their activities. The strategy identifies the following youth related concerns: 1) Lack of appropriate legal framework for culture, 2) lack of institutional capacity, 3) poor coordination and cooperation between

different levels of government and youth, 4) lack of financial resources, 5) lack of public space for youth at municipal level.

Kosovo*

Taking into account the specificity of the socio-political context in Kosovo* as well as the intention of preserving the multi-ethnic composure, the Constitution does not specify the category of young people and therefore any obligation towards them, which would aim at their cultural emancipation. Any mention of culture in the Constitution is aimed at overcoming ethnic differences and preserving religious and cultural heritage with the aim of building a multi-ethnic society.

On the other hand, the official title of the Law on Youth of the Republic of Kosovo* is entitled "Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth". Youth empowerment is an important part of building a national sovereignty of Kosovo*, which is clearly recognized in Article 1 of this law:

„This law aims to promote and reaffirm continued participation of youth in the decision making process, without any difference and exclusion, in the development of a democratic society, in order to improve the quality of life of youth and their social status."

This law, unlike other countries, defines a category of youth between 15 and 24 years. The law defines programs for young people whose leadership, approval and supervision are carried out by the local self-government, under the direct supervision of the ministry and the department for youth. Government bodies are working together with the Kosovo Youth Action Council (KYAC) in the adoption, implementation, development, and youth policies. KYAC are bodies supported by the OSCE, which aims to improve youth participation in decision-making and policy-making. One of the goals of this program is directed towards greater participation of young people in the participation in culture through increased visiting of places of cultural significance. However, the programme itself does not go deeper into the cultural participation of young people, especially in the part of cultural production (OSCE, 2013).

The same law in Article 13 reinforces the need for a greater participation of young people in the field of culture while, however, the mechanisms of youth participation are not sufficiently elaborated.

Kosovo* Youth Strategy 2013-2017 and Activity Plan 2013-2015 is a comprehensive strategy of the Kosovo* Government for Youth. One of the strategic objectives is also the field of culture, sport and recreation that aims at integrating the youth into social, economic and cultural life, through various cultural, sporting activities (Departman za mlade MKOS, 2013). The Strategy advocates raising the level of social inclusion in the social life as well as the development (organization / performance / realization) of various cultural, sports and recreative activities for the youth. For the purposes of this strategy, a SWOT analysis was made to identify the following shortcomings that could be related to culture: infrastructure construction, improvement of legislation, support for young talents, and greater role in the decision-making and decision-making process.

The Law on Strengthening and Participating Youth (2009) aims to reaffirm the position of youth in the Kosovo society. Also, one of the obligations prescribed by this law is that Kosovo institutions provide a special influence and role in the decision-making process, and one of the areas is the field of culture.

Montenegro

The youth policy is in responsibility of the Government of Montenegro, respective government departments and administration in charge of youth, municipalities, CSOs. At the national level, the most important institution responsible for youth policy is the Directorate for Youth and Sports, which adopts the annual plan for the implementation of the Youth Strategy. In addition, the Council for Youth formed by the Ministry, municipal administrations, youth organizations, experts, plays an important role in monitoring the implementation of the Strategy. Local self-government plays an important role in creating and implementing the local youth policy. For the purpose of policy coordination, planning and implementation and cooperation between competent municipal bodies with other tiers of government, municipalities are entitled to establish a special organizational unit for youth (Youth Office). One of these is the Youth Office in Nikšić.

One of the priorities of The Youth Strategy 2017-2021 is to ensure young people to have access to quality cultural content both as creators and consumers. Interestingly, the strategy assumes

that one of the approaches to increase civic activism of young people is to increase cultural participation. This is actually the only strategy within which cultural participation is inserted in the section on volunteering. A plethora of the means for improvement of youth cultural participation includes developing a culture of youth participation, supporting youth networking and linking young people, securing a mechanism for fostering activism. The strategy recognizes the following shortcomings in the field of cultural participation of young people: insufficient support to young people for development of the specificities of their own subcultural expressions, inadequate involvement of young people in the existing programmes of cultural institutions, as well as insufficient knowledge of youth about art and culture through the existing education system, underdeveloped communication and government-based initiatives on local level, specific programmes dedicated to young people's culture.

The strategy suggests that, through the support of creation, quality and equal access to cultural content, the culture of young people can be improved. Some of the key problems are the lack of a database to determine the exact number of people involved in the culture. One of the measures is the development of culture of volunteering in the institutions of culture. It is necessary to disseminate the availability of quality cultural offer - especially taking into account the north of Montenegro. Some of the measures within the strategy are: support for creators of cultural content, infrastructure solutions, school system reforms, development of information technology for young people.

The Culture Development Programme (Ministarstvo kulture , 2016) promotes a greater participation of young people in culture, emphasizing that the government is facing challenges to increase the contribution of young people to culture. The programme reiterates the need to conduct research on cultural needs of young people, as well as on designing contents aiming to identify interest of young people in culture. It sets out the programme as one of the strategic goals and equals the development of culture with a special emphasis on the municipalities in the north. Therefore, one of the strategic measures is the realization of the programme for supporting the development of cultural policy of Nikšić municipality.

The program for supporting the development of culture in Niksic 2014-2017 (Program razvoja kulture opštine Nikšić) was initiated by the Government of Montenegro at the initiative of the

Ministry of Culture as a four-year project that should result in improving the cultural life of Niksic, a city that has a long and significant cultural tradition.

This program activates all cultural institutions of the city of Nikšić, encourages their cooperation, productions and co-productions, exchange programs with other cultural institutions in Montenegro, as well as an international presentation. At the same time, the program points to the necessity of a meaningful, organized and continuous functioning of cultural institutions, in order to meet the cultural needs of citizens. One of the strategic goals is the creation of this type of needs in Niksican which, although recognized as one of the better audiences, regardless of the type of cultural program offered to them, were not able to "consume" culture in proportion to their needs. The lack of cultural contents in this city, which characterized the previous period, was an alarming sign of the necessary cultural activity.

The strategy of cultural development consists in the proportional offer of all forms of cultural and artistic programmes, for all ages and generations. From month to month the audience will be able to follow concerts, exhibitions, theater performances, film screenings, literary evenings (Program razvoja kulture opštine Nikšić). The main result of this programme will be the creation of a "Municipal Development Plan for Culture", which according to the Law on Culture will be developed by all cities in Montenegro (Portal Onogošt, 2017).

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The government, as the main policy planning and implementation body, plans and carries out the reforms, while the Youth and Sports Agency has the role of monitoring the implementation of the national youth strategy. The National strategy emphasizes the role of the civil sector in improving the cultural participation of young people. Partnership relations and inter-sectoral co-operation are specifically emphasized in order to meeting the goals of the strategy.

There is an evident continuity when it comes to creating policies in the field of youth in this country. For example, at national level, there are two strategies that follow the implementation for the period from 2005 to 2025 (not considering that three years have passed with another strategy). It is surprising, however, that, for example, another strategy was created for the

period from 2015 to 2025. The long implementation period, especially in relation to the sensitivity and dynamics of the changes inherent to youth population, would require a somewhat shorter implementation interval.

Within the Strategy of Youth 2015-2025 (Национална стратегија за млади 2016-2025) there is a special thematic area of Culture. The following main concern is clearly highlighted:

"There is little available data in the field of youth culture relevant to the national level, in principle, the strategies and policies implemented by the Ministry of Culture refer to culture as a separate area, but it is difficult to identify activities that would relate to the culture of youth".

Strategy clearly points the shortcomings in this field: insufficient and irregular cultural content (especially outside Skopje), lack of interest of young people as well as insufficient "fresh" cultural offer, cultural illiteracy, poor integration of young people for the purpose of cultural association, cultural gap between young people in Skopje and outside Skopje, poor media offer.

The National Strategy for the Youth (2016-2025) recognizes culture as one of the key areas. Thus, it has a special place in this strategy, but it also forms a significant part of the Quality of Life section. The strategy was preceded by the research of the Institute for Sociological and Political-Legal Research in 2014, and it reflects the main priorities of the European Charter in this field. Main problems identified in this strategy are: insufficient cultural offer in places outside Skopje, poor cultural participation of young people, insufficient cultural production by young people.

The Strategy, as well as the Action Plan for 2016-2017 (Акциски план за спроведување на Национална младиснска стратегија), suggests the need for improving the system of cultural participation of youth - measures aimed at greater public reception, improving the quality of cultural offer with a focus on cities outside Skopje, cooperation with youth associations in order to improve the cultural offer, the participation of young people in the creation of cultural policies, refreshing the education program in schools with culturally rich content, greater support for young talented people.

The national strategy identifies the free time as a strategic goal in the section of quality of life. Strategy points out that some of the main factors affecting the quality of life of young people are lack of autonomy (or lack of independence), unemployement, financial dependence, poor rural development. As one of the solutions for an improved cultural participation of youth, the document is affirming the principle of improving the youth engagement in decision making in cultural policies, as well as the need to encourage rural youth in the creation of cultural contents and policies.

Culture is one of the priorities of the Youth Strategy for the City of Skopje (Стратегија за млади на Град Скопје). The goal of the strategy in this area is to support the cultural engagement, creativity and mass involvement of young people in cultural activities by improving the responsive information available, and networking of all actors in the field of culture and youth. The strategy itself does not differ much from the national strategy in relation to its specific goals, for example: greater support of young talents through funding, more cultural participation of young people, increased inclusion of young people in the creation of cultural content.

The local youth strategy of the municipality of Kavadarci (created within the project "Creating local youth strategies") (Локална младинска стратегија за Општина Кавадарци) identifies problems as well as the national strategy and the local strategy of the city of Skoplje. Local governments recognize the main concerns related to culture, but the question is to what extent urban and rural concepts in cultural policy coexist in making the cultural landscape of the country.

Serbia

Serbia adopted Youth law in 2011. Article 1 (Zakon o mladima republike Srbije, 2011) of this law stipulates the measures and activities undertaken by the Republic of Serbia, autonomous provinces and units of local self-government, aimed at improving the social status of young people. Youth policy is implemented by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and youth activities are defined by the youth strategy. Strategy is adopted for a period of ten years.

The law itself defines the financing of programs and projects of public interest, in which young people are encouraged to actively and qualitatively spend free time, nourishing safe and healthy life style, as well as in meeting the needs of young people in the field of culture (Article 20). Support of local self-government in order to create the conditions for meeting the needs of young people in the field of culture is carried out in accordance with the specified needs of the local self-government and policy adopted (Article 46). Also, the law encourages young talents in the field of cultural creativity, as well as children's creativity and creativity for children and young people.

Cultural policy is created at the national level and implemented at the levels of the republic, province and local self-government. Ministry of culture and information is responsible for development and promotion of culture and artistic creation, and the protection and preservation of cultural heritage. National cultural policy is implemented at central, provincial and local levels.

The Republic of Serbia adopted the National Youth Strategy (Ministarstvo kulture i sporta, 2014) as well as the accompanying action plan in this area for the period 2015-2017. Within these documents, general and specific goals represent the basis for defining the indicators of youth policy. Strategy has 11 specific and strategic goals. Here we include only those related to our research topic:

Institutions in society should provide equal access to cultural events for all citizens, marginalized groups as well as to those in social need. The strategy stipulates the need for encouraging talented individuals in developing and fostering their own abilities, defines necessary prerequisites for quality free time through accessibility and availability of the cultural contents, and encourages an improved participation of young people in creation of public policies.

Key priorities of the national strategy are related to fostering participation of young people in culture through creative cultural programmes, self-employment opportunities, involvement of young people in cultural programmes, development of systematic support in increasing the cultural participation of young people. Improving information provision for youth by adapting

the contents to the needs of young people and through adjusting the cultural contents. The Action plan for culture highlights the following: support for accredited programmes for talented students, support to extracurricular activities aimed at providing the developmental opportunities for young people. Engaging in creative cultural sector is one of the strategic goals that aims to reduce the risk of social exclusion. In particular, the action plan focuses on the culture of young people. In this part, the specific goal is to improve the participation of young people in the creation of cultural content. For this reason, the government intends to support programmes that promote the cultural and creative potential of young people both in formal and non-formal education setting, and in this way to ensure better access for participation of young people in enriching the cultural offer. Increasing the scope, diversity and quality of cultural offer is reiterated also as a priority at the level of local communities.

Cultural participation and cultural production are seen here as the areas falling within the scope of free time, not factually identified as a priority. Some changes in the new strategy have been announced (Ministarstvo kulture i informisanja, 2017). The new strategy for the development of the culture of the Republic of Serbia recognizes three priorities in this area: human resource development, infrastructure development, international co-operation development and EU integration. The strategy identifies specific concerns such as the lack of interest for cultural creativity, lack of motivation of young people to participate in innovative cultural undertakings. There is an evident need to increase the "export" of cultural creators to other cities of Serbia, since the vast majority of them are located in Belgrade and Novi Sad -which is one of the preconditions for creating a financially sustainable environment for culture. The strategy recognizes both the potentials and the role of the youngest population, reiterates the quality education, pro-active engagement in projects, inter-sectoral co-operation and communication in order to increase the level of youth participation in cultural production.

When it comes to the municipalities included as the host cities of two Local Democracy Agencies Subotica and Knjaževac, different approaches to culture could be seen considering the specifities of the local context. The city of Subotica has achieved a continuity in adopting and implementing of youth policy measures, while in Knjazevac there is a lack of strategic policy framework in this respect.

The relevant starting document for Subotica is the Action Plan for Youth for the period 2015-2020 for Vojvodina (Akcioni plan za mlade). Two key areas that this document identifies are culture and information provision for the young people. The overall objective set is to increase availability and supply, as well as greater participation of young people in the field of cultural activities. Unlike the national strategy, this strategy as one of the activities involves affirmation of the original multi-ethnic cultural heritage, as well as the preservation of the intangible cultural and industrial heritage. The structures that work with youth in the field of culture in Subotica are Foundation for Youth Culture "Danilo Kiš" which aims to help shape the cultural space for young people in local community. Civil society organizations , including LDA Subotica, are also engaged as organisations working with youth, while the scope of their activities among other things, include art workshops, training and cultural events for young people.

The Youth Action Plan for Subotica (Akcioni plan za mlade), sets the policy framework and measures for improving the opportunities for a better quality of free time through a stronger partnership of organizations and institutions active in the field, developing information systems, improving infrastructure, increasing the participation of young people in these activities.

3. SECONDARY ANALYSIS

## 3.1.   The Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy (IFCD)

This chapter examines the links between the legislative and institutional structures we have so far assessed as important for furthering youth policy as an empirically valid indicator of culture and its correlations.

The IFCD[3] database from 2017 will be used, which contains data for Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia. Unfortunately, Kosovo* is not in this database, but its relevance and quality are justification for its broader application. It should also be noted that it does not recognize the age difference, and we cannot distinguish the special category of "young people". Visual presentation of the relationship between variables is based on the scatterdot diagram. Dashed red line shows a linear relationship between variables, and its direction (in all cases) "up" indicates a positive correlation between the variables. The coefficient from the right upper corner R^2 shows the common surface of the variable - multiplying the value with 100 gives a percentage of the common surface.

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[3] The IFCD is a tool for assessing cultural policies and examining links between culture and democracy within and among Council of Europe member states. Developed especially for policy makers, practitioners, advocates, and researchers, the IFCD sheds light on countries' positions in terms of culture and democracy, possible linkages between key aspects, and opportunities for policy intervention, advocacy, and research (http://www.governancereport.org/ifcd/#).

Figure 1: Relation between Democracy and Cuture
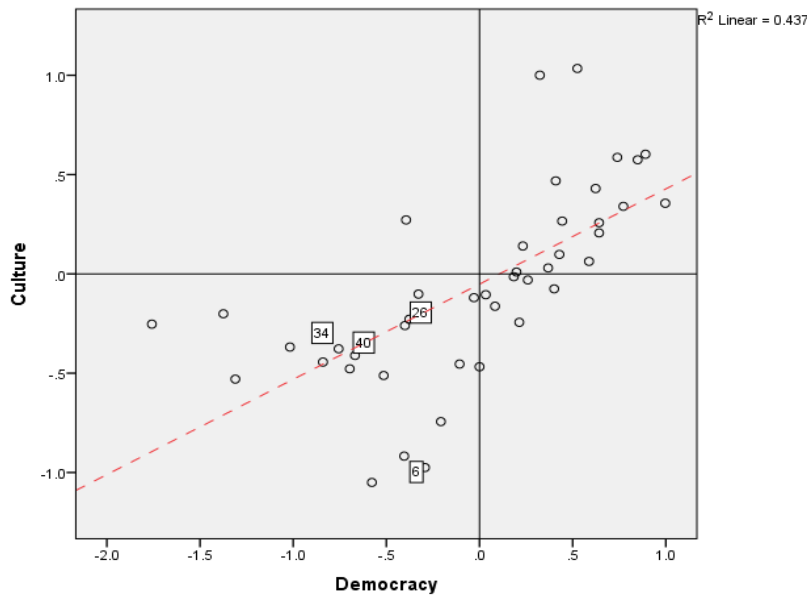
In figure 1 we can see positive relation between Democracy and Culture. Coefficient R^2 indicates a strong relationship between variables. Figure is divided in four part and positions countries from region are identified with numbers[4]. It is indicative that all countries are in a part that points to a lower democracy and a lower culture.

Figure 2: Relation between Economy and Culture
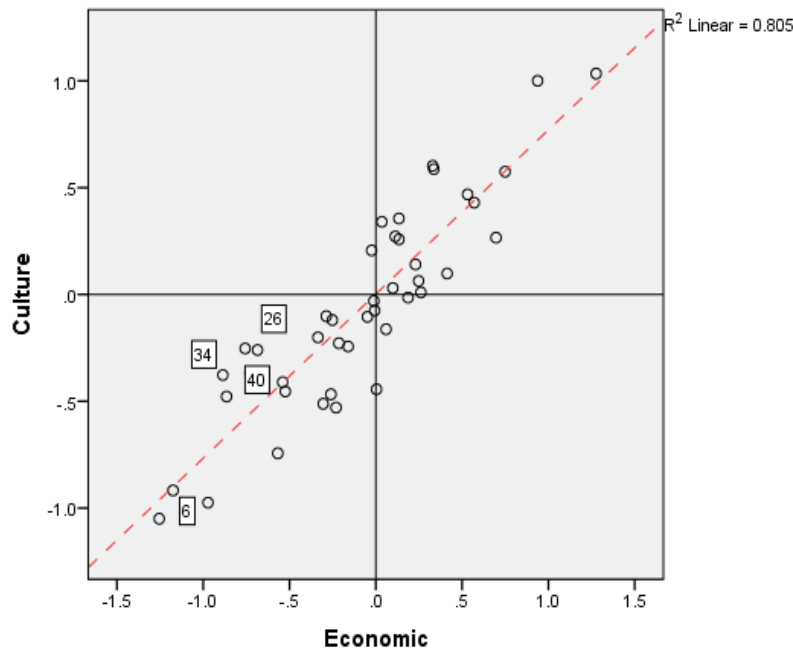
In figure 2 we can identify relation between Economy and Culture. As we can see, there is a strong link between culture and economy, which confirms the assumption that as a country's economy is stronger culture is more developed. This is also supported by the high value of the coefficient R^2. As in the previous case, the countries of the region are located in a part that shows a weaker economy and thus a less developed culture.

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[4] 6 – Bosnia and Herzegovina, 26 – Montenegro, 34 – Serbia, 40 – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Figure 3: Relation between Cultural Infrastructure and Cultural Participation
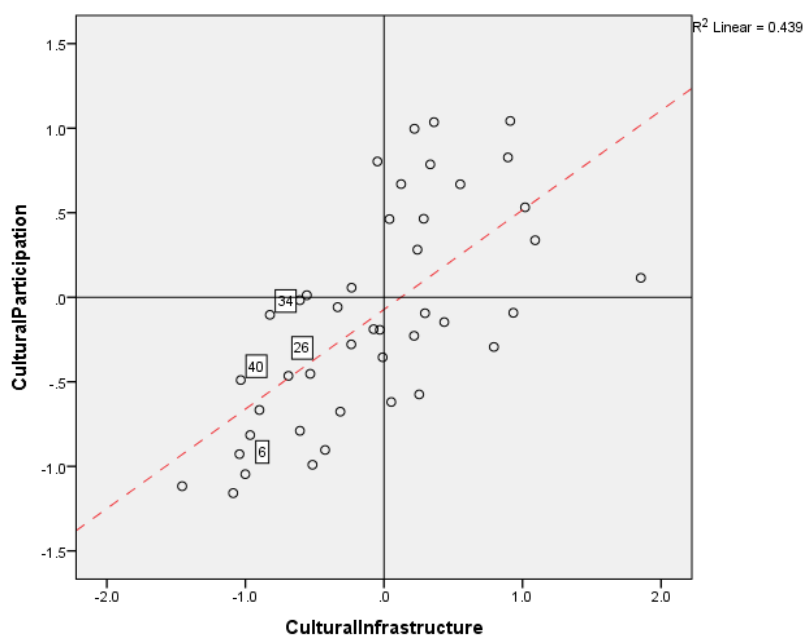

Figure 3 indicates positive correlation between Cultural infrastructure and Cultural participation which explains that cultural participation increases as the cultural infrastructure is bigger. Also, as in the previous cases the positions for the countries of the region are in the part that points to weaker cultural infrastructure and cultural participation.

These are some of the most relevant links that point to the importance of culture and cultural participation. The databases we use offer more opportunities, but any further research will in some way deviate from the subjects of our research that puts Youth in focus.

3.2. Bosnia and Herzegovina

Youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina is marginalized (Žiga, 2015, str. 8). The study points out an average socio-economic profile of a young person:

The average young person in BiH is 21 years old, lives in a small town or vilage with no more than 2000 inhabitants. If not a student (high school) or student, he/she is most often unemployed, living in a household with approximatly four members (3.82), in apartment/house and has own room and internet connection. In average young people in BiH have a computer, a car and a smartphone, while the most of them do not own a tablet and in a slightly lower percentage of a laptop. Households in which young people live on average have monthly expenses of 801 to 1100 KM, and own between 11 and 20 books.

The most outstanding problems related with the status of youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina are: brain drain, unemployment, anachronic and outdated education programmes, collapse of the value system, the presence of corruption and bribery, loyalty to political centres of power. For example, a strong indicator of this situation could be seen on the example of the municipality of Prijedor where young people state the following reasons for leaving: low standard of living, lack of perspective, high crime, corruption level and violence, followed by poor conditions for entertainment and recreation (Omladinska politika opštine Prijedor, 2008).

Apathy is widespread among the young people who do not seem to be able to do much to overcome such a situation; for example, in this study almost half of young people interviewed do not know how many books they have at home - 14.7% say that there is no book. Their attitudes point to the current trends on the basis of which the goals in life are formed. Young people point out the following trends: career, good physical appearance, independence. What is symptomatic is the expressed conservatism of young people, especially related to their attitudes about the abortion and homosexuality (60% of the respondents expressed condemnation in relation to these issues).

However, on the positive note is the growing tendency of interest among young people for cultural participation, and for example in the Republic of Srpska, the interest of the audience for theatre has increased in the last few years (the children's theater has recorded an increase of 12,000 spectators between 2011 and 2015) (Ministarstvo prosvete i kulture, 2017). On the other hand, analyzing the situation in publishing sector in Republika Srpska, a negative trend could be observed. From 2012 to 2016, the number of books published in the Republic of Srpska has been halved. The most commonly published are professional and scientific literature in the field of linguistics and fiction, textbooks monograph, religious and religious literature. How serious this indicator is, could be illustrated by the fact that in the EU an average of 1 to 1.5 books per thousand inhabitants is published annually. In Republika Srpska, this percentage is 0.09% (i.e. an average of 1000 publications annually). According to global standards, budget allocations less than 2.4%, is an indication that culture is reduced to an incident.

One of the evident problems is a conservative education system — for example the non-formal education has not been developed despite the interest of young people. Leasure time of young people is usually filled with "activities": socializing with friends, going out into the city, listening to music. In most cases, investment in culture is seen as an unnecessary cost or luxury.

Further to this, evidences show more youth passivity in rural settlements than in urban communities, whereas young people from these areas have fewer opportunities for cultural participation, production, or for following the contemporary cultural trends.

3.3. Kosovo*

High unemployment rate, mostly affecting the youth as in other parts of the Western Balkans, is also the biggest problem in Kosovo*. The data from the Kosovo Youth Strategy indicate that 58% of young people are unemployed. It is also important to note a very limited impact of young people on policy making. The strategy identifies two main reasons for this: firstly, the limited ability of public institutions to include youth in these processes and on the other hand, the insufficient capacity of youth and youth organizations to be part of these processes. An evident lack of research works in this field makes this picture even more complicated.

Montenegro

Two research studies are relevant for secondary situation analysis in Montenegro: Cultural life of students in Montenegro (Pavlović, 2016) and Cultural practices in Boka Kotorska (Cvetičanin P. , 2012). Interestingly enough, in the course of making of the strategy of culture, the relevant authority did not prepare a situation analysis that would help determine the cultural needs.

In Montenegro, 2.5% of the state budget is allocated for culture (Ministarstvo kulture , 2016), which is considerably higher percentage as compared to other countries included in this study.

Research results on cultural participation of young people in Montenegro (the survey included a student population: young people aged between 18 and 29), show the following trends in cultural participation: the level of cultural participation is weak because students are not attracted to cultural events, impact of cultural contents on everyday life is marginal.

Furthermore, estimations say for example that 71.1% of students have never visited the theatre, 80.1% have never visited the museum, 52.9% of respondents had read up to 2 books in the previous year.

Most of the students in Montenegro are financially dependent on their parents (56.7%), while only 8.8% of them are employed. Financial independence influences significantly the youth cultural participation and in most cases the students give up either going to vacation or the cultural content.

Young people in Montenegro mainly spend their free time in sports recreation / training, watch TV or going out. Only 1.66% go to theatres or cinema during daytime, 2% are engaged in art, while 9.2% read books. Approximately 54.5% of student population in their leaisure time does not deal with cultural production (professional or amateur).

The research of "Cultural practice in the Boka Kotorska" by Predrag Cveticanin was conducted in 2012 for the needs of drafting the local self-governments' cultural programme for three municipalities: Kotor, Tivat and Herceg Novi. The paper outlines key findings emphasized by Cveticanin, based on factor analysis showing that:

a) Active cultural participation includes frequent visit of theatres, libraries, concerts of classical music, art galleries and museums, as well as pop-rock concerts, jazz concerts, as well as going to the cinema. What those who belong to this form do not visit are concerts of folk music, sports events and restaurants with "live" music. This group according to Cveticanin forms the core of active audience in Boka Kotorska (33.76% of the total variance).

b) Cultural participation focused on entertainment explains 13.87% variance. Entartainment is understood in a specific way through going to concerts of folk music, going to bars with "live" music, going to sports events, and on the other hand, rarely going to the theatre, art galleries, museums, etc.

c) Cultural participation of seamans, denoting a kind of a local context, is explained with 10.26% variance. It is characterized by a tendency towards turbo-folk and newly-formed folk music on one and techno and rap music on the other side. Regression analysis shows that these are mainly young people, mostly male, with lower education level and in low skilled jobs.

3.4.   The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

For the needs of the secondary analysis, two research analyses on youth needs and youth trends (Јакимовски, 2014; НАОДИ ОД ПРАШАЛНИК ЗА МЛАДИ, 2015) were used. In fact, there is very little available data in the field of culture related to youth at the national level. Strategies and policies implemented by the Ministry of Culture primarily relate to culture.

Young people in this country are facing numerous concerns. As in entire Western Balkans, the key problem is a high unemployment (45.5%). Passivism and apathy are reflected in almost all segments and activities, while the research shows that a large number of young people are not physically active (50%), and that only few of the young people volunteer in the local community, i.e. almost half of the respondents do not participate in any activities of the local community. A similar situation occurs in civic activism where 2/3 of the respondents do not participate in any form of civic activism. However, one of the data deviating from this situation is political participation where only 7.3% of young people do not go to the polls. Possible explanation is in evident polarization in society and in the specificity of the socio-political context (Јакимовски, 2014).

Research results on the level of youth cultural participation show that a quarter of young people in this country does not seem to attend cultural programmes. Most of those attending the cultural events show interest in the concerts or multimedia performances. Films, theatre or literary festivals are rarely attended by the youth. The survey also shows that the cultural participation varies from rural and urban communities variables, and the variable related to ethnicity and educational status.

When it comes to private cultural reception, most of the young respondents watch serial programmes (21.5%) and the least of them show interest in music (11.1%), while in the case of a public cultural reception, 38.5% of young people in Macedonia do not visit cultural events and from those who visit, the highest frequency is going to the theatre. Out of a large number (24.1%) of those who do not read the books at all, an extremely high percentage (89.2%) does

not belong to any cultural group. When asked what they lack in cultural offer, most of them answered: more cultural events of the festival type. Also, a large number of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the cultural offer. What is positive is the interest of young people when it comes to youth activities —one third of respondents would want to be included in one of them.

3.5. Serbia

Interest in cultural participation of young people is most present in Serbia compared to all the other countries that are subject of this analysis. This is also supported by the data published in research studies by a remarkable number of authors (Cvetičanin P. M., 2011; Mrđa, 2011)[5] and beyond the strategic planning of the government or local community - which was mainly the case in other countries.

Studies have shown that economic dependence, apathy, poor financial position and consequently poor participation of young people (not only in the field of culture) are some of the main characteristics of the life of young people in Serbia. As well as in all the countries of the region, there is a strong centralization of cultural contents, and therefore smaller and non-urban places are mainly excluded from cultural activities.

Compared to the number of young people involved in some form of cultural participation, research estimation indicate that on average between 8% and 13% of young people are engaged in some form of cultural creativity. The rest of the young population is not engaged in cultural production, and the main reasons are lack of interest and lack of free time. A general abstention from local public life was also expressed (32% of young respondents stated that they participate in some of the activities in respective municipalities).

The unemployment rate of young people is at a high level — nearly every second young person is unemployed. Research shows that the inactivity of young people is to a large extent related to the economic situation, which affects the deprivation of individuals.

