

**MAPPING OF YOUTH POLICIES AND
IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING SUPPORT AND GAPS
IN FINANCING OF YOUTH ACTIONS IN THE
WESTERN BALKANS**

**Report
Serbia**



Title: MAPPING OF YOUTH POLICIES AND IDENTIFICATION OF EXISTING SUPPORT AND GAPS IN FINANCING OF YOUTH ACTIONS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS –SERBIA REPORT

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The report is based on comprehensive research, organized and overseen by the Open Society Foundation in Albania, and involving six researchers, one in each Western Balkans six economies between September 2020 - January 2021 with Blerjana Bino as Research Team Leader and Klodjan Seferaj, Programme Manager for European Integration and Good Governance at OSFA.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report zooms into the current situation of youth policies in Serbia, identifying existing support of and gaps in the financing of youth actions. Also, it analyses youth participation in decision making by highlighting best practices and providing recommendations. Another dimension of the report is the mapping of donor programs in the youth sector. The report includes a brief overview of the impact of COVID-19 on youth.

The report was drafted based on desk and empirical research. The desk research consisted of an analysis of laws, regulations, national strategies and programs. Statistics from various sources, as well as the most recent reports from local and international organizations were analyzed as important sources of information on the youth sector in Serbia. The empirical research was carried out through 18 interviews with representatives of institutions, NGOs, and the donor community.

According to legislation, young people are persons from 15 to 30 years. According to Eurostat statistics, in 2019 there were 1,156,611 young people in Serbia aged 15 to 29, which is 16.6% of the total population. A depopulation trend is visible in the population projections for Serbia 2011-2041. In more concrete terms, according to the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS), population projections for the age group 15-29 show that in 2031 there will be 80,307 fewer young people than in 2018, while in 2041 the decrease will reach 91,064. One-fifth of the total unemployed people in Serbia are young people aged 15 to 30. The position of young people in the Serbian labor market is significantly more unfavorable in comparison to that of the European Union (EU) youth in terms of labor market status. In recent decades, Serbia has been seriously addressing the problem of the outflow of young, educated persons.

On the level of youth policy framework in Serbia it is worth highlighting that the first National Youth Strategy (NYS) for the period 2008-2014 was adopted in May 2008, while the Action Plan (AP) for its implementation was adopted in January 2009. The second NYS was adopted for the period of 2015-2025, and its AP for the 2018-2020. The Law on Youth in Serbia (LoY) was adopted by the National Assembly on July 5th, 2011. Program priorities related to the implementation of the NYS goals, the allocation and use of funds being determined by the Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS) within the Ministry's annual implementation plan. The total budget for 2018 is planned and executed in the amount of EUR 41,695,286.88, with EUR 36,703,408.85 from the Budget of the Republic of Serbia and EUR 4,991,877.98 from other sources.

The existing legislative and strategic framework for Serbian youth policy, including the LoY, NYS, and the AP for the implementation of NYS, are considered to be examples of good practice



in terms of setting the ground for effective policy implementation. MoYS provided support to the establishment of various youth policy actors on the national level, such as: the National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS), the National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) and the National Association of Local Youth Offices (NALYO), as well as local youth offices in 137 self-government units, which strengthened the structure for youth policy implementation. Still, there are continuous attempts by government structures and youth civic society to advance the Youth Policy system at both the local and national levels.

Even though mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and reporting are envisioned and described in NYS and its AP, there is a lack in systematic and continuous implementation of the foreseen mechanisms. Despite all the mechanisms developed to guarantee cross-sectoral cooperation in the youth field, cooperation exists in Serbian youth policy only to a small degree and relies heavily on the relatively modest resources of the MoYS.

Only the largest CSOs in Serbia, which are partly addressing youth policies through individual programs, have the opportunity to discuss topics and priorities directly with the donors. The three key youth associations (KOMS, NAPOR and NALYO) in Serbia working with and for youth are funded mostly by the MoYS. The general impression is that the broader donor community does not recognize them as essential stakeholders. They are funded mainly by donors capable of granting smaller donations, significantly impacting their sustainability and their program and strategic planning.

A significant number of interventions aimed at the youth population have been implemented by the donor community, in particular by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Regional Youth Cooperation Office, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Serbia, the Council of Europe, the European Union delegation including support through the TEMPUS foundation programs, the UNFPA Serbia and the German Organization for International Cooperation.

The sustainability of the youth sector might also be affected by donor-driven agenda setting. The youth sector would benefit from a better coordination of donor activities and the collection of data that would provide clear information on programs and projects.

Taking into consideration the challenges that the youth is facing, the main priority is to increase youth employability, especially of youth neither in employment, nor education, or training (NEET category), refugee and returnee youth, young parents, and to support social inclusion of youth from vulnerable groups. Still, the main focus of the largest donors are social and economic rights and there are just a few youth civic literacy programs, e.g., the Youth and Rule of Law and Media Freedoms. There is strong need to empower young people in recognition of their civic and



political rights. The sustainable response on the effects of COVID-19 on youth from vulnerable groups is necessary.

One of the key policy recommendations is related to a revision of the LoY which is needed to address several issues related to: the duration of NYS and the mechanisms for ensuring flexibility and possible changes, if needed; the active involvement of youth and relevant youth policy actors in the NYS monitoring and evaluation processes; the need for external evaluation of the implementation of the NYS; maintaining participatory decision-making and co-management principles at all levels, and the creation of a space for “youth” as a category in the constitution.

The report consists of six chapters. The first presents general data on youth population and continues into the second chapter which depicts the legal and strategic youth policy framework, as well as the key institutions responsible for youth policy. The third chapter provides an analysis of the funding framework and its mechanisms, focusing on the funding of the national youth strategy and the accompanying action plan. The fourth chapter brings into focus the analysis of mechanisms and channels for inclusion of youth into decision making and youth participation. Major interventions by international organizations and development partners targeting the youth population are discussed in the fifth chapter. The concluding sixth chapter aims to identify good practices and gaps based on which the main recommendations are structured, according to the key themes presented in the previous chapters. COVID-19’s impact on youth is included as part of chapter six.



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Action plan
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPA	EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
KOMS	National Youth Council of Serbia
LoY	Law on Youth
LSG	Local self-government
LYAP	Local Youth Action Plans
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sport
MP	Member of Parliament
NAYLO	National Association of Local Youth Offices
NAPOR	National Association of Youth Workers
NEAP	National Employment Action Plan
NES	National Employment Service
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NYS	National Youth Strategy
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PSSY	Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth, Autonomous province Vojvodina
RYCO	Regional Youth Cooperation Office
SD	Structured dialogue
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SORS	Statistical Office of Serbia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
YC	Youth Council
YFJ	European Youth Forum
YPA	Youth Policy Actors



CHAPTER 1: YOUTH POPULATION DATA

This chapter presents statistics regarding youth age, gender, ethnicity, education, employment, and migration based on Serbia's available data.

Although the Law on Youth (LoY) establishes the youth age framework, it is not used consistently, making research into the youth sector challenging. Another inconsistency is that the definitions of young persons overlap with the definition of children.¹ There is an unequal use of the age category regarding youth² by the other laws and institutions, such as for example, data on youth employment,³ and data on youth use of social protection services.

1.1 Age and gender

According to Eurostat statistics,⁴ in 2019 there were 1,156,611 young people in Serbia aged 15 to 29, which is 16.6% of the total population. Divided in age cohorts, youth statistics show the following data:

- The number of youth in the age group 15 to 19 was 352,273, which was 5.1% of the total population

¹Definitions of young people overlap with the definition of children. Article 11 of Serbia's Family Act stipulates that the age of majority is acquired at the age of 18, while the Law on Youth defines young people as persons from the age of 15 to the age of 30. The question is whether such dual status affects the exercise of certain rights and how young people with dual status are treated in different legal situations. If such a status were found to put youth between the ages of 15 and 18 at a disadvantage, then it would be necessary to revise the aforementioned laws regulating the status of children and youth.

² Serbia is facing the challenge data on youth that is not sensitive regarding different sectors such as health and unemployment.

³ For example: the Labor Force Service collects statistical data regarding youth 15-24 years old, and the social protection service collects data up to youth who are 26 years old.

