

## Report

### **Child-led ecological camp “Think of a better earth for children”**

On August 26<sup>th</sup>, the ecological camp "Think of a better earth for children" was held. We had the pleasure to have among the panellists the Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Infrastructure, Mr. Liburn Aliu, Deputy Minister of Culture, Youth, Sports, Mr. Sejnur Veshall, and the alpinist Mrs. Arineta Mula, representative from Save the Children, Mr. Veton Kryeziu, representative from Syri i Vizionit, Mr. Naser Lajqi and as participants, members of Respect Our Right and those of the "Think of the Earth" online sessions. A total of 47 children participated in the activity.

During his speech, Minister Aliu stressed how important it is for the youth to take care of the environment, being the last hope to take measures for concrete changes. He congratulated us on the initiative and was open for cooperation with the ROR group, in future projects related to the environment. Deputy Minister Veshall also expressed the readiness of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports to help and support us in the field of environment. Mrs. Mula, shared with us her experience as a Kosovar mountaineer and informed us more about the state of the environment in different Kosovar mountains, and that the situation in some mountains, which are more polluted should be improved immediately.

During this camp we also developed focus groups on: Environmental education in schools, Recycling, Water Pollution in Kosovo and Renewable Energy, through which we generated ideas on how we can improve these areas in Kosovo. After each group completed the discussions, they presented in front of everyone, the conclusions that the group had reached.

#### ***Conclusions from discussions on Renewable Energy***

In conclusion, our focus group has concluded that: in order to use renewable energy resources in Kosovo, the entire system of electricity supply (dominated by power plants), heating, cooling, transport and water must be changed. However, since that would be a very costly project, it is not seen as feasible by Kosovo itself in the near future. Until the goal of using other energy sources is achieved, it is important to increase citizens' awareness on the pollution caused by coal and other fuels, in order to contribute at least to households, by installing solar panels or the use of fuels with less pollutants. Another way to raise awareness among citizens about the use of fuels, is to increase the cost of coal.

### ***Conclusions from discussions on Water Pollution***

During the discussion in our focus group, we compared the current situation in our country and at the global level. Seeing that as soon as the effort for mineralization of water pollution has started, we came to the conclusion that there is great room for the implementation of new methods on the prevention of water pollution. These methods include those at the individual level as well as those at the collective level. As we are familiar with the saying "change starts with yourself", we believe that it is better to start with those at the individual level, such as: reducing the use of bleach, pesticides and herbicides, not emptying the sink oil, not using the toilet as garbage bins etc. While those at the collective level include the need for assistance from institutions, such as: the creation of "baskets" for emptying excess oil near gas stations, the creation of a control system over the purity of water in hydropower plants, care laid on water areas which are used either for drinking water or for other needs.

### ***Conclusions from discussions on Recycling***

During the discussions of our focus group, we came to the conclusion that on this topic there are two key factors that can improve the current state of recycling in Kosovo: the people themselves and the decision-making institutions. Taking examples from other clean countries with green spaces, such as Finland, we can clearly see that recycling is not a very complicated and costly process if it is managed properly! Most of the materials we use are recyclable, while those that are not should be used for energy! From our point of view, these are some of the recommendations:

To impose fines, to be supervised by an inspectorate, to make people pay for plastic bags, to give a small amount of money when a recyclable product is returned, to separate the waste from the bins, and to put labels on the bin such as "It is strictly forbidden to burn them", to launch national awareness campaigns about recycling and the environment in general, and to take into account children's innovative ideas about the environment in which they live.

### ***Conclusions from discussions on Environmental Education***

The subject of environmental education is not at a satisfactory level according to students and it is not linear in Kosovo schools (in some schools it is practiced less, in some more). We have come to the conclusion that this subject should be taught to students throughout their 9-years of education. The practical part should be included as much as possible: including: recycling workshops, construction of ecological gardens, cleaning actions, planting of plants. When planting plants, their maintenance should be included. It is important to include more pictures in this subject, so that the topics can be seen in visual form. Regarding the theoretical part, it is important to include more concrete consequences of what will happen, if not everyone contributes to improve the situation. Instead of traditional method of assessment, so tests or oral assessment, each student should have a "project" that they will carry out over a period of time. The project may be, e.g. Students to organize a cleaning event, to be in conversation with the Ministry of Environment, to build ecological gardens, etc. So the student is free to develop his / her creativity, and to develop managerial and organizational skills. In this form, we will be encouraged to go beyond the framework of traditional grading.

And in the last part, we had the opportunity to write letters to institutions, for requests, complaints or suggestions in the field of environment. This camp has been a great opportunity for each of us to talk to relevant institutions, generate ideas on how we can protect the environment and at the same time make new friends!

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