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# **Advancement of Local Youth Entrepreneurship Policy through Participatory Approach**

## **Research report**

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## Most important results:

47% of all respondents are unemployed.

Unemployment rate is much higher with Kosovo Serb respondents (56.5%), than Kosovo Albanian respondents (40.4%).

33.9% of Albanian male respondents stating they are unemployed as opposed to 47.3% Albanian female respondents. There is no significant difference in the unemployment status of male and female respondents from the Serbian community.

44,5% of respondents are planning to leave Kosovo. 9,6% percent more Serbs than Albanians want to leave Kosovo.

Serb respondents feel less safe to invest in a business in their municipality. On a scale from 1-5, Serbs grade the safety of their investment with 2.57. Albanian respondents on the other hand grade the safety to invest in South Mitrovica with 2.80.

Somewhat higher percent of Serb respondents (43.5%) than Albanian respondents (36.7%) stated that they have a business idea they plan on realizing. Likewise, higher percentage of Serb respondents (13.8%) were unsuccessful in realizing their business idea than their Albanian neighbors (6.6%).

Higher percent of North Mitrovica residents 27.5%, than South Mitrovica residents 13.7% expect their local authorities to improve the conditions for youth entrepreneurship.

Almost 60% of our respondents stated that they have never participated in the public discussions organized by the municipal authorities.



## Context:

The questionnaires were collected between 15<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of June in various places in South and North Mitrovica and the surveyors were asked to target young people between 18 and 35 years of age. A total of 400 questionnaires were collected randomly, through F2F interviews.

The two municipalities, North and South Mitrovica used to represent a unified administrative zone, a single municipality until 1999.

Informally, the city was split during the conflict in 1999 when major demographic changes and expulsion of population from south and north made the river Ibar a predominantly ethnic border.

Formally the city split in May 2012 when the administrative office for North Mitrovica was formed in Kosovo system. In February 2014, this office was transformed into municipal administration with Mayor elected on local elections.

The two municipalities are now largely separated along the banks of the river Ibar, with the exception of one village that is still a disputed territory between the two municipal administrations. However, regardless the ethnic and geographic division, citizenry on both sides of the river are severely affected by a decay of the city that used to be industrial and cultural capital that overshadowed even Pristina.

The contrast of the wealthy industrial past that largely rested on the Trepca mining complex and service businesses that supported the industrial giant and the post-conflict instable security environment, especially in North Mitrovica, is the primary focus of all economy-related discussions in both municipalities.

In addition, the research shows that the youth in general is in a very difficult position, constrained by the instable living conditions worsened by ethnic and political tensions and largely isolated from their peers in other parts of Europe.

Finally, the youth feel underappreciated and discriminated against in terms of what ideas they could offer to benefit the development of their communities.

## Description of the sample:

The following document is a part of the project that aims to increase civic activity in influencing the priorities, planning and decision making of local government introducing participatory approach in development of local youth entrepreneurship strategies in municipalities of North and South Mitrovica.

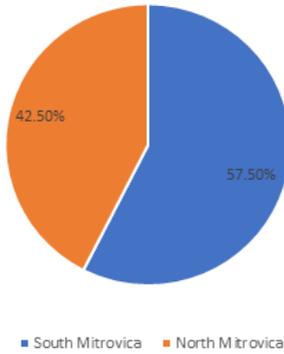
The public opinion research on youth entrepreneurship was conducted in order to support the process of the development of the municipal strategies for youth entrepreneurship of the municipalities North and South Mitrovica.

In addition to this, the purpose of one part of the questions related to the level of current participation of the youth in these two municipalities in the municipal policy development initiatives is to help set the indicators for measuring the future progress or regress of the activities targeting this particular field of social engagement with local institutions.

The research itself is primarily quantitative, but it also included four interviews, two round tables and two focus groups. A total of 37 of people were included in the qualitative part of the research, four were interviewed, additional six people were included in the round table in North Mitrovica while eight people participated in the focus group in North Mitrovica, finally, seven people were included in the focus group in South Mitrovica, while twelve people partook in the round table discussion in the same municipality.

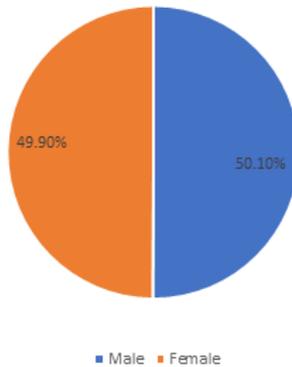
In the quantitative part of the research, there were a total of 400 respondents from the municipalities of South and North Mitrovica, somewhat larger number of respondents was from South Mitrovica (230) which also has almost three times larger population than North Mitrovica (170). Given the project's focus on youth, only the respondents between 18 and 35 years of age were questioned, and the average age of the respondents was 23.65.

Where are you from?



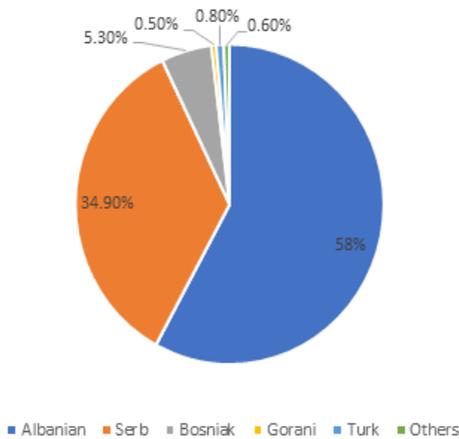
The respondents were equally distributed between gender with 198 respondents being male, 197 female and 5 refusing to answer.

What gender are you?



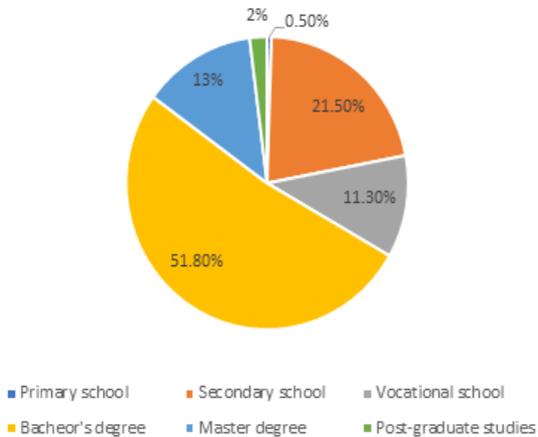
Almost 60% of the respondents were Kosovo Albanians, some third of the respondents were Kosovo Serbs and a bit over 5% were Bosniaks.

### What is your ethnicity?



Half of the respondents have bachelor's degrees and the second largest group of respondents have high-school diplomas.

### Level of education

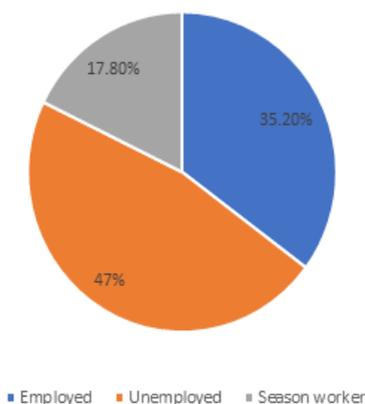


Almost half of our respondents stated that they are unemployed, whereas a third has steady employment. Unemployment is somewhat larger within the Kosovo Serb community that measures less season workers and less youngsters employed in a more permanent basis. There are some differences between the level of education of the respondents. The following table will show those differences:

	Primary school	Secondary school	Vocational school	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Post-graduate studies	Total
Serb	0%	28.1%	9.4%	38.1%	20.1%	4.3%	100%
Alb.	0%	18.6%	13.9%	57.6%	9.5%	0.4	100%

These differences are significant but are to be contributed to the age of the respondents as the most frequent respondents among Kosovo Albanians are those aged between 19 and 24, whereas, the most frequent respondents among Kosovo Serbs are between 24 and 28 years of age.

What is your employment status?



The following table shows disaggregation of the employment rate by ethnicity.

	Employed	Unemployed	Season worker	Total
Serb	31.9%	56.5%	11.6%	100%
Albanian	38.3%	40.4%	21.3%	100%

Employment status also differs with gender groups with 51.5% of our female respondents stating they are unemployed as opposed to 42.6% of male respondents. In the Serb community there are no differences in the employment status of two genders (56.7% of Serb male respondents are unemployed and 56.3% of Serb female respondents are unemployed), however, the difference is much higher in the Albanian community with 33.9% of Albanian male respondents stating they are unemployed as opposed to 47.3% Albanian female respondents giving the same answer.

During the qualitative part of the survey, the respondents were asked to offer closer interpretations as to these differences in the results. The respondents from North Mitrovica stated that the difference might be due to a clearer situation in the South that does not have a dual governing system. Others claimed that North Mitrovica, being considerably smaller, offers less opportunities. But the respondents generally agreed that the labor market in Kosovo is more accessible to Kosovo Albanians due to better freedom of movement.

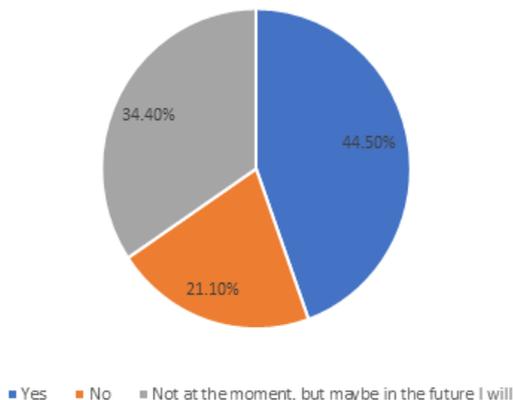
The respondents from South Mitrovica largely presented disbelief in the result, claiming unemployment must be higher in South Mitrovica. One of the respondents claimed that the fact the city is divided affects the unemployment rate.

According to the official data of the Employment Office in of South Mitrovica, there are 6000 people in this municipality who seek jobs via this office. However, the Director of the Office, Besmir Salihu, stated that the number does not reflect the real situation as not all of the unemployed person uses the services of the Employment Office. He added that in 2017, this office had 40 beneficiaries per each available post.