⁴ Eurostat, Ratio of young people in the total population on 1 January by sex and age [yth_demo_020]. Available at: <https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do> Accessed 6th January 2021.



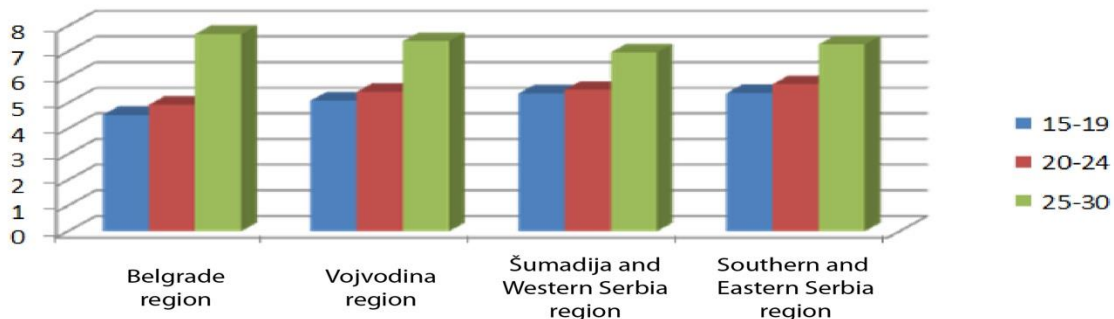
- The number of youth in the age group 20 to 24 was 236,982, which was 5.5% of the total population
- The number of youth in the age group 25 to 29 was 423,074, which was 6.11% of the total population

SORS⁵ show that the number of young people has been continuously decreasing since the last census in 2011. The estimated number of young people aged 15 to 30 for 2019 is 1,237,628 (17.8% of the general population). Women make up 48.7% (602,212) and men 51.3% (635,416) of this age group. The data show that there is a lower percentage of women in the younger population than in the older one, which is a negative trend from the demographic aspect.⁶

A depopulation trend is visible in the population projections for Serbia 2011-2041. In more concrete terms, according to the SORS, population projections for the age group 15-29 show that in 2031 there will be 80,307 young people less than in 2018, while in 2041 the decrease will reach 91,064.⁷

The distribution of young people (15–30) and their share in the total population by groups and regions is presented in the following table for 2019.⁸

Figure 1: Distribution of young people by region 2019

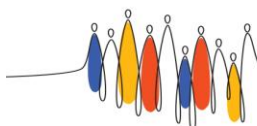


⁵ The difference between SORS and Eurostat data stems from different definition of the upper boundary for the age cohort – SORS counts young people that are 29 at the time of data collection even if they turn 30 in the year when data is collected, unlike Eurostat that does not include those who turn 30 in the year when data is collected.

⁶ Osnovni pokazatelji položaja mladih u Srbiji – komparativna analiza sa drugim evropskim zemljama i trendovima (Basic indicators of the position of young people in Serbia), MYoS, Snezana Klasnja, November 2020, page 16 [https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Analiza%20osnovnih%20pokazatelja%20polozaja%20mladih.%20MOS%20.%20Klasnja%20novembar%202020.%20godine%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Analiza%20osnovnih%20pokazatelja%20polozaja%20mladih.%20MOS%20.%20Klasnja%20novembar%202020.%20godine%20(2).pdf) Accessed 6th January 2021 p. 5.

⁷ Population estimates, 2019, number 172 – year. LXX, 7/1/2020. Statistical Office of Serbia. <https://www.stat.gov.rs/oblasti/stanovnistvo/procene-stanovnistva/>. The Statistical Office of Serbia has not had data for AP Kosovo and Metohija since 1999, so they are not included in the data coverage for Serbia (total). Accessed 6th January 2021.

⁸ The data provided are the data from EuroStat, a database that sees young people as a category aged 15 to 29. The Law on Youth in Serbia recognizes young people as those aged from 15 to 30. However, statistics and keeping data on youth are not done uniformly.



Observed by statistical regions in Serbia, most young people aged 15–30 are in the Region of Šumadija and Western Serbia – 340,772 (27.5%) of them, followed by the Region of Vojvodina 332,217 (26.8%) and then the Belgrade region 290,386 (23.5 %). The fewest of them are based in the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia, 274,253 (22.2%). The largest share of young people aged 15–19 in the population of a certain region is in the Region of Southern and Eastern Serbia – 5.38%, as well as young people aged 20–24, 5.73%, while the share of young people aged 25–30 is the highest in the Belgrade region at 7,68%.⁹

1.2 Education and employment

1.2.1 Education

Regarding the level of education, most young people had completed secondary education 56.6%, followed by completed primary education 28.4%, while 11.9% of this age group had completed higher education in 2019. There were 2.9% of young people with no schooling or incomplete primary education. Observed by sex, there are more men in all categories except for higher education, where there are 96,970 women and 60,184 men. There are 15.3% with higher education in urban areas and only 6.6% in rural areas. The ratio is reversed when it comes to the percentage of young persons with primary education and lower because there are 27.4% of them in urban areas and 37.3% in rural areas.¹⁰

Table 1: Data on young people according to education

Education (15-29.)	Total number	%	men	women	city %	rest%
No education	15,326	1.2	7,926	7,400	1	1.3
Elementary school but not finished	22,594	1.7	12,273	10,321	1.3	2.4
Elementary school	375,459	28.4	196,746	178,713	25.1	33.6
High school	747,847	56.6	398,028	349,819	57.1	55.8
High education	157,154	11.9	60,184	96,970	15.3	6.6
Unknown	3,641	0.3	1,953	1,688	0.2	0.3

⁹Osnovni pokazatelji položaja mladih u Srbiji – komparativna analiza sa drugim evropskim zemljama i trendovima (Basic indicators of the position of young people in Serbia). MYoS, Snezana Klasnja, November 2020, page 16 [https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Analiza%20osnovnih%20pokazatelja%20polozaja%20mladih.%20MOS%20%20Klasnja%20novembar%202020.%20godine%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Analiza%20osnovnih%20pokazatelja%20polozaja%20mladih.%20MOS%20%20Klasnja%20novembar%202020.%20godine%20(2).pdf) Accessed 6th January 2021 p. 5

¹⁰Osnovni pokazatelji položaja mladih u Srbiji – komparativna analiza sa drugim evropskim zemljama i trendovima Basic indicators of the position of young people in Serbia, MYoS, Snezana Klasnja, November 2020, p. 16 [https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Analiza%20osnovnih%20pokazatelja%20polozaja%20mladih.%20MOS%20%20Klasnja%20novembar%202020.%20godine%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Analiza%20osnovnih%20pokazatelja%20polozaja%20mladih.%20MOS%20%20Klasnja%20novembar%202020.%20godine%20(2).pdf) Accessed 6th January 2021



Total	1,322,021	100%	677,110	644,911	100%	100%

The European Commission (EC) report on Serbia notes that the student population has continued to decrease due to negative demographic trends and emigration.¹¹

1.2.2 Neither in employment nor in education or training (NEET)

The NEET rate, or the participation of young people who are not employed and are not in any of the training or education programs, is 18.9% in the total number of young people and is down by 1.2% points compared to 2018.¹² The total number of NEET young people in 2019 was 19.3%.¹³ There are seven categories of NEET youth:¹⁴

- 1) Those who are entering the labor market or starting the next level of their education or training and will soon be leaving this group – 7.8%
- 2) Short-term unemployed – 29.8%
- 3) Long-term unemployed – 22%
- 4) Persons with a disability – 6.8%
- 5) Persons taking care of their family members – almost 90% of young persons belonging to this category are women – 15.4%
- 6) Discouraged – 5.8%
- 7) Others – 2.5%

In 2019, 19.3% of people aged 15 to 30 in Serbia were not employed, did not go to school, or were trained through the training system (NEET). That is more than 234,000 young people. NEET youth rate increases with increasing the age group of young people. Compared to the age group of 15 to 19 years, there is a large increase in the NEET rate among young people aged 20 to 24. The NEET rate becomes even higher in the age category of 25 to 29 years. Approximately one fifth (20.9%) of young women belonged to the NEET group (aged 15 to 29), while young men's share was 17.1%.¹⁵

¹¹ European Commission Annual Report Serbia, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf Accessed 4th January 2021 p.102

¹² Youth and entrepreneurship, National Youth Council of Serbia, available at: <https://koms.rs/2020/12/22/istrazivanje-mladi-i-preduzetnistvo/> Tamara Vukov, Miloš Stančić, Miloš Hrkaloović, page 30 last accessed: January 6, 2021

¹³ Položaj NEET mladih u Republici Srbiji 2020, Fondacija Ane I Vlade Divac (The position of NEET youth in the Republic of Serbia, Foundation Ane and Vlada Divac 2020: https://www.divac.com/upload/document/poloaj_neet_mladih_u_republii_srbiji_2020.pdf p. 24 Accessed 10 January 2021

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Položaj NEET mladih u Republici Srbiji 2020, Fondacija Ane I Vlade Divac (The position of NEET youth in the Republic of Serbia, Foundation Ane and Vlada Divac 2020: https://www.divac.com/upload/document/poloaj_neet_mladih_u_republii_srbiji_2020.pdf p. 24 Accessed 10 January 2021



1.2.3 Unemployment rate

According to official data from the National Employment Service (NES), the number of unemployed young people in May 2020 was 104,702.¹⁶ One-fifth of the total unemployed people in Serbia are young people aged 15 to 30. SORS reports for the 3rd quarter of 2020 that the unemployment rate for young people aged 15 to 24 is 26.5%.¹⁷ The European Commission (EC) report on Serbia notes that “*although labor market performance has improved, with the lowest unemployment rates in the last decade, this was also due to large-scale emigration.*”¹⁸ In February 2020, the government adopted a 2021-2027 strategy on economic migrations, aiming to prevent further emigration and encourage professions from the diaspora to return to the economy.¹⁹ The issue of youth migration will be discussed in the following section.

The position of young people in the Serbian labor market is significantly more unfavorable in comparison to that of EU youth in terms of labor market status. Just half of those aged between 20-29 are employed in comparison to almost two thirds of their peers in the EU 27²⁰. The unemployment rate of this age group is double in Serbia, where for every five-active youth, one is unemployed²¹. Among employed workers, there is a significant share of those who lack job security (44.1% in Serbia and 35.8% in the EU 27). However, the reasons why young people are employed in this form differ significantly: 81% of young people in Serbia work in temporary jobs because they are unable to find permanent employment, while this is the case for only 29% of their peers in the EU.²²

The chances are very high that youth will continue to work in uncertain jobs in the coming period, considering that a third of those between the ages of 25-29 are employed in this manner.²³ The problem with quality internships in the labor market is especially pronounced. In this context, internships are considered as the short-term work experience programs that include learning and training, in which all interested parties can be involved regardless of whether or not they are in the formal education system. These internships are self-initiated; they are not a

¹⁶ The position of young people in the labour market, useful documents: <http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/rs/o-nama/inicijativa-za-zaposljavanje-mladih/polozej-mladih-na-trzistu-rada/> Accessed 10 January 2021

¹⁷ Labor Market Survey, 3rd Quarter, November 2020 <https://www.stat.gov.rs/en-us/oblasti/trziste-rada/anketa-o-radnoj-snazi/> Accessed 10 January 2021

¹⁸ European Commission Annual Report Serbia, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf Accessed 4th January 2021 p. 6

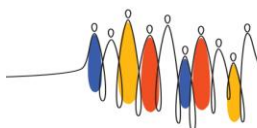
¹⁹ *ibid.* p. 60

²⁰ Crveni alarm za radna prava, Fondacija Centar za demokratiju, Sarita Bradaš. The red alarm for labour rights, Foundation Centre for Democracy, December 2020, available at: <http://www.centaronline.org/userfiles/files/publikacije/fcd-2020-crveni-alarm-za-radna-prava.pdf>, last accessed: 6 January 2021, page 89

²¹ Following the opinion from *Alternative report about the position and needs of the youth in Republic of Serbia* young people would not be satisfied with a salary lower than RSD 65,000 (appx 600 EUR), while most consider the amount between RSD 65,000 and RSD 80,000 to be sufficient for a decent life.²¹ The average salary for April 2020 in Serbia, however, was RSD 58,932 (approximately 500 EUR).

²² Crveni alarm za radna prava, Fondacija Centar za demokratiju, Sarita Bradaš. The red alarm for labour rights, Foundation Centre for Democracy, December 2020, available at: <http://www.centaronline.org/userfiles/files/publikacije/fcd-2020-crveni-alarm-za-radna-prava.pdf>, last accessed: 6 January 2021, page 90

²³ Crveni alarm za radna prava, Fondacija Centa za demokratiju, The red alarm for labour rights, Sarita Brada Foundation Centre for Democracy, December 2020, available at: <http://www.centaronline.org/userfiles/files/publikacije/fcd-2020-crveni-alarm-za-radna-prava.pdf>, last accessed: 6 January 2021



compulsory part of education and training. They are also not prescribed by law or regulations as a condition for engaging in a particular occupation, i.e., profession, but they are important for skills development and further employment. There is no adequate contractual form to regulate the relationship between these companies and young people in such programs.²⁴ The existing solutions in the Labor Law that regulate contracts on vocational training and advanced training do not cover all forms of internships and demotivate the organization of such programs²⁵ for the unemployed.²⁶

1.2.4 Youth and Entrepreneurship

The number of young entrepreneurs is about 28,000²⁷. Subventions are received by around 900 young people a year, 40% of whom are women.²⁸

1.3 Youth Migration

In recent decades, Serbia has been seriously addressing the problem of the outflow of young, educated persons. Although the exact number cannot be determined reliably, data from the European Statistical Office show that more than 4,000 people leave Serbia every month, and 51,000 annually.²⁹ The most common reason quoted by young persons is unemployment.³⁰ Other reasons include economic problems, lack of security, the socio-political situation and problems in the corrupt operation of local governments³¹. In addition to the push factors offered for going abroad including corruption, nepotism, and the hiring of members of the ruling party, there are factors that pull including the opportunity to learn about other cultures, develop professionally, learn foreign languages, or reunite with their parents or other family members who already live abroad. Germany is the first choice for 37.5% of young people, most of whom are students.³²

²⁴ Crveni alarm za radna prava, Fondacija Centar za demokratiju, Sarita Bradaš. The red alarm for labour rights, Foundation Centre for Democracy, December 2020, available at: <http://www.centaronline.org/userfiles/files/publikacije/fcd-2020-crveni-alarm-za-radna-prava.pdf>, last accessed: 6 January 2021, page 91

²⁵ During the summer of 2020, the Decree on the Youth Employment Incentive Program "My First Salary" was adopted. The Decree is illegal in several respects, due to its legal nature and the provisions it contains. It creates a new type of employment, contrary to the Labour Law. This is an employment incentive program, but, according to the provisions of the Labour Law, this employment is not considered an employment relationship. First of all, introducing a new measure must be harmonized with the existing legal provisions. Therefore, it is not legal to introduce a new modality of employment by a Decree or any other bylaw, even though this is to improve persons' employability. Such legal regulation is also unconstitutional because a sub-legal act takes over the legislator's powers.

²⁶ Regional Report on Boosting Youth Employability, Belgrade Open School, available at: <http://www.bos.rs/en/quality-internships/868/2018/09/14/boosting-youth-employability-in-the-western-balkans---regional-report-2018.html> Accessed 4th January 2021, page 12

²⁷ A revision of the National Youth Strategy is planned, and one of the priorities in the work will be aimed at improving youth entrepreneurship and simplifying the business operations of young entrepreneurs, from the [Keynote address of Serbian Prime Minister Designate Ana Brnabic](#) (October 28, 2020) Accessed on 6th January 2021

²⁸ Youth and entrepreneurship, National Youth Council of Serbia, available at: <https://koms.rs/2020/12/22/istrazivanje-mladi-i-preduzetnistvo/> last accessed: January 6, 2021, page 100

²⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Enlargement_countries_statistics_on_migration,_residence_permits,_citizenship_and_asylum Accessed: 10 Jan. 21 and http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/bgcentar/eng-lat/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/zero_report_on_youth_rights-2019-eng-04-02-comp_007.pdf

³⁰ Zero Youth Rights Report 2019: available at: <http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/bgcentar/eng-lat/zero-report-on-youth-rights-in-serbia-2019-2/> page 22, Accessed on 6th of January

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*



According to the results of the Survey on the Position and Needs of Youth in Serbia, which was implemented by The Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSiD) in 2019, 11% of young people plan to move out, i.e., to leave the economy permanently (7%), while a larger number of them plan to leave the economy for a certain period (20%), and 51% do not plan to leave the economy at all.³³ The survey on student migration³⁴ shows that a total of 3,489 students, or a third of those surveyed, plan on going abroad after graduation. Over 90% of the students surveyed stated that they had the full support of their parents for leaving. The majority of students (27.3%) quoted the improbability of finding a job in their profession in Serbia as the main reason for going abroad. Other reasons are low paying jobs in their profession (21.3%)³⁵ and the low living standard (20.1%)³⁶.

Other reports confirm the same challenges with demographic issues in Serbia, arguing that youth emigration could cost Serbia up to EUR1.2 billion per year and 4 out of 5 young Serbs think about emigrating.³⁷ The same report finds that in Serbia, there is an aging population and a decreasing population trend jointly influenced by a negative natural increase and an intensified emigration flow. Availability of data about external migration is scarce so there are no precise records on migration from Serbia, and thus the age and education of migrants cannot be determined.³⁸ The EC report for 2020 notes that there is an increasing number of young and skilled people that are emigrating.³⁹

CHAPTER 2: NATIONAL YOUTH LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

³³Osnovni pokazatelji položaja mladih u Srbiji – komparativna analiza sa drugim evropskim zemljama i trendovima, Basic indicators of the position of young people in Serbia, MYoS, Snezana Klasnja, November 2020, page 5 [https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Analiza%20osnovnih%20pokazatelja%20polozaja%20mladih,%20MOS%20.%20Klasnja%20novembar%202020.%20godine%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Analiza%20osnovnih%20pokazatelja%20polozaja%20mladih,%20MOS%20.%20Klasnja%20novembar%202020.%20godine%20(2).pdf) Accessed 6th January 2021

³⁴The survey was conducted by the cabinet of the minister without the portfolio in charge of demography and population policy in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade, 2018, (Migracije studenata) available at: <https://www.mdpp.gov.rs/doc/Migracije-studenata.pdf>. Accessed 15 December 2020 page 42

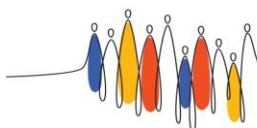
³⁵Ibid, p.51

³⁶In order to solve this issue, The Coordination Body for Monitoring Economic Migration Flows in Serbia was established by the Government of Serbia's decision from January 31, 2019. According to the decision, the Coordination Body directs the work of state administration bodies to review the situation in the field of economic migration and find solutions to improve this area, intending to prevent the further departure of citizens of Serbia and encourage the return of experts from the diaspora. The Coordination Body has launched an initiative to adopt the Strategy on Economic Migration of Serbia for 2021–2027. The Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran, and Social Affairs coordinates the preparation and the procedure for adoption of the Strategy, the development itself, and the preparation of the ex-ante analysis. The Strategy was adopted on February 27, 2020.³⁶

³⁷“Cost of Youth Emigration”, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, <https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Cost-of-youth-emigration-Serbia.pdf> Accessed 6th January 2021

³⁸ibid. p. 8

³⁹European Commission Annual Report Serbia, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf Accessed 4th January 2021 p.104



This chapter analyzes the national youth policy, and its legal and institutional framework in Serbia. In addition to outlining the relevant strategic documents, action plans, laws, and bylaws, a critical assessment identifies achievements, challenges, and remaining gaps.

2.1 The Constitution

There is no specific definition about youth in the Constitution and no other particular reference to youth. Article 60 of the Constitution⁴⁰ in regard to right to work only stipulates: “Women, youth and the disabled are provided with special protection at work and special working conditions, in accordance with the law.”⁴¹

2.2 Law on Youth

The Law on Youth (LoY) was formulated through a broad participatory process and adopted by the National Assembly on the 5th of July 2011. The scope and purpose of the LoY is defined in Article 1, stating that: “this Law regulates measures and activities undertaken by Serbia, autonomous provinces and local self-governments aimed at improving the social status and position of youth and at creating conditions for addressing young people’s needs and interests in all the areas of interest for young people.”⁴² The purpose of the Law is to create conditions for supporting young people in NGOs, social activism, development and fulfilment of their potential for their own and for the benefit of the society.” At the end of 2018, KOMS, NAPOR and NALYO reached an agreement on common and priority goals of amending the Law on Youth and the Law on Volunteering to improve the institutional framework and create preconditions for quality systemic care for young people. It was agreed that this should be prioritized since such a law is not sufficiently able to provide preconditions for a better position of young people, their organization and their development in Serbia. KOMS, NAPOR and NALYO organized several focus groups with civil society representatives regarding the effects of the LoY. In October 2020 the Serbian Premier announced that in the following period, there was a plan to analyze the current implementation of the LoY and prepare amendments to the LoY.⁴³

2.3 National Strategy on Youth

The first National Youth Strategy (NYS) was adopted in May 2008 for the period 2008-2014 and the Action Plan (AP)⁴⁴ for its implementation in January 2009 for the period 2009-2014. Since the adoption of the LoY, it is prescribed that NYS should be adopted for the period of 10 years by the government at the proposal of the MoYS. Therefore, the second strategy development

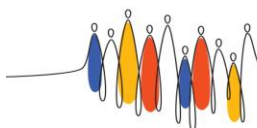
⁴⁰ Note: “youth” is not a constitutional category; however, the representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports think it would be good if it were, as children are a constitutional category in Serbia

⁴¹ The Constitution of the Rep of Serbia, Available at: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/ustav_republike_srbije.html Accessed 10 December 2020

⁴² *The RS Official Gazette*, No. 50/11.

⁴³ *Keynote address of Serbian Prime Minister Designate Ana Brnabic* (October 28, 2020) Accessed: 6th January 2021

⁴⁴ National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, "Official Gazette of R. Serbia", No. 22/2015 (Nacionalna strategija za mlade, "Službeni glasnik RS", br. 22/2015). Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Nacionalna%20strategija%20za%20mlade%20-%20ENG.pdf>, p4 Accessed 10 December 2020



process was initiated in 2014 upon the adoption of the Decision⁴⁵ on Establishing a Working Group for the Preparation of the National Youth Strategy for the Period 2015-2025⁴⁶ and an AP for its implementation. After a wide consultative process, the NYS 2015-2025 was adopted in February 2015.

The NYS 2015-2025 is based on the government's strategic orientation to work with and for young people, and, starting from the goal set in the LoY, it seeks to ensure conditions for enabling young people to reach their full potential, participate actively in society, while contributing not only to their own development but also to the development of society.⁴⁷ The NYS strategic goals lack specific quantitative targets. The basis for monitoring the implementation of activities and achieving the planned results is a set of indicators given in the AP. Indicators are determined at the level of results of each specific goal (descriptive indicators), as well as on the level of results of each individual activity (qualitative and quantitative indicators).

A revision of the NYS is also planned, and one of the priorities in the work will aim to improve youth entrepreneurship and simplifying the business operations of young entrepreneurs.⁴⁸ The annual monitoring of the implementation of the NYS was held and general recommendations for the MYoS were addressed.⁴⁹ Besides, monitoring points out the lower capacity of the MoYS to implement complex NYS AP due to a lack of human resources employed in the youth sector. For example, the report states that between 2015 and 2017, five employees of the youth sector in MoYS had to evaluate the implementation of 330 projects. In 2020 the MYoS has 9 employees but still experienced limited capacities.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Law on Youth, "Official Gazette of R. Serbia", No. 50/2011 from 8.7.2011 (Zakon o mladima "Službeni glasnik RS", broj 50/2011). Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/Dokumenta/Omladina/zakoni-i-strateska-dokumenta/The%20Law%20on%20Youth.pdf>, Article 10.

