



SUCCESS STORY

Kosovo's next Generation of Leaders Steps Forward with Social Media

Youth use online platform to advocate for social change



Photo by: USAID/Kosovo Kimberly Crago

Kosovo's leading super changers:
[Left] Rexhep Kameraj, Blerona Tmava, Afrim Berisha and Leonora Javori.

“We are the future of our society. We are those will be leaders in the future. Our country is in our hands.”

July 2016 – With over half of the population being under 30 years old, Kosovo's youth is a force to be reckoned with.

Rexhep Kameraj, Leonora Javori, Blerona Tmava, and Afrim Berisha are all “Superchangers,” or some of the most engaged participants on the online platform Fole n’Fole [Speak in the Nest]. There, young are free to post articles and discuss their opinions on politics and other social topics such as opportunities at school and university. There are over 600 active members on the site, with posts and debates happening regularly.

News of the platform spread in different ways. Kameraj, for example, heard about it through social media. Berisha learned of the platform through New Media School, which is another USAID initiative teaching youth how to wield social media to conduct political and social advocacy campaigns. Speak in the Nest is spreading through Kosovo's youth and showing them their capacity for inciting change.

Javori shares that there, “hasn't [been] any space before this [the platform],” where young people could debate. “Of course, before we could share posts and such, but this was a real ‘nest’ for us – we discussed a lot with our peers, and we had a chance to confront our leaders.”

During its very active 10 months (end of 2015 and beginning of 2016), the Speak in the Nest project spread out to 24 municipalities in Kosovo. It organized a number of events, including meetings with mayors and political parties, mock elections, assembly simulations, and public debates where youth could express their opinions on what is happening in Kosovo but present their views to leaders.

Members of the platform develop their debate and critical analysis skills while learning about politics in Kosovo.

“It's necessary for youth to understand their power—all of us have some political power—even if we're not aware of it,” said Berisha. “This platform offers the opportunity to understand our own political power and not be manipulated by politicians.”

“We are the future of society,” says Javori, “We are those who will be the leaders in the future. Our country is in our hands.”

“In general, it’s been youth that have led the changes,” adds Berisha. “This [the platform] is a place to get together to initiate social change.”

Speak in the Nest is managed through USAID’s election support activity implemented in partnership with International Foundation for Electoral Services. The platform will slowly be turned over to the super changers, who will post articles and moderate all the content, taking an even closer step toward leadership.

The super-changers all agree that Speak in the Nest is growing and reaching out to even more youth. “This [the platform] has shown us that if we’re determined, no one can stop us,” said Berisha.