

# Circular Economy in Kosovo

*Perceptions and knowledge of circular economy among Kosovars*

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## Introduction

The essence of circular economy lies in humanity's tendency to be able to mimic the economic system, upon which nature functions - where raw materials that go into creating a product in nature are not lost, but only transformed from one form into another. In the face of overpopulation, overuse of finite resources, environmental degradation and its impact on the wellbeing of humanity, it is clear that the linear economic system, which began several hundred years ago, and took off from the industrial revolution and onward, is not sustainable to accommodate the impact of climate change facing humanity in the long run.

The aim of circular economy is to offer an alternative to the linear economy based on the mindset of *Take-Make-Dispose*, into an economic system where the focus is on designing products with *Regenerative* and *Restorative* systems of production and consumption, based on *Production-Consumption-Reuse*. The purpose of circular economy is the use of raw materials that are so clean that they can be re-recycled in continuation. This economic system aims to fundamentally eliminate waste out of the system and to make efficient and effective use of resources for production in continuation.

The idea of circular economy has existed in different forms since the mid 60s. In the face of global warming and climate change, circular economy is taking a more integrative form, being emphasized daily, as a sustainable alternative to the linear economy. The notion of a circular economy in developed countries is being studied and refined, while modalities for transitioning to such an economy are being tested and tried, with a long-term aim of securing a more sustainable economic model for the survival and flourishing of humankind.

In Kosovo, the beginnings of this economic model are scattered, with few initiatives from companies in the private sector, cursory discussions from civil society organizations, and a deficient vision from the government for developing this system within the country. Initiatives for economic development seem to be intensely focused on creating a more competitive economy, while building strongly and quickly on the linear economy, rather than creating an environment that would enable the development of a sustainable economic system through circular models.

What is more evident than the lack of familiarity with the circular economy terminology and concept among the masses in Kosovo, is their lack of clear understanding of the essence of the system, as well as its building blocks that enable its development. While environmental benevolence is apparent, there is an absence in holistic understanding on how business actions and individual choices interact with one another holistically and sustain healthy existence. Moreover, there is lack of trust that anything can be done on an individual level to shift the direction of the economy and a very high dependency and reliance on support from the government.

## Methodology

The research on the perceptions and knowledge of circular economy among Kosovars has been conducted in a three-month period, from May until August 2019.

The data that supports this study has been collected through primary research, led by a survey distributed electronically, through social media and email. This report is based heavily on primary research that has been conducted specifically for this report, due to the lack of prior research exclusively focused on circular economy in Kosovo.

The usage of electronic platforms for this primary research has been done to protect the environment, to save paper and other materials that contribute to damaging the environment.

The research process was mainly focused online. The survey was created specifically to measure the knowledge, perceptions and behaviours of Kosovo's inhabitants regarding opportunities and obstacles that relate to the development of circular economy in the country.

Survey responses came from a majority who identified themselves as single and/or married, with a close split of employed and unemployed individuals.

The survey was voluntarily completed in full by 462 people from throughout Kosovo (both rural and urban areas), aged 15-65+, of all levels of education, primary to tertiary level. Data has been analyzed through the integrated system for analysis on the online platform and on SPSS for a more detailed analysis.

The survey was crafted in Albanian, but to avoid any language limitations, the terminology in English was also included, so to evaluate the real knowledge of individuals about the concept. The study reflects the perceptions and knowledge of respondents from both urban and rural areas, including viewpoints from the north (Mitrovicë, Vushtrri, Skenderaj, Drenas Glogoc), south (Prizren, Suharekë, Dragash), center (Malishevë, Shtime, Klinë, Rahovec) east (Prishtinë, Gjiilan, Kamenicë, Podujevë, Fushë Kosovë, Lipjan, Ferizaj, Obiliq, Viti, Novobërdë,) and west of Kosovo (Pejë, Deçan, Gjakovë, Janjevë).

The purpose of the study is to give an initial reflection on the level of information, knowledge, perception and behaviours of citizens in relation to the development of circular economy in Kosovo, as well as to provide multisectorial recommendations to help develop this economic model in the country.

## Knowledge of Circular Economy in Kosovo

The majority of the surveyed had never heard of “Circular Economy”, as more than 60% stated that they either had no knowledge of the topic or they did not remember. Considering that the terminology is relatively new in the Albanian language, the surveyed were also asked whether they had heard of “Circular Economy” in English, so to more concretely measure their actual knowledge on the topic - beyond language limitations and lack of available literature for this field in Albanian. But, the results came out almost identically and the majority had not heard of this concept even in English.

Considering that familiarity with a terminology and holistic understanding of a concept differ and impact the overall awareness of people regarding the studied concept, the respondents were then presented with the full definition of circular economy in Albanian and were asked whether they had ever talked about it at school or at university. The aim was to get a sense of the depth of understanding they have about the concept. The results showed that even though more people had heard about the term “circular economy”, the vast majority of them (more than 70%) had never talked about it or didn’t remember talking about it in school/university. In villages and in more isolated areas, such as Malisheva, Vitia, Deçan and Skenderaj the lack of knowledge about the concept was significantly higher.

When respondents were asked how familiar they were with the concepts that contribute to the creation of a circular economy, the results highlighted significant shortcomings in their knowledge. The majority were not able to identify conceptual structures that enable the creation and development of a circular economy.

Around 36% of respondents had never heard about any of the concepts that contribute to the creation of a circular economy. Only 1.3% had heard of all.

Only around 6% of the surveyed had heard about *Biomimicry*, a new discipline that studies the best ideas from nature and imitates its designs and processes to solve problems, and is considered as one of the building blocks of a circular economy. This discipline aims to find inspiration in nature for innovation - for example to study the function of leaves to create more efficient solar cells. Biomimicry was especially unfamiliar in villages and more isolated areas of Kosovo.

The aim of circular economy is to fundamentally differ from linear economy - to shift away from concepts of “Take-Make-Dispose” to an economy that mimics nature and nothing “goes to waste”. But, in a sustainable and healthy way is reincorporated in the production and consumption system, while avoiding disposal. This innovative approach, based on economic contribution through the creation of products and processes in line with nature’s models, is one of the foundations of circular economy and is almost unknown in Kosovo.

Only 15% of respondents had heard about the *Blue Economy*, which aims to use available resources and ocean resources for economic development and for improving the lives and employment opportunities of people, by protecting the health of oceans. Due to the increasing lack of space for landfills, oceans and waterways become victims of the linear economy and result in becoming dumping grounds as “oceanfills.”

The aim of Circular Economy is to push forward the mindset that earth functions as a whole and that negative impact on one side will undoubtedly have a negative effect on another aspect of life on earth. For this reason, the linear economy model, where we produce-consume-dispose, by misusing waters, is not sustainable. Respondents in Kosovo had very little knowledge about the concept of Blue Economy or how it relates to Circular Economy.

Only 4% of respondents had heard about the *Cradle to Cradle* concept, the least of all concepts they were asked about. This process follows a biomimetic approach to designing products and systems that model human industry on nature’s processes. Nature views every material as

nutrition that circulates in a healthy and safe cycle from one process to another - from production, consumption and all the way to the reintegration in reproduction.

This low level of familiarity with this concept, reverberates the previous answers of respondents where the majority indicated that they had not discussed circular economy in schools or universities. The basis of these concepts usually begins to be learned in schools and is analyzed in depth in academic contexts.

More respondents were familiar with the concept of *Industrial Ecology*, which deals with the study of materials and energetic flows in industrial systems. Around 45% of respondents stated that they had heard about industrial ecology. The purpose of this approach is to create a “Closed Loop” system where no material is lost or disposed at the end, but it’s life continues in a circular form, by being used and reused from one phase of its life to the other. As to how many of these respondents have linked this terminology with the definition that relates to circular economy, and how many of them have linked it to other concepts that exist in Albanian, but have other meanings may be one of the language limitations. We have to acknowledge limitations that may arise where the notion analyzed, such as circular economy in Kosovo, is not even included in legislation and is not “general knowledge”.

Less than 20% of respondents had heard about the *Systems Thinking* approach. Systems Thinking is an approach used to understand the impact of the interaction of elements with one another and the whole. This approach looks at the place of every element in relation to the environment, infrastructure and the context in which the element is placed. Circular Economy can be functionalized only if the mindset adheres to a systems thinking approach to life.

One third of respondents were familiar with the term *Biosphere Rules*. A concept that deals with the implementation of “Closed Loops” in production processes that originate from natural systems and are translated into industrial production systems. Here too, due to language limitations, the respondents may have associated this terminology with other concepts, which are taught in Biology in Kosovo. Although, the English terminology was also included in the question.

Around 80% of respondents had never partaken in a *Design Thinking* workshop/training. Design Thinking is an innovative method that focuses on solving problems creatively and is often used to find solutions to problems created from ineffective design and that negatively impact the environment, by creating inefficiencies in business and society. A language limitation, which could have influenced the positive responses may be that “design thinking” is often associated with traditional design or graphic design.

When respondents were asked about circular economy’s focus, their answers were scattered and it was clear that they lacked thorough and holistic knowledge about the topic. The vast majority of the respondents (66%) think that circular economy’s focus is recycling. However, the latter focuses on extending the life of products created from finite resources, within the linear economy and is not the core of circular economy.

According to the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, circular economy goes beyond the linear economy and aims to redefine development and move away from the “extractive industrial system” that relies upon the *Take-Make-Dispose* concept.

The aim of circular economy is to go beyond the consumption of finite resources in designing waste completely out of the system. For this reason, recycling of products that use finite resources as raw material, does not eliminate the consumption of finite resources, because not every product that has been created by humans so far can be one-hundred percent recycled. The recycling process uses vast amounts of finite resources itself for the process, which in itself damages the environment.

After recycling, the respondents selected “product life extension” (around 37%), and one third “design thinking” (30%), and around one fourth systems thinking (26.5%), as other focuses for circular economy. However, only around one fourth (24%), saw all these components as

focuses that could help develop the circular economy. These findings reconfirm that overall there is general lack of knowledge and in depth understanding about the circular economy concept in Kosovo. But, also significant misunderstanding about the essence of circular economy that could hinder profound and successful development of this system in Kosovo.

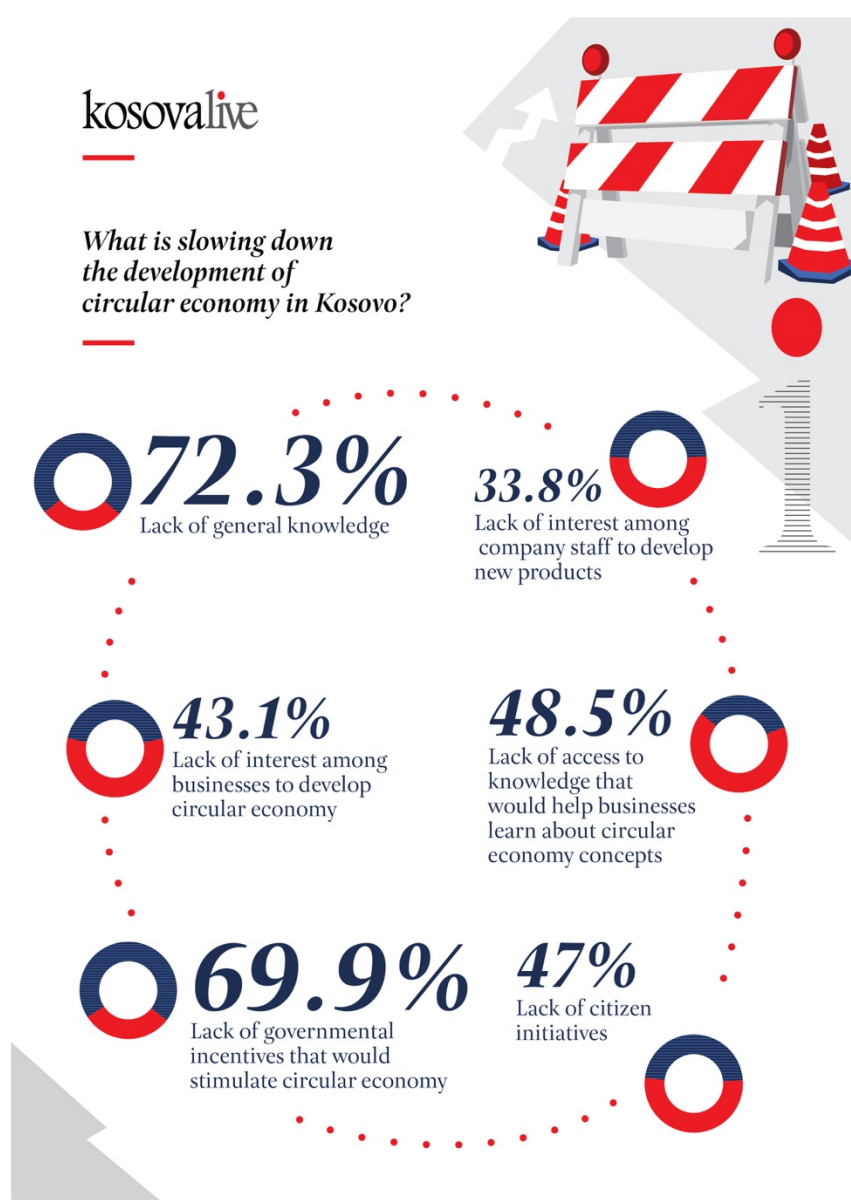
## Barriers to the development of Circular Economy in Kosovo

Around 70% of respondents believe that the main barriers that slow down the development of circular economy in Kosovo are general “lack of knowledge” about this system and “lack of governmental incentives that stimulate circular economy”.

Around 43% believe that the problem lies in businesses that do not want to focus on the development of circular economy, lack of access to knowledge on how to create businesses that stimulate the circular economy (48%), and lack of initiative.

More than one third of respondents (34%) believe that hindrance to the development of circular economy is the lack of interest among company staff to work in developing new and innovative products that could be integrated into this economic system.

When it comes to the development of circular economy, a desire to rely on state and government assistance seems to be one of the main patterns identified in the responses, perceptions, desires and answers of respondents in this study.



**Figure 1. What is slowing down the development of circular economy in Kosovo.**



Traditional recycling is based on managing the consequences of the linear economy, yet it is one of the first steps to create an environmental stewardship mindset among people and that is why it has been included as one of the questions in the survey. In Kosovo, recycling is barely existent and done sporadically, but it is not a mainstream practice done by households or businesses. Awareness about the need for recycling may bring about awareness about the responsibility of biomimetic design and of product management at the end of the life cycle and its role and impact in our lives.

The majority of respondents (around 60%) believe that one of the most effective ways to increase citizen participation in recycling in Kosovo is to offer financial incentives for recycling (for every product you recycle you receive money).

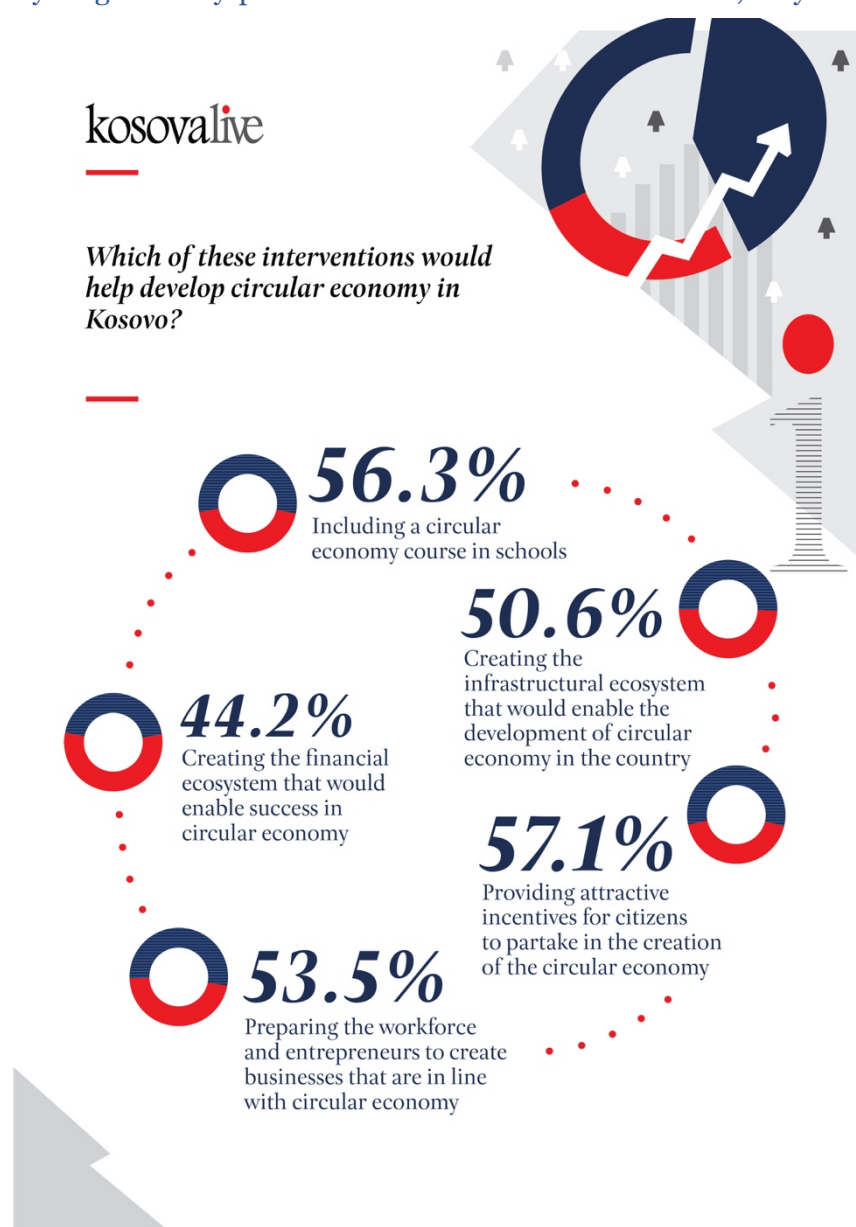
This method has been successful in bringing about behavioural and cultural change in recycling in many places around the world. Nonetheless, recycling as it functions now as a

process, is not considered the core of circular economy. That is why it is important to work more towards educating the masses about the fundamental aims of circular economy, so we can comprehend to what degree we will need to modify our behaviour and the design of products and systems, so to enable the development of this system in Kosovo.

Around 9% of respondents believe that the problem is in the design of containers, and that recycling could be increased if they would be redesigned.

Others think that if there were recycling containers in the lower levels of their apartment buildings (15%), in their work buildings (5%) or in their schools and universities (8%), recycling would increase.

Respondents believe that there is a lack of meaningful education about the importance



**Figure 2. Which of these interventions would help develop circular economy in Kosovo?**



of recycling and that there is a lack of local and central institutional capacities for developing the means to gather recyclable materials.

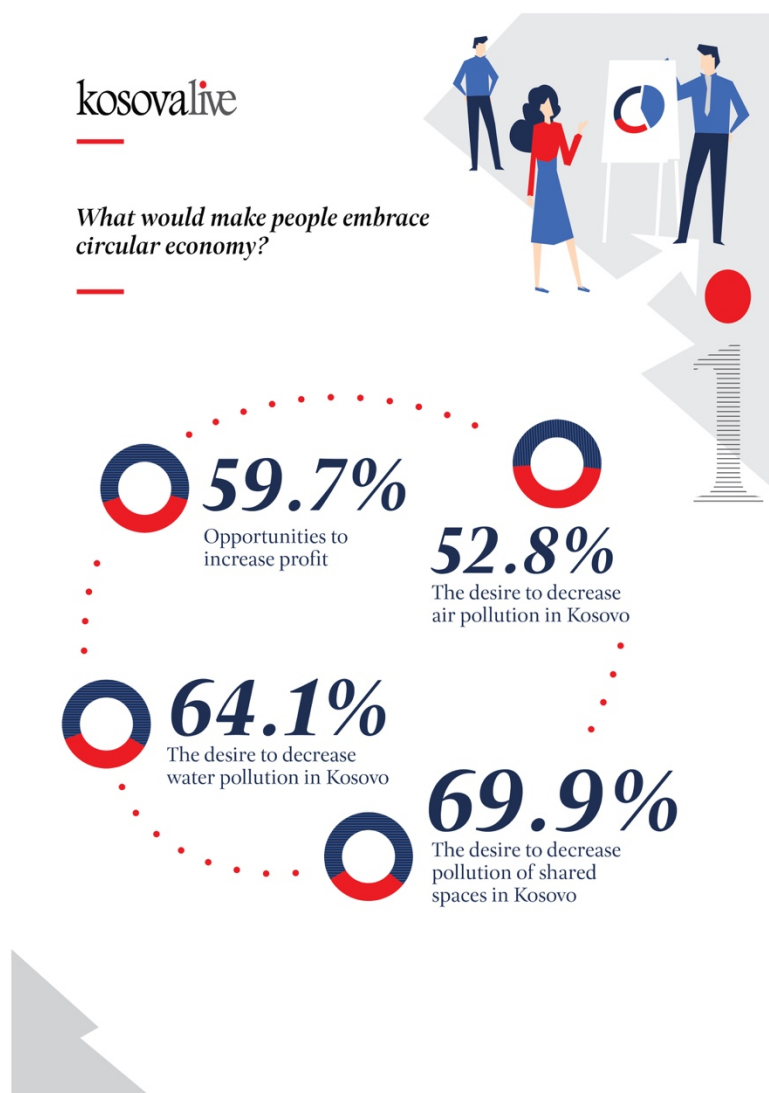
They also believe that creating legal modalities that would compel recycling and similar behaviours would increase participation in recycling in Kosovo. For some it was important to also determine the source of energy for recycling, as in to only use renewable energy for recycling. Again, it is important to reiterate that recycling as a notion still falls within the linear economy, but it is a necessary doorway to create awareness about the impact of single-use product life cycles on the environment, especially in developing countries such as Kosovo, where the life of products after use is rarely discussed.

Respondents reflect a considerable sense of awareness about the main causes and problems that contribute to the creation of waste. The majority believe that the lack of opportunities for management of waste (around 58%), usage of unrecyclable raw materials (around 58%), and the creation of weak and poor products (around 32%) and the increase of consumerism and the desire to possess material things (28%), are the main problems that lead to the creation of waste.

This shows that there is general social awareness about the causes of the problem that the linear economy has been creating. It also leaves space for the inclusion of the circular economy model that ensures a more sustainable approach for solving problems that contribute to environmental, social and health issues, in the long run.

## Opportunities for the development of Circular Economy in Kosovo

When asked what would make people join the circular economy in Kosovo, the vast majority said “the desire to improve shared spaces would push them to help spur the development of circular economy” (70%). The desire to decrease air pollution was second (64%). While the “opportunity to increase profit” was listed as one of the three top ways that would help stimulate people to join the circular economy (with 60% of supporters). Opportunity to increase profit was listed even higher than the desire to decrease water pollution, which ended



**Figure 3. What would make people embrace circular economy?**

up being listed as one of the top four most preferred ways to attract interest for joining the circular economy (53%).

Around 57% of the surveyed believe that the creation of stimulating models for common citizens to take part in the creation of circular economy is one of the most effective ways for creating favorable conditions for the flourishing of the circular economy in Kosovo.

Investing into including a circular economy class in schools and universities was one of the top two most popular propositions from the surveyed, as selected by 56% of them.

Thirdly, enhancing the capacities of the workforce and entrepreneurs to create businesses in line with circular economy criteria was one of the best ways identified for enhancing the development of this system in Kosovo (54%).

The need for creating the infrastructural ecosystem that enables the functioning of circular economy in the country (51%), as well as the financial ecosystem that ensures success in the circular economy (44%) were also top priorities for respondents.

## **The role of Culture and Behaviour in creating favorable conditions for Circular Economy**

Research findings reflect a lack of knowledge and initiative across all levels that could help create favorable conditions for the development of circular economy in Kosovo. While the development of circular economy is stagnating, effective management of linear economy consequences is also lagging behind.

Even though society reuses certain products in Kosovo, product life extension goes one step further, for a second use, after which it ends up in the dumpster. Reusing and recycling of products create from finite resources still falls within the linear economy. But, it is a necessary mindset and behavior to develop among people, so to pave the path for more effective and conscious design, especially in developing countries such as Kosovo, where recycling is barely practiced.

Individual initiative for reuse of products among citizens in Kosovo is limited only to secondary reuse, since individuals do not have the necessary knowledge, technology and access to infrastructure for reusing products beyond. Moreover, for many products, the type of raw material that's been used limits recycling.

Only around 42% of citizens in Kosovo reuse paper, glass, plastic or other products. Only about one third (34%) say that they usually reuse products that are created for a specific purpose and one fourth (24%) says that they do not reuse products, after using them once.

Of those that said that they reuse, the majority stated that they reuse bottles of water, juices and jars for a longer period of time. Plastic bags were one of the most reused products among respondents, who after using them for carrying, use them again for garbage.

Of those that said that they do not reuse products for the second time, concerns related to whether certain products, such as plastic bottles are dangerous for reuse. Meanwhile, others listed laziness, lack of knowledge on how to reuse and low cost or access to certain products, which actually did not make it necessary for them to reuse the old ones.

The research clearly shows that there isn't only lack of knowledge on how to reuse, but also a lack of availability of appropriate infrastructure that would enable reuse, as well as an absence of incentives that would incorporate the concept of recycling in the daily lives of Kosovo's inhabitants.

Considering that waste management is a nationwide concern and recycling is meagerly practiced in Kosovo, speedy development of the circular economy remains far-fetched but attainable with multilevel and cross-sectorial interventions.

The core focus of circular economy is the elimination of the concept of waste completely out of the system. By using healthy biomimetic designs that enable re-recycling of raw materials and parts of products, circular economy avoids traditional recycling and inhibits consequences that may be created from waste on the environment and on public health.

## **Conclusions**

While the surveyed express benevolence towards the environment, it is clear that concrete changes that would lead to the creation of a circular economy would come to fruition if in the short run there would be financial incentives for them, and in the long run inclusive education and investment in sustainable infrastructure.

Even though individual awareness about the importance of the environment is evident, the survey shows that collective behaviour and culture can drastically change in the short run only if there are unified multilevel interventions that could motivate them to transform their lifestyle.

The ability to identify problems is evident among respondents, yet there is lack of individual proactivity for intervention, without any tangible incentives. Considering that investment in education takes time and drastic changes need even more time, financial incentives or punishments, would help in the development of circular economy in the short run.

There is an urgent need for a multisectorial strategy that would include the establishment of the legal, economic, infrastructural and educational basis, to change the mentality and culture regarding notions of production, consumption and elimination of disposal.

## **Recommendations**

Circular economy foresees a holistic approach to problem solving, by addressing the problem from the building blocks and all the way to it's broad impact on society. In order to create a favorable environment for the establishment and flourishing of circular economy, we need coordinated and parallel interventions that would impact the change of mindset and behaviour in the personal, social and state levels.

The national strategy for development 2016-2020, drafted by the Government of the Republic of Kosovo, in January of 2016, does not mention the circular economy terminology and does not foresee a holistic and in depth development of circular economy in Kosovo. The focus of the strategy is more on managing the consequences of linear economy, by foreseeing an increase in the efficiency of waste management, recycling, forestation and an increase in the use of renewable sources of energy. The focus is less so in the development of circular economy, which would shift economic activity away from the use of finite resources and prevent the consequences brought about the rapid development, by focusing on effective design from the beginning.

Kosovo's Program for Economic Reforms (PKRE), 2019-2021, does not mention the circular economy terminology either and is highly concentrated in further developing the linear economy in the country. In the PKRE program concrete reforms that would develop circular economy should be included. These reforms should consist of specific provisions and activities that align with the circular economy model for designing societies, products and services that lead to sustainable benefits and few consequences in the long run.

**Legislation**– Laws should be adapted to include the concept and the appropriate circular economy terminology and to offer benefits for people, entities (for profit and nonprofit) that contribute or plan to contribute to the stimulation of circular economy in the country. Laws on Social Enterprise, Economic Zones and Foreign Investments, should foresee benefits, which would stimulate entities to develop circular economy in Kosovo. The Law on Waste, even though it foresees the avoidance, reduction and prevention of waste on the environment, does not emphasize complete elimination of waste from the system as a central focus and it does not mention circular economy. The Law on Strategic investment should also be amended to foresee benefits for investors and investments that would help in stimulating the circular economy in the country.

**Economy** – Concrete interventions in microeconomic and macroeconomic levels should be undertaken to lead long-term economic development in the direction of a sustainable circular economy. Financial interventions in the form of subsidies or direct payments may bring about changes in mentality and behavior and pave the way to the needed results that may push forward the development of circular economy. Fiscal and non-fiscal incentives that could provide guarantees for specific investments that would stimulate circular economy and would help in encouraging businesses to undertake tangible actions towards investing in increasing the efficiency and efficacy of the chain of production, consumption and to eliminate waste, would contribute to a faster transition into this economic model. Other benefits and ease of doing businesses with a circular approach, may refocus the short-term economic development, towards a more sustainable one in the long run.

**Technology** – The burst of global technological development in the world is giving hope and speed to the development of circular economy. Considering that new technologies take time to become mainstream in developing countries, more effective support for access to innovation and doing business with developed countries needs to be provided to Kosovo's businesses. Through national and local strategic planning and interventions, individuals and entities, may be able to ensure the development of products, services and processes that comply with the expectations and values of a circular economy.

**Infrastructure** – The planning of cities, villages and economic zones, but also connections to neighboring countries and the region need to be adapted, so to ease and stimulate the development of circular economy within the country and the region. To enable the design and creation of products that use reusable and safe raw materials for repeated use, concrete measures need to be taken to protect and revitalize land and space that would enable the development of such products and services that mimic natural processes, without damaging the environment. Abandoned spaces that have been degraded are a good opportunity for transformation into innovation hubs, businesses or informal educational spaces for driving the path towards innovating circular economy models.

**Education** – Public academic institutions need to include a practical multi-year curriculum on circular economy in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. In the meantime, private high schools and universities are recommended to adapt quickly and to include circular economy concepts cross-sectionally in all of their teachings, as a core element that serves as a compass for human action and interaction with nature. Non-governmental organizations that have education as a central focus, are recommended to urgently work in creating virtual and non-virtual workshops, conferences and innovative educational activities that motivate and inspire the desire to create and design products and services in compliance with the circular economy. Local and national governmental bodies need to lead the way in the promotion and harmonization of public procurement with the circular economy models. Meanwhile, private companies are encouraged to hold trainings for workers and staff for creating products and services, as well as manners of transforming their chain of production and consumption in line with the values and approaches of the circular economy towards the environment.

**Arts & Culture** – Artistic and musical projects can contribute greatly to creating a culture that values the development of circular economy and pushes forward ideas that entwine the protection and preservation of environment within them. Local projects from artists, musicians, and bloggers that are intertwined with circular economy and promote a holistically healthy and inclusive approach towards life and the environment and inspire cultural changes in the masses should be strategically supported from the local and national government. Investments should be made in “Maker-spaces” that would enable artists and innovators to experiment with the transformation of environments, products, services and the chain of production, consumption and elimination of waste from our way of life.

## **Impressions from the First Circular Economy Conference, held on September 2019 in Prishtina**

The first national circular economy in Kosovo, held on the 25th of September 2019, by KosovaLive, in Prishtina, with representatives from the national, local, private and non-profit sectors, analyzed what Kosovo has been doing for the development of this economic model. Discussions at all levels aligned with the research findings and reflected the situation with the development of circular economy in the country as very lacking and almost nonexistent.

For developments in the national and local levels, we talked to the Minister of Economic Development, Valdrin Lluka, and parliament member, former mayor of Gjakova and former minister of Industry and Trade, Mimoza Kusari Lila, who emphasized that Kosovo does not have a circular economy strategy in place and none of the political parties have it included as a priority in their political agendas.

The lack of governmental incentives was also mentioned as one of the main hindrances to the development of circular economy in Kosovo. The need for an open and active dialogue between businesses and governmental bodies was stated to be crucial for creating a favorable environment for the flourishing of this economic model in the country.

Nongovernmental organizations and business associations in the country, emphasized that they should play an important role in promoting and pushing forward circular economy in the country, even though they are hesitating to make changes because of many factors that disable them from investing in the necessary advancement mechanisms to push forward the concept. In the panel that represented the private and nonprofit sector in Kosovo at the conference, Astrit Panxha, Executive Director of the Kosovo Producers Club, Nora Latifi Jashari, Executive Director of GAP Institute, and Driton Bajraktari, Executive Director of Kosova Social Enterprise, re-emphasized the need for better coordination among all parties so to create initiatives for the promotion of a more favorable environment for the development of circular economy in the country.

Speakers also mentioned that the lack of initiative from the private sector is highly impacted by poor laws, access to innovation, lack of qualified staff, high costs for development of products and services that enable the development of circular economy and the high level of corruption.

The private sector representative at the conference, Visar Ramajli, talked about KIVO and Reks' business initiative, which invested in an “internal recycling plant that recycles 100% of plastic waste from the process of production and integrates in the cycle of production, resulting in 0% waste”. The plant also uses a closed water loop for cooling, called “freecool”, which saves energy usage, by activating cooling compressors installed in the factory. The KIVO and Reks examples show that the opportunity for enhancing efficacy in eliminating waste through innovative technologies are possible even in Kosovo, but several limitations



contribute to the unrealisation of such initiatives. The lack of knowledge, unwillingness of business leaders, absence of state support and guarantees for such investments, low purchasing power, insufficient business capital, access to technology, and lack of freedom of movement, make these investments difficult for local businesses.

One of the main reasons why businesses do not invest in such models that were presented by Visar Ramajli, representative from the private sector at the conference, is because they are too costly and local companies do not have the financial capacities for making such investments in the long-run. If the return on investment is not guaranteed and attractive for them, such investments are not justifiable for companies, especially considering that the country does not currently provide any form of protection and guarantee for such investments.

The national circular economy conference in Kosovo reconfirmed research findings, which reflect a lack in general knowledge about the concept among the population, as well as an absence of a national strategy for the development of circular economy in the country. The conference emphasized that the notion of circular economy in Kosovo is still heavily and mistakenly focused on recycling and waste management, and does not go to the core of the subjects, which aims to transform the chain of production and consumption, with an ultimate goal of eliminating the concept of disposal and fundamentally transform our way of life.



## About News Agency KosovaLive (KosovaLive)

KosovaLive's mission is to use media as a means of education, dialogue and equality. KosovaLive's work is led by three pillars:

**Media as a Means of Dialogue:** Designing projects that relate to using media as a means of dialogue between interethnic communities within the country and the region, KosovaLive works in building long-lasting understanding, cooperation and peace. From high level Kosovo-Serbia forums, involving politicians, journalists, community leaders and other dignitaries, to journalist conferences and exchanges, KosovaLive has been a leader in breaking the ice in inter-ethnic communication, ever since the early days of post-war.

**Media as a Means of Education:** By using innovative mediums of communication, KosovaLive works on building critical thinking abilities and critical media literacy in youth, women, civic servants, officials, and journalists. Projects encompass a broad array of topics from Fakenews, Disinformation, Voting, Public Engagement, Women Empowerment, to Circular Economy, Design Thinking, and Social Entrepreneurship. More than decade long partnerships with higher education institutions in Kosova and the U.S., enable KosovaLive to educate and engage individuals from various backgrounds in multilingual and multinational activities, events, programs and initiatives.

**Media as a Means of Equality:** Award winning innovative programs for increasing social, economic and gender equality, have improved the lives of hundreds across the country. The award winning all girls educational and professional bureau, part of internationally renown GlobalGirl Media, focuses on women's empowerment through programs that enhance women's public and economic participation, through media. ([www.kosovalive.org](http://www.kosovalive.org) and [www.kosovalive360.com](http://www.kosovalive360.com))

## About the Author

Annea Hapçiu is the Innovation Advisor at KosovaLive. She is also the founder of the educational and professional bureau, GlobalGirl Media Kosova, within KosovaLive, which is part of the international chain of bureaus GlobalGirl Media and also the founder of the first yoga studio in Kosovo, N'Yoga.

She completed her master studies on Social Enterprise, with a focus in Media for Social Change, at the American University in Washington D.C. through the Kosovo American Education Fund (KAEF) scholarship. She graduated as a John W. Berry Scholar from the University of Dayton, where she completed her Bachelor of Business Administration (BSBA) in Entrepreneurship and Marketing.

For her work in education, gender equality and artistic projects, she was honored by the New York state in 2017. UN Women listed her as one of the top activists in 2018 and top innovators in 2019 for Europe and Eurasia. Her project "A journey of branding through yoga" was presented on TEDxWomenPrishtina in 2013. Annea is also a reviewer of scholarly papers in the fields of marketing and nation branding for the International Marketing Review.

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