

# Women, Youth and the Green Energy Transition in Kosovo: Challenges, Opportunities, and the Path Forward

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## Abstract

The transition to green energy is not only an environmental imperative but also a unique opportunity to reshape our societies through inclusion, innovation, and intergenerational collaboration. As the energy sector accounts for nearly three-quarters of global greenhouse gas emissions, nations like Kosovo must prioritize a swift and justice-based transition toward low-carbon and renewable energy systems. Rising global temperatures pose immediate threats to human health, well-being, and the very ecosystems that sustain us, including land, air, and water.

Kosovo's energy sector is currently dominated by outdated lignite-fired thermal power plants, contributing to severe environmental degradation and public health concerns. In fact, Kosovo ranked as the 30th most polluted country globally (AQI, 2023), with one of the highest carbon intensities of electricity production in Europe—more than three times the EU-27 average. Investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency could prevent up to 2,300 premature deaths by 2030. Despite these urgent needs, Kosovo still faces challenges in closing the gap between coal dependency and the wider adoption of renewable energy sources (RES).

However, the green transition also offers a crucial window to empower underrepresented groups, particularly women and youth, to lead change. Women in Kosovo remain underrepresented in the energy sector, especially in leadership, technical, and decision-making roles. Yet, studies consistently show that inclusive energy policy-making and gender-balanced participation lead to more equitable and sustainable outcomes. By enhancing access to education in STEM fields, creating targeted programs for female entrepreneurs in clean energy, and promoting gender-sensitive climate policies, Kosovo can unlock the full potential of its human capital. The younger generation, too, holds a transformative role in shaping a climate-resilient future. Building their skills, fostering innovation, and supporting green startups can drive forward momentum for a more inclusive and sustainable energy system.

While Kosovo has committed to reducing emissions by up to 42% by 2030 (conditional on access to climate finance), translating this commitment into action requires structural reforms, public engagement, and international support. The road to green energy in Kosovo must be inclusive, not only in technology and policy, but also in who is at the decision making. The leadership of women and youth is not optional—it is essential.

## References

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