## Research results:

More than 40% of our respondents state they are planning to leave Kosovo. When it comes to the ethnic groups somewhat higher percentage of Kosovo Serbs are intent on leaving Kosovo. Similarity, the percentage of male respondents intent on leaving Kosovo (50.8%) is higher than the percentage of female respondents who favor this option (38.3%).

Are you planning to leave Kosovo?



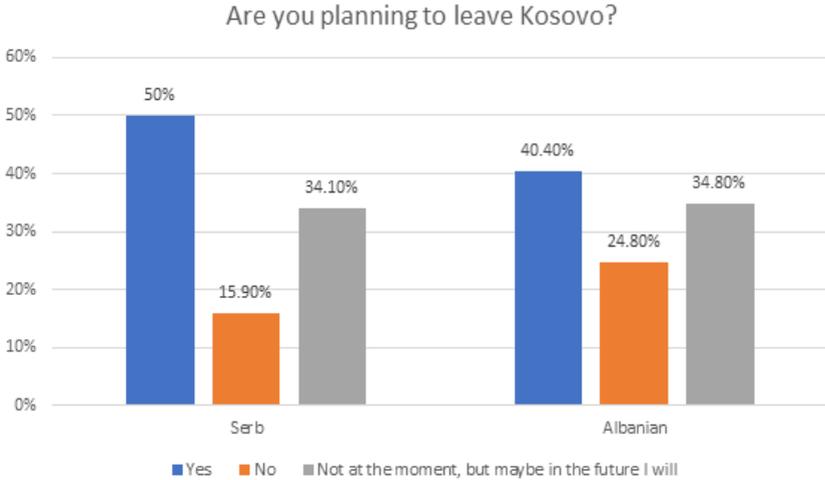
During the qualitative part of the survey, we asked the participants about the position of the young people in their respective communities.

When it comes to the community in South Mitrovica, their responses could be sum up to this: the youth are active, ready to volunteer and engage but are discouraged by the lack of appreciation or even regard by the system, especially un the decision-making process. The situation does leave many to consider going abroad, the participants confirmed the findings. One of the participants also noted that the number of CSOs dealing with the youth has also decreased in the past years. Unfair working conditions were also a concern for two of the participants who stated that the small percent of the youth that are employed are not reimbursed or are asked to work overtime without compensations.

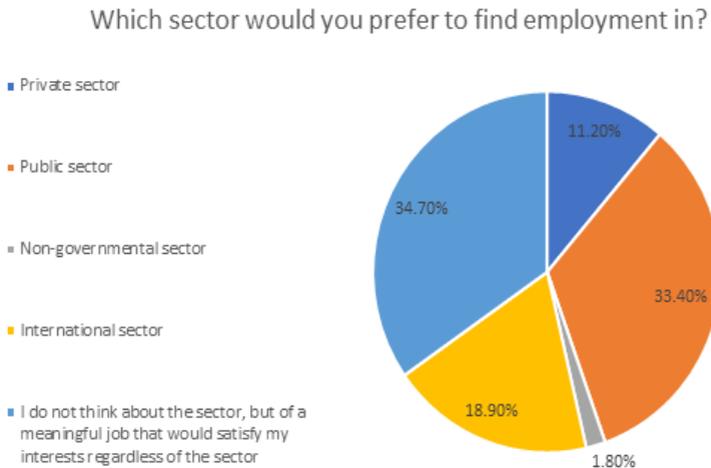
In contrast, their peers in North Mitrovica majority of the blame for the position the young people are in, place on the youth themselves, describing them as inactive and disinterested or without perspective.

The few percent of young people that are employed are predominantly the students who are not from Mitrovica and who have to work to sustain themselves during their studies.

The following chart shows disaggregation of the answers by ethnicity.

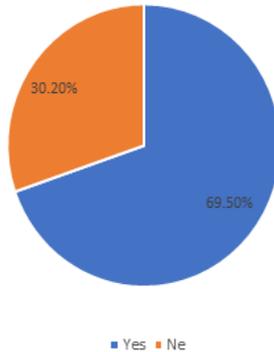


Third of the respondents say that the public sector is their first choice when it comes to employment, while only 11.2% would prefer working in the private sector.



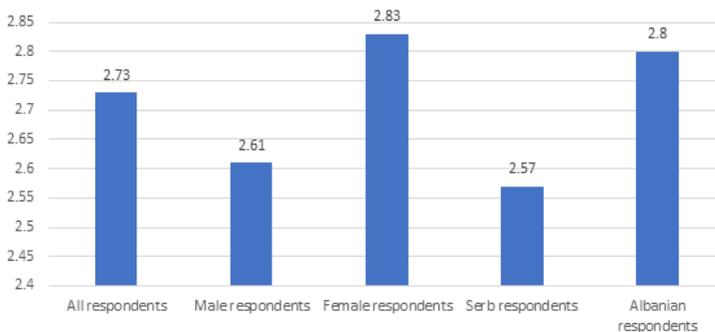
Regardless the choice of the sector, vast majority of respondents that have working experience have gained this experience in the private sector. Men have more experience working in the private sector (79.7%), but over half of our female respondents also stated the same (60.7%).

Do you have experience working in the private sector?



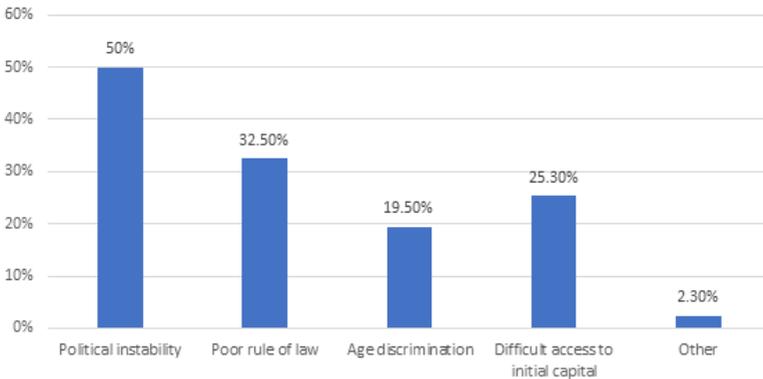
The respondents were also asked to offer their perception as to how safe it would be to invest in a business in their municipality. The level of safety was expressed on a scale from 1 (not safe at all) to 5 (completely safe). While 3 was the most commonly given answer, the average answer of all respondents was 2.73. Serb respondents feel their investment would be slightly less safe (2.57) than the Albanian respondents (2.80). Also, men feel less safe to invest in their municipality (2.61) than women (2.83).

On a scale from 1 (not safe at all) to 5 (completely safe)  
how safe do you feel investing in a business in your municipality?



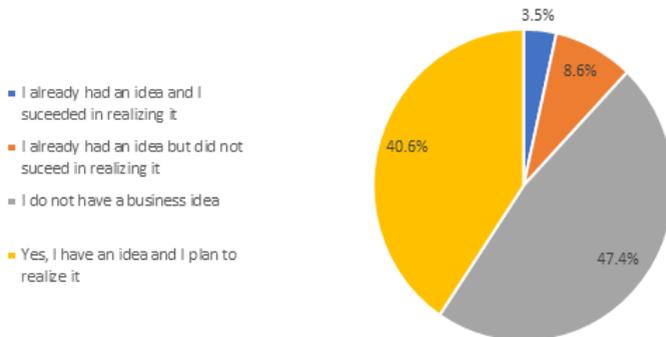
The respondents were also asked what are the main risk factors when it comes to youth entrepreneurship in their municipality and the instable political situation stood out as the factor of the highest risk. The respondents were able to chose multiple factors of risk.

What are the highest risk factors for youth entrepreneurship in your municipality?

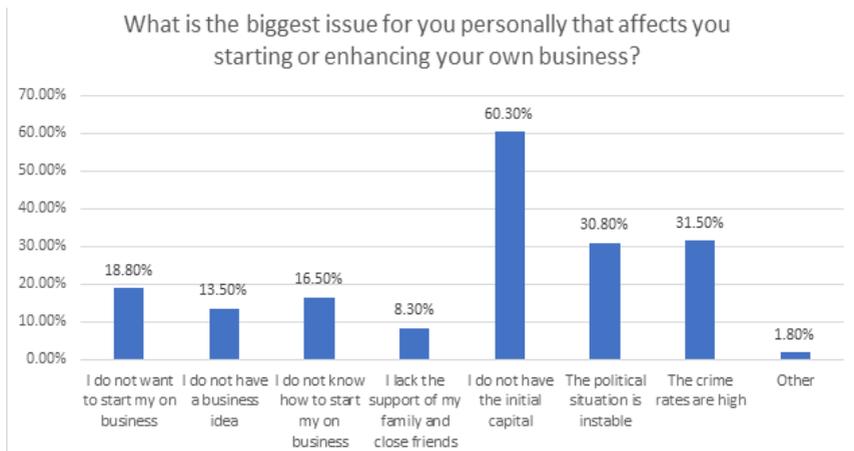


Almost half of the respondents of the survey do not have a business idea they plan on developing in the next three years. Somewhat higher percent of Serb respondents (43.5%) than Albanian respondents (36.7%) stated that they have a business idea they plan on realizing. Likewise, higher percentage of Serb respondents (13.8%) were unsuccessful in realizing their business idea than their Albanian neighbors (6.6%). The differences in the answers between genders are not significant.

Do you have a business idea you plan on realizing in the next 3 years?



And while the political situation is what the respondents found to be the highest risk factor for youth entrepreneurship in their municipalities in general, the situation is somewhat different on an individual plan. The lack of capital, crime and political situation are the issues that the youth find have negative effect on their own ability to start and grow a business.

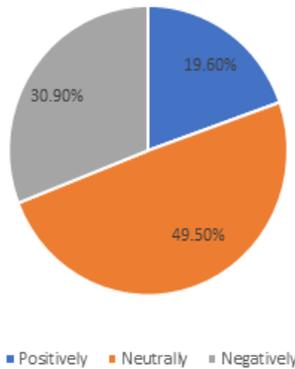


And while these are the individual obstacles, the perception of the collective in the community is extremely negative. For example, when asked to describe their peers in one word, the young people from North Mitrovica who partook in a focus group used the following descriptions: addicts, lazy people, old-fashioned, self-involved, apathetic and waiting for a better tomorrow.

Although slightly more optimistic, the responses of the Albanian community resonated in a similar way: passive as of 2015, desperate, desperate because of their dependence, not motivated, underestimated, desperate due to the local politics, more optimistic.

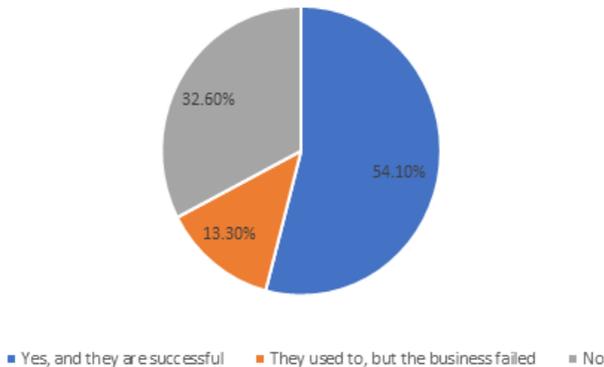
Surprisingly close to a third of our respondents have stated that views and the positions of people in their direct surrounding towards private businesses is negative. With Albanian respondents (34.1%), this percent is higher than with Serb respondents (24.5%).

How do people in your direct surrounding view private businesses and entrepreneurship?



Likewise, almost a third of our respondents do not have successful entrepreneurs as role models in their immediate family or close surrounding. When cross-referenced with the ethnicity of the respondent, the results show that the percentage of respondents who have positive examples of successful entrepreneurs in their immediate surrounding is higher with Serb respondents (62.6%), than Albanian respondents (48.3%).

Does someone from your family or your close personal surrounding own a business?



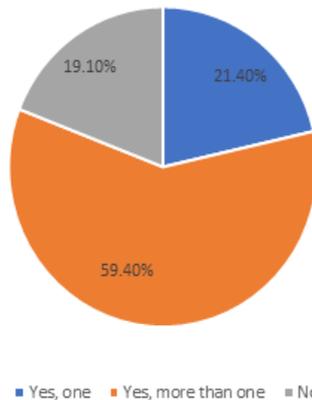
The respondents of the qualitative part of the survey report that North Mitrovica is not a conducive environment for personal invest-

ments, as the political and security situation can turn the tide in a few days and have serious consequences to private businesses. The young are creative but are unmotivated to invest their time, creativity and capital in such an environment. Two of the respondents also claimed the young in North Mitrovica to have poor entrepreneurial spirit not due to the environment, but due to their laziness.

Again, the qualitative research showed a sharp contrast between North and South Mitrovica where only one respondent claimed that the young are not motivated, while the rest of the group claimed the youth are extremely motivated but often lack diversified ideas or institutional support to develop their businesses.

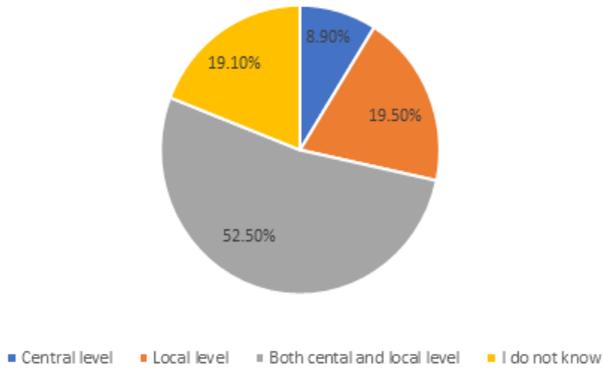
However, in the respondents' wider surrounding, role modes are not deficient, as vast majority of our respondents stated that they know of at least one successful young entrepreneur.

Do you know a successful young entrepreneur?



More than a half of the respondents think that problems of youth entrepreneurship need to be tackled on both local and central level of the governance. More respondents from North Mitrovica (27.5%), than those from South Mitrovica (13.7%) find that the policy changes need to happen on the local level.

In order to improve the conditions for youth  
entrepreneurships, this issue needs to be raised on:

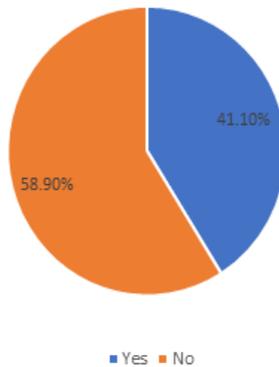


Disaggregation of answers according to the municipality:

	Central level	Local level	Both central and local level	I do not know
South Mitrovica	9.7%	13.7%	50.2%	26.4%
North Mitrovica	7.8%	27.5%	55.7%	9%

Almost 60% of our respondents stated that they have never participated in the public discussions organized by the municipal authorities. Citizen participation is somewhat at the higher level in the municipality of South Mitrovica, where 46.5% of the respondents partook in a public discussion organized by the authorities, whereas in North Mitrovica 33.7% of respondents had the same opportunity.

Have you ever participated in the public discussions organised by your municipal authorities?

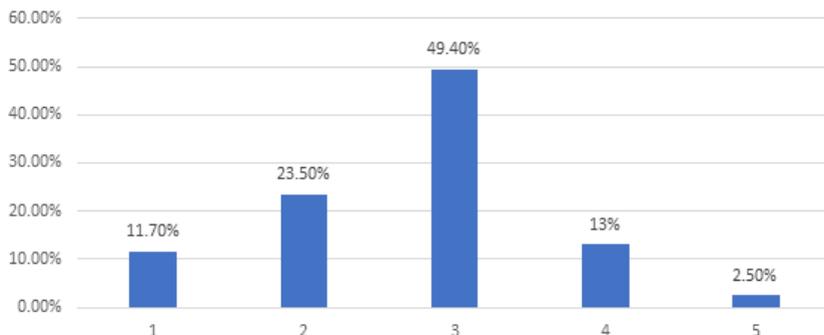


Serb respondents in the qualitative part of the research have explained the difference between the two municipality with the lack of trust in the municipal authorities as well as sense of fruitlessness, according to them, the citizens feel not much would change with their participation and that the discussions are organized just to fulfill the legal norms.

The respondents from South Mitrovica said that in their experience, youth participation is much higher with the discussions organized by the CSO and that the young who do take part in the municipal discussions are just “a number”, not really there to make any difference. Some of the participants see a greater role of the educational institutions in spreading information about public discussions and their value to the community.

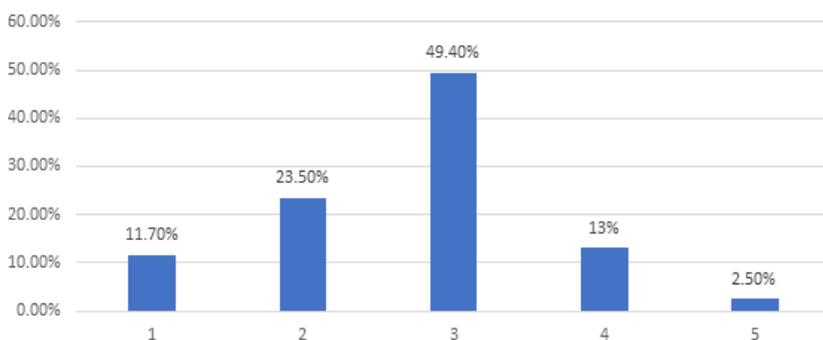
We also asked those respondents who have partook in a public discussion organized by the municipal authorities to assess how much the opinions of the citizens stated during those discussions were respected by the municipal authorities. Regard of citizens’ contributions was rated with the average grade of 2.71.

If your answer to the previous question was “YES”, on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is “absolutely disregarded” and 5 is “absolutely respected” how much were the citizens’ contributions regarded by the municipal authorities.



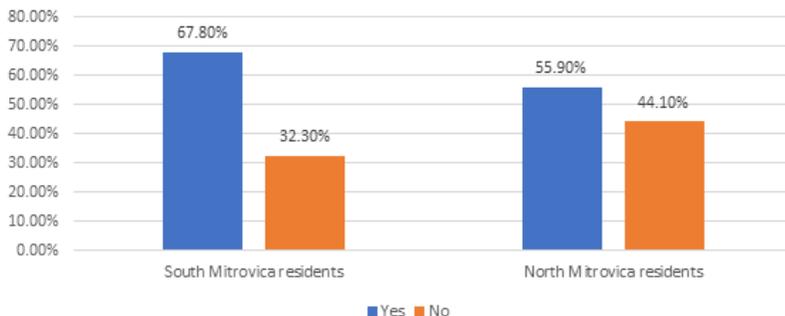
One of the more encouraging results that indicate that the level of citizen participation may be increased in the future period lies in the fact that 62.1% of respondents who never attended a public discussion organized by municipal authorities would participate in such a discussion.

If your answer to the previous question was “YES”, on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is “absolutely disregarded” and 5 is “absolutely respected” how much were the citizens’ contributions regarded by the municipal authorities.



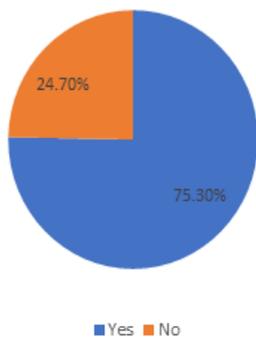
The citizens of South Mitrovica who have never attended public discussions (67.8%) are more willing to do so in the future than the citizens of North Mitrovica (55.9%).

If your answer to the question 18 was "NO",  
would you attend a public discussion  
organised by the municipal authorities



More than 70% of the respondents would be interested to be a part of the working group for the development of the municipal strategy for youth entrepreneurship.

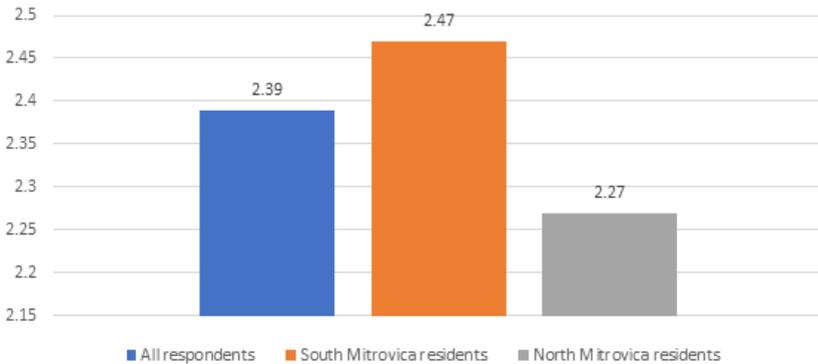
Would you accept to be a part of a working group for the  
development of the municipal strategy for youth  
entrepreneurship?



When it comes to the questions related to participation or willingness to partake in the public discussions or the decision-making processes there are no differences in answers between genders.

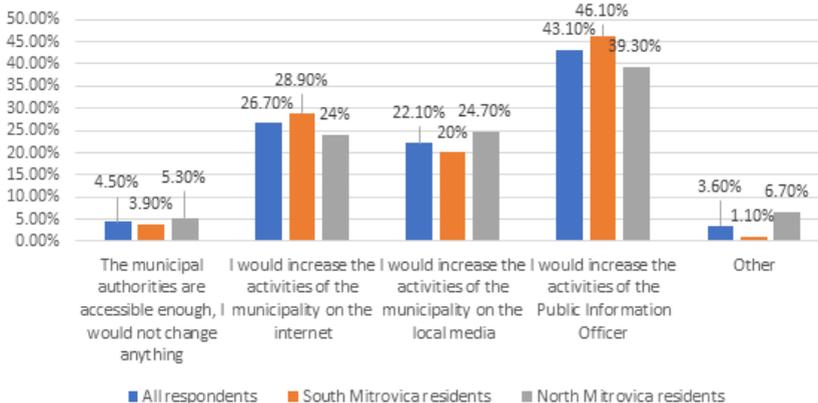
Generally speaking, the transparency of the municipalities is perceived as poor by our respondents. On a scale from 1-5, the average grade the respondents is 2.39.

On a scale from 1-5, where 1 stands for "very bad" and 5 stands for "excellent", rate the level of transparency of your municipality



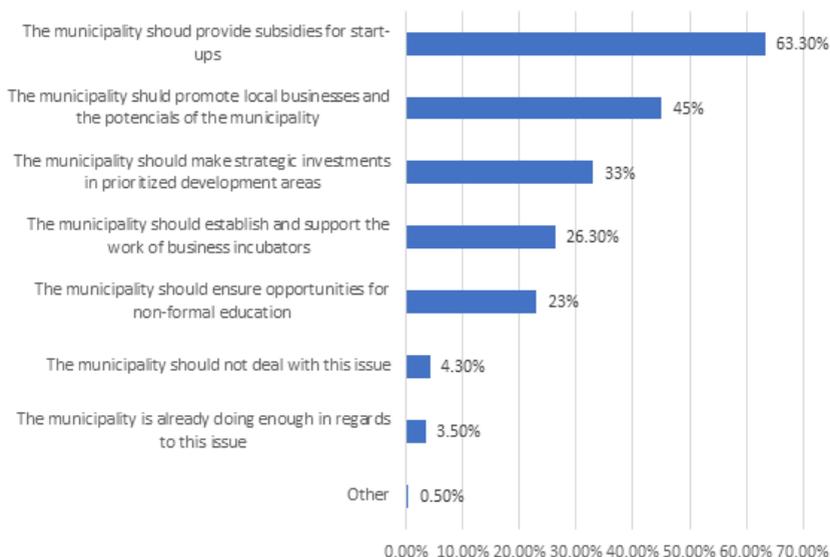
In an effort to establish what do the citizens perceive as main deficiencies in the public relations of their respective municipal authorities, we asked what they would change in the way the municipality conducts communication with the public. Close to a half of our respondents think that the work of Public Information Officers should be more visible.

If you could influence the policy of public relations of your municipality, what would you change?



The respondents see the role of the municipality in supporting youth entrepreneurship primarily in ensuring initial capital for new business ideas.

## How do you see the role of the municipality in supporting the development of youth entrepreneurship?



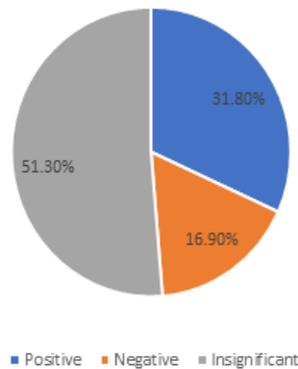
Olivera Pacariz from the municipal administration of North Mitrovica said that there is no developed policy on youth entrepreneurship and that her Office for Education has a set yearly budget that has been slowly decreasing over the years, according to which she plans the activities. She added that her Office tries to keep in touch with the needs of the young people through public and CSO debates, but that, generally speaking, the young people are passive.

The main potential in the development of youth entrepreneurship, Pacariz sees in the IT sector. She also added that verification of diplomas is one issue adding to the unemployment rates in North Mitrovica.

Finally, the main problems of the young people that the Office for Education of the municipality of North Mitrovica identified are alcoholism, addiction, unemployment and poor access to information.

