Đurđica Kazić, a young psychologist engaged as a national UN Youth Volunteer, and Aleksandra Jovanović, an expert on women's economic empowerment, serve in Kosovo* (as per UN Security Council Resolution 1244). They committed to empower each other through a unique possibility for the new generation of women leaders – the mentorship initiative. On the Occasion of International Women's Day, they share their story.

This undertaking aims to develop young women’s leadership capacities to become agents of change for their communities, contributing to social cohesion.
I strongly believe in the solidarity and connection between women. Young women need just a bit of support to experience big changes. --Aleksandra Jovanović

Their endeavours as a mentee and a mentor have influenced both reciprocally. While Aleksandra proudly witnesses Đurđica’s increase in self-confidence and her remarkable capacity in building relationships in the community, positioning her as a future leader, Đurđica has been a pillar for Aleksandra’s deeper insight into young women’s needs and aspirations.

Đurđica is empowering youth by engaging with them in educational activities at the non-governmental organization Domovik. She offers creative language learning classes for street children, together with three other UN Youth Volunteers. This was her first time being involved with such a diverse and multi-ethnic group of individuals.

In this project, I meet such beautiful people that I forget where they come from – ethnic backgrounds don’t matter anymore. The most enriching experience of my life. --Đurđica Jovanović, national UN Youth Volunteer

Asked about the development of youth leadership capacities over the decades, Aleksandra remarks that young women are getting more engaged with new educational prospects.

It’s a nice feeling to see so many young women in one place, eager to learn and find opportunities – that gives me hope. -- Aleksandra Jovanović
This initiative is part of “Empowering Youth for a Peaceful, Prosperous, and Sustainable Future in Kosovo”, a project funded by the Peacebuilding Fund and implemented by UNDP-UNV, UNICEF and UN Women.

*References to Kosovo shall be understood in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

Europe and the CIS

• International women's day • IWD • gender empowerment

Sustainable Development Goal: SDG 5: Gender equality, SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals