



Institute for Democracy and Mediation
Instituti për Demokraci dhe Ndërmjetësim

BEYOND SCHOOL BARRIERS

A PERSPECTIVE FOR BUILDING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES
THROUGH SCHOOL AS COMMUNITY CENTER MODEL

This publication is prepared in the framework of the project “Empowering local community at preventing any form of violent extremism through multi-sectoral prevention measures in Kamza municipality”, implemented by the Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM) with financial support from the European Union through the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism Hedayah.

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countering violent extremism



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**Shkolla
Qendër
Komunitare**


PËR KOMUNITETE TË QËNDRUESHME

The background features a light gray field with several thin, overlapping, curved lines in shades of green and yellow. In the lower-left corner, there are two overlapping organic shapes in shades of orange and yellow. The text is positioned within the darker orange shape.

why school
as community
center

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- a) It is an **instrument** that puts the school at the center of the community, links institutions at the local level, and strengthens the relations of the school's staff with students and parents, aiming to strengthen cohesion in facing security challenges and violent extremism.
 - b) It encourages the **responsibility** and **collective decision-making** of each stakeholder involved in the process– by respecting diversity, supporting the school and the well-being of the community.
 - c) It **transforms the "traditional" role of the school** to focus on the social and democratic values, ensuring the social and psychological well-being and healthy life of the students and strengthening the family.
 - d) It **develops school capacities**, increases the skills of young people, and promotes their active participation in the community.

A community is **RESILIENT** when it possesses skills and encourages the active participation of various local actors in the community, using all the resources (human, legal, and financial) in response to various problems and phenomena, including violent extremism.



the municipality

1. The mayor
2. City council
3. Local public safety councils
4. Services and other structures of the municipality

community groups

business sector

media



SCC

people with influence

NGO

religious communities

youth groups

the school


1. Teaching staff
2. Student governments
3. Parent boards
4. Psycho-social service

police

1. Maintaining local order and security
2. Prevention of phenomena that affect the safety and well-being of the community


The image features a white background with abstract elements. In the bottom-left corner, there are two overlapping, organic shapes in shades of teal. The larger, darker teal shape contains the text 'the vision and shared responsibility' in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. In the top-right corner, there are several thin, overlapping lines in yellow and green, forming a complex, web-like pattern.

the vision and
shared
responsibility



“School as Community Center” is an important instrument in strengthening local communities through education, capacity building, promoting active citizenship, empowering women, informing and raising awareness of the community in combating intolerance, discrimination, and prejudice. This model aims to transform the school into a meeting point which strengthens the **partnership of local institutions – school – family – community – interest groups**, as a supportive community environment, that enables interaction with all stakeholders; contributes to youth development and promotes active citizenship; supports the development of communities both in terms of safety and their commitment to decision-making and the improvement of local democracy.

The experience built on the “School as Community Center” model, combines the interaction among local institutions, with local communities and stakeholders:

- The mayor of Kamza Municipality, the Municipal Council, and respective structures of the municipality strengthen the engagement in the field of security and prevention of violent extremism. The experience indicates that the commitment of all these institutions in the implementation of the action plan for the "School as Community Center" is an opportunity for success in improving their service provision.
 - The school enables the development of young people, by providing academic knowledge and preparation to be active citizens in society. The school staff, together with the psychologist and the security officer, facilitate this process through the exchange of information, social and cultural activism, and cooperation with the local stakeholders.
 - The Police Commissariat of Kamza is an important stakeholder in this cooperation. Through participation in activities, the local police fulfil their objectives within the local plan of "Community Policing". The police conducts periodic communications with parents, students, and young people to address mutual concerns with these actors, proactively at an early stage.
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best
practices



Improving school capacities as a safe place to promote the School as Community Center model as an instrument for preventing violent extremism