⁴⁶ The responsibilities of the Working Group for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy are related to the monitoring and implementation of NYS and are limited to the duration of the NYS (2015-2020). This group is required to report to the Youth Council on the implementation of the NYS. The inter-ministerial Working Group for the Monitoring and Implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2015-2025. The task of this body is to co-ordinate the development of the NYS, propose measures in order to harmonize activities during the implementation of the strategy, monitor its implementation, as well as to participate in evaluation of the implementation and prepare annual reports for the government about that process.

⁴⁷ The vision of National Youth Strategy⁴⁷ is: "Young people are active and equal participants in all spheres of social life, they fully develop their potential and contribute to personal and social development and well-being. Young people are supported by society, they create better living conditions and conditions for the development of potentials and actively contribute to the overall development of society."

⁴⁸ Keynote address of Serbian Prime Minister Designate Ana Brnabic (October 28, 2020) Accessed: 6th of January 11, 2021

⁴⁹ For more information regarding monitoring of the NYS please check: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Godisnja%20evaluacija%20sprvodjenja%20%20NSM%202019.pdf> Accessed 6th January 2020

⁵⁰ The Institute of Economic Sciences has been hired by the MYoS to conduct research activities and compile an appropriate Report on the monitoring and the implementation of the NYS for 2019.



2.4 National Action Plan on Youth

The Action Plan (AP) for the implementation of the NYC for the period 2018-2020⁵¹ was adopted in December 2018⁵². It specifies the indicators for monitoring the degree of implementation of the activity: the period of implementation (the time required to achieve the planned goals, results and activities), the level of implementation (national, provincial, local), accountable entities and participants in the implementation process and it defines the total funds for the implementation. Since the AP for NYS was adopted for the period 2018-2020 there are no planned revisions foreseen in the coming period. Important coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the NYS and AP is the Youth Council (YC)⁵³ that consists of representatives of the public administration involved in matters of interest to youth, representatives of the province of Vojvodina administrative body in charge of youth issues, representatives of youth organizations and associations, representatives of youth offices, a joint representative of the national minority councils, and respected experts.⁵⁴ The obligation of all ministries involved in the work of the YC is to prepare reports on the results achieved in working with youth and in the implementation of the NYS in preparation for each meeting (twice per year). The YC was not held in 2020 due to the state of emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.5 Institutions dealing with Youth

National level: The Ministry of Youth and Sports MoYS is in charge of the coordination, development, improvement and implementation of youth policy, including the NYS, as well as other national plans and programs for youth. The MoYS directly oversees the activities conducted at the national level, for the implementation of which it is directly responsible, while it only monitors the activities implemented at the local level and those directly implemented by other line ministries, institutions and organizations.⁵⁵ The monitoring is conducted indirectly, through the reports and these reports are used by the MoYS in preparation of the Annual Progress Report. The Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the NYC is submitted by the MoYS to the Government.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Action plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2018-2020, "Official Gazette of R. Serbia", No. 099/2018 (Akcioni plan za sprovođenje Nacionalne strategije za mlade za period od 2018. do 2020. godine, „Službeni glasnik RS”, br. 99/2018). Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Action%20plan%20for%20the%20implementation%20of%20the%20National%20Youth%20Strategy%202018-2020.pdf>

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Please note the fact that National Youth Council of Serbia (Umbrella Youth Organization) and Youth Council of the Government of Serbia, are not the same bodies and do not have the same responsibilities. The establishment of the Youth Council is envisaged by the LoY, as an advisory body initiating and harmonizing activities related to the development and implementation of Youth Policy and proposing measures for its improvement.

⁵⁴ Decision on Establishment of the Youth Council, Government of R. Serbia, "Official Gazette of the RS", No 8/14, (Odluka o obrazovanju Saveta, "Službeni glasnik RS", br.8/2014) Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/Dokumenta/Omladina/savet-za-mlade/ODLUKA%20o%20obrazovanju%20Saveta.pdf> Accessed on 7th of January 2021

⁵⁵ According to the *Unique records of the organizations*, managed by the MoYS⁵⁵ there are 1,457 youth organizations, organizations for youth and associations/unions in Serbia, dealing with various topics related to youth.

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The Youth Council mandate of the YC is to encourage and co-ordinate the activities related to the development, realization and implementation of youth policy to propose measures to improve youth policy and propose measures for the harmonization of different activities of ministries and other responsible bodies.⁵⁷ s. The YC has a specific role in cross-sectoral co-ordination and the harmonization of activities at the national level.

At the level of **Autonomous Province Vojvodina** (APV), the authority responsible is the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth (PSSY). The PSSY monitors and supports the work of youth associations and associations dealing with youth issues, as well as federations and local youth offices; establish and coordinate the work of the Youth Council of the AP Vojvodina, in accordance with the law; prepare programs and propose measures for improvement of the status of young people in conformity with the Youth Policy Action Plan⁵⁸; support projects in the areas of interest to youth; present awards to talented and successful children and adolescents in the AP Vojvodina and continually support their development.⁵⁹

2.6 Other sectors impacting youth

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and the **Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy** are in charge of child day care and pre-school services and child protection, family care and welfare services respectively. In the area of education and training, the education strategy and its action plan are being implemented as well as the general and VET secondary education reform, albeit with delays, particularly in higher education.⁶⁰

The Ministry of Justice is involved in juvenile delinquency.

The Ministry of Health is in charge of youth health.

The Ombudsperson is in charge of the protection of national minority rights, children's rights, the rights of disabled persons, the rights of people deprived of liberty, and gender rights. Following that, the Ombudsperson could provide recommendations regarding children.

Commissioner for the Equality Protection is in charge of carrying out the procedure based on complaints in cases of discrimination against persons or groups of persons connected by the

⁵⁷ In accordance with the LoY, in January 2014, the Youth Council (YC) was established. It has 24 members and one-third are representatives of young people. Members are representatives of the MoYS, nine⁵⁷ other ministries dealing with youth, Provincial Secretariat for Sport and Youth, youth associations, local youth offices, representatives of national minorities and relevant experts in the youth field. The YC is chaired by Minister of Youth and Sports. Youth members, who are representatives of youth organizations, are chosen through an open call by the MoYS.

⁵⁸ The current Youth Policy Action Plan in Autonomous Province of Vojvodina is adopted for the period 2015-2020, available at: <https://www.sio.vojvodina.gov.rs/images/Dokumenta/Omladina/AkcioniPlan/AKCIONI%20PLAN%20za%20mlade%202015-2020.pdf>

Accessed on 6th of January 2021

⁵⁹ Taken from the PSSY's web page: <https://www.sio.vojvodina.gov.rs/index.php/en/english/provincial-secretariat-for-sports-and-youth>, Assessed on October 9th 2020

⁶⁰ European Commission Annual Report Serbia, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf Accessed 4th January 2021 p.102



same personal characteristic. Following that, the Commissioner could provide recommendations regarding discrimination on youth regarding their ages.

The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU) has as its primary mandate to strengthen the Government's capacities to develop evidence-based social inclusion policies, as well as to coordinate and monitor their implementation in line with the international standards and best practices in Europe. It is important as a means to follow the position of vulnerable youth (Roma youth and youth from low-income families).

The National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) is the basic instrument for implementing an active employment policy that defines the programs and measures that will be implemented during the year⁶¹. It is implemented by the National Employment Service (NES). The strategic framework for the preparation of the NEAP is the National Employment Strategy 2011-2020,⁶² coordinated by the Ministry for Labour, Employment, Veteran, and Social Affairs. Young people aged 15 to 24 are recognized as one of the particularly vulnerable groups in the labor market in Serbia. They are defined as a category of unemployed persons who need additional support in the process of integration or reintegration into the labor market. Therefore, the Youth Services Package was first planned by the National Employment Action Plan in 2013 and since then was included in all of the following NEAPs.⁶³

In the National Employment Action Plan for 2020⁶⁴ a special section is dedicated to hard-to-employ persons, including young people. This document contains a unique package of services for young people. In the analysis of the state of young people in the labor market, a comparative overview of the state of young people (aged 15–29) in the labor market from December 31, 2017, to September 30, 2019, is given. Thus, according to the National Employment Service records, on September 30, 2109, there were 46.6% of unemployed young people who have been looking for a job for more than 12 months, and in 2017, there were 51.6% of them.⁶⁵

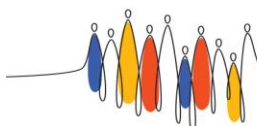
⁶¹ Following the Law on Employment and Unemployment Insurance ("The Official Gazette of RS," No. 36/09, 30/10, 88/10, 38/15, 113/17), hard-to-employ persons are unemployed persons who have greater difficulty in finding a job due to the condition of their health, insufficient or inadequate education, socio-demographic characteristics, a regional or professional mismatch between supply and demand in the labor market, or other objective circumstances.

⁶² RS Official Gazette", No. 37/2011

⁶³ In 2019, the NES financed measures that covered 6,180 young people, which is 5.6% of young people on the unemployment register. The largest number of unemployed covered by these measures (69%) are involved in supply-side labor interventions – additional education and training programs. However, data on high youth unemployment and underemployment indicate that the critical problem is on the labor demand side and limited employment opportunities. The NES Work Program and NEAP for 2019 do not provide data or analyses that would explain the choice of these measures. According to the evaluation findings, the professional practice in which the largest number of young people is included has no positive effects. After participating in the program, the participants are not in a more favorable position in the labor market both in terms of labor market outcomes and subjective well-being.

⁶⁴ Official Gazette of RS," No. 94/19,

⁶⁵ Crveni alarm za radna prava, Fondacija Centar za demokratiju, Sarita Bradaš. The red alarm for labour rights, Foundation Centre for Democracy, December 2020, available at: <http://www.centaronline.org/userfiles/files/publikacije/fcd-2020-crveni-alarm-za-radna-prava.pdf>, last accessed: 6 January 2021, page 102



2.7 Critical assessment of legal and policy framework on youth

National youth policy in Serbia is often recognized as an example of good practice at the EU level in terms of existing legislation, support structures on the national and local levels, and the systems developed. The collaborative, consultative and inclusive process applied by the Serbian authorities in the late 2000s is considered by the Council of Europe (CoE) to have been an exemplary case of participatory youth policy making, exercising the principle of co-management.⁶⁶ But despite all the mechanisms stated above, the cross-sectoral co-operation exists in Serbian youth policy only to a small degree, as it relies heavily on the relatively modest resources of the MoYS and their proactivity, while other ministries and governmental bodies do not contribute to cross-sectorial cooperation as much. In managing youth policy decision making and implementation, MoYS needs more robust support from all governmental bodies⁶⁷. All interviewees agree that the revision of the LoY is highly necessary. Currently, alliances (NAPOR, KOMS and NALYO) are leading the process of negotiation with the MoYS that is aimed at amending the LoY. The main weakness of the LoY pointed out by interviewees is that the LoY is not binding and is only declaratively supporting the creation of a responsible youth care system. There are no defined punitive measures for non-compliance with the LoY.

The main challenge of the Serbian national youth policy is the limited adequate mechanism of monitoring and evaluation of youth policy development and implementation. Numerous indicators in the AP are merely quantitative, referring only to the number of activities and participations, thus lacking performance-based indicators. As a result, the monitoring and improvement of the unfolding youth policy is hindered. The issue of monitoring raises the question of the effectiveness and efficiency of the Working group for Monitoring and Implementation of the NYS. The meetings of this group were dedicated to exchange of the information among members of what has been done in relation to young people and/or to the implementation of NYS. So far, the reports prepared for the YC were descriptive compilation of all implemented activities, often without clear links to the NYS specific goals and measures.

Inter-ministerial cooperation and coordination in implementation of the NYS is limited, although the LoY and the NYS define modes of cooperation between governmental and non-governmental structures. Various ministries that are expected to deliver elements of the NYS (e.g., education, health or employment) are under no strict obligation to include youth in consultative processes or to allocate funds to ensure the implementation of the activities listed in strategic documents. This also includes the lack of reporting on the activities carried out in connection with the NYS, which greatly influences the monitoring of the NYS fulfillment. The EC report also notes in 2020 that the number of youth policy coordination mechanisms at the local level has

⁶⁶ Conclusions of the Council of Europe International Review Team: Youth policy in Serbia, Potočnik D, Williamson H, Council of Europe, 2015. Available at: https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/YP_Serbia.pdf Accessed 10 January 2021

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*



increased, but they should be further strengthened, and expired youth action plans should be renewed.⁶⁸

The AP does not foresee monitoring of ongoing activities implemented by other ministries nor the system of responsibilities, so the MoYS is not always acquainted with the implementation of activities in other sectors. Also, this often leads to non-realization of activities from the AP that is the responsibility of other sectors. Other ministries report ex post – only after the activities are implemented and they are linked to the NYS in the report that other ministries send to MoYS.

The aims and goals provided in these documents invariably fall within the purview of several ministries beyond the MoYS, primarily of those responsible for education and employment. Effective, efficient and reliable cross-sectoral co-ordination is the precondition for successful implementation of the NYS and its Action Plan⁶⁹.

⁶⁸ European Commission Annual Report Serbia, 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf
Accessed 4th January 2021 p.104

⁶⁹ Contribution of non-programme economies to EU Youth Wiki chapter I - Serbia: Youth Policy Governance, Perovic B, Council of Europe, 2017. Available at: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262379/YOUTH+WIKI+SERBIA.pdf/d687393b-8b29-472e-9848-a81b199a592a>, accessed on June 9th 2019



CHAPTER 3: YOUTH FUNDING FRAMEWORK: NATIONAL YOUTH PROGRAMS AND INSTRUMENTS

The chapter analyzes youth policy funding and presents some key interventions and government programs in the area of youth, including a critical assessment of the above.

3.1 Youth policy funding

Funds for youth policy are allocated from the budget of Serbia (through MoYS and line ministries) and provincial and local level governments. According to the Law on Youth (Article 12): “The funds for National Youth Strategy implementation shall be provided in the budget of Serbia, as well as the budget of the autonomous province and local self-government unit, and from other sources, in accordance with the Law.” Therefore, there is more than one specific budget line within the Law on the Budget of Serbia dedicated to the implementation of the NYS. Due to the lack of a comprehensive system for data gathering, there is no precise information on the total budget that supports implementation of youth policy in Serbia.

Based on the LoY and the Rulebook on Financing and Co-financing of Programs and Projects of Public Interest in the Youth Sector, the MoYS finances programs and projects of public interest in the youth sector directed to achieving goals of the NYS. Following the provisions of the LoY, Serbia's budget provides funds for financing programs and projects of public interest.⁷⁰ Financing and co-financing programs and projects of public interest in the areas of the youth sector is realized through financing or co-financing of programs and projects implemented by the holders of programs and projects, as follows: 1. youth associations and associations for youth; 2. local self-government; and 3. institutions, scientific research institutes and other legal entities based in Serbia.

The first funds for youth were allocated by the MoYS through a public annual call in September 2007, with the priority programs for strengthening youth organizations and organizations dealing with youth. Since the adoption of the first NYS (2008-2014), regular annual calls have been used as an instrument for its implementation. Since its establishment in 2007 until June of 2019, through donations to non-governmental organizations, the MoYS has allocated more than EUR 16,140,000.00 (RSD 1,900,000,000) for the realization of 1,427 projects⁷¹.

⁷⁰ Rulebook on Financing and Co-financing of Programs and Projects of Public Interest in the Areas of the Youth Sector Official Gazette of the RS," No. 30/18.

