

STRATEGY 2024 - 2027

LIZA-R is a grassroots organization based in Gjilan, Kosovo. This strategy document defines our priorities and approach to youth empowerment and support in the Gjilan region.



LIDHJA ME INTERES ZHVILLIMOR PER TE ARDHMEN E RINISE

OUR VISION

A bright youth for a brighter future

The *vision* of LIZA-R is a future where young people in Gjilan thrive and work towards a better future for their community.

Our *mission* is to empower young people in the democratic process by providing them with the tools and knowledge to increase their civic engagement.



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ABOUT LIZA-R

LIZA-R was created in 2003 as an initiative from the OSCE Mission in Kosovo to address the lack of youth initiatives in the Gjilan region and to bridge the gap between political leadership and youth's voices. The initial years of LIZA-R's work focused on the capacity building of student representatives and youth councils in schools, empowering them to identify the challenges and needs of young people in Kosovo and present them back to our team to develop initiatives to tackle them. LIZA-R was formally established as an NGO in 2007 and has since worked to empower young people to increase their civic engagement, support meaningful political participation of youth, and foster advocacy campaigns on topics that are important to young people.

While we are based in the city of Gjilan, our activities cover the wider Gjilan region including activities in Kamenica, Klokot, Novoberda, Partesh, Ranilug and Vitia. LIZA-R's main beneficiary group is young people from the age of 14. Reflecting on the different interests and needs they have conveyed to our team, in addition to civic engagement, LIZA-R has four focus areas addressing these needs:

- Cultural and educational activities for young people aged 14-15;
- Employment support for young people from the age of 17 to help them kickstart their career;
- Higher educational & study abroad support for young people from the age of 18 to explore their higher studies opportunities;
- Tools & workshops for parents and teachers to support children better through their individual, educational and professional development.

This set of activities aims to encourage their personal development, which is a pre-requisite for their motivation to become more engaged in their communities. Due to a lack of socio-economic opportunities many young people leave Gjilan and Kosovo more generally. We aim to mitigate that gap in opportunities and moreover foster engagement of young people to further better them for generations to come.

LIZA-R is an independent and apolitical organization. The vision, mission and activities of LIZA-R are not determined by any political institution, political party or individuals, business organization, donor, or other NGOs.

LIZA-R is based in Gjilan but also active in the wider region including Kamenica, Klokot, Novoberda, Partesh, Ranilug and Vitia



CORE VALUES

INTEGRITY

is a value that we aim to foster in our beneficiaries as a key part of personal development. It is also fundamental to the workings and decision-making of our organization.

AMPLIFYING VOICES

we strive to amplify young people's voices from different backgrounds and encourage a meaningful participation of young people in political debates and decision-making.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

cultivating a sense of active participation in public life where young people are informed, committed and focus on the common good of the community.

COOPERATION

among civil society actors and like-minded individuals enables LIZA-R to implement its mission and work towards its vision. We therefore also aim to encourage cooperation among our young beneficiaries.



STARTING POINT

What we have learned from the previous strategy period:

- The context of violent extremism has changed and is changing continuously. While our past PVE activities have focused on religious extremism, it is key to expand also to political and ethnonationalist extremism.
- The sustainability of youth work in the Gjilan region and Kosovo in general was a key consideration in developing this strategy. Aside from LIZA-R's work to empower young people in becoming the next generation of changemakers, the strategy also includes components on cooperation and coordination with both state and non-state actors to work together towards more sustainable programming in this field.
- Similarly, sustainability of the organization was identified as a key area of focus. LIZA-R is one of few youth NGOs active in the Gjilan region. For continuity of youth work it is key for LIZA-R to continuously grow and increase their reach.



SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Our strong network of civil society and other actors and our coordination role in the region.
- Consistency in working towards our vision from its establishment in 2003 until now.
- Accountability towards the community and our donors in implementing our work.

WEAKNESSES

- Lack of diversified funding resources and long-term funding planning and management.
- Insufficient capacities to apply for and absorb larger funding opportunities
- Lack of space to organize activities for young people in Gjilan.
- Insufficient knowledge management within the organization.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop organizational capacities to apply for and implement larger projects.
- Increase visibility and sharing of impact and achievements with donors and the larger community.
- Increase efforts in data collection and knowledge management in order to convey impact and consolidate learnings.

THREATS

- Changes in political leadership and thereby shifting priorities and inconsistent support.
- Changing threats and needs related to violent extremism and its effect on the community is difficult to anticipate.
- Changing priorities of donor community.
- Limited duration of projects.

THEORY OF CHANGE

LIZA-R has identified that there is an increasing number of young people leaving Gjilan and Kosovo for better socio-economic opportunities. Youth who stay struggle with unemployment and struggle to find recreational and educational opportunities. Youth centers and councils often exist officially but are not very active or operational at all.

Therefore, we have focused our efforts to:

- Engage youth in socio-economic activities that interests them to work on their personal development as well as to improve their vision of their future.
- Empower young people and non-formal groups of youth to increase their civic engagement.
- Work with teachers, parents and caregivers to improve their ability to support children with their individual, educational, and professional needs and development.
- Support integration of vulnerable and marginalized communities to work towards the wider goal of inclusivity, both in the social and political sense.
- Advocate for issues regarding youth and their active civic engagement at the municipal and central level.

This holistic approach aims to create better opportunities and more robust support system for young people by addressing both their immediate needs and work towards long-term empowerment of young people.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



In 2022 **over 550 young people have taken part in economic empowerment activities** provided by Liza-R. During these activities young people were provided more about socio-economic development, drafting projects and business plans, entrepreneurship, labor law etc.



Over 1000 young people participated in round tables over the past three years where they discussed issues in their communities, they were concerned about issues including career orientation, violence in school, youth and security, violent extremism, public awareness about cultural heritage, drafting of public policies for youth, etc.

Advocacy at the central and local level:

Contributed to the drafting of:

- Kosovo's Youth Law and the establishment of the Local Youth Action Councils and the Central Youth Council.
- Municipal action plans for youth and municipal regulations for volunteering, the functionalisation of Public Youth Centers for Youth, and subsidies.
- Municipal action plan for the environment
- Referral mechanism of the municipality of Gjilan

Facilitated the establishment of a Public University in Gjilan

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic objective 1: build resilience and increase civic engagement of young people by empowering them through personal development, fostering social cohesion, and increasing their engagement with local institutions.

During this strategy period, LIZA-R wants to organize at least 50 trainings and 36 debates, thereby engaging a total of 1400 young people. Supporting youth in their personal development and building their skills to become more engaged in the community is a key aim of LIZA-R's mission and therefore its first strategic priority. Trainings can include topics of socio-economic development, drafting projects and business plans, entrepreneurship, labour law in addition to round tables about career orientation, violence in school, youth and security, violent extremism, public awareness about cultural heritage, drafting of public policies for youth, etc.

Strategic objective 2: increase the capacities of teachers, parents and caregivers to improve the support system of young people in the Gjilan region.

During this strategy period, LIZA-R aims to train 100 parents and 200 teachers. LIZA-R believes that a good support system for young people of parents or caregivers and teachers and other school staff are important in order to foster the personal and professional growth of young people. Because of that, we are investing in improving their skillset to better support children and young people.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic objective 3: increase LIZA-R's outreach to young people to provide socio-economic opportunities to a larger group of young people and increase the impact of our awareness raising campaigns.

Based on our communications strategy, LIZA-R will continue to improve its visibility among young people and the wider community to inform them of our activities but also to share opportunities. In order to achieve this, LIZA-R will operationalize its website, lead 15 awareness campaigns, distribute brochures, posters and digital promotional materials to publicise events and opportunities, and produce informative material. We also plan to organize public events with young people such as city exhibitions and cleaning actions in the municipality such as park and schools.

Strategic objective 4: improve sustainability of the organisation through capacity building efforts and by improving the sustainability of youth work in the Gjilan region through increased coordination and cooperation efforts.

During this strategy period, LIZA-R aims to strengthen its capacity regarding the design and management of projects as well as the monitoring and evaluation of municipal documents/policies for youth. In order to achieve this, LIZA-R plans to attend 20 trainings and train 100 of its staff and volunteers.



KEY PARTNERS

LIZA-R works in close coordination and with the support of the following key partners:

- Relevant local and central institutions such as Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Municipalities of the Gjilan region and their directories for Education, Culture, Youth and Sports
- Schools in the Gjilan region
- Local NGOs working with non-majority communities and marginalized groups as well as Prishtina based NGOs including ATRC
- Local businesses and Chamber of Commerce



ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

This strategy was drafted in cooperation with the Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC), within the “Resilient and Inclusive Communities Program” funded by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF).