

Kosovo

Report 2026



A GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF
INTERDISCIPLINARY PEACEBUILDERS

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Program Background

The Applied Peace Network (APN) is designed to enrich the peacebuilding field by bringing together diverse perspectives and emerging voices from across disciplines. Through an intensive, tailored, and thought-provoking seminar, participants are introduced to leading figures in the field and encouraged to develop innovative responses to real-world conflicts affecting their communities.

The program further seeks to cultivate a global network of local peacebuilders. By empowering individuals from diverse sectors to contribute to peacebuilding in their own contexts, APN strengthens collaboration, knowledge exchange, and long-term connections among practitioners, community leaders, and emerging peacebuilders.

Program Overview

The APN Kosovo seminar was a multi-day peacebuilding program held from April 6–17, 2026, bringing together emerging peacebuilders, civil society actors, youth leaders, and community representatives to explore key issues shaping peace and resilience in post-conflict Kosovo.

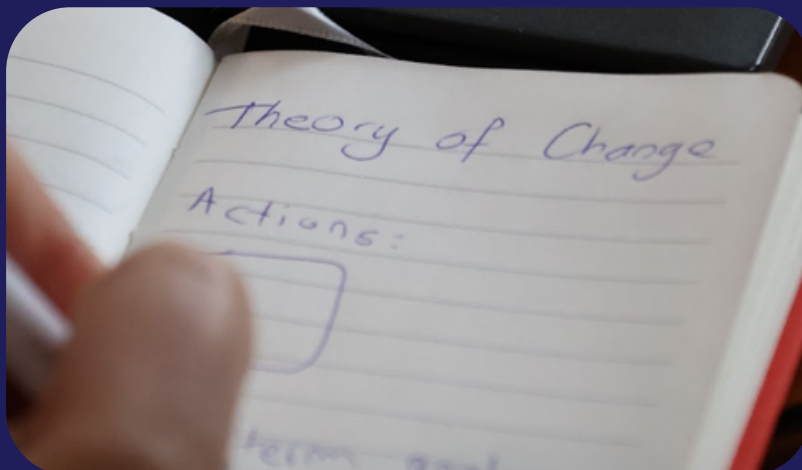
The program combined conceptual learning with practical application. Participants reflected on Kosovo's post-war peacebuilding challenges, examined comparative and local examples.

Focuses of the Program:

- Climate resilience
- Gender and peacebuilding
- Transitional justice
- Community-based peacebuilding
- Technology and innovation
- Human rights
- Interfaith dialogue
- Applied peace project designs

Skills Developed:

- Conflict analysis
- Project design
- Stakeholder mapping
- Budgeting
- Implementation planning
- Risk management
- Monitoring and evaluation



Day 1

Intersection of Climate Change, Environmental Governance, and Peacebuilding in Kosovo



Day 1 introduced the links between climate change, environmental governance, social cohesion, and peacebuilding. Participants examined environmental challenges in their communities — including pollution, waste, soil degradation, and water and energy management — and analyzed how such pressures can heighten community tensions or strengthen resilience and cooperation. Discussions underscored that effective peacebuilding must be inclusive, engaging women, youth, minorities, religious communities, and other marginalized groups.

Day 2

Gender Paths to Peace: Healing and Justice in Post-Conflict Kosovo

Day 2 examined the role of gender, minority inclusion, healing, and justice in peacebuilding. Sessions explored why women's participation and broader gender inclusion are essential to sustainable peace, and encouraged participants to reflect critically on how gender dynamics shape post-conflict recovery. The discussions reinforced the value of inclusive peace processes as a foundation for lasting stability.

Day 3

International Development Aid and its Unintended Consequences on Peacebuilding in Post-War Kosovo

Day 3 examined the role of international development aid in post-war Kosovo, including its positive contributions and unintended consequences. Participants reflected on comparative examples, including the Swabian Danubians case, and discussed how acknowledging injustice without justifying harm can support reconciliation and peacebuilding.

Day 4

Institutional Approaches to Transitional Justice: Insights from Kosovo's Ministry of Justice

Day 4 explored transitional justice through institutional and academic perspectives. Sessions with Mr. Baki Svirca and Dr. Gëzim Visoka helped participants better understand the purpose and challenges of transitional justice in Kosovo. Key topics included addressing past crimes, acknowledging victims, documenting the past, facing historical injustice, and building sustainable peace.

Day 5

Field Visit to Community Building Mitrovica and Drenas Center for Promotion of Women's Rights

Day 5 offered field-based learning through visits to Community Building Mitrovica (CBM) and the Drenas Center for the Promotion of Women's Rights. Participants gained first-hand insight into community-based peacebuilding, youth engagement, interethnic cooperation, trauma healing, support for survivors of war crimes — both women and men — and sustainable development. The visits enabled participants to connect classroom learning with peacebuilding practice on the ground.

Day 6

Technological Paths to Peace: AI and Innovation for a Resilient Future

Day 6 focused on the intersection of artificial intelligence, innovation, resilience, and peacebuilding. Participants discussed how technology can support communication, early warning, community problem-solving, youth engagement, and data collaboration. The session also addressed risks such as misinformation, hate speech, deepfakes, privacy concerns, and algorithmic bias.



Day 7

Human Rights, Constitutionalism and Peacebuilding

Day 7 examined the role of human rights and constitutionalism in building sustainable peace. The session with Ms. Remzije Istrefi explored how rights protection, rule of law, accountability, equality, and inclusion contribute to post-conflict recovery. Participants also strengthened their understanding of project management and how to translate peacebuilding ideas into practical plans with a session led by Caroline Bland.

Day 8

Interfaith Dialogue and Education: Foundations for Sustainable Peace

Day 8 focused on interfaith dialogue, education, and conflict analysis. Sessions with Arriza Ann Nocum and Dr. John De Rosa explored how dialogue between religious and ethnic communities can reduce prejudice, build trust, and support coexistence. Participants also discussed how education, youth activities, volunteerism, and shared community initiatives can help prevent division.

Day 9

From Ideas to Action: Designing Applied Peace Projects

Day 9 marked the program's transition to applied project design. Participants developed Theory of Change models and worked through problem definition, stakeholder mapping, and the formulation of project objectives, outputs, and activities — translating broad peacebuilding concepts into structured project designs responsive to real challenges in their communities. Working with Phoebe Greenaway, participants also designed Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks and defined measurable outcomes.

Day 10

Budgeting, Implementation, Risk Management, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Final Project Development

The final program day focused on practical implementation. Participants learned how to connect budgets to project activities, identify implementation risks, and use monitoring and evaluation to assess whether peacebuilding activities are creating intended change. The day supported participants in strengthening their final project ideas and preparing to contribute to peacebuilding initiatives beyond the seminar.



Seed Grant

Qualification

At the program's conclusion, all participants pitched peacebuilding project ideas to a jury composed of IP, FIQ, and OSCE Kosovo representatives. Qualified projects will receive seed grants supporting implementation within their communities. IP will continue providing bi-weekly mentoring and support throughout the implementation process.

Erëza Matoshi: Virtual Reality for Empathy and Youth Peacebuilding

Project

Erëza Matoshi's project addresses inherited narratives, prejudice, and limited meaningful contact among young people in Kosovo, where biases shaped by separated community experiences can deepen division. Her proposed intervention is a virtual reality experience that allows teenagers to step into another person's life — experiencing everyday routines, moments of division, and shared human experiences through immersive storytelling. Within safe, facilitated, and emotionally supported settings, the project aims to build empathy, challenge stereotypes, and foster structured dialogue.



Rozafa Berisha: Media Literacy and Dialogue for Interethnic Trust

Project

Rozafa Berisha's project addresses Kosovo's fragmented information environment, particularly around sensitive interethnic and political issues. Media narratives are often selective, emotionally framed, or weakly verified, fueling mistrust and polarization — pressures felt acutely by young people, who face high exposure to digital content with limited tools to assess credibility or contextualize competing narratives. Her project combines media literacy training with structured dialogue to strengthen young people's ability to assess information, identify misinformation, question polarizing narratives, and communicate constructively across community lines.



Survey and Evaluation Findings

Pre- and post-session surveys were employed throughout the APN Kosovo seminar to assess participants' baseline knowledge, learning progress, reflections, and readiness to take action. The survey results show that participants strengthened their understanding across multiple peacebuilding themes and increasingly connected seminar content to practical community-based action.



A strong finding across the post-session surveys was that participants generally felt **more prepared to take action after each seminar day**. In several sessions, all respondents said they would recommend the topic to others and felt more prepared to apply what they learned.

Guest Speakers



HAKE ABASI

Haki Abazi is a former Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo, two-time Member of Parliament, and former Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee. He has over a decade of experience leading peacebuilding and development programs in the Balkans and beyond, including as Program Director at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. He holds a degree in computer science and management and is fluent in English, Albanian, and Serbian.



DR. CHARLES DAVIDSON

Dr. Charles E. Davidson has worked in peacebuilding his entire adult life. From his early 20s, he began traveling to war-torn and conflict-affected countries to discover better ways to understand dynamic approaches to peace partnerships. After founding IP in 2009, Davidson has lived at the intersection of peacebuilding practice and scholarship, earning his Ph.D. from the Carter School at George Mason University.



DR. FERIDE RUSHITI

Dr. Feride Rushiti is a leading human rights advocate and founder of the Kosovo Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims (KRCT). With over two decades of experience, she has played a pivotal role in advancing recognition and support for survivors of wartime sexual violence, including contributing to the landmark 2017 government decision to provide pensions to victims. She has also helped shape Kosovo's legal framework for the humane treatment of detainees and the establishment of independent monitoring systems. Her work has earned international recognition, including the U.S. Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award in 2018.



GENC BROQI

Genc Broqi is a senior leader with extensive experience in education, governance, and community development in Kosovo. As former Programs Director at Roma Versitas Kosovo, he supported underserved students and led initiatives that promoted inclusion and equal access to education. His work with international organizations and public institutions has focused on strengthening communities and advancing social cohesion. Genc brings a strong commitment to building more inclusive and resilient societies.



DR. VIOLETA BAKIA

Dr. Violeta Bakia is an experienced European foreign and security policy researcher who works at the intersection of peacebuilding, EU policy, and cultural governance. Her academic research and book publication focus on the European Union's role in achieving sustainable conflict resolution, particularly in Southeast Europe. Alongside her academic work, she has worked in various international organizations and foundations, engaging in peace, social, and cultural policy initiatives across Kosovo, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Germany. She currently serves as Chief Operating Officer of the Haus der Donauschwaben in Sindelfingen, Germany, where she leads operations at the intersection of culture, research, and community engagement. Originally from Kosovo and primarily educated in Germany, she brings a transnational perspective that bridges academic insight with practical policy experience.



BAKI SVRICA

Baki Svirca is the Head of the Transitional Justice Division at the Ministry of Justice. He leads efforts to address the legacy of conflict in Kosovo through policies on accountability, reparations, and reconciliation, working closely with government, civil society, and international partners.



ARIZZA NOCUM

Arizza Nocum is the Co-founder and President of KRIS for Peace, which has trained over 1,000 youth in peacebuilding since 2008 and received the YouthLED Democracy Award from The Asia Foundation in 2021. She was selected by Kofi Annan as one of ten young leaders working to counter violent extremism and advance youth-led peace initiatives. She currently serves as Managing Director of DIGInspire, focusing on strategic marketing across sectors in the Philippines.



GËZIM VISOKA

Gëzim Visoka is Associate Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies in the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University. His research focuses on post-conflict peacebuilding and statebuilding, as well as state creation and the politics of diplomatic recognition



KADIRE TAHIRAJ

Kadire, a Kosovo war survivor, rebuilt her life by raising three orphaned children she met in a refugee camp. Now a community leader and women's advocate, she has mentored more than 120 women through Women for Women and leads initiatives focused on health, domestic violence, and empowerment.



TEUTA SAHATQIJA

A technology and policy expert, university professor, and one of Kosovo's first women programmers, she serves as Director of Women in Tech Kosovo. With expertise in AI, cybersecurity, and digital transformation, she has advised the President of Kosovo and the Mayor of Pristina while championing gender equality in technology.



CAROLINE BLAND

Caroline Bland graduated from The George Washington University in 2024 with a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs. Caroline works as a Project Manager at the Center for Applied Peace Strategies, where she continues to apply her expertise in managing complex initiatives. She brings extensive knowledge in project management and development, with a focus on advancing strategic goals in the peacebuilding field.



PHOEBE GREENAWAY

Phoebe is a graduate of the George Washington University with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and a minor in Data Science. At Innovations in Peacebuilding, she works on the Monitoring and Evaluation of current projects and data storage for future initiatives, she is passionate about using her skills and interests in international development to create sustainable and equitable communities.



DR. JOHN DEROSA

John DeRosa brings over three decades of experience across public service, national security, technology, and education. He currently serves as a Principal Product Manager at Amazon Web Services, working on emerging technologies and strategic innovation. His career includes roles with the U.S. Army and senior defense institutions. He is also an affiliated faculty member at Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, where he supports education and peacebuilding initiatives.





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For more information, check out our website:
innovationsinpeacebuilding.org