⁷¹ Ministry of Youth and Sports Information Bulletin, Belgrade updated on May 31 2019. Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/informator-ogradu>, Accessed on June 10 2019, p21



As for 2020, MoYS public competitions for programs and projects of public interest in the youth sector were announced in February 2020 through a public tender as follows⁷²:

- Public tender for financing and co-financing programs and projects for the implementation of the objectives of the NYS and the "Youth are the Law" program (NYS competition). Total budget: RSD 77,998,935.87 (EUR 658,218.868)
- Public competition for stimulating various forms of employment, self-employment and youth entrepreneurship (employment competition). Total budget: RSD 74,996,183.67 (EUR 632,879.1870)
- Public competition for the development and implementation of youth policy. Total budget: RSD 45,705,981.10 (EUR 385,704.481)
Public competition for support to local self-government units in implementing youth policy at the local level. Total budget: RSD 18,000,000.00 (EUR 151,898.734)

The results for all four public competitions were announced in July 2020. Following the results of KOMS,⁷³ the National Coalition for Decentralization (NKD) published an announcement related to competition and transparency.⁷⁴

In both competitions the MYoS opened for NGOs (NYS competition and employment competition), more than half of the projects were awarded to NGOs in Belgrade. In the case of the competition for the implementation of NYS, as many as 21 out of 35 (60%) projects were awarded to associations in Belgrade. When we look at the division by districts in Serbia, as many as 20 districts did not receive a single project in the competition. In terms of finance and allocated money for the public tender, NGOs from Belgrade deployed 55.26 million of the total 78 million dinars awarded (71%). In the second example, in the competition for employment, associations from Belgrade won 15 out of 26 projects (57.79%), the region of Kosovo and Metohija did not win a single project, and if we look at the districts, as many as 21 districts did not receive a project. In terms of distributed money, out of a total of 75 million dinars, 45.28 million dinars (61%) were awarded to associations from Belgrade through a competition.⁷⁵

⁷² Ministarstvo omladine i sporta, <https://www.mos.gov.rs/vest/rezultati-javnogkonkursa-za-razvoj-i-sprovođenje-omladinske-politike4>, <https://www.mos.gov.rs/vest/rezultati-javnog-konkursa-za-stimulisanje-razlicitih-oblika-zaposljavanjasamozaposljavanja-i-preduzetnistva-mladih4>, <https://www.mos.gov.rs/vest/rezultati-javnog-konkursa-za-finansiranje-i-sufinansiranje-programa-i-projekata-zasprovođenje-ciljevanacionalne-strategije-za-mlade-i-programa-mladi-su-zakon4>, <https://www.mos.gov.rs/vest/rezultati-javnog-konkursa-za-podrsku-jedinicamalokalne-samouprave-u-sprovođenju-omladinske-politike-na-lokalnom-nivou> accessed on 10th of January 2021

⁷³ Alternative report about the position and needs of the youth in Republic of Serbia, 2020, available: <https://koms.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Alternativni-izves%CC%8Ctaj-o-poloz%CC%8Caju-i-potrebama-mladih-u-RS-2020.pdf> page: 37 Accessed on 6th January 2021

⁷⁴ For more information regarding statement please check: <https://nkd.rs/2020/07/27/ministarstvo-omladine-i-sporta-ponovo-diskriminise-zahtevamo-nova-konkursna-pravila-i-kriterijume/> accessed: 6th January 7, 2021

⁷⁵ Alternative Report on the Position and Needs of Youth in the Republic of Serbia – 2019, National Youth Council (KOMS). <https://koms.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Alternativni-izves%CC%8Ctaj-o-poloz%CC%8Caju-i-potrebama-mladih-u-RS-2020.pdf> page 52 accessed 10 January 2020



When referring to the Budget of Serbia, in 2020 the percentage of the budget allocated for youth through the MoYS is 0.09% of the annual public budget⁷⁶. However, there is space for increasing this amount on an annual basis if a specific activity is recognized as a priority, as is the case with OPENS – European Youth Capital 2019,⁷⁷ which was recognized as a project of national importance and supported by the government through the budget of the Ministry of Culture.

The total funds in the budget of the Autonomy Po Vojvodina (APV) for youth policy in 2020 amount to RSD 27,000,000 (EUR 227,884.101) which is 6% of the total funds allocated for the Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth.

The only available research on the percentage of funding for budget allocations for young people at the local level is from 2017. This research shows that the rate of planned investment in the implementation of youth policy within the budget program 1301 within the local government budget amounts to 3.26% if we look only at municipalities that invest in youth policies, which is only 0.14% of the total municipal budget. The funds from this program are usually directed to sports organizations and various related activities (over 95%), which concludes that the strategic commitment is financing sports activities under the slogan of investing in young people.⁷⁸

Table 2: Overview of budget reallocations for 2019 – national, regional and local level

Budget of Serbia		Budget of the Autonomous province Vojvodina		Local self-government units
The Ministry of Youth and Sports	EUR 9,000,056.58 (RSD 1,065,721,000)	The Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth	EUR 202,680.96 (RSD 24,000,000)	No access to detailed information
The Ministry of Culture and Information	EUR 177,345.84 (RSD 21,000,000)	Additional amount allocated for Novi Sad – European Youth Capital 2019	EUR 192,031.59 (RSD 22,600,000)	
The Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications	EUR 869,839.13 (RSD 103,000,000)			
The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management	EUR 1,689,008.02 (RSD 200,000,000)			
The Ministry of Economy	EUR 2,444,237.33 (RSD 289,428,742)			
The Office for Human and Minority Rights	EUR 16,890.08 (RSD 2,000,000)			
The Ministry of Environmental Protection within the Green Fund of Serbia	EUR 71,782.84 (RSD 8,500,000)			

⁷⁶ Alternative Report on the Position and Needs of Youth in the Republic of Serbia – 2019, National Youth Council (KOMs). Available at: <http://koms.rs/istrazivanje/alternativni-izvestaj-o-polozaju-potrebama-mladih-u-republici-srbiji-2019/>, p37

⁷⁷ OPENS 2019 – Novi Sad European Youth Capital. Available at: <https://opens2019.rs/en/opens-2019/>

⁷⁸ Koliko lokalne samouprave ulažu u omladinsku politiku (How much do local governments invest in youth policy?), Divac Foundation 2017, available in Serbian: <https://www.divac.com/upload/document/ybh4wbt - koliko ls ulazu u provedjenje omladinsk.pdf> accessed: 6th January, 2021 p 10



<p>** Within the Financial Plan of the National Employment Service it is estimated that in 2018 funds related to youth were EUR 22,231,568.06 (RSD 2,632,500,000)</p>		
<p>*** The projected budget of the Ministry of Youth and Sports for 2019 is EUR 10,144,851.32 (RSD 1,194,049,000). Compared with the total MoYS budget for 2019, 22.06% is allocated for the Youth Sector, while 77.94% is allocated to the Sports Sector.⁷⁹</p>		

3.2 Youth projects funding

Despite data on budget allocations from ministries, information on specific programs/instruments for young people remains very limited as youth are integrated into the support given to all target groups.

The "European Union Support to Active Youth Inclusion" project (IPA 2014), the total value of which is EUR 4.7 million, financed by the EU and co-funded by the Government of Serbia, aims to ensure greater social inclusion of the youth population in Serbia by increasing employment, youth activity, work experience and entrepreneurship practice among the youth population. Through the project, the EU and the Government of Serbia has granted 24 grants, which have been implemented in more than 35 cities and municipalities in Serbia by the end of 2021.⁸⁰ The project is managed by the Ministry of Finance, through the Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programs (CFCU), while the project beneficiary institutions are the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The implementation period is still ongoing.

Mini grants under the “Opens on the road” program

Due to the pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus, the realization of the planned “OPENS ON THE ROAD” program was disabled and was redirected at helping civil society organizations to overcome the crisis caused by the pandemic, providing them with funds for digital work. The main aim of the program is to support organizations to overcome the crisis period and organize online activities for young people. The total amount with the award of mini grants is RSD

⁷⁹ Infomator o radu MYoS: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/informator-o-radu?lang=lat> Accessed 6th June 2019

⁸⁰ The projects implemented by the national and provincial social welfare institutions, municipalities and cities, citizens associations, foundations and educational institutions will increase the scope and quality of services at the local level in education and employment, innovative practice, active inclusion mechanisms and models and thereby strengthen the social inclusion of youth.