In addition to the role of the municipality, the respondents were also asked to explain how they see the role of the civil society in promoting youth entrepreneurship. More than a half find that the role of CSOs in this matter is insignificant.

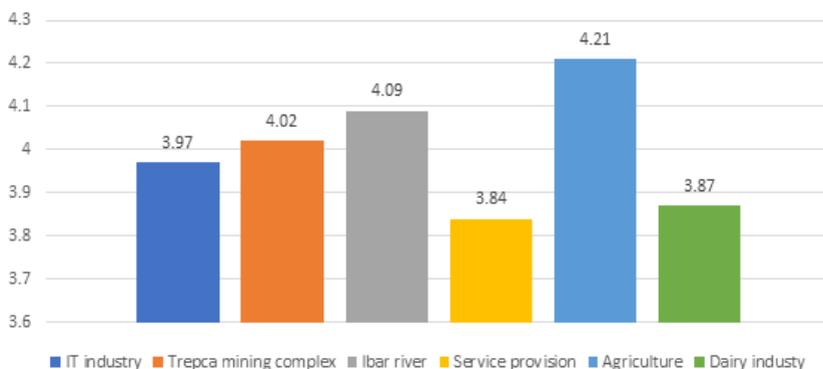
How do you see the role of the civil society in promoting youth entrepreneurship?



Respondents were also asked to measure the importance of investments in particular areas of economy or particular resources, and, in general, they find investments are needed across the economic sector.

In an interview with a young entrepreneur from North Mitrovica, the role of civil society in supporting youth entrepreneurship was assessed as positive. Although he himself has not sought assistance in starting up his own business, he did state that he will seek the assistance of the civil society sector in expanding his business. He finds that high unemployment rates should be seen as an opportunity for finding opportunities for self-employment. He himself became an entrepreneur after he lost his job. Furthermore, he stated that poor quality of the services offers fair opportunity to anyone ready to invest in the high-quality services.

On a scale from 1 - 5, where 1 stands for "completely unnecessary" and 5 stands for "absolutely necessary" how important is to invest in these fields?

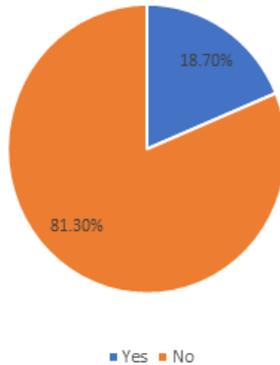


Majority of the focus group respondents from South Mitrovica state that they do not know what the investment priorities are, calming also that the municipality has no strategy regarding youth entrepreneurship. One of the respondents recommended municipality create an environment that will uphold and utilize the creativity of young people.

The respondents from North Mitrovica were also vague, but some offered concrete recommendations, such as investing in institutions that will deal with youth and culture or investments in the non-formal education. They also looked back at many donations for start-up businesses distributed over the years and warned any such programs in the future, need to be controlled better.

The region of Mitrovica, especially its northern municipalities have received a lot of aid in international assistance in the past years. However, debates as to the impact of those investments are still ongoing. Vast majority of our respondents do not think that the donations spent on the support of entrepreneurship have been allocated properly.

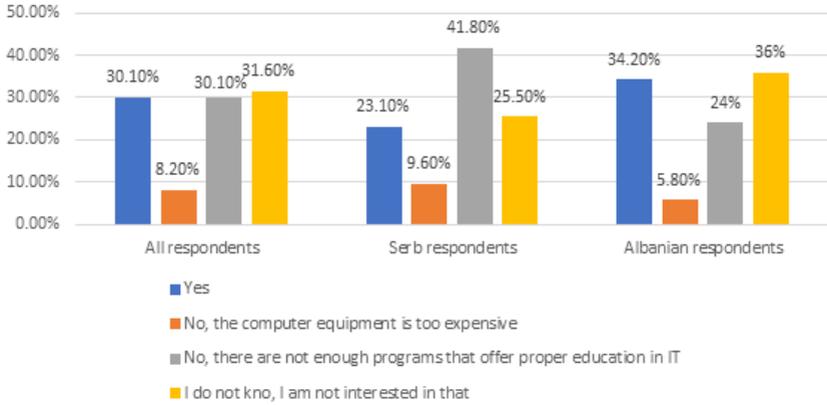
Are you satisfied with the current allocation of the donor funds invested in the development of entrepreneurship?



Out of the respondents who offered some sort of explanation as to why do they find that the donor assistance was unsuccessful, majority (62.8%) cite corruption and 20% cite improper allocation.

Finally, given the rapid development of modern technology, the respondents were asked to assess the availability of the on-line job market. Contrary to stereotypical expectations, there are almost no differences in answers between women and men in this question. When it comes to men, the percent of respondents disinterested in IT technology is 32.5%, whereas 31.1% of women share this opinion. However, the percent of women who find that there are not enough programs that offer IT education (36.8%) is higher than with male respondents (23.6%).

### Do you think that the on-line job market is accessible enough to you?



More than half of the respondents do not know if there is an IT company in their town.

### Is there an IT company in your town?