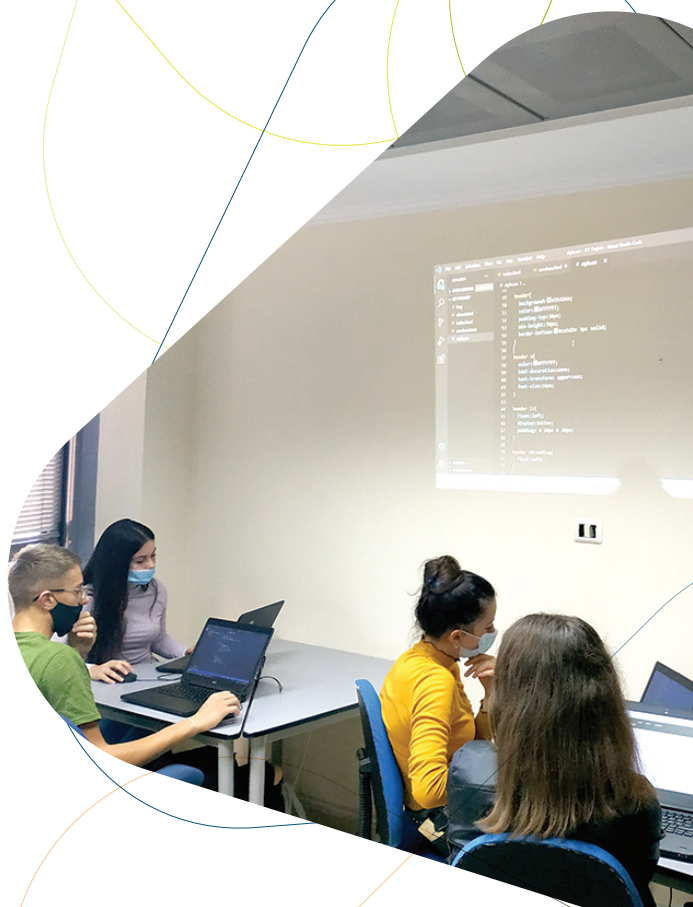
- Establishment of School as Community Center Steering Committee, with the involvement of all stakeholders at the local level - municipality, police, education office, school, and students. This committee focuses on engaging youth and strengthening their voice at the local level as well as strengthening multi-stakeholder relationship in the community.
- Development and implementation of the annual plan of activities of the School as Community Center, in cooperation with parents, school staff, students, community, and local institutions.
- Improving school facilities and the opportunities for youth development, by providing computer equipment, books, and other supporting materials.
- Drafting an Action Plan for Resilient Communities, for a wider approach of the local government to the local community and young people, in particular, aiming at increasing the community's capabilities and building resilience.





Empowering youth capacities and encouraging active citizenship

- Thematic and vocational training for students in the areas of conflict management, media literacy, information and communications technology, empowerment of girls and women in the labour market, and career counselling for young people.
- Informative sessions on violent extremism with second-year students of “Ibrahim Rugova” high school, with the help of the school's psychologist and the security officer.
- Supporting new talents in school, through creating a painting club and engaging young people in conducting awareness campaigns against violent extremism.
- Joint meetings and sharing experiences among teachers, students, and parents from different high schools in Kamza.
- Promoting volunteering among young people and engaging them in local community initiatives.





Advocating youth and women priorities at the local level

- Establishment of the Youth Democracy Club and the Women Empowerment Club.
- Engaging youth in internships at the Municipality of Kamza, promoting trust and strengthening the cooperation of local institutions with young people.
- Designing the manifesto of youth priorities for the local government and the manifesto of women's priorities for empowerment.
- Promoting the development of citizenship skills and the knowledge of youth on the local government and the rights of girls and women.




Promoting inclusiveness and raising awareness on respecting diversity

- Periodic discussion meetings led by the school psychologist and the security officer, with the school's staff and students on respecting diversity, inclusion, and avoiding any form of discrimination.
- Awareness-raising activities conducted by the youth against discrimination and prejudices.
- Informative activities with young people and parents in cooperation with law enforcement institutions and religious communities on phenomena such as violent extremism, bullying, domestic violence.
- Informative and awareness-raising meetings between representatives of the local police and students on narcotics, tobacco, and alcohol use; conflict management training sessions, and promoting the culture of reporting to competent institutions in case of legal violations.





for a successful
implementation

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- Greater involvement of local actors, as well as the parents' community, in drafting the annual plan of the School as Community Center, promoting shared responsibilities and opportunities to support in the implementation of activities;
 - Coordination of work and activities at the local level with local government units and other institutions, focusing on SCC activities;
 - Develop a proactive approach towards young people, through boosting their active role in providing solutions to the community's problems;
 - Adapt annual youth internship practices from the local institutions as an opportunity to increase trust in the local government and boost the youth empowerment process;
 - Provide more training/informative sessions on career counselling so that young people can have an easier transition to the labour market or attain further university studies;
 - Facilitate communication with local businesses and create spaces for capacity building and inclusion of young people in employment programs;
 - Increase the communication among police representatives and young people through involvement in joint activities such as information, awareness, or sports events;
 - Support youth initiatives, especially those that raise awareness and engage young people in decision-making;
 - Advance intercultural dialogue by supporting young people and different groups in society, combating discrimination, and promoting an inclusive culture;
 - Increase interactive relationships with schools and the local community, strengthening dialogue between young people, parents, and teachers;

The website www.shkollaim.org aims to inform the public about the activities conducted in Albania on behalf of the School as Community Center (SCC) model, serving as a medium of communication for all stakeholders involved in the SCC model.

The Facebook page [@shkollaim.shqk](https://www.facebook.com/shkollaim.shqk) shares in real-time the activities on behalf of the School as Community Center model.