

SECOND
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BALKANS **YOUTH
MEETING**

THE BERLIN PROCESS – A NEW IMPETUS FOR YOUTH WORK?

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Recent Achievements and Current Challenges in Youth Policies in the Western Balkans (WB6)

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INTRODUCTION

This report represents a short overview of the current state of art when it comes to the national youth policy development and implementation in WB 6 countries (Albania, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo¹, Montenegro, and the Republic of Serbia). The report is tailored to feed the purpose of the event and to assist the participants in identifying the achievements and challenges in this field. Special focus has been put on priority areas such as: youth participation, social inclusion, and civic education. The report does not represent an extensive analysis of youth policy in WB6 but rather highlights its main tendencies based on the existing official documents (strategies and legal acts), as well as the country reports available at ECKYP, Youth Wiki etc.

The structure of the report comprises the following chapters:

1. Common tradition of youth policy in WB 6
2. National youth policy framework in WB 6
3. Tendencies in youth policy development in WB6
4. Tendencies related to youth work in WB6
5. International and European dimension
6. What works well: Youth Participation
7. What works well: Social Inclusion
8. Case study: Joint UN Youth Programme in Montenegro
9. Challenges of youth policy implementation in WB6
10. Area related challenges: Youth participation and civic education
11. Area related challenges: Social Inclusion

¹ *All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

1. COMMON TRADITION

“This (youth) is a category that holds huge potential as a key resource for social progress, but also a category that is highly vulnerable to social and economic changes in society” (National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, FYRO MACEDONIA)

THE WESTERN BALKANS COUNTRIES ARE FACING CHALLENGES WHICH NEED AN ADEQUATE POLICY RESPONSE!!

“All countries do in fact have a youth policy – by intent, default or neglect. After all, doing nothing still affects young people’s lives” (Prof. Dr. Howard Williamson)

- Despite the fact that the **WB6 countries share a common tradition in youth policy development and implementation, young people are treated differently** by sector specific acts and policies across the region, such as education system related laws, the law on juvenile justice, family law, etc.
- No consensus on **the definition** of Youth in WB6: it is mainly based on age covering ranges from 15 to 24 (in Kosovo*), 15 to 29 (in Albania, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”) and 15 to 30 (in Serbia, Montenegro and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina). According to the youth policy briefing (2011), in Republika Srpska, this ranges from 16 to 30 years of age, while the third self-governed Brcko District in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a legal definition of youth.

2. NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY FRAMEWORK IN WB6

Table 1: Review of the policy, legal and institutional framework of the national youth policy in WB6

Country	Strategic and legal framework	Institutional framework
Albania	National Youth Action Plan 2015-2020 includes six general objectives and twenty-nine specific objectives accompanied by detailed cost for each activity. Albania does not have a national law on youth.	The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth has responsibility for youth affairs and focuses on the protection of constitutional rights, access to education, vocational training, safe employment, inclusion, participation, interfaith understanding and tolerance.

Country	Strategic and legal framework	Institutional framework
<p>Bosnia and Herzegovina</p>	<p>The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina formed a Working Group in 2015, the document “Analysis of Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina Youth Conditions and Needs” was produced in 2013 and the Draft Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Youth Strategy was adopted by members of the Working Group in 2015.</p> <p>The National Assembly of the Republika Srpska adopted the Proposal of the third Youth Policy of the Republika Srpska for 2016-2020 in 2016. The Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a Youth Strategy.</p> <p>The Laws on Volunteering and Youth Organisation of the Republika Srpska (2008) and the Youth Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2010) define the youth policy framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina outlining legal protections and provisions for youth rights, youth work, and youth councils. The Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a law on youth.</p>	<p>The Department for Youth within the Ministry of Family, Youth & Sports has responsibility for youth in RS.</p> <p>The Division for Youth within the Ministry of Culture and Sports has responsibility for youth with the FBiH and is responsible for the youth law (2010), coordination of federal and international youth programmes, participation, identifying youth needs and supporting the development of the federal youth strategy.</p>
<p>Kosovo*</p>	<p>The Youth Strategy 2013-2017 and Action Plan 2013-2015 (KSYAP). The Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth (2009).</p> <p>In the process of development of the new National Youth Strategy 2018-2023 and “Youth Action Plan 2018-2021”.</p>	<p>The Youth Department within the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport.</p>
<p>Montenegro</p>	<p>Law on Youth (2016) and the Strategy on Youth 2017 - 2021 were created through an evidence based and participatory approach.</p>	<p>Directorate for Youth under the supervision of the Ministry of Sports is responsible for youth affairs.</p>
<p>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</p>	<p>National Youth Strategy (2016-2025). Two laws related to youth work: Law on Volunteerism and Law on Associations and Foundations.</p>	<p>The Agency for Youth and Sports and ‘youth coordination of associations’, are responsible for the implementation through actions plans.</p>
<p>Republic of Serbia</p>	<p>National Youth Strategy 2015-2025 and The Law on Youth.</p>	<p>The Department of Youth within the Ministry of Youth and Sport has responsibility for youth affairs and policy in Serbia.</p>

3. TENDENCIES OF YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN WB6 COUNTRIES

- Paradigm shift in youth policy development and service design (outcome oriented and measurable - efficient youth policies)
- Resource oriented youth policy (vs problem oriented approach)
- The youth policy is part of the state development agendas (EU, CoE, SEE)
- Participatory policy making (different approaches and mechanisms of consultation)
- Political commitment to an evidence based policy making
- Transversal - holistic approach
- Cross sectoral approach (a horizontal, inter-ministerial or interdepartmental collaboration across various policy domains, aiming at maximising the potential of youth policy)
- Values and principles (participation, inclusion etc.)
- Local level: *“Currently, in 135 municipalities in Serbia there are local youth offices. The Ministry of Youth and Sports supports programmes and projects of youth offices aimed to NYS implementation and encouraged local authorities to allocate funds to the youth activities which is expressed through local youth action plans”* (MOS).

PURSuing THE PRINCIPLES AND GOALS OF CROSS SECTORAL YOUTH POLICY CAN POSITIVELY INFLUENCE THE ENTIRE GOVERNANCE SYSTEM OF A COUNTRY, NOT ONLY YOUTH POLICY!!

4. TENDENCIES RELATED TO YOUTH WORK IN WB6

- NO STRATEGIC / LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH WORK in WB6
- BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (Republic of Srpska): Strengthening capacity in youth work, adapting legislation, creating sustainable mechanisms and standards for work with young people at the local level are measures for creating conditions for active participation of young people in society, which is in line with the recommendation "Strengthening the role of youth work for political empowerment of young people".
- FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA ([NYS 2016-2025](#)) Thematic area: LOCAL YOUTH WORK - is an organised and systematic process of education and support of authentic development of young people with the aim of fulfilling their overall personal, social and civic potential (3 objectives).
- SERBIA:

[The National Youth Strategy \(2015-2025\)](#): one of the specific goals is „Improved quality and availability of youth work and ensured recognition of youth work”, further elaborated within the [Action Plan for NYS implementation \(2015-2017\)](#). The youth work is recognised in the context of non-formal education, where recognition of competences acquired through youth work is underlined as essential for young people (employability).

[The Law on Youth \(2011\)](#), in the Article 3, the Law defines meanings of individual terms, including the youth work. The definition that NAPOR uses is more elaborative.

Youth work is: a) Complementary to formal education; b) carried out by youth workers; c) Conducts activities using non-formal education methods and information.

5. INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPEAN DIMENSION

- International organisations supporting youth policy development in WB6 (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, OSCE).
- International and European values and principles are integrated.
- International youth work opportunities (Erasmus + Programme): among WB partner countries Serbia is leading in terms of number of projects approved and the total amount of allocated funds from the EU Erasmus + Programme (In 2017, the EU supported 29 youth projects from Serbia with over 1.3 million euros), while the highest number of projects has been implemented in FYRO MACEDONIA as the WB programme country.
- Regional Youth Cooperation Office in the Western Balkans (#RYCO): WB 6 countries dedicated to the improvement of regional cooperation in the youth field through.
- EU-Western Balkans Summit: #SofiaDeclaration “Supporting socio-economic development and putting a special focus on youth” (#RYCO, intra-regional mobility scheme, doubled Erasmus+ funding for the region, “Western Balkans Youth Lab”-innovative policy making hub).
- WB6 representatives take part in the decision making processes through statutory bodies (CDEJ, Joint Council on Youth) etc.) and contribute to youth policy/youth work development through EU-CoE Youth Partnership (EKCY, PEYR), SALTO SEE etc.
- In 2017 Serbia supported adoption of the Recommendation to the Council of Europe member states on youth work adopted by the Committee of Ministers and remains committed to its implementation.
- Serbian city of Novi Sad has been declared as the European Youth Capital for 2019.

6. WHAT WORKS WELL: YOUTH PARTICIPATION

- ALBANIA: 1st strategic objective: (Promotion and participation of young people in democratic decision-making processes) aims at not only establishing respective infrastructure in support of young people, like youth centers, but also at strengthening and enhancing the structures and capacities of youth organisations and networks.
- BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: The Draft Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Youth Strategy 2016-2020: strategic priority area - youth activism (participation, volunteering and mobility). The Youth Policy of the Republika Srpska 2016-2020: Strategic priority area Active participation; Strategic priority: Improve possibilities for active participation of youth (3 objectives). Principle: Active youth participation.

- KOSOVO*: Strategic objective 1: YOUTH PARTICIPATION (refers to the increase of youth participation in decision making processes and significant inclusion of youth at sector policy making which directly influence at youth). Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth No. 03/L-145 provides indirect reference to **civic education**.
- FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA: Thematic area 1: YOUTH PARTICIPATION (5 objectives)
- MONTENEGRO: Outcome C: Young people are active citizens, involved, motivated, proactive and participate in decision-making and community development processes, in creation of policies and their implementation (3 objectives)
- SERBIA: strategic priority: Youth activism and active participation. Strategic goal: Enhanced active participation of young women and men in society (4objectives). Principle: Active youth participation and cooperation.