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[5] Also, the National Youth Strategy as well as the local action plans offer a large number of data when it comes to the cultural participation of young people.

In the field of cultural consumption, research shows that young people rarely visit cultural institutions or events. For example: 83.5% of young people rarely or never visit museums, 75.4% never or rarely visit galleries, 72.5% rarely or never visit cultural and historical monuments and archaeological sites. Also, 69% of young people rarely or never visit theatre performances, and 69.2% the literary event, while 67% never or rarely go to the cinema. Young people are most interested in going to cafés (62.9%).

Young people mostly spend their leisure time relaxing - by listening to music, watching TV or hanging out with friends. Passivity is additionally contributed by data that only 2/5 persons are engaged in sports activities. Frequency of dealing with some form of creativity is 1/10. When it comes to key dimensions and priorities that young people tend to express, it is possible to distinguish three "value" categories: *have a career, look good, be independent*.

Serbian government allocates extremely low percentage of the budget for culture - only 0.42% of the public budget is intended for culture and thus, in comparison to the EU allocations, it comes down to the incident. The Culture Budget for the Republic of Serbia for 2016 is 0.63%, while in the previous years this budget amounted to about 1%.

The Local Action Plan for Subotica points to the passivity of young people when it comes to the way they spend their free time. More worrying fact is that a large percentage (79.7%) of young people is satisfied with the way of spending leisure time. One of the possible assumptions is that local self-governments do not recognize young people as potential drivers of furthering culture and cultural life in the local community. Often the mechanisms of animation do not seem to have become attractive or adjusted to young people's dynamics.

4. SURVEY ANALYSIS

4.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Respondents included in the research sample are all from the Western Balkans: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo*, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia. Also, we have examined youth cultural participation and our sample is limited to respondents who are between 15 and 30 years of age. Figure 4 shows the gender structure of the respondents. Significantly more women participated in the research compared to men.

Figure 4: Gender
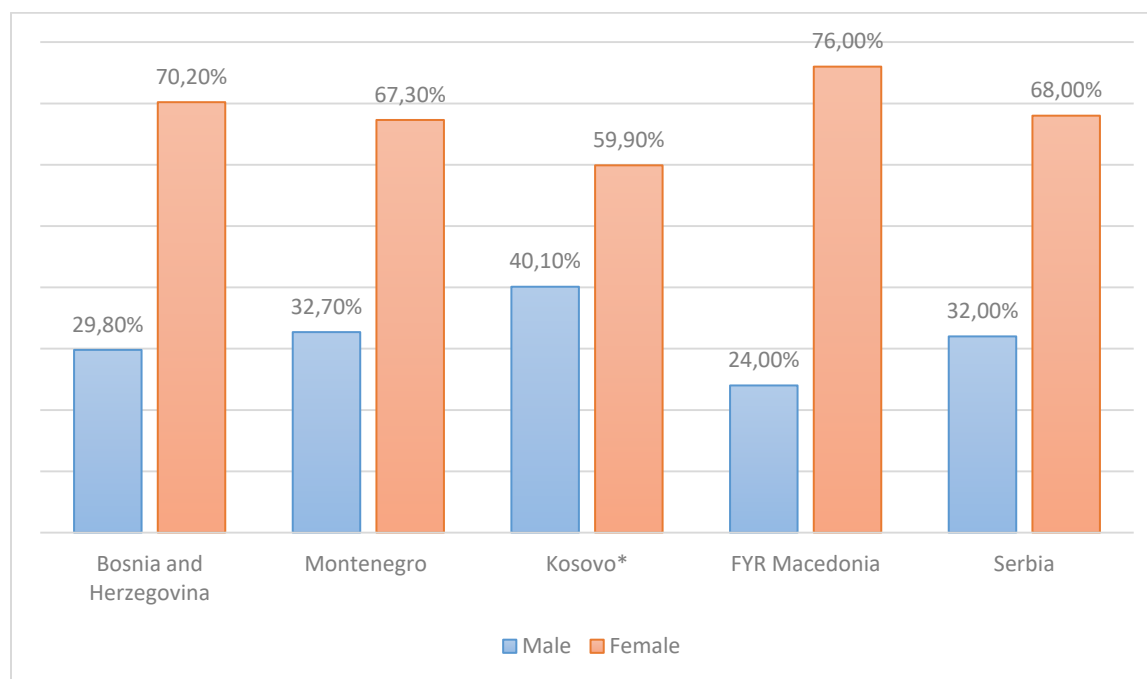
The figure 5 shows educational profile of the respondents, most of whom have completed high school (38.90%), while on the other hand, with almost equal distribution among respondents who have completed elementary education and those who have a bachelor diploma (26.80% and 26.60%). The highest education, 10.8% of the respondents are in the rank of Spec. Sci or higher. Educational structure of the respondents provides solid grounds and prerequisites for further analysis.
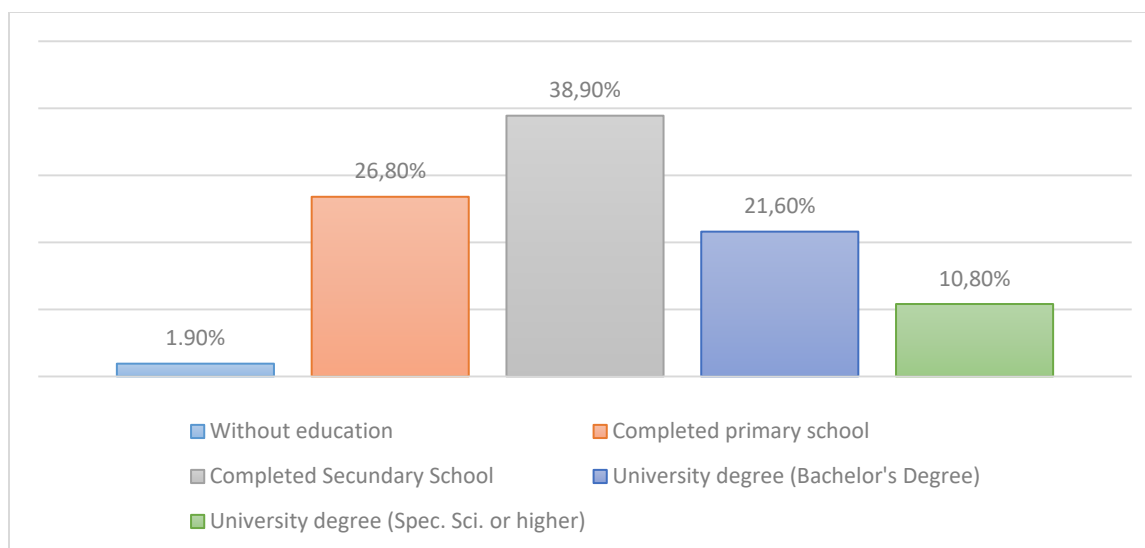
Most of of the respondents included in the survey are from urban areas (Figure 6). The highest disproportion in the sample is present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the smallest one is present in Kosovo*.

Figure 6: Place of residence
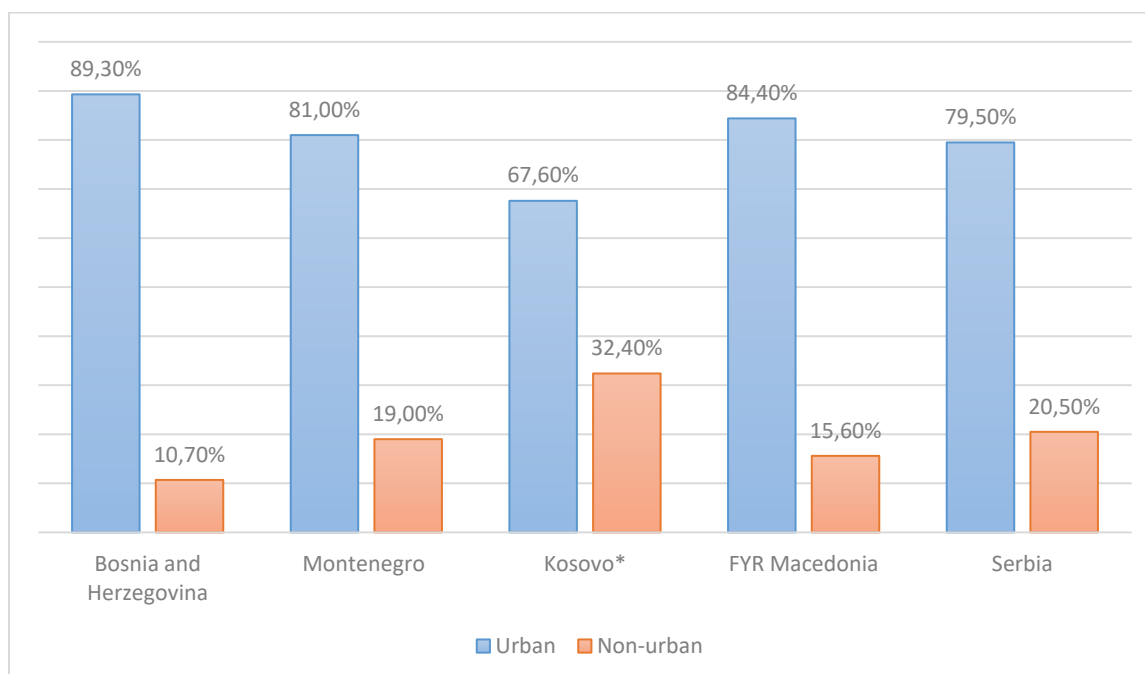
4.2. Perception of the surroundings and the environment in relation to culture

It is very important to examine the link between the place of residence and the environment in which the respondents live. In this way, it is possible to establish the initial data/knowledge in terms of the assessment of the needs of respondents as well as the evaluation of the contents. Figure 4 shows the estimation of the relationship of the respondents with the environment - local, national, regional and the European. It is possible to determine the comparative differences in relation to the average values - higher values indicate a stronger connection. In almost all categories of the sample in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the highest relationship with their environment was expressed, except when it comes to the category of "Your country" as emphasized for Montenegro. Serbia shows the weakest link with its environment in most of the categories except in the first one. In general, it can be concluded that young people in the region show an over-average interest in the contents from their own and wider surroundings.

Figure 7: Connections with surroundings (mean differences)
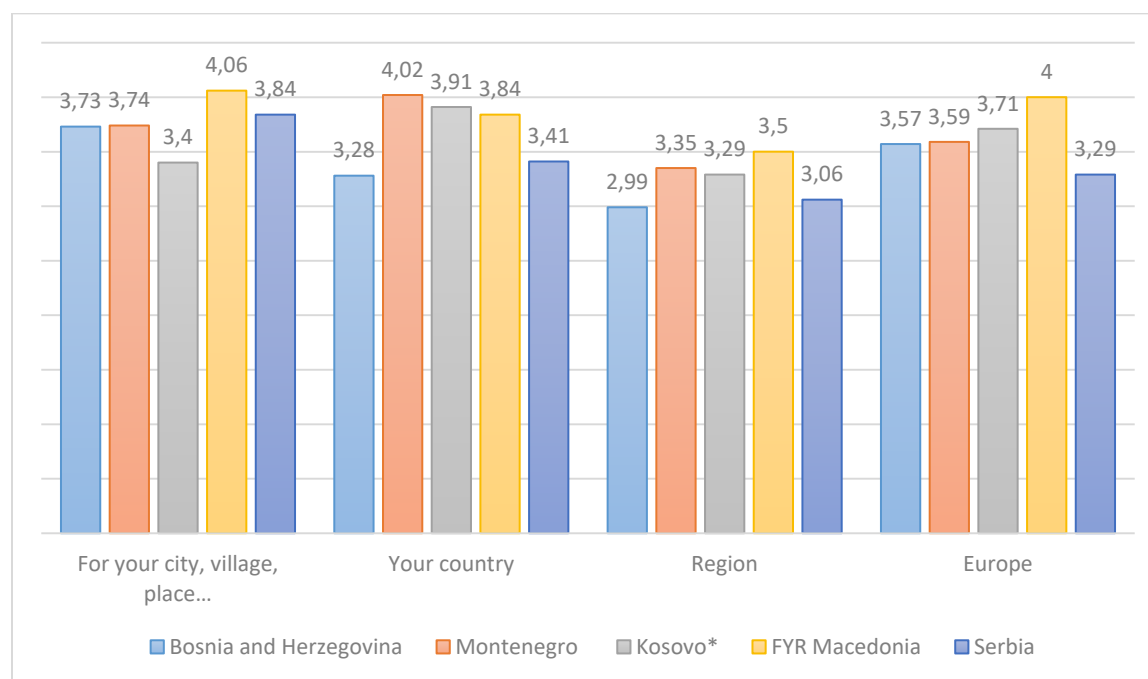
As previously established, the trend of young people's interest in cultural content can be identified in the Figure 8. This figure indicates an over-average interest in cultural content.

Youth in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia shows the greatest interest in the content on all three levels. However, it is not possible to identify significant differences between the three levels, because the interest in cultural content in all categories is almost identical.

*Figure 8: Level of interest for cultural content (mean differences)*
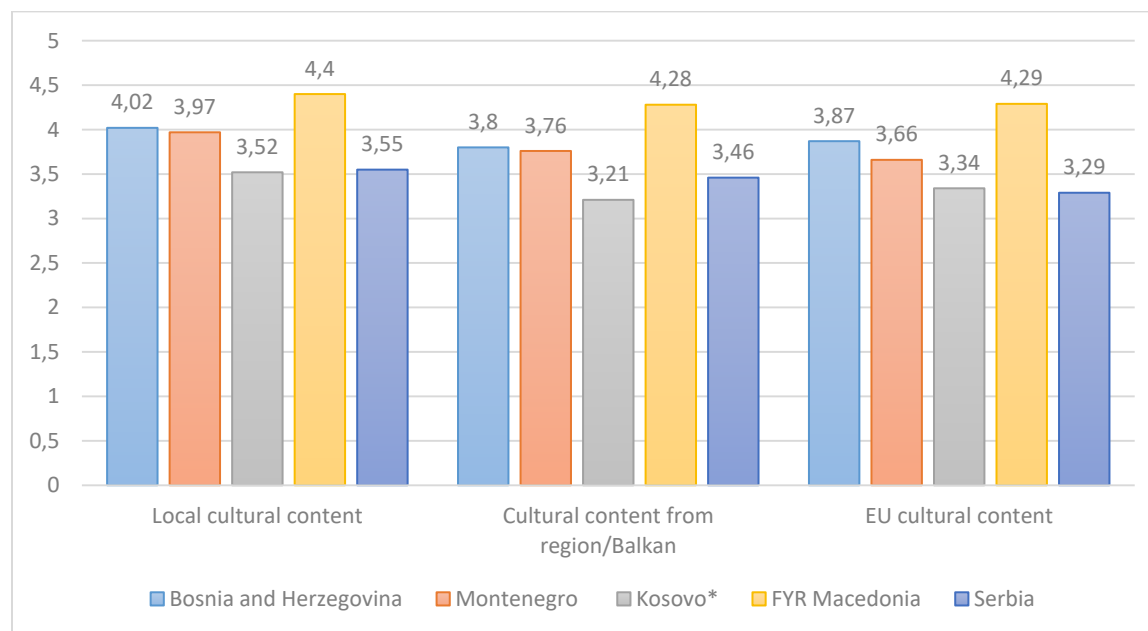
It is important to examine the link between the place of residence (urban and non-urban) with the affiliation with the surroundings. Figure 9 indicates the minimal, almost unequivocal differences of these two categories with the surroundings. This can be considered as an indicator of the lack of difference in the association of young people with the surrounding and in relation to the place of residence (urban and non-urban).

The tendency of non-existence of differences (figured in Figure 9) is confirmed and appears in Figure 10 where we examine the average differences in relation to interest of young people in cultural contents. This figure shows no significant differences between urban and non-urban societies in relation to the interest in cultural content. This is a solid indicator of the interest of young people in the environment, who do not really have the opportunity to keep themselves updated with cultural content as the youngsters from urban societies - desk analysis already showed that one of the main problems observed in entire region is the "concentration of culture" in the capital cities.

Figure 10: Level of interest for cultural content in urban and non-urban societies (mean differences)
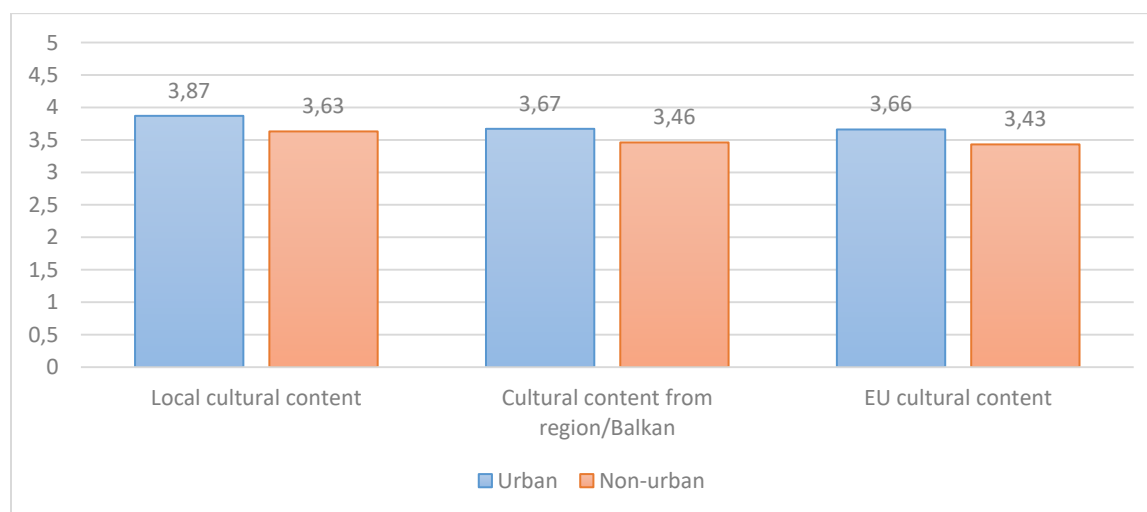
4.3. Cultural needs

Below we will examine how respondents evaluate culture in the context of cultural content or how they evaluate the importance of culture in their lives (figure11). In relation to the distribution of percentage of the use of free time we can group the respondents into three categories: 1) respondents who spend their free time relaxing, at the computer, hanging out with friends, with the family and listening to music; 2) In the second category are those who spend their leisure time watching television, visiting cultural events (concerts, theatre, cinema), reading, in sport activities, housework; 3) In the third category are those engaged in some form of artistic activity, participate or volunteer in community work and by rule lack free time. We see that the most popular activities include: relaxing, use of computer, spending time with friends and listening to music. Activities like participation in a cultural organization or volunteering in the institution of culture are at least represented. However, it is encouraging to note that the number of respondents who are not engaged in any activity is low. On the other side, a worrying trend of passive "activities" such as relaxing and using the computer is highly represented. Only a small percentage of respondents are engaged in some form of artistic, cultural activity, and in addition to those who volunteer to create cultural content, an overall impression is that only a little portion of the free time is spent on participation in cultural activities. On the positive note, activities that include public cultural participation (going to concerts, theatre or cinema) have become increasingly popular.

*Figure 11: Free time of respondents (multiple answers)*
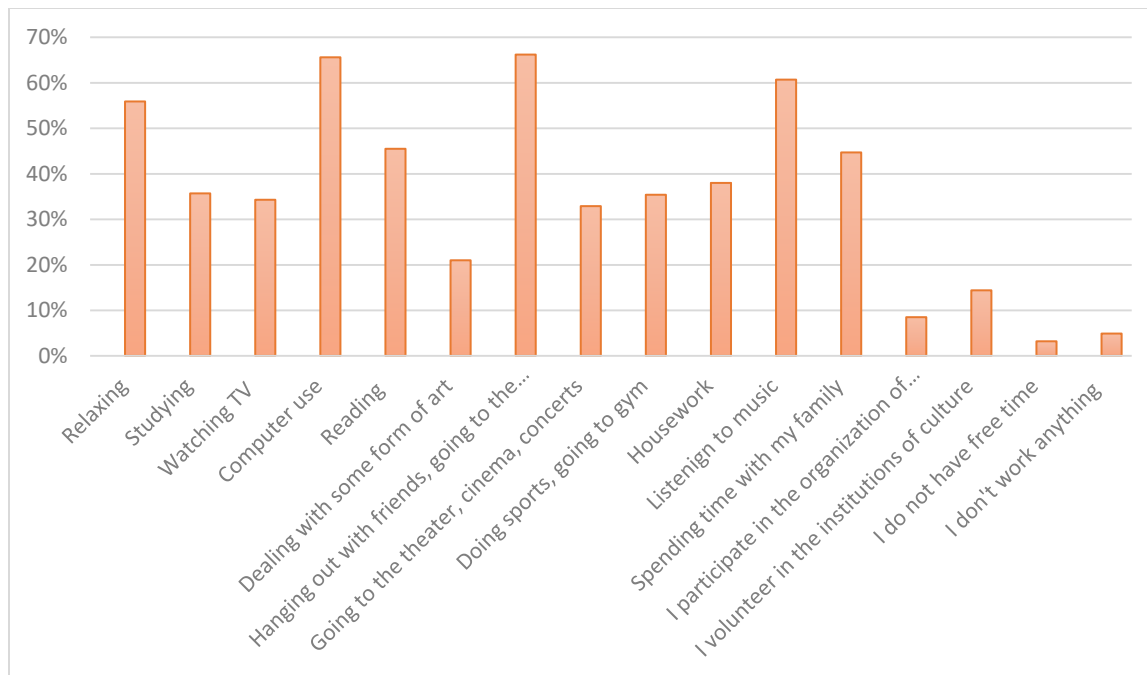
The next graph shows how the respondents evaluated the importance of culture in their life. In the figure 12 the mean differences show areas with higher values indicating higher importance of culture. Evidently the differences are small and the values are above of average. Comparatively, the values have been grouped around a lower average (3.10) in which are Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, and slightly higher estimate which include Kosovo* and the Former Republic of Macedonia. Values for Montenegro are somewhere between. However, the results obtained in this graphic are not encouraging because a five-step scale applied implies an ambivalent response ("neither agree nor not agree").
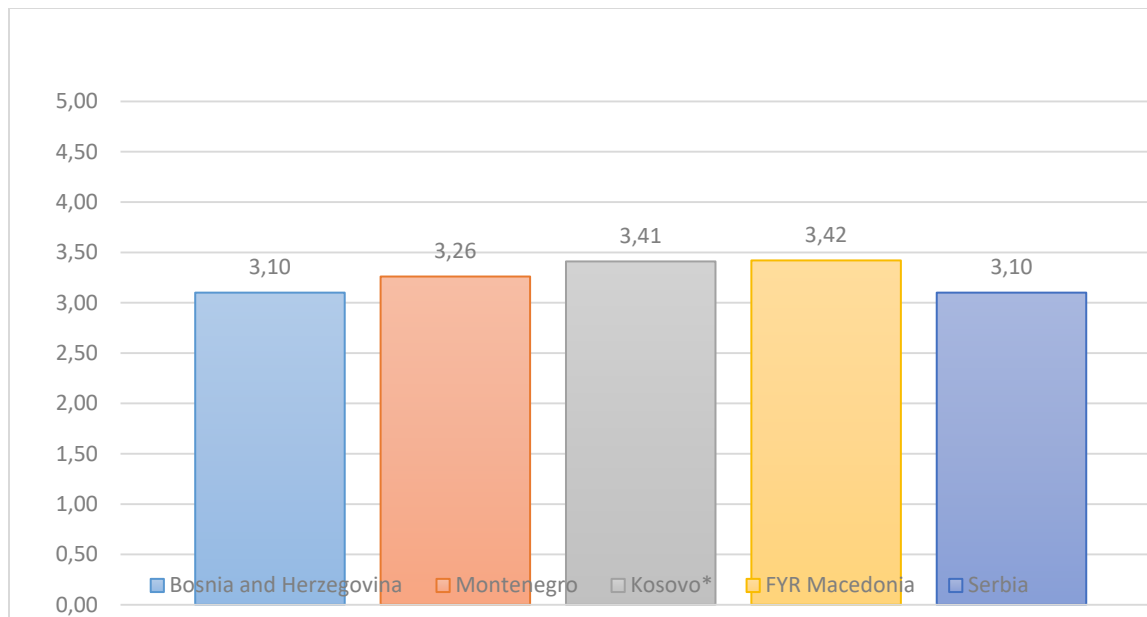
Adequacy of the cultural offer (figure 13), estimated in relation to the needs of the respondents, shows below-average values in all categories (as in figure 10 higher mean values in indicated higher adequacy), except in the case of fine arts where the estimated adequacy of the offer is a little above the average.

Figure 13: Adequacy of cultural offer (mean differences)
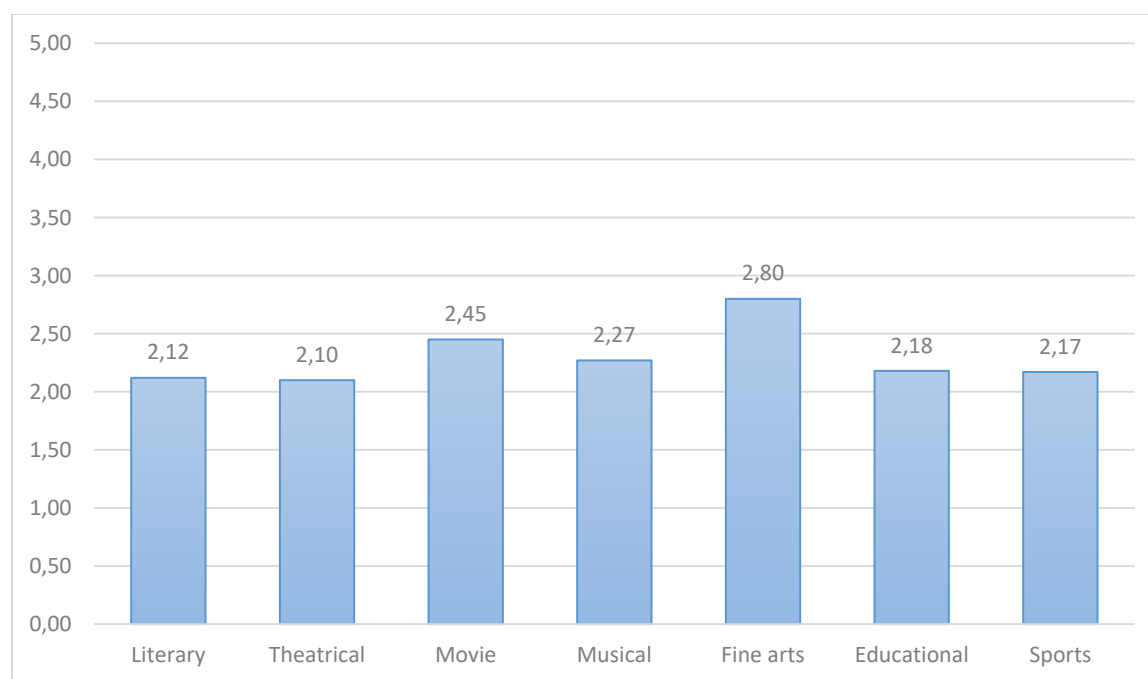
Respondents are generally dissatisfied with the cultural offer in the city where they study, and the values are below the average. In Figure 14, we see that the least dissatisfaction with the cultural offer is in Montenegro and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and that the highest is in Kosovo* and in Serbia. Bosnia and Herzegovina is somewhere between.

Figure 14: How satisfied are you with the cultural life in the city where you study (mean differences)
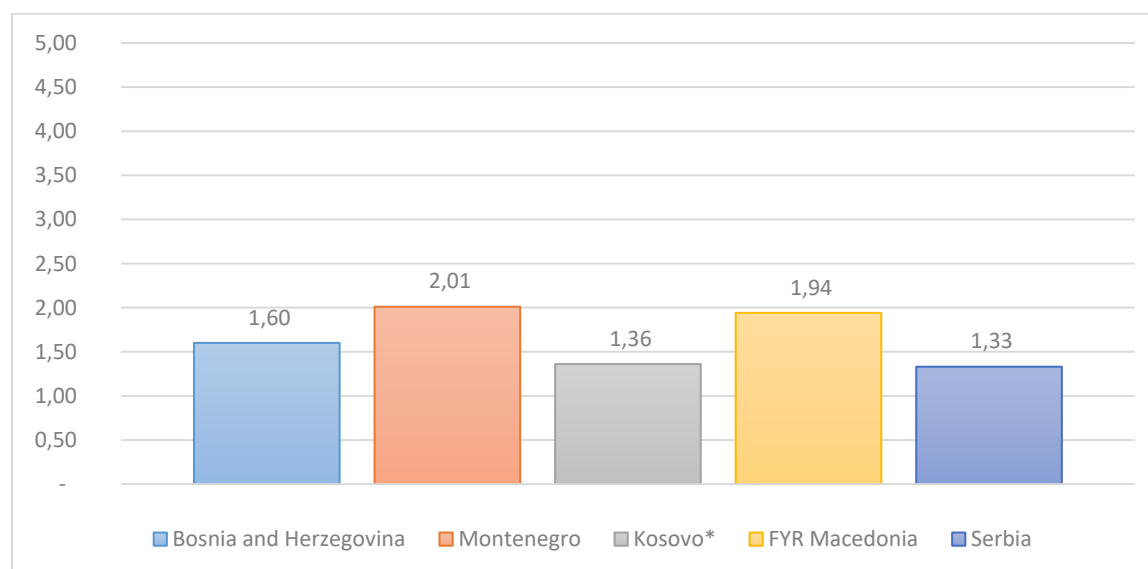
The following figure is an indication of a worrying trend - that young people most often give up on cultural content (figure 15), (with the exception of cigarettes) which is at the same time an evidence of the impact of socio-economic situation on cultural participation. The needs such as clothes, going out, internet are represented on a lower average, while the needs such as vacation and renounce of technical devices are at least represented.
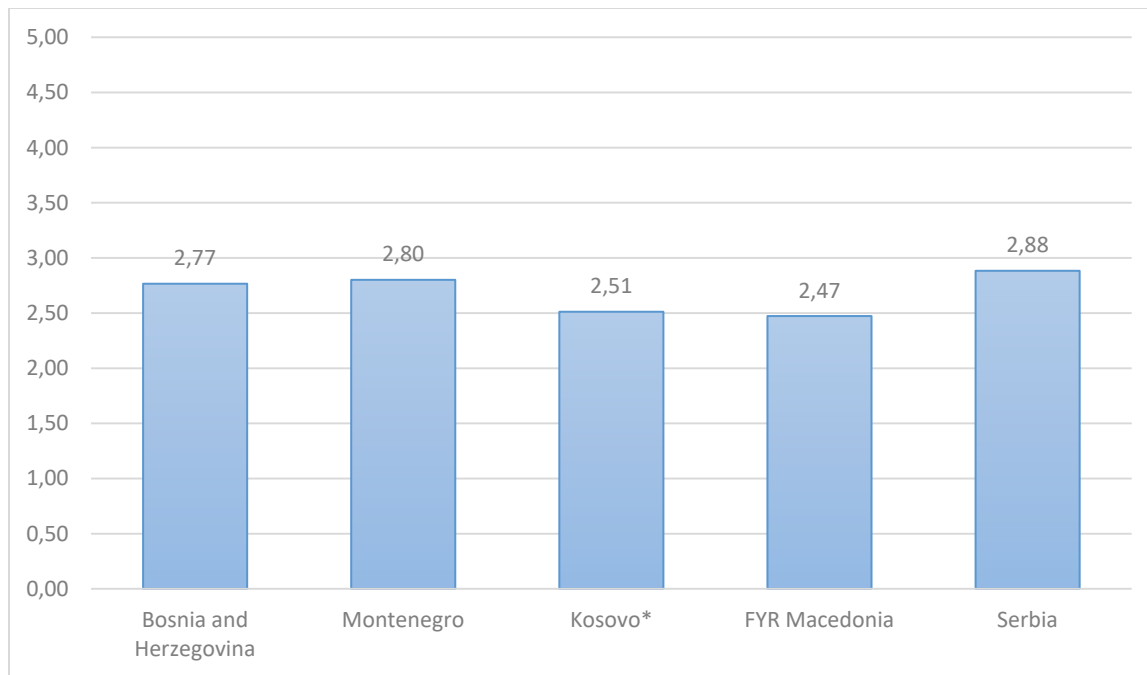
Figure 15: Needs that you usually renounce (mean differences)
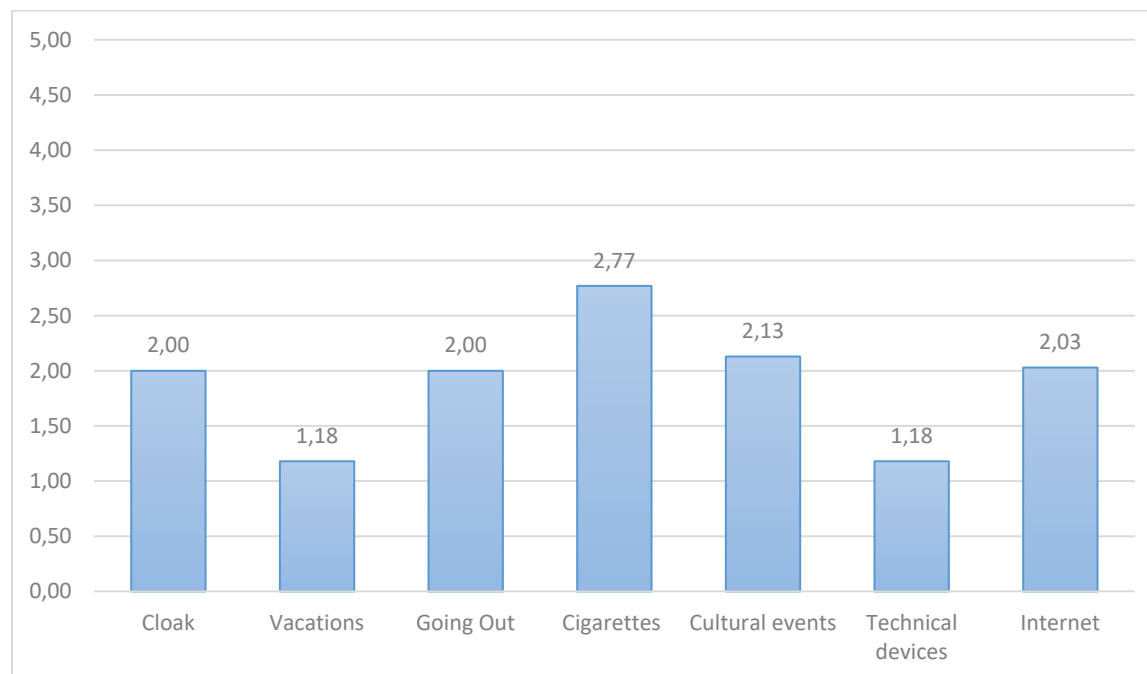
4.4. Cultural participation

Closer insight into the level of cultural participation will be obtained by reviewing Figures 16 and 17 which show the level of cultural participation in each country individually as well as the level of cultural participation in relation to the content.

Figure 16 shows that the highest level of cultural participation is in Serbia (2.88) immediately followed by Montenegro (2.80) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (2.77) with approximately same values. Kosovo* and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have the lowest level of cultural participation (2.51 and 2.47). It is encouraging that the coefficients are mainly above the average.

In a more detailed overview shown in the Figure 17 we can determine which activities are appreciated and which are neglected when it comes to public cultural participation. More than half of those surveyed read five or more books in the previous year, whilst approximately one third of respondents were up to 3 times in the cinema. Almost the same percentage is for those who were up to three times in the last year on a concert. The visits to cultural and historical monuments and listening to cultural program on the radio or TV are similar in percentage, but less popular than going to concerts, cinema or reading books. Visiting museums or galleries is at a lower intensity while going to the theatre in comparison to other activities is more favourable among young people. Visiting the opera is less favourable activity among young people.

Figure 17: Cultural participation
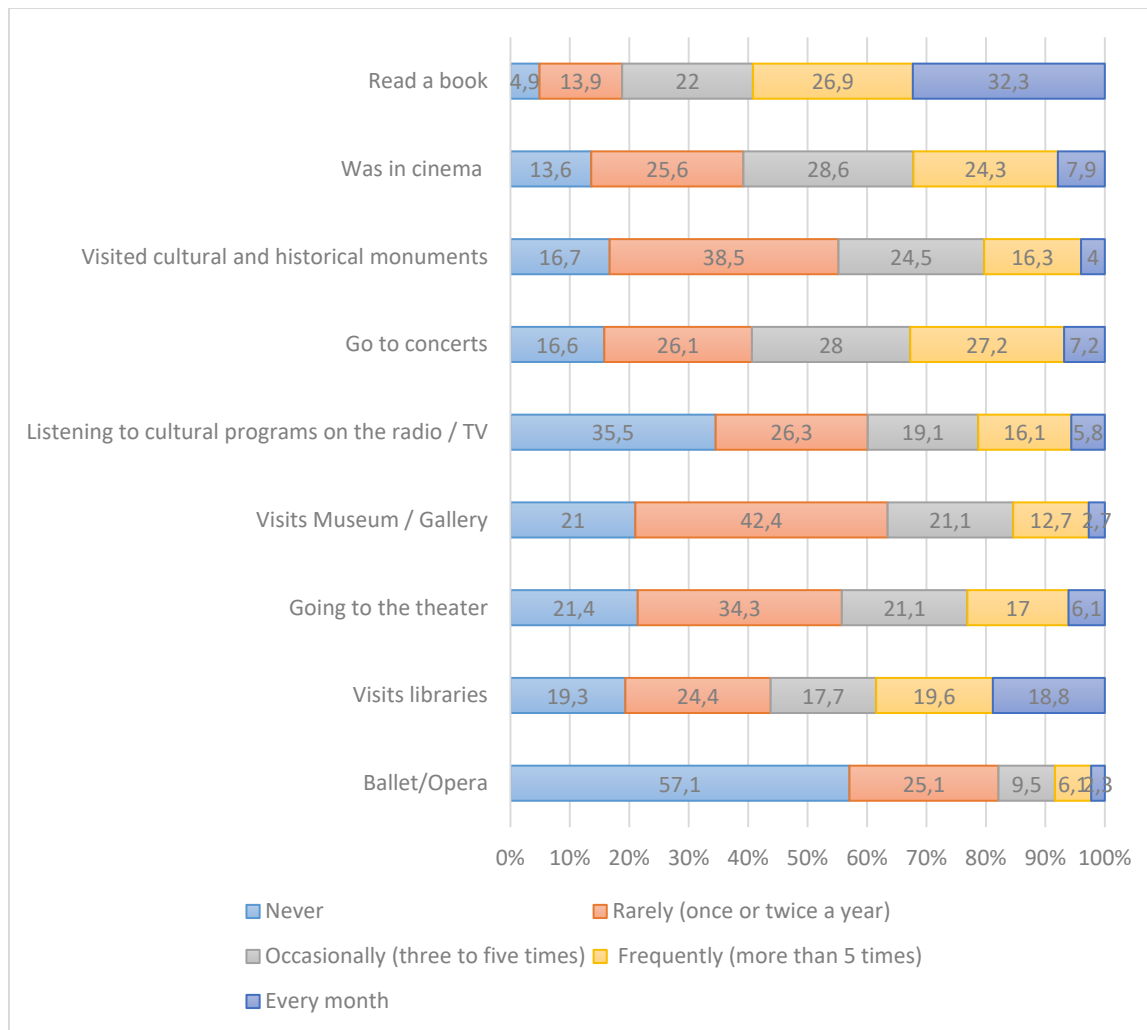
As established earlier, young people consider that they do not have much free time, as confirmed with the data in the Figure 18. As one can notice, the main explanation for poor cultural participation in almost all categories is the lack of free time. Lack of interest is present in three categories - visits to cultural and historical monuments, listening to cultural programmes on radio and ballet or opera. This can serve as a good indicator of unattractive content for young people. The lack of money is the main reason for not going to the concerts. Surprisingly enough, the reasons such as poor information and poorer offer are presented in a very modest percentage, and similar conclusion can be made for the lack of money.

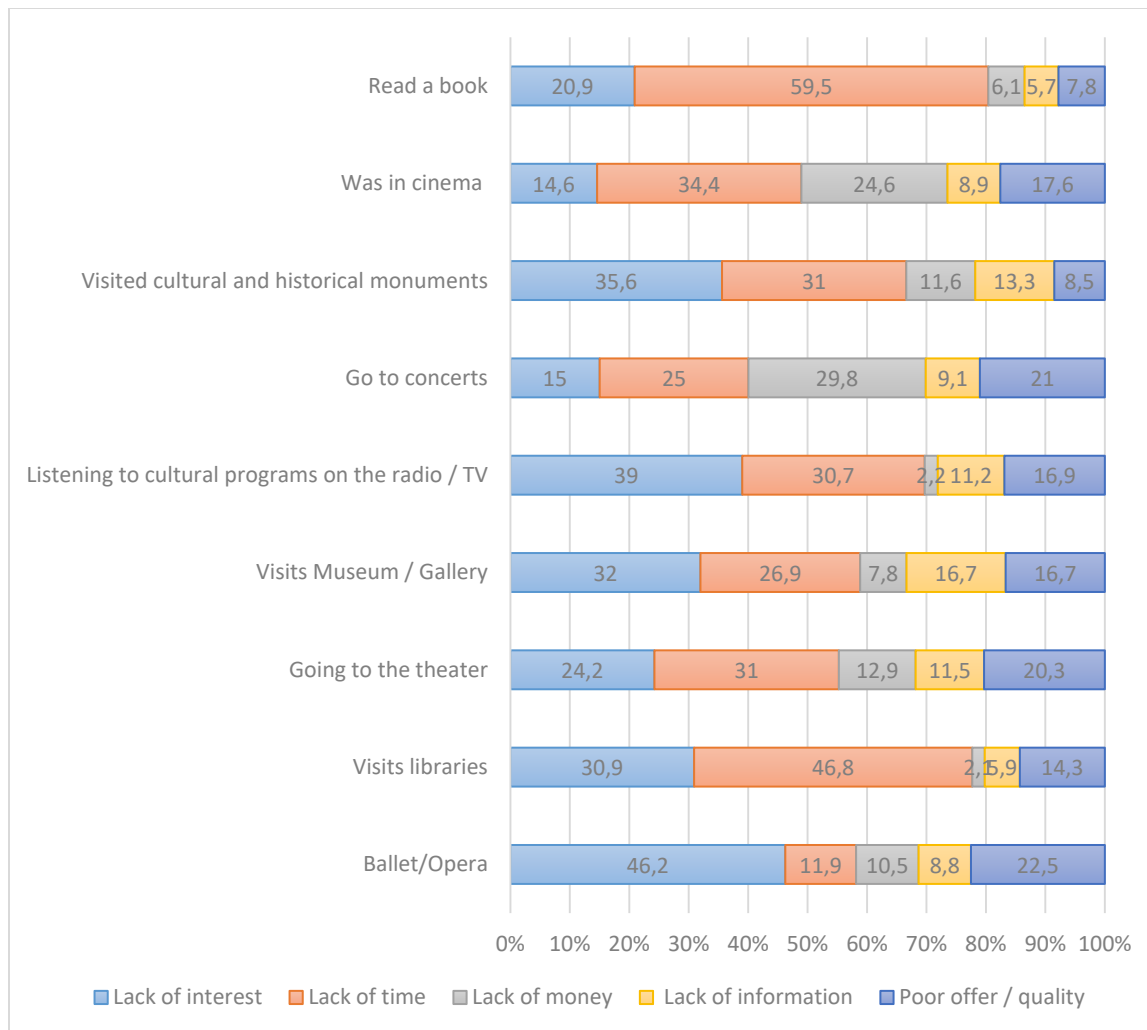*Figure 18: Main reasons for poor cultural participation*