➤ 7. WHAT WORKS WELL: SOCIAL INCLUSION

- FYRO MACEDONIA: **values of youth policy**: SOCIAL INCLUSION - Social integration and inclusion implies a necessary minimum and a requirement without which the integral development of any young person cannot be provided. Social inclusion is a fundamental right that should be enjoyed by all young people.
- FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA: **principles** for NYS implementation: EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS – Acknowledging that different groups of young people need different approach and forms of support in order to ensure equal access for making use of the opportunities that exist.
- KOSOVO*: The KSYAP has incorporated social inclusion (gender, ethnicity, rural/urban youth and some marginalised groups) as a **general approach** that should be taken into account during the implementation of the activities.
- MONTENEGRO: **inclusive principle** – youth policy envisages measures that enable equality and equal chances to all young people to achieve their full potential in life, and especially measures for overcoming barriers for inclusion of especially vulnerable groups and measures for ensuring civil participation of all young people.
- SERBIA **strategic goal**: (4.6. Social inclusion of youth) ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR THE SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION;
- SERBIA (2 principles): RESPECT FOR HUMAN AND MINORITY RIGHTS, EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION; EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.

8. CASE STUDY - JOINT UN YOUTH PROGRAMME IN MONTENEGRO

PARADIGM SHIFT IN POLICY DESIGN:

- YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMME IN MONTENEGRO - KREATIVACIJA
<http://un.org.me/youth-empowerment-programme-in-montenegro/>
- UPGRADING LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT: Development of the national Youth Strategy (2017 - 2021)-contemporary and innovative methodologies for strategic planning for impact, collaborative planning, and contemporary international standards for youth policy design and implementation.
- USING INNOVATIVE TOOLS FOR BUILDING CAPACITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE: Supporting young people in creating opportunities for their personal and professional growth and democratic empowerment. Improving young people skills and attitudes needed for growing into competent, resilient, passionate, autonomous individuals and citizens.

- **USING FORESIGHT FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Planning for results and change >>

Result based management >>



- **DEVELOPING SERIOUS GAME FOR CONSULTATION**

Let the future be preferred >>

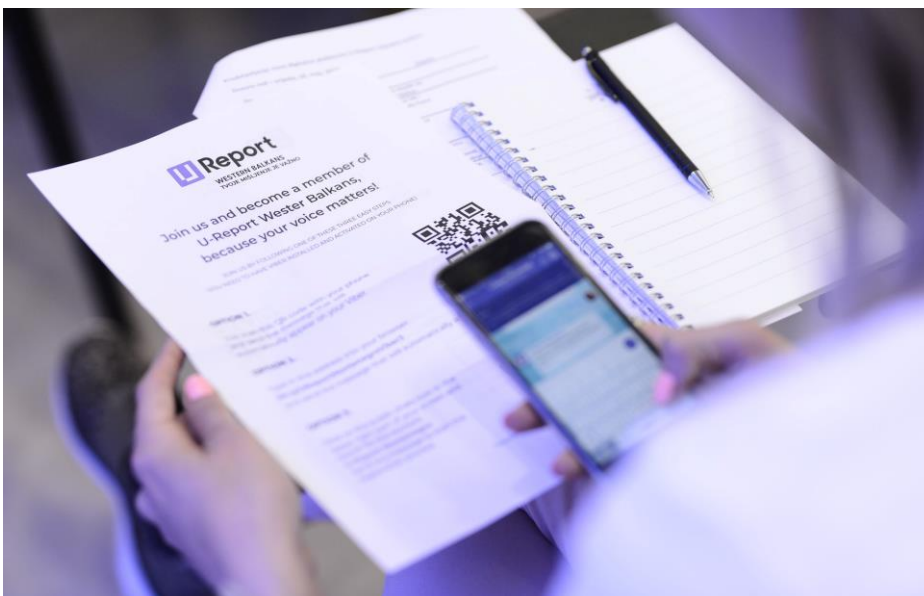


- **Innovative Service Design based on UPSHIFT methodology:**
YOUTH INNOVATION LAB (UNICEF & DIRECTORATE FOR YOUTH):

Feedback loop; Empowerment; Participation mechanisms; Design thinking - User centred approach



- **INNOVATIVE YOUTH PARTICIPATION TOOL:**
U - REPORT WESTERN BALKANS:



The UNICEF Country Offices of **Albania, Kosovo** and **Montenegro** jointly launched **U-Report Western Balkans – a digital platform aimed at youth activism**. The goal of this platform is to establish the direct communication with youth and collect their opinions on various topics in order to inform the decision makers on challenges that they face.

9. CHALLENGES OF YOUTH POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN WB6

5 Components of youth policy:

(Youth policy-the essentials, EU-CoE youth partnership)

- **Coverage** (geographical area and social groups that are covered, plus policy domains): national youth policy in the region tend to be centralised, focused on the mainstream youth, and cover different public policy domains (there is a slight shift in setting priorities between the 1st and 2nd youth policy cycle);
- **Capacity** (the role and relationship of government and youth NGOs): information and knowledge on contemporary youth policies should be improved among both public and non governmental organisations;
- **Competence** (the question of training and qualifications): education of public servants and youth workers is especially problematic;
- **Co-operation, co-ordination and coherence** (hierarchically and horizontally): dominant model of cross sectoral cooperation is transversal which means that one central actor is responsible for youth policy development and implementation and often not empowered enough to provide meaningful youth mainstreaming across the governmental departments. Both horizontal and vertical mechanisms for cooperation are lacking;
- **Cost** (the financial and human resources required): there are various funding schemes available but there is no sustainable and strategic approach in place. Qualified human resources are also lacking at national and local level (due to the frequent shifts the institutional memory is often lost).

Other key components of the national youth policy (Denstad 2009):

- **Established links between local, regional and national levels have to be improved** - national youth policy recognises the competencies and responsibilities of local and regional authorities, and proposes ways of implementing policy in co-operation, co-ordination and partnership with them.
- **Consistency with international practice also needs to be enhanced** – taking into account the international dimensions, experiences, standards and recommendations.

10. AREA RELATED CHALLENGES: CIVIC EDUCATION AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION

- CIVIC EDUCATION is **not explicitly mentioned** in the youth policy framework in WB6 (sector specific policy domains - education)

➤ YOUTH PARTICIPATION:

- **The legal and policy framework** does not encourage youth participation and activism - Over/under regulated area.
- There are **no efficient mechanisms** for integrating youth perspectives into public policy and youth participation - Non or only tokenistic participation of youth and other actors in development of the youth policies.
- The lack of **knowledge and capacities** of youth and municipal youth organisations - human rights based approach, lack of continuous support, insufficient funding etc.
- Non-conducive environment for **volunteering**, affected by poor institutional framework, the lack of strategy and plan for implementation of the Law on Volunteering and support to volunteering actions.
- Young people are not sufficiently involved in the activities and decision-making process in **specific policy domains** (environmental issues).
- Networking and international cooperation should be serving as a mechanism for future international cooperation so that the youth sector approximates to regional and international level.

11. AREA RELATED CHALLENGES: SOCIAL INCLUSION

- The lack of data - official statistics - in order to inform the policy development based on needs of young people from socially vulnerable categories.
- The lack of effective **outreach** to certain youth groups.
- The lack of adequate **services and programmes** both to prevent the risk and to provide support for young people at risk of social exclusion
- The existing support services for young people at risk of social exclusion offered by health, education, social welfare and employment institutions and agencies are **not tailored** to the needs of different youth groups.
- Insufficient **sensitisation** of related actors (both public and civic organisations) has led to inefficiency in the implementation of existing measures of support and to a limited coverage of youth at risk of social exclusion

Annex 1: HANDOUT - WHAT WORKS WELL

I) YOUTH PARTICIPATION

ALBANIA:

- **1st strategic objective** (Promotion and participation of young people in democratic decision-making processes) aims at not only establishing respective infrastructure in support of young people, like youth centers, but also at strengthening and enhancing the structures and capacities of youth organisations and networks. (Strengthening of youth NGO structures and capacities; Increase of youth participation in decision making processes and local governance structures; Youth awareness raising and education on the electoral process; Enhancement of support for young people and youth organizations).

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA:

- The Draft Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Youth Strategy 2016-2020: **strategic priority area** - youth activism (participation, volunteering and mobility).
- The Youth Policy of the Republika Srpska 2016-2020: **strategic priority area**: Active participation; Strategic priority: Improving conditions for active youth participation (objectives: 2.1. Developed awareness of the importance of active participation of young people in the society and in the decision-making process; 2.2. Developed capacities in the youth work sector and active involvement of young people in the decision-making process; 2.3. Increased volunteer engagement of young people).

KOSOVO:

- **Strategic objective 1: YOUTH PARTICIPATION** (Increase of youth participation in decision making processes and significant inclusion of youth at sector policy making which directly influence at youth).
- **Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth** No. 03/L-145, “aims the advancement and continuous re-affirmation of youth participation in decision-making processes, without any distinction and exclusion, in the development of a democratic society, in order to improve the lifestyle of the youth and their social status”.

The Law on Empowerment of Youth (2009) outlines rights, responsibilities and obligations of governmental authorities and youth organisation. The law aims to strengthen the participation of youth in decision-making processes in order to improve their quality of life, as well as their social status. It has a total of 19 articles and it incorporates the responsibilities of different central and local institutions and youth organisations in order to ensure wide youth participation in public life. In addition, it defines voluntary work and informal education of young people and provides instruction for the licensing of the so-called “Youth Centres”.

This law obliges Kosovo institutions to **ensure youth participation** and also their appropriate influence on important decision-making processes affecting the youth.

In addition, this law also details some of **the fields where youth participation is mandatory**, as in the following: education; employment; public health; social issues; culture, sports and recreation; **citizen education and democracy**; and environment, spatial planning and rural development.