Figure 19 shows the literature most often read by Youth. Most often it was literary work (in 45.1% of cases) while other forms of literature are less represented. It is important and interesting to note, that in spite of Internet trends, some "more traditional" forms of literature have been retained and, as highlighted before, still attracts the interest of young people.
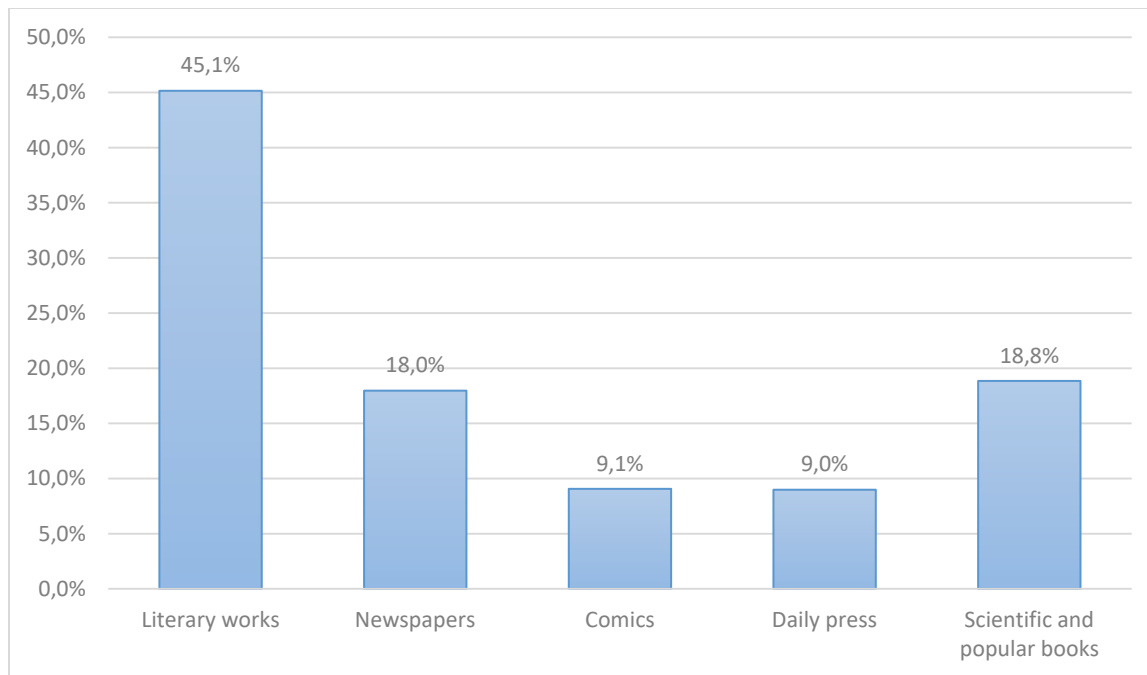
As already emphasized, the cultural production is considered here as a professional or amateur activity in a particular field. The Figure 20 show that a large number of young people are extremely passive according to this criterion and that they are not engaged in cultural creative activities (30%). Furthermore, this data has the other side that shows that about 70% of young people are dealing with some form of cultural creativity. Out of those who are engaged in a cultural activitiy most are in photography or in editing space, while the forms such as singing, acting, playing musical instruments are somewhat less represented.
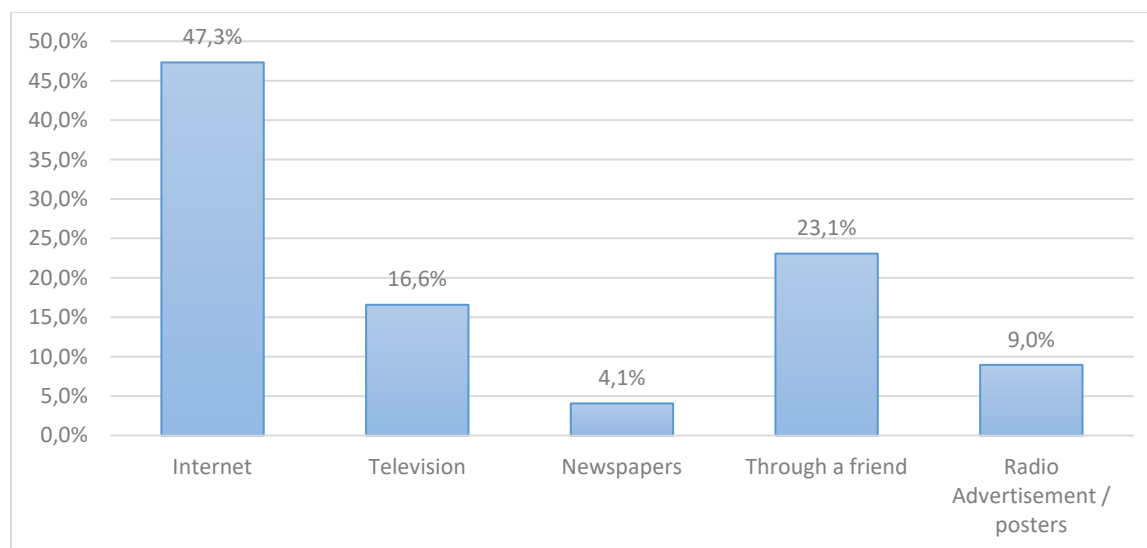
Figure 20: Cultural production in last year
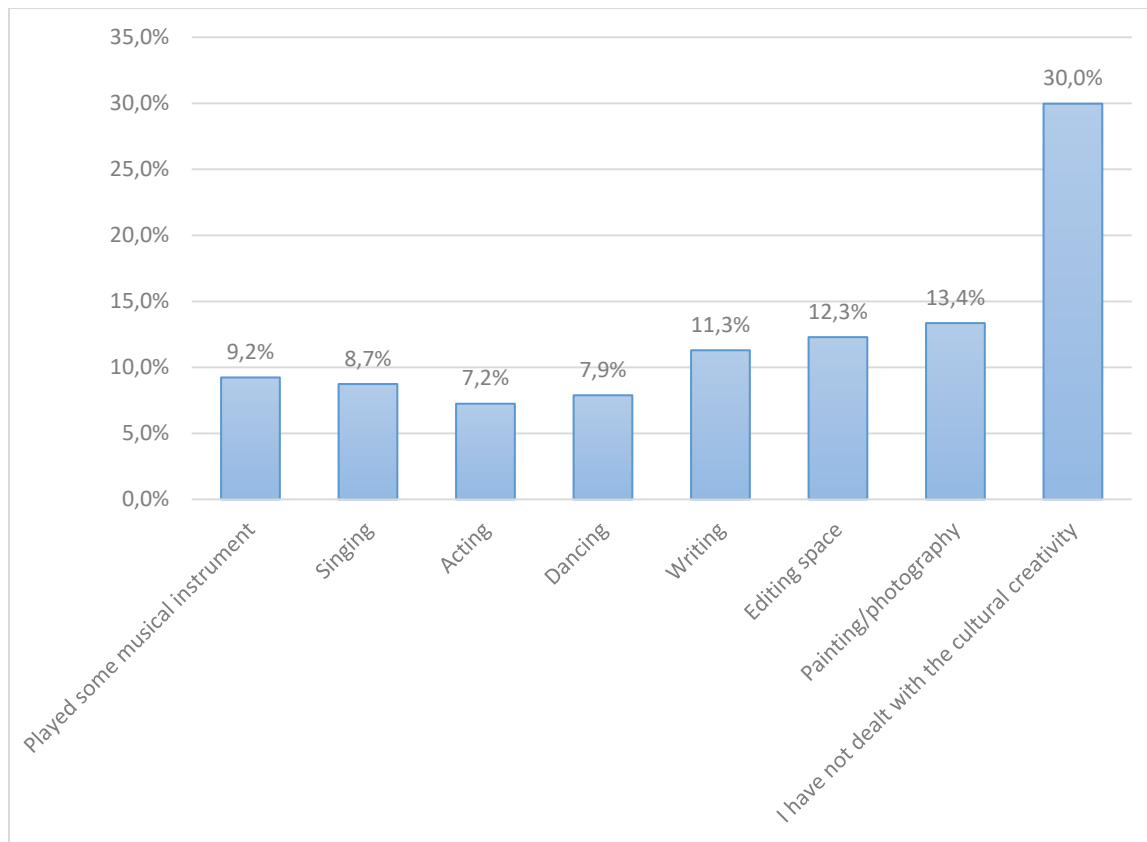
4.5.   Media and Youth

As the Graph 21 shows, young people are most often informed about the cultural events via Internet — almost half of the respondents. Also, the significance of friends ("word of mouth") in information transfer is not negligible, about a quarter of respondents rely on this type of obtaining information. What has already been noticed and confirmed, is the low popularity of print and TV media among young people.

Observed comparatively Internet is the most popular medium, while others are in a something different relations when it comes to popularity among young people. Figure 22 also shows the popularity of television as well as the radio, which is a different information compared to the one in the previous table. It is obvious that the media is differently ranked depending on the information provided by them

Figure 22: Ways of informing about cultural events
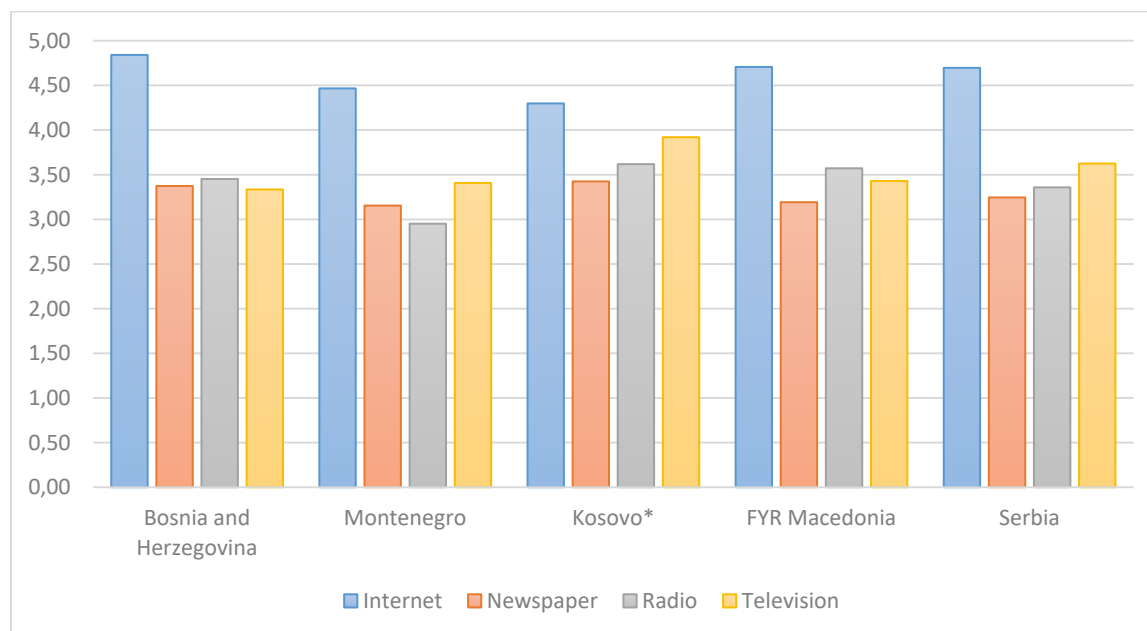
Considering the most important and the most widespread ways of communication and information , the Figure 23 shows that Facebook, Instagram and Viber are most popular, which is not surprising because of the popularity of social networks among young people. Skype, Twitter and Google + are less popular.

Figure 23: Use of internet
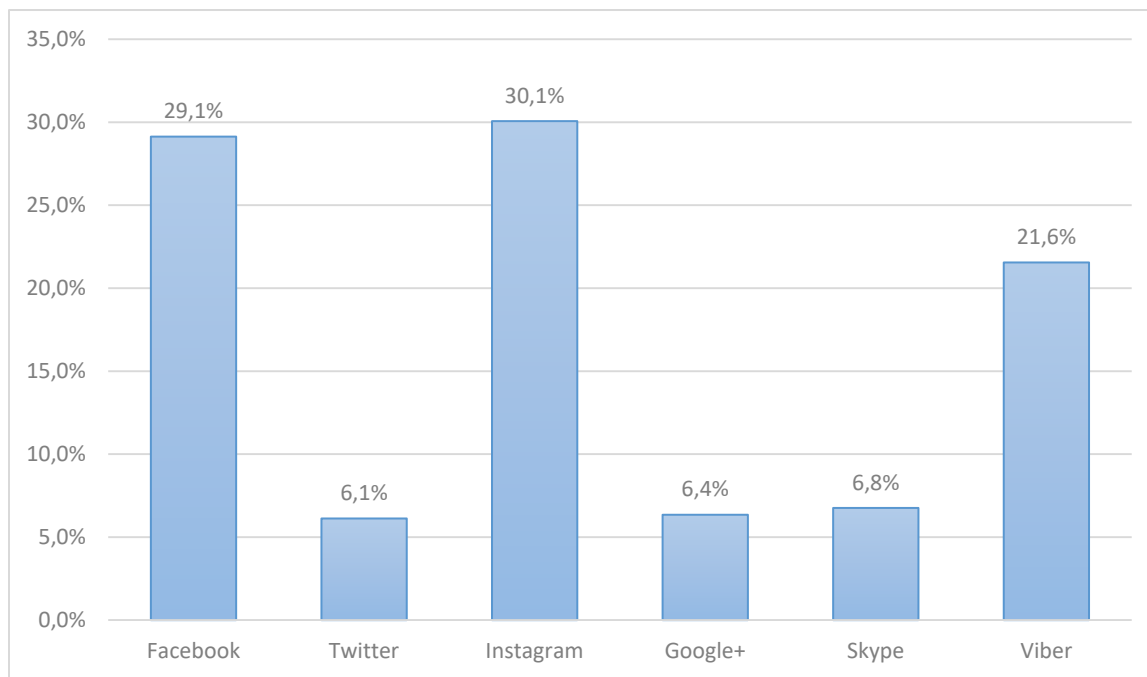
4.6.   Conclusions

Based on the characteristics of the research sample, the representation of educational and age criteria can be considered to meet the necessary standards of quality assessment of the data obtained. However, when it comes to the sample, a lower level of participation of young people living in non-urban environments and a certain gender imbalance with higher number of male respondents could be observed. Minor oscillations could be expected in this type of sampling, but the educational criterion as the key for determination of the quality response can consequently make up the quality sample.

Respondents have shown above average relationship with the surroundings from which they originate as well as with regional or European. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has

the most pronounced tendency when it comes to the trends from different surroundings levels, whether we are talking about cultural or "linking" elements. The region itself seems to be the least interesting one for the respondents. On the other hand, cultural content does not record differences between countries, nor does it differ from the point of urban or non-urban societies.

Three categories of free time were defined in the research, and one of the surprising findings is that young people consider that they do not have enough free time and consequently not enough interest in participating in cultural activities. This finding is supported by below average assessment of the adequacy of cultural content as well as the frequency of renunciation of culture.

The research findings suggest that there are somewhat satisfactory tendencies in terms of youth cultural participation. As noticed, the most popular activity is reading books mainly literary works/fiction. On the other hand, the cultural production indicates a significant activity of young people whereas more than one third of the sample are engaged in some form of cultural creativity. The biggest gap seems to be present in The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia with a high level of interest expressed in cultural content, but the level of participation remains the lowest.

As expected, Internet is the most popular medium. It is also the most popular source of information.

5. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSION

The focus groups discussion was implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo* as part of the regional research on youth cultural participation implemented and coordinated by the Local Democracy Agencies in the Western Balkans. The total number of realized FGD was seven. Table 1 shows the time, duration, place, name of the moderator and number of participants in each conducted focus group. In each country covered by the project one FGD was realized, except for Serbia and BiH, where two focus groups were realized per mentioned country.

Focus group discussions as a qualitative research method are aimed at deeper understanding of the phenomenon of research interests. Characteristics of the focus group discussion are that their realization tends to obtain a deeper insight and understanding of opinions, attitudes, feelings and knowledge of the participants in these groups. The aim of the focus group discussion in this project is to collect as much qualitative data as possible on the cultural participation of young people in the Balkans. The purpose of the discussion is to determine the habits and motives for cultural consumption of young people, and to determine the reasons for their cultural contribution. Their realization enables collection of comprehensive information on the occurrence of interest over a short period of time, however, the results obtained cannot be generalized – but they should be observed as attitudes which are typical for representatives of population participating in focus groups. Focus groups are organized with the presence of moderator (facilitator) who facilitates and directs communication of participants, and in this research, moderators were local researchers from the Local Democracy Agencies located in respective host municipalities. Average duration of focus groups is between 60 - 120 minutes, and each group has around 8 participants. The characteristics of the focus groups in this study are shown in the table 1. The discussion guidelines were formulated and focused on several topics: spending of free time, cultural production and cultural reception, causes for cultural participation, and main information sources about cultural events.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Focus Group Discussion

Town	Date	Number of participants	Duration	Moderator
Prijedor, BiH	05.10.2017.	8	90 min	Sanela Avdić
Knjazevac, Serbia	22.09.2017.	8	80 min	Sanja Džakula
Mostar BiH	11.10.2017.	8	60 min	Jelena Krešić
Peja, Kosovo*	29.09.2017.	6	80min	Linda Çavdarbasha
Kavadarci, FYR Macedonia	03.10.2017.	9	85min	Ivana Petrovska, Anica Dimovska
Subotica, Serbia	21.09.2017.	5	120 min	Filip Budanović
Nikšić, Montenegro	6.10.2017.	9	102 min	Bozina Stesevic
Average		7.5	88 min	

5.1. Habits in spending free time

Participants answered the questions about how they spend their free time and their priorities when deciding on what to spend pocket money. Participants declared that they lack free time because of their work or studies, so when they have some free time they enjoy relaxing, sleeping, watching a good movie, enjoying sport activities, listening to the music (on youtube), socializing on social media (hanging on social networks). They agreed that the culture is important part of their life and they would like to have more opportunities to participate in culture in their city. It is important for them to meet and understand diverse cultures, because it can help in breaking stereotypes and prejudices, although unfortunately they miss numerous cultural events in their communities.

In some FGD (Prijedor) the answers differ depending from which area young person comes from (rural or urban). Youngsters from the rural area spend most of their time reading books and watching films since theatre is far away and they need much more money to get there and then to buy a ticket. Since youngsters do not have a lot of financial resources in some of the communities, they save money for something "more valuable" (mobile phone, tablet and similar), rather than spend money on cultural events (Mostar, Knjaževac). If they spend money on culture it is often for buying tickets for cinema or a concert, or for the buying computer games. In Kavadarci (Macedonia) most of the cultural events are free of charge so the young people from that community do not need to spend much money on cultural events. In Niksic, the young participants mentioned sports betting or gambling activities on which they spend money the most.

5.2. Cultural reception

Youngsters from the focus group discussions pointed out that they mostly visit and attend:

Exhibitions - Participants prefer to visit exhibitions of their own choice rather than visit and see everything that is being offered. Since FGD were held in smaller towns and municipalities, it is a little bit difficult to visit cultural events in those communities, because the offer of cultural event is limited - to one exhibition monthly and two or three theatre performances (sometimes even less). Young respondents like to visit free exhibitions or those where the ticket is not more than 2 euro, mostly photo exhibitions. In Mostar for example, the exhibitions are visited the most, since they are popular and plenty of them are organised regularly. In Peja municipality the young people frequently visit the Anibar cultural centre, dokufest, cultural traditional games in Rugova valley. In Kavadarci participants mention multimedia exhibitions organized by Young Artists Organization in the Youth Center making synergy of all arts: graphics, painting, sculpture etc. In Nikšić participant visited the museum of Freud, Bedem Fest.

Concerts - Concerts in bars/cafés are far more often and easy to visit than classical concerts which are rarely organized in the towns included in the research. Participants stated that in some communities there is a lack of opera and ballet shows and they would be very interested to see something more of such ''highbrow art'' content in their local communities (Nikšić). Unfortunately, these contents reserved almost exclusively for the capital cities. In Kavadarci participants mentioned Grozdober, humanitarian concerts. In Subotica some participants stated that they are members of diverse culture clubs and sing in choirs.

Theatre performances - Youngsters visit theatre at least once in two months, watch movies regularly in all towns and stand-up comedians (Nikšić). In other communities there is not enough theatre performances that youth can attend, although they stated that they would be interested if the cultural authorities offer some theatre events.

Reading - Participants do read books - some on daily some on weekly basis. Participants from municipality Plav (Montenegro) mention philosophical and sociological books, fiction, American literature and world literature specifically. Some participants mention belletristic more often (international authors like Orhan Pamuk, and national authors like Meša Selimović).

Travelling – Because of the lack of cultural events in their own town, the youngsters often decide to go to nearby centres for an interesting event (exhibition of a famous painter or a concert or a theater show). At least once in three months, youngsters visit another city to participate in cultural event in most of the towns. Even if they travel to another city for a different reason they use this opportunity to visit museums, galleries and other cultural sites. Participants mostly enjoy visiting music festivals and events where they can interact with artists and ask questions, like collective exhibitions or workshops. More specifically participants from:

- Prijedor travel to Banja Luka to consume cultural events
- Knjaževac travel for music festivals (rock camp for girls in Belgrade) and theatre shows, Nisville Jazz festival in Nis, Festival of youth culture of Serbia (FKMS), Gitarijada in Zajecar, Beer fest in Belgrade, EXIT festival in Novi Sad;
- Peja mention travelling to Knjazevac exposits and festivals, Skopje museums, International youth camp (CULTURE EXCHANGE), Shkoder orthodox church,

mosque, Museum - House of declaration of independence of Albania in Vlora, the National theater in Tirana, the castle of Ohrid;

- Kavadarci (The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) travel to the concert in Skopje,
- Subotica travel to other cities such as Budapest and Novi Sad to visit museums, art galleries, regional comic book festival in Belgrade, summer music festivals, Regional extreme sport festival "Pannonian Chalenge" in Osijek;
- Nikšić travel to Podgorica to visit theatre and cinemas, or Belgrade and Cetinje.

However, in some municipalities (Mostar, Subotica) participants of the FGD stated that they did not travel much due to the lack of the financial resources, or due to the problems with visa (Kosovo*).

Volunteering- Participants from Peja Kosovo stated that some of them participated in volunteering activities connected with culture.

Level of satisfaction with cultural events in their community

Participants express a general dissatisfaction with the cultural offer in their own town or in a nearby area. However, even when a cultural event is organized, it is not well visited because only a limited number of young people seem to be interested in culture. Small rural communities specifically are facing the problem of lack of young people and they can practically offer almost no cultural contents to the citizens. The most common cultural events in rural areas are folklore gatherings or some other similar events specific for each community (Prijedor: Gallery 96, concerts of amateur groups; Mostar: Mostar youth theater, Street Arts Festival Mostar).

Improvements are necessary in terms of quality of cultural offer: to provide more quality theatre shows (not only commercial ones as mentioned in Knjaževac), more contents relevant for the history of their local communities, to create a kind of a historical, learning route through the city as well as more sport events (as mentioned in Subotica). In some communities young people suggest an establishment of a meeting point/cultural centre in which they can get

togehther to create cultural contents. Nevertheless, some participants mention that the existent cultural offer and the quality of cultural program of local museum and library is satisfactory (as mentioned in Mostar).

5.3. Cultural production

Most of the youngsters from the focus groups discussions were participating in different forms of art and culture. Most of participants in all FGD have culturally active friends (active in the local underground music scene, festivals, photography activities, painting and graffiti). It is obvious that FGD participants were not representatives of their communities, they were more interested in culture than the average. Participants conclude that that majority of their peers are not culturally active.

Almost all participants said that they value the culture very much and they understand the culture in a very broad manner. Culture is way of behaving, bon-ton, tradition, but also music, theater, exhibition, concerts, movies, TV shows, photography etc. By visiting cultural events and consuming different forms of culture youth can escape the reality they live in, and this is very important to them. Participants were enrolled in different cultural activities: summer theater school; singing or playing in the band and writing songs, writing small stories and articles for newspaper, making videos and short amateur films, being a member of a local amateur theatre group. Participants enjoyed participating in mentioned cultural activities and it makes them feel happy. They mentioned some obstacles such as lack of funding and the lack of continual financial stability. For example, even for the bands there is lack of place where amateur bands can practice for free; there is no youth centers where youngsters can participate in creative or painting workshop or get some instructions and materials that would make their creative work easier and more satisfying.

5.4.   Rationale for youth cultural participation

It is of a great importance to emphasize the need to enable a space for young people to work together and be proactive to push authorities to work towards culture preservation and to create a stimulating environment for youth cultural participation. Culture should be a corrective element of the politics and cultural policy should be based on proper budgeting. To some extent, the participants are able to see a direct link between public budgeting and culture, both on the level of society and on personal level. Raising awareness of the role of culture in society is important also for the sake of the young people who can make the positive changes happen and see some progress in their local community.

The rationale for cultural participation is also in building the social cohesion based on getting the citizens of diverse ethnic or cultural background together and enable space for them to express their talents and opinions. Most participants from all towns think that the local public authorities are not focusing enough in culture because they don't see importance of it. There are a lot of negative examples when culture was suffocated because of irresponsible behavior by local authorities and donors. For example, in Prijedor an old cultural heritage is dilapidated only because of a dispute between the owner and the local government. One of the most important cultural events "Ars Kozara" faced a lot of problems because the payment by the Ministry of Education and Culture was late for months, and many similar examples of negligence could be mentioned. In some other communities, the reasons for low participation in cultural events are different: in the municipality Nikšić the young people see the lack of quality performances or lack of time and financial resources. In some other communities, the reasons for low level of cultural participation are different: general abstention from public participation (Subotica), lack of adequate information system promoting the events.

5.5.   Information sources

Young people find that the most widely used information source is *the Internet* and this is the way how most of them get information about promotions and cultural events (very often on the mobile phone). Internet is the main source of information and essential communication tool for the youngsters, mostly because it is free and easily available. They use social media, online magazine and pages that promote cultural events to find events they are interested in. All participants use internet and the purpose is to stay informed about the events, for communication, listening to music, panels, watching movies, TV shows, and basically everything else. They prefer internet because in that way they can choose what they want to read, in opposition to TV as *traditional media* where they are being offered the information without an opportunity to reflect/react. Young people avoid watching TV and even if they do so they prefer documentary movies and programmess such as National Geographic, music and history or sport programmes, psychology thrillers, TV series. They can also find cultural info on *posters and billboards* around the cities and on doors of coffees they visit (Prijedor, Kavadarci). In Kavadarci (Macedonia) participants mentioned also *teachers of art and language* as information sources, in Subotica *friends* as sources of information or *radio* while driving.

5.6.   Concluding observations

Young people participating in the FGD are interested in culture, both in reception and production but from time to time they lose enthusiasm because of the lack of opportunities. They are facing a lack of cultural events in their towns and also a lack of support of local authorities for culture. One of their biggest concerns is the lack of space (such as youth centres) or places where they could develop their own approach/ tools of creativity, an official place to exchange ideas with other youngsters interested in art and culture, in order to organize workshops and engage more easily in culture and art. FGD participants consider culture as an important part of their life but it is not the first priority. The participants are of the opinion that the system that does not value or invest sufficiently in culture. On top of that, devastated

economies have forced many of the citizens (including youth) to strive only to fulfill existential needs.

Cultural offer could be widened and cultural participation improved by more efficient inter-sector cooperation, effective communication and promotion, more engaged media (TV, radio), by engaging youth through projects, and by communicating with the young people about the cultural offer of the city (Subotica). Educational system and traditional family values are not considered as elements in support to participation in culture and culture in general (Nikšić). It is necessary rethink the approaches to introduce more opportunities for youth cultural participation rather than make them feel responsible for not participating. WB countries need to raise culture awareness and cultural participation because understanding the culture can be considered as the most important means for creating open-minded people and active citizenship. More resources (at all levels) need to be invested in cultural participation, since otherwise, the engagement in producing and sharing the creative talents will remain limited.

6. INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

6.1. Profiles of interviewers and covered sector

The purpose of interviews with stakeholders was to understand deeper the concept of cultural participation, with a special focus on institutional arrangements, as well as the existing legislative framework in this area. Thus, the framework for the selection of respondents generally involved the individuals with competencies, experience, or position (in business) or in the field of cultural policy development. Interviews were organized in all the countries included in the research: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Kosovo*. Table 1 shows the data about conducted interviews (duration, date of interview, interviewer, and the position of interviewed person…).

Table 2: Characteristics of the Interview with stakeholders

Town	Date	Positions of participants	Duration	Moderator
Skopje, FYR Macedonia	04/10/2017	Adviser for international cooperation – Youth Department	42 min	Ivana Petrovska, Anica Dimovska
Skopje, FYR Macedonia	20/10/2017	Master degree in Culturology	/	Ivana Petrovska, Anica Dimovska
Peja, Kosovo*	25/09/2017	Chief of youth at the department of Culture Youth and Sport	1h	Linda Çavdarbasha
Peja, Kosovo*	02/10/2017	Executive director at Anibar	40 min	Linda Çavdarbasha
Prijedor, BIH	/	President of the Association of Artists	/	Sanela Avdić
Prijedor, BIH	/	Free artist	/	Sanela Avdić
Nikšić Montenegro	27/10/2017	Advisor to the Ministry of Culture, Directorate of Cultural and Artistic Creativity	/	Božina Stešević
Nikšić, Montenegro	2/10/2017	Executive Director of the Cultural Center Punkt	/	Božina Stešević
Nikšić, Montenegro	29/09/2017	Head of the Cultural Sector of Niksic Municipality	46 min	Božina Stešević

The table shows that in each country at least two interviews were organized with the respondents who are closely related to the culture field. These were either representatives of the public institutions or representatives of the NGO sector, or free artists. Thus, we wanted to get as possible wide range of responses, taking into account the subjectivity of the interview process as well as the quality of the responses collected.

6.2. Personal perception

In the first section of the information on the personal perception and knowledge of the respondents about culture were collected — how they are related to the field of culture, how much priority and importance they give to culture, and how often they visit cultural events.

As already mentioned, all respondents are involved in creating or following cultural events, directly or indirectly — as creators of cultural policy or as a consumer of cultural offer. More precisely, almost all respondents participated in the creation (or implementation) of policies as representatives of institutions, or organizations that deal with cultural development or as members of the civil society sector. On the other hand, a respondent from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia possesses the master degree in cultural studies and was considered as a relevant source of information as a consumer of cultural content. Two respondents, from Prijedor and Podgorica are teachers in school but they are also active on the institutional level.

Most respondents agreed that culture is important especially as a means and indicator of the progress and emancipation of society.

"…If this society is not open to culture and does not provide the space it deserves, then it impossible to say that we live in an advanced, modern and civil society." (Nikšić, Montenegro)

 Some interviewees see the culture as a tool of strengthening the regional cooperation and dialogue, but on the other side as the means of strengthening national identity. Also, the respondents highlight the link between cultural participation and the financial power as an important factor of cultural participation — the question is how much the regional economic situation allows for cultural participation, e.g. the respondent from Prijedor works in a mine because there is no job for him as an academic painter.

It is noticeable that despite the fact that the majority of the interviewees who are connected with the culture professionally, they also pay much attention to culture in their free time. Most of the respondents regularly visit the cultural events whenever they have enough free time. There is also a financial factor as a determinant of the frequency of cultural participation.