Example: Regarding international co-operation, the OSCE mission in Kosovo continuously supports the participation of young people in policy design and decision making by closely working with central and local institutions, youth civil society organisations, and young individuals. The OSCE mission drafted an important [Participatory Handbook for Local Youth Action Council](#). This handbook was designed to increase the understanding of LYAC members with the role, function and responsibilities of the council and to share good practice.

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA:

➤ Thematic area 1 (NYS 2016-2025):

OBJECTIVE 1: An increased number of youth generated youth initiatives and youth associations;

OBJECTIVE 2: Institutions, organisations and youth will have regular, continuous and joint activities in accordance with the interests of young people;

OBJECTIVE 3: Local and national authorities provide financial support for the promotion of youth participation;

OBJECTIVE 4: More significant institutional focus on youth, ensured through the Youth and Sports Agency;

OBJECTIVE 5: Adequate resources provided for the implementation of youth policies and youth participation mechanisms.

MONTENEGRO:

➤ Outcome C: Young people are active citizens, involved, motivated, proactive and participate in decision-making and community development processes, in creation of policies and their implementation (objectives: Development of youth participation culture; Putting in place mechanisms / systems for fostering activism; Supporting youth organizing and youth networking)

➤ **The Law on Youth** (2016) regulates youth policy development, implementation and monitoring at the national and local level. The scope of the Law (Article 1) covers the issues of interest to youth activities in Montenegro, activities relating to youth policy, youth work, institutional care about youth, forms of organisation and financing, and **participation of youth at the local and state level**, as well as other issues of importance for young people.

When speaking about basic principles and values of the new Youth Policy, in accordance with international recommendations, the main goal is that it should be based on rights, inclusive, **participative**, gender sensitive, holistic, based on knowledge and evidence, ensured resources, and accountable to the target group.

SERBIA:

➤ **Strategic priority: Youth activism and active participation**

➤ **Strategic goal: Enhanced active participation of young women and men in society**

➤ **Principle: Active youth participation and cooperation**

Everybody, especially youth policy actors, shall ensure a stimulating environment and offer active support in the performance of youth activities for young people, in their taking initiative and in their meaningful involvement in decision-making processes and processes of implementation of decisions that contribute to personal and social development, while young people shall receive complete information. Freedom of association, cooperation with peers and intergenerational cooperation at the local, national and international level shall be supported and encouraged.

Specific goal 1: Improved legal and policy framework for the inclusion of young women and men's perspective and youth participation in decision-making processes and youth policy development

Specific goal 2: Established conditions for capacity building and synergy in the activities of YPA, sustainable development and inclusion of a greater number of youth activity associations

Specific goal 3: Improved conditions for volunteering of young people and for young people

Specific goal 4: Increased participation of young people in environmental protection and sustainable development

The National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS) initiated launching of the structured dialogue on national and local level as a process for discussions between young people and policy makers in order to make sure the opinions of young people are taken into account in defining the youth policies (in the process of public discussion about the new Draft AP for National Youth Policy implementation).

II) SOCIAL INCLUSION

- NOT explicitly mentioned as STRATEGIC priority in WB6 apart from Serbia (treated as general approach, principle, or value)

SERBIA:

- Strategic goal: Enhanced support for the social inclusion of young people at risk of social exclusion (4.6. Social inclusion of youth)

Specific goal 1: The necessary system pre-conditions are created for youth at risk of social exclusion to be adequately recognised and supported in their inclusion in the economic, social and cultural currents.

Specific goal 2: Increased availability and scope of activities designed to prevent social exclusion of young people at risk

Specific goal 3: Increased coverage and inclusion in available programmes of youth at risk of social exclusion who are beneficiaries of local services and support programmes

KOSOVO*:

- The KSYAP has incorporated **social inclusion** (gender, ethnicity, rural/urban youth and some marginalised groups) as a **general approach** that should be taken into account during the implementation of the activities.

- The co-operation on youth matters is also reflected within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with special emphasis on youth employability, gender equality and social inclusion.

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (NYS 2016-2025):

- Values of youth policy: **SOCIAL INCLUSION** - Social integration and inclusion implies a necessary minimum and a requirement without which the integral development of any young person cannot be provided. Social inclusion is a fundamental right that should be enjoyed by all young people.
- Principles for NYS implementation: **Equality and inclusiveness** – Acknowledging that different groups of young people need different approach and forms of support in order to ensure equal access for making use of the opportunities that exist.

MONTENEGRO:

- PRINCIPLE 2 Inclusive – youth policy envisages measures that enable equality and equal chances to all young people to achieve their full potential in life, and especially measures for overcoming barriers for inclusion of especially vulnerable groups and measures for ensuring civil participation of all young people.

SERBIA:

- Principle: **Respect for human and minority rights, equality and non-discrimination**

All young people shall be equal and shall enjoy equal status and equal protection regardless of their personal characteristics. Any kind of discrimination or unequal treatment of young people, direct or indirect, on any grounds, particularly on the grounds of age, race, sex, national origin, religious belief, language, social background, financial standing, affiliation with political, trade union or other organisations, mental or physical disability, health, physical appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other actual or assumed personal trait shall be prohibited.