6.3. Legislative background and institutional efficiency

By this set of questions, the participants were asked to associate the culture with the state and society in the light of development, and how this is reflected in the legislative framework. It was also important to identify the guidelines for improving the institutional framework for culture development.

Different relationships have been identified. The importance of culture is emphasized but the outcomes of its impact are different. On the one side, it can serve as a factor for nationalism by restoring and strengthening negative patterns of cultural history, and on the other hand it can have a more constructive role in developing a more tolerant society. Everyone agreed that the Balkans as an environment characterized by a cultural diversity has a good brand for "exports" as a positive promoter of countries and region. Prijedor respondent stressed the political abuse of culture as a means of achieving the goals of political elites:

"Culture is one of the foundations of society, one of those main pillars of society, especially in young societies as it is on its own, closely linked to ruling classes when this so-called ruling art is made, layers are made that are hermetic, closed, that is, because we are currently in the process of transition and it is still time to crystallize the needs that we have and which culture should satisfy."

When the efficiency and existence of official documents in the area of cultural development were examined, respondents were divided. Those representing institutions emphasized the existence of a high-quality legislative and strategic framework in that area. While on the other hand representatives of the NGO sector and independent artists pointed out the opposite. The blindness of following the EU legislative framework in this field was highlighted, which is not in line with our needs and current development trends. A Kosovo interviewer said about this:

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"Most of our legislation was imported, and I think and isn't as representative of the institution's needs. And the lack of a cultural strategy contributes to a gigantic mess, which at times produces positive results, but other times it produces mass kitsch."

The majority of respondents pointed out that greater intervention is needed in the development of local strategies for the development of culture, because this part is largely ignored. Culture is concentrated in a small number of major cities, so other places are generally poorer with cultural offer. However, as the respondents say, the situation is improving in relation to what it was.

Interviewed from Montenegro stated that there were no criteria for the selection and placement of alternative cultural contents / projects produced by an independent cultural scene:

"It is certainly necessary to inspect, critically evaluate and categorize all occurrences belonging to an alternative, independent or some other civil sector."

Main disadvantages and recommendations in this field identified by respondents:

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Define a clearer policy, but also to make institutional reforms that would separate the ministries of culture of sport and education that are now operating in one body. Define the status of artists, and develop educational programs with the aim of developing the cultural needs of youngest people.

Kosovo*

The Ministry of Culture has the highest responsibility. It is necessary to define clearer goals and objectives for cultural development, to formulate new strategies and find the sources of financing.

Montenegro

Measures are needed to update the culture development strategy, increase scholarships in the field of culture, and promote culture as creative sector. Culture institutions, established on a legal basis, with good development programmes, creative teams, quality projects and financial security, are the foundation for the development of culture. Developing the municipal cultural institutions so as to meet the needs of youth in local communities is also necessary (museums, galleries, libraries, theaters...).

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The main responsibility lies with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports Agencies and the NGO sector. Diversification of policy measurea are necessary to promote youth cultural participation. The whole process requires decentralization and greater inclusiveness.

"For the development of culture, responsible individuals, affirmative artists, competent intellectuals, talented young people, professional associations, and their thinking and ideas should be a platform for creating a cultural policy."

6.4.   The role of Youth in the field of culture

The third part of the interview was created to examine the role and position of young people in the process of cultural participation.

Most of the interviewees emphasized the passive role of young people in the process of creating cultural content, as well as the weak economic dimension of cultural production, which has a negative impact on participation.

Identified issues can be divided into several categories: 1) in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, for example, one of the main problems is the centralization of cultural content and the poor offer in places outside the capital city. Also smaller municipalities are characterized by the insufficient commitment of local governments to cultural events - due to the lack of financial resources, culture suffers because by default the cultural content is neglected and

more attention is given to other content (i.e. sport); 2) a reform of the educational system is needed to enrich the curricula with subjects of a cultural character, because in the elementary education there is a noticeable neglect of these contents; 3) generally, culture is marginalized, which is reflected on the passivity of young people; 4) priority is given to "technical culture" in relation to "classical".

Some of the solutions to the situation in this area include: infrastructure improvements, funds for Youth, more inclusive cultural policy making with a stronger involvement of young people, decentralization of decision-making in culture, and richer curricula in primary education.

6.5.   Cultural offer and cultural participation

In this part of the interview we were interested in examining the cultural offer in local, national or regional context, as well as the preferences of respondents to that offer. Also, we were interested how cultural participation fits the needs of young people and how they see the main present challenges in culture.

The problem of concentration of culture in the capital cities was again emphasized, but it was emphasized that in these places the offer does not meet the needs — forcing the culture poor by contents the entire programme of cultural development as well as the abilities of the people behind it is questionable.

"Quantity does not mean quality."

Serious preparations and strategies based on programmes led by the professionals are necessary to improve the situation and openness of programs and institution to Youth. Also, the respondents emphasized the regional significance of the cultural offer. Expanding the offer and maybe receiving more financial support that would be vital for the sustainability of culture.

Respondents are manly skeptical when it comes to how much cultural offer matches the needs of young people. It is clear that it is retrograde and it often does not follow trends, but when it comes to trends it does not find a modality that would satisfy majority but it's progressive and doesn't meet the needs of a larger segment of consumers.

It was interesting to see the knowledge about the cultural participation as our respondents come from the field that is "cultural". A wide range of answers was offered. Only two respondents gave a correct definition. Mainly there was a confusion about what cultural participation represents. Some stressed that cultural participation means "bad information", others that cultural participation "implies joint projects and programmes". Wide and abstract answer were also presented and abstract and vague definitions "cultural participation is "ALL" and it involves moving the boundaries in art."

Contemporary trends have a twofold impact on culture: on the one hand, there are accessible platforms and new forms that are suitable for online presentation, which is the current trend in culture, but there is also a negative influence of mass media in the form of populism and hate speech as the reminiscence of he past and a clear demonstration of a distortion of value system. These are two faces of modern culture and its main challenges we are facing on daily basis.

6.6.   Comparison with the EU

In this part of interview respondents were asked about values promoted in the EU and their impact on national cultural values. Also, we were curious about knowledge on programmes and policies that influence national politics and serves as amplifier for national cultural development.

The respondents emphasized the importance of the EU integration process, as well as the benefits from the reforms taking place in all the countries in WB. However, they pointed out bureaucratic barriers that allow only a small number of organizations or government bodies to participate in EU projects. On the other side, the respondent from Prijedor pointed that our region needs to seek authentic Balkan cultural products and consistently promote them in the course of creating cultural policies in our countries — since even now we copy-paste the cultural products from the EU frame. Despite all the differences, the Western Balkan region carries a common cultural background that can serve as the grounds for furthering its integration, both as a region in Europe and with the EU.

Most of the respondents reiterate a positive role of the European Union, often through a pragmatic view referring to the financial assistance and support to candidate countries. The respondent from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has a following recommendation:

"…offer more programmes and projects for young people in developing cultural awareness and expression, promote the mobility of artists and professionals in the cultural field, strengthen and promote the importance of the creativity in education, intercultural competences and intercultural dialogue and, support the development of creative partnerships."

When it comes to integration processes and implementation of EU regulative respondents have shown somewhat limited knowledge because many could not give a more concrete answer to this question. However, they pointed out that civil society sector has a significant role in the reforms towards the EU integration, while the EU programmes they are familiar with are: Erasmus +, Creative Europe, European Agenda for Culture, Youth employment initiatives.

6.7. Current situation in culture

In this part we were interested in current situation in culture on national and local level as well as satisfaction with the level of cooperation at the regional level. A wide range of responses was obtained.

Prijedor, BiH:

A new strategy for culture development is necessary, as well as more funding in this sector. Emancipation and freedom, especially in terms of freedom from political influences need to become the guiding principles in creating the environment for youth cultural participation.

Peja, Kosovo*:

Improved inter-sectoral co-operation and a strengthened role of civil society is more than necessary. An important prerequisite for participatory policy making includes pro-active approaches by the local government and involvement of competent professionals in public dialogue on development in culture.

Nikšić, Montenegro:

There are initiatives but the dynamics of development in this area is slow, and therefore the situation in culture stagnates. Diversification of programmes and contents is needed, which would influence the selection of better quality programmes.

"…settled scheme of implementing cultural policies, insufficient public awareness of the importance of culture and the job or development opportunities that it provides, as well as lack of staff and capacity to study culture from theoretical and societal aspects. What is good in the current situation is that young people recognize culture as an opportunity for creation and that they can contribute to its development "

Skopje, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia:

According to the respondents, a general impression is that there is an increased visit to cultural events, as well as the awareness of importance of these events. A more systematic promotion of culture and intercultural dialogue is necessary, of course, with more stable financing of the cultural projects.

In addition to a general awareness that the regional cooperation is significant if not the most important factor in the integration of the region, the respondents emphasized that an improved cooperation and a more precise bilateral/multilateral co-operation framework for action is needed and in this field.

When it comes to the local level, the respondents were generally dissatisfied because the culture was concentrated in the main major cities. Trends are recognized but not affirmative enough and, of course, the financial basis for the implementation of various programmes is also questionable.

6.8.   Concluding observations

Considering the above, we can conclude that there is a clear awareness of the importance of culture, while the evidences collected show a high relevance of culture for empowering young people. The role of young people is essential for development of culture and society as a whole and respondents have emphasized this fact many times in the course of the research process.

Yet the perception of the importance of culture, its status and role that has in society is different. From government officials we could hear criticism directed to the cultural scene, independent institutions or cultural workers, but rarely on strategies or official policies. On the other hand, the representatives of civil society sector or the professionals in culture have strongly criticized the policy/decision makers and government institutions, as well as the anachronic strategies and policy measuress in the area of culture. Often as the research findings have shown, the institutional capacities to make the positive change happen have been questionable.

Also, the perception of the importance of culture for international relations was different. Some emphasized its importance in strengthening national identity, while the others perceive culture through the lenses of its ability to (re)-connect the countries of the region, and as a way to overcome cultural differences or the ethnically based dividing lines. Almost all respondents agree that the EU is a good example of co-operation based, among other things, on a cultural basis and that the Western Balkan region should also strive for it. Cultural differences often represent an obstacle to furthering the regional cooperation, but are also seen as the firm grounds for improving (and educating for) the culture of dialogue at regional level. Since the main subject of this research are the local bottom-up approaches, culture in its broad sense is seen as an incentive for young people to engage in social and economic development at community level and foster people-to-people communication through bringing the cultures closer. This is exactly why the young people are the most important actors of positive change in value system as essential for overall reforms still to take place in the Western Balkans.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The present social and economic reform agenda in the Western Balkan countries as well as the commitment to the accession negotiation process clearly show their common aspiration towards the full membership in the EU. However, the young generation living under prolonged transformation of societies, caught between the past and the future, between backward looking and forward- looking perspectives is facing numerous obstacles, both administrative and mental barriers. Leaving the Balkans has become the only future alternative for many as the recent surveys show, while over the past couple of years all the countries in the region are facing a historic level of the brain-drain – of young educated people. The Balkan countries have not yet been able to adequately address such an emigration and depopulation, while the institutional incentives to encourage young people to stay and contribute to social and economic development in their countries or local communities are still sporadic. In this sense, a wide range of regional co-operation initiatives by the countries themselves (and not only supported externally) have become crucial requiring immediate and effective measures to ensure preconditions, at local level in particular, for fostering culture and youth cultural participation to improve cultural co-operation, educational and employment opportunities in the Balkans. Therefore, the members of the Balkan Network for Local Democracy endorse the following policy recommendations for policy and decision makers in the Balkans and at the EU level:

- Culture and youth cultural participation should be recognized as important means of building social cohesion at the local, national and regional level. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to provide the grounds for an increased level of youth cultural participation, intercultural dialogue and education for the culture of dialogue both at local, national and regional level.
- Promoting knowledge and a deeper understanding of the richness of culture and cultural heritage of the region to young people, both through formal and non-formal education, is essential.

- Widening the scope of opportunities for youth cultural participation requires urgent measures by local public authorities, in particular in a way to ensure adequate infrastructure and facilities where young people can develop their creativity and interests.

- Cultural development strategies at the local level and decentralization of culture are of utmost importance for the young people living in geographically marginalized towns and municipalities all across the region.

- Young people have the potential to become recognizeable actors of the cultural and creative sectors and socio- economic development in their own communities; Therefore, cultural sector needs to be further promoted to young people as the sector that provides employment opportunities while encouraging their innovative approaches, talent and entrepreneurial skills development.

- Multi-stakeholder approach, co-operation and partnerships connecting cultural sector and creative industry need to be fostered at local, national and regional level in the Balkans involving both formal and informal youth organisations and associations, youth workers and trainers.

- Youth regional co-operation initiatives and cultural exchange need to be further encouraged in support to their more effective participation in reconciliation process, intercultural dialogue and local community development;

- Regional youth information service needs to be developed to promote and inform young people in youth friendly manner on diverse training opportunities, exchange programmes, cultural heritage in neighbourhood area, with a database and calendar of cultural events, cultural innovative practices so as to encourage youth interaction, exchange, information share and cultural participation;

- Balkan Network for Local Democracy welcomes the establishment of the Regional Youth Co-operation Office, Western Balkan Fund and Balkan Youth Council as the three pillars of regional co-operation paving the way to increased youth participation and contribution to the regional ownership of reform process towards the EU integration.

Regional network meeting, Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina, January 2017

Balkan Network for Local Democracy, Podgorica, February 2017

Balkan Youth Forum, Peje, Kosovo*, October 2017

Balkan Youth Forum, Reclaim public spaces, Prishtina, Kosovo*,October 2017

„Knjaževac tamo gde su prijatelji", Photo exibition in Knjaževac, Local Youth Initiative, September 2017

Local Youth Initiative, Zavidovići, July 2017
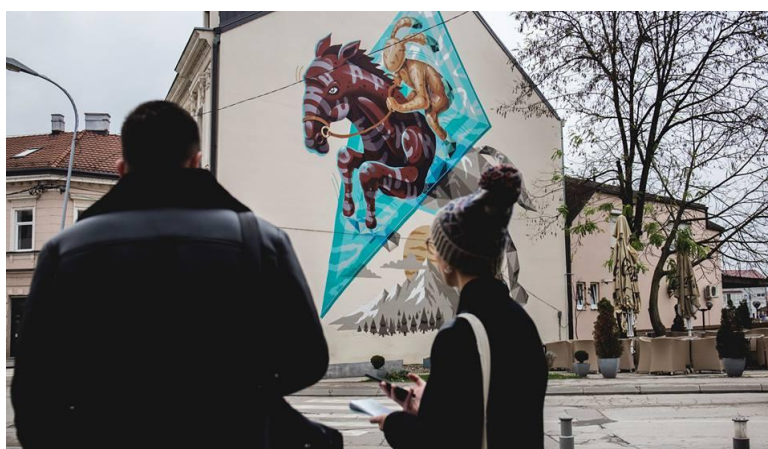
Youth Correspondents exchange, Prijedor, November 2017

Local Youth Initiative, Graffiti, Zavidovići, July 2017

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Balkan regional platform for
youth participation and dialogue