- Principle: **Equal opportunities for all**

Young people shall be entitled to equal opportunities and participation in all spheres of life in accordance with their own choices and abilities. Personal and social development of young people shall be encouraged by ensuring the respect for diversity, gender equality, rights, freedom and dignity. Young people shall have the right to objective, adjusted and easily accessible information in order to develop and make fully informed decisions.

III) YOUTH WORK

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

- One of the main roles of institutions, especially local self-government units, would be to provide material and technical conditions for youth work, or to provide support and framework for self-organized youth activities. **Strengthening capacity in youth work**, adapting legislation, creating sustainable mechanisms and standards for **work with young people at the local level** are

measures for **creating conditions for active participation** of young people in society, which is in line with the recommendation **"Strengthening the role of youth work for political empowerment of young people"**

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA (NYS 2016-2025), Thematic area:

- **LOCAL YOUTH WORK** - is an organised and systematic process of education and support of authentic development of young people with the aim of fulfilling their overall personal, social and civic potential (3 objectives).
- **Active role of youth in the development of the local community** - Key challenges for young people in this area are associated with the fact that youth work is not recognised as a key tool for assisting the positive personal and social development of young people. Youth work is not formally regulated, standardised or integrated as part of the system of youth upbringing, education and protection, and it is not equally available to all young people in different parts of the country.

OBJECTIVE 1: Recognition of youth work as a key tool for assisting the positive personal and social development of young people

OBJECTIVE 2: Formal recognition and regulation of the use and availability of youth work as an integral part of the education system of the country

OBJECTIVE 3: Ensuring the quality and availability of youth work in the territory of each municipality

SERBIA

- **The National Youth Strategy (2015-2025):** One of the specific goals is „Improved quality and availability of youth work and ensured recognition of youth work”, further elaborated within the [Action Plan for NYS implementation \(2015-2017\)](#). The youth work is recognised in the context of non-formal education, where recognition of competences acquired through youth work is underlined as essential for young people (employability).
- **The Law on Youth (2011):** In Article 3, the Law defines meanings of individual terms, including the youth work. Thus, Youth work shall mean such youth activities organised by and for young people, based on non-formal education, carried out in young people’s free time and undertaken with the aim of improving the conditions for personal and social development of young people, in accordance with their needs and abilities, in which young people voluntarily participate.

The definition that NAPOR uses is more elaborative: “Youth work is planned educational curriculum, created with the purpose of providing support to young people in the process of independence, by helping youth in personal and social development to become active members of the society and participants in the decision- making process. The idea of youth work is to create a safe environment and opportunities for active participation of young people on a voluntary basis in the process of acquiring skills, competencies and knowledge.”

Youth work is: a) Complementary to formal education; b) carried out by youth workers; c) Conducts activities using non-formal education methods and information.

Recognition

National Association of Youth Workers (hereinafter referred to as NAPOR) is a union of Civil Society Organizations that embraces 68 member organizations delivering youth work in Serbia that lobby, advocate, and influence existing and initiate new policies. All the processes related to recognition of youth work at national level are done by and within NAPOR. Main areas related to recognition are:

- Development of 3 vocational standards in area of professional non-formal education (1. Youth activist, 2. Youth work coordinator; 3. Specialist for youth work and policies) that are included in National Vocational Qualification system (still to be officially published by the Government);
- Development of standards for NFE programs in youth field and a mechanism for its implementation ((re)accreditation process of youth work programmes based on 8 standards) that ensures building necessary skills and life values of young people to take active participation in community development along with promotion of democratic principles;
- Development of non-formal education curricula for two vocational standards in area of professional youth work (1. Youth activist and 2. Youth work coordinator) through which NFE providers gain standardized professional competencies to be able to make greater impact on youth empowerment;
- Development of mechanism for validation of previously attained competencies for two vocational standards for NFE in youth field;
- Establishment of a pool of licensed organization and trainers for delivery of multi-modular trainings for non-formal education vocational standards;
- Establishment of a pool of mentors for validation of previously attained competencies;
- Creation of tool for recognition of competences of young people gained through youth work programmes and NFE (Passport of Competences) is implemented in cooperation with Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant actors from public, private and civil sector who contribute to development of the Passport and mechanism for improvement of youth employability through inter-sectoral consortium.

In addition to NAPOR efforts, with the support of Ministry of Youth and Sports there has been several initiatives related to support youth work by following European initiatives. From January 1st, 2015 Ekoloski centar Radulovacki was the fourth accredited youth centre in Europe with Council of Europe's quality label for youth centres. After revision of the status in 2017, the centre is given the label for the next five years.

Moreover, Ministry of Youth and Sports fully supported application of Novi Sad, the city in Vojvodina, (Northern autonomous Province in Serbia) for European Youth Capital, which Novi Sad won for 2019, with the goal to create more opportunities for youth by youth, empower them to become pro-active initiators of positive changes and introduce innovative ideas not only in Novi Sad, but also on a national and international level.

Annex 2: HANDOUT - CHALLENGES

I) AREA SPECIFIC CHALLENGES - YOUTH PARTICIPATION

ALBANIA:

Even though in Albania the under 30 age group is approximately one third of the population, **youth participation in democratic processes and decision making and social life remains very low**. Factors contributing to this situation are: lack of legal framework setting forth legal obligations and governing policies that promote and motivate young people to be active in democratic processes and decision making. Active youth participation in the elections process and especially that of first time voters has been decreasing steadily.

On the other hand, even though there is a large number of youth organizations, a considerable part of them have gaps in organization, leadership, and project development and management. Another gap noted in the youth organization sector (but not the only one) is the lack of cooperation between youth organizations with civil society groups, institutions or funding agencies.

Representation of the youth in the political life and especially at the local governance structure level remains very low. Their representation in this structures is not done in compliance with the legislation and the decisions in force, but in the majority of cases in line with personal acquaintances or “the good will and wish” of the party leaders.

- The main challenges for youth and youth organizations today are the **lack of financial support** for various initiatives, and above all the approach to and lack of information on various resources related to support for youth or various youth activities.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (RS):

- Lack of capacity in the youth sector is one of the key difficulties in **youth work**. Undeveloped human resources and financial constraints for investing in youth infrastructure and youth work make it difficult for self-organization of young people as well as continuous activities in the field of youth work.
- The **lack of interest among young people for social and political events** in the community is directly related to information and education. Despite the presence and available information technologies, young people remain **uninformed**, which is especially noticed among young people from **rural areas**. It is indicative that young people who are members of youth organizations report significantly more participation in decision-making processes, and it is necessary to strengthen the capacities of youth organizations and organizations working with young people and to provide them with continuous support in the exercise of social functions.
- The **passivity of young people in the social and political sense** is largely the result of an **environment that does not encourage young people to take an active part** in the socio-political processes, and some of the measures of this document are oriented towards the creation of tools for better information and civic education of young people through the inclusion of all actors in society.
- Encouraging cross-sectoral dialogue and **supporting youth initiatives** should promote social participation for the common good. The increasing participation of young people in the work of

the **political parties** of the Republic of Srpska is visible, but this social engagement is often reserved only for the narrower circle of those who rule certain knowledge and skills, and the involvement of young people in the social flows in the context of this document requires a more active relationship and action towards a larger number of young people.

- Particular attention should be paid to young people from vulnerable and marginalized groups who have very limited access to information and activities.

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA:

- The existing practices, the **absence of representative bodies and the low level of awareness and education among young people about their right to participate** highlight the extent of youth exclusion from these processes and indicate some of the causes of youth **apathy**.
- **Youth representation in the country's institutions is not at a satisfactory level**, and even where young people are present in institutions they are rarely or only to a small extent involved in decision-making processes. Certain forms of **youth organisation** can be identified at local level, as well as strategic documents on youth in some municipalities; however, there is no uniform approach that applies everywhere. In addition, **local self-governments and government institutions do not allocate sufficient funds for the needs of youth** and for the implementation of their ideas. Nor do these institutions contribute adequately to **encouraging volunteer work** among young people, despite the fact that the majority of the young population support this type of engagement as an opportunity for training that will make them better prepared for future job positions.
- The key challenges in the area of youth participation are related to the **opinion of young people that they are only partially involved in policy creation** and that they are more involved in helping their peers and friends with school assignments than in volunteer work for non-governmental organisations. Those young people who are members of civil society organisations consider that only a small percentage of young people are members of any organisation and that a significant percentage are not interested in politics at all.

In the long term, these key challenges can cause apathy among the young population, negatively influencing the quality of education, creating **passive citizens** and **lowering the quality of life of youth in general**.

KOSOVO*:

The Law on Empowerment and Participation of youth, in Article 6, paragraph 2, states that: "The Government by sub-legal act will determine the key Ministries, responsible for enforcing the provisions of paragraph 1 of Article 6 of this law." However, a recently published report² of the Commission for Education, Science, Technology, Culture, Youth and Sports reveals that **the Government of Kosovo has not yet issued a sub-legal act concerning this issue**.

² Report by the Commission for education, science, technology, culture, youth and sport "Supervising the implementation of the Law No. 03/L-145, on Empowerment and Participation of Youth", <http://advocacy-center.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Raport-mbi-Mbikqyrjen-e-zbatimit-te-Ligjit-nr.-03L-145-per-fuqizimin-dhe-pjesmarrje-te-rinise.pdf>, p. 7.

- Decision-making of the youth in central and local level (SWOT): The responsibilities of certain ministries regarding the enforcement of the Law on Empowerment and Participation of Youth are **not clearly provided**.
- All publications, reports and different researches in the field of youth indicate that **youth participation and their influence in many important fields of their life is very low, symbolic**, due to two reasons: in one side, **limited possibilities of public institutions to involve them in these processes**; and in the other, **insufficient capacities of the youth and their organisations to become part of these processes**³.
- Actual developments, as political, social-economic, cultural, immigration and emigration, poverty and other developments **affect directly on the youth participation level**, based on analyses deriving from different researches. Organisation of the youth is not satisfactory even at schools, public universities or private colleges, places in which better self- organisation is expected by youth, professing their influence in learning, culture or even leadership within these institutions, but this is not entirely their fault.

MONTENEGRO:

- The strategic framework clearly positions youth as a matter of interest to Montenegro and through a holistic approach envisages inter-sectoral and interdepartmental cooperation of youth policy actors. Youth Strategy 2017-2021 is a document that positions young people not only as subjects of youth policy, but also as actors responsible for its planning, realization, monitoring and evaluation.

Besides the results achieved, NPAM's (2006-2011) evaluation highlighted the still-present **marginalisation of youth issues**, which are most definitely an interdepartmental issue, as well as the **extremely limited influence NPAM** as a strategic document had in the sense of prioritisation and mainstreaming of youth issues. The analysis showed that a significant influence has been made in **raising youth issues at the local level**, and partly also on capacity building and ensuring support for youth organisations and organisations working for youth.

- The New Youth Strategy (2017-2021) emphasises that youth should be established as a transversal issue, and that a holistic approach to youth policy implementation should be applied through inter- sectoral and inter-ministerial collaboration which should be established and co-ordinated by the Directorate of Youth and Sport through co-operation with different stakeholders, providing a strategic framework for the development of legislation and policies affecting youth.

The strategy also states that **there is no professional and advisory cross-sectoral body or mechanism established in order to stimulate and promote the development of youth policy in Montenegro**, and therefore, the improvement of both horizontal and vertical inter-sectoral co-operation is highly prioritised.

One way to achieve this is the establishment of a functional Youth Steering Committee as a professional and advisory cross-sectoral body aiming to stimulate and promote the development of

³ MLSW, annual report on performance, 06/2010; Ministry of Internal Affairs, Strategic Plan 2007-2010; Ministry of Health, Sector Strategy of Health 2010-2014, Youth Volunteerism in Kosovo: an opportunity to learn , UNDP, 2010, Prishtina.

youth policy, monitor the work of ministries and other governmental bodies in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth-related policies within their jurisdiction.

In line with the Law on Youth (Article 16), this advisory body should provide opinions and recommendations, follow the development of youth organisations and youth and provide recommendations for improving their work and support systems; make recommendations for the development of youth policies at local, national and international level; and monitor and respond to social issues of importance to young people.

Finally, the **improvement of inter-agency co-operation** is needed in order to consolidate activities and efforts of all government departments. In this sense, establishment of a functional operational intergovernmental working team is envisaged with the aim of monitoring the implementation of the youth strategy, implementation of joint annual action plans and the design and implementation of priority projects concerning youth.

SERBIA:

Results of the draft evaluation report (2014) were taken into consideration when drafting NYS, particularly recommendations which indicate areas that need to be developed and continuously further improved:

- Ensure that the decision-making process is in accordance with the principles of co-management; improve local capacities so as to be adjusted to young people;
 - Provide more transparent decision-making process and availability of information relevant to young people;
 - Ensure the improvement of the situation of youth organizations and organizations for youth through clearly separated project financing and program administrative grants.
- **Youth activity associations**, without any doubt, perform an important social and political function, but even so there is **no supportive environment** either for the development of youth civil sector or for the promotion and protection of youth civil society space. In fact, **the capacity of youth participation associations is insufficiently developed**, and therefore it should be intensively built to **enhance youth activism**. On the other hand, capacity building requires a **certain amount of funding** that cannot be provided by umbrella organisations of young people, which renders this entire process more difficult.

II) AREA SPECIFIC CHALLENGES - SOCIAL INCLUSION

ALBANIA:

Another **phenomenon noted recently is the return in the country of a large number of youngsters who had emigrated to neighbouring countries**, mainly Greece and Italy. This age group was either born in these countries, or left Albania at a very early age. They were educated and have been employed in various professions, thus gaining good education and work practices. However, even though they have gained good skills in these countries, their **reintegration in the Albanian reality is challenging**. In order to support youth and youth organizations, the activities foreseen in this

objective aim at enhancing support to youth (living in Albania, but also those returning from emigration) through the establishment of financial support mechanisms and the creation of facilities for information exchange and communication sources.

SERBIA:

As concerns the phenomenon of social exclusion, particularly in the current circumstances of global economic crisis, the latest data about the **poverty level** indicate that certain groups of young population are facing the risk of social exclusion.

Three million or 42.1% of the population of the Republic of Serbia is exposed to the risk of poverty or social exclusion, both being the result of three different risk factors (the rate of poverty risk, low labour intensity and severe material deprivation). This result is considerably higher than the average in the 28 EU countries (24.8%). After Bulgaria and Romania, this value is higher than in other EU countries.

Compared to other age groups, children (under 18 years of age) and the **youth** (18 to 24 years old) are those most exposed to the risk of poverty (27.3%) after social transfers, which, among other things, is a consequence of high youth unemployment rate, i.e. a large number of young people who are not employed, do not go to school nor are getting any professional training in the official system of training (NEET).