850,000.00 (EUR 7,172.95). The minimum amount of an individual grant is RSD 25,000.00, (EUR 210) and the maximum amount is RSD 85,000.00 (EUR 717.29).⁸¹

3.3 Key youth programs and instruments

The **Youth Incentive Program My First Salary** from 2020 gives a chance to young people who have graduated from university or high school. In order to encourage youth employment, the Government of Serbia passed a decree to open this program. The decree on Youth Incentive My First Salary came into force on August 15, 2020. Young people who want to participate in the program should be younger than 30, have a university or high school degree, and no work experience. Also, all graduates should be registered with the National Employment Service. The program will be held by the NES. The first monitoring will be done six months after its implementation.⁸²

3.4 Critical assessment

The main strength of the funding framework for the NYS is that the budget for its implementation is regulated by the LoY, and a major portion of its funds are allocated annually through the budget of Serbia (Law on the Budget of Serbia). This ensures continuity in the achievement of the overall strategic goals of the NYS. Moreover, as an integral part of the AP, the budget provides a clear, concise and coherent financial framework for achieving the goals of the NYS. The weakness of the existing funding framework is embedded in the methodology for calculating the budget. Considering the MoYS budget is approved annually⁸³ and the budget of the AP for the period of three years, there was a problem of non-compliance of these two budgets in the last year of the AP implementation.⁸⁴ Reports on realized activities that are coming from local governments do not always contain information on the spent funds, which greatly complicates the monitoring of the realization as well as the assessment of the fulfilment of NYS goals. Taking this into account, the share of young people in local government budgets is minimal. It represents insufficient funds, especially for implementing any changes at the local level within the youth group.

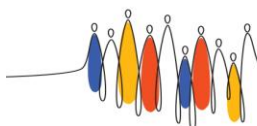
At the national level, the situation is the opposite. Most of the ministries and public agencies involved in the implementation of the NYS do keep track of spent funds but do not report on concrete activities/goals of the AP, which influences the monitoring of the NYS goals fulfilment.

⁸¹ Therefore, this year the program “OPENS on the road,” in a partnership with the National Association of Practitioners of Youth Work (NAPOR) and the Umbrella Organization of Youth of Serbia (KOMS), will be carried out through the award of mini-grants aimed at organizations of and for young people on the territory of Serbia

⁸² For more information, please check: <https://mojapravlata.gov.rs/>

⁸³ For example, the MoYS’s budget plan for 2018 was drafted before the Action Plan 2018-2020 was prepared and adopted.

⁸⁴ Evaluation of Implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period 2015-2017, Institute of Economic Sciences in Belgrade, commissioned by the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia, 2017. Available at: [https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/Izvestaj%20o%20Evaluciji%20AP%20NSM%202015-2017%20final\(1\).pdf](https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/Izvestaj%20o%20Evaluciji%20AP%20NSM%202015-2017%20final(1).pdf)



Activities indicated in the AP are also carried out by the youth organizations that apply for donor-funded projects. The MoYS does not have monitoring mechanisms for the funds dedicated to these projects, which greatly influences the evaluation of the results and the total budget for implementation of the NYS.

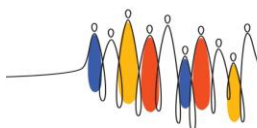
The question of the quality and sustainability of the programs for youth was raised by several actors interviewed; who agree that in order to have a long-term impact on involved youth, the continuity of the programs must be ensured. The programs of the youth organizations in Serbia operate on an ad hoc basis, while trying at the same time to ensure a long-term impact. Provision of funding should follow a more predictable and sustainable route. In attempting to support the greatest number of youth organizations and projects, almost every year the MoYS makes significant budget cuts of the proposed projects themselves. This significantly influences the quality of the implementation.

Lastly, one of the major concerns expressed during the interviews with stakeholders is the politicization of the youth sector and a lack of transparency in funding. Although this argument needs to be further assessed and explored, a recent study on the state of the civil society sector in Serbia confirms that the “civil society space has gradually narrowed, and how undemocratic practices have led to numerous irregularities in public tenders, funding of citizens’ associations, attacks and campaigns against activists, and the formation of an increasing number of governmental non-governmental organizations (GONGOs) and political non-governmental organizations (PONGOs).”⁸⁵ The interviews confirm that this is visible in the youth sector as well in relation to the distribution of funds on a national and local level (a concentration of financial resources in the hands of some youth organizations without accountability for what they do, poor transparency around funding decisions,⁸⁶ and support of GONGO organizations from the budget line 481, dedicated to civil society organization grants).⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Needs Assessment of Civil Society in Serbia in 2019, https://www.gradjanske.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/NAR-ENG_2019_01.10.pdf Accessed January 11, 2021

⁸⁶ Several comments were addressed during interviews with CSO representatives during collection of the field data

⁸⁷ For more information regarding GONGO in Serbia, please check: Assessment of the Needs of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Serbia in 2019 <https://www.gradjanske.org/en/needs-assessment-of-civil-society-organizations-in-serbia-2019/> conducted by Civic Initiatives through The Resource Center for Civil Society Organizations in Serbia and CSO Sector in Serbia in 2019 Assessment of the Situation in the Civil Society Organisation Sector in Serbia, Representative Office of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation SRB, Belgrade https://act.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/CSO-Sector-in-Serbia-2019_Summary_WEB.pdf Accessed on 6th of January 2021



CHAPTER 4: YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN POLICY AND THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

The chapter analyzes the existing mechanisms of youth participation both at the central and local levels and also presents the primary national youth organizations and networks.

4.1 Youth engagement and participation in policy: Key mechanisms and processes

4.1.1 Participation at the central level

Even though active youth participation is highlighted in different national documents, there is no distinctive legislation that would oblige national, regional or local governments to include youth in the policy making. The LoY (Article 16) stipulates: *At the proposal of the Ministry and in accordance with the regulations governing the work of the Government, the Government shall form a Youth Council as an advisory body initiating and harmonizing activities related to the development and implementation of Youth Policy and proposing measures for its improvement... Representatives of young people shall make up no less than one-third of the Youth Council membership.*⁸⁸

KOMS formally launched an initiative to establish a National Working Group for Structured Dialogue within the Youth Council of the Government of Serbia in 2019. Structured dialogue is a continuous process of consultation between young people and decision-makers in order to jointly define and implement policies relevant to youth at all levels, implemented in EU member states. After the consultation process done with youth organizations, several Ministries and the TEMPUS Foundation, the official proposal to form a National Group for Structured Dialogue was presented at the last meeting of the Youth Council (May 2019).⁸⁹

During 2019 and 2020, meetings of the informal working group for structured dialogue and EU dialogue with young people were held, following the methodology implemented in the EU member states in youth policy. Meetings were held to prepare for Serbian delegates' participation in EU youth conferences, support the formal establishment of a Working Group within the Youth Council of the Government of Serbia, and initiate advocacy for representatives' participation in conferences despite its non-member status. Five youth policy actors actively participated in the work of the Group in formulating positions for the conference.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ For more information please refer to Chapter 2 of the Report.

⁸⁹ Izveštaj o radu Krovne organizacije mladih Srbije za period mart 2019. – avgust 2020. godine (Report on the work of the KOMS for the period March 2019 - August 2020) p14, internal document

⁹⁰ Ibid.



In August 2019, KOMS prepared a cross-sectional document to establish a structured dialogue / EU dialogue with young people. This was initiated by the Tempus Foundation for the needs of the YouthWiki chapter on participation. Secretary-General Stefan Đorđević presented the initiative at the XI session of the Council on 21 May 2019. At the XII session of the Youth Council of the Government of Serbia, in November 2019, the KOMS initiative was adopted to establish a National Working Group for the EU at the beginning of 2020, a draft Rulebook on the work of this working group was created. The formal establishment is expected at the next session of the Council, which was not held in 2020 due to the state of emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic.⁹¹

In August 2019, the New Deal process was launched to improve the framework of national youth policy. KOMS formed a Working Group to draft a document for a new vision of youth policy. The involvement of other actors in youth policy, primarily NAPOR and NAYLOY, has also been ensured. KOMS launched the initiative in October: A New Vision for Youth Policy (New Deal) to bring about critical changes in youth policy in the coming period. In October 2019, a draft was made of recommendations, which are the starting point for further consultations and agreements. Recommendations for the implementation of the NYS, recommendations related to the legislative framework, recommendations associated with the cooperation of youth policy actors, and recommendations related to developing positive values among young people have been created.⁹² In 2020 there was no additional information regarding the process of the New Deal.

The first Youth Dialogue with crucial decision makers was held in December 2019. The event was accompanied by additional meetings of the KOMS team with the Cabinet of the Premier in 2020 to agree on concrete activities in the operationalization of youth recommendations in three thematic areas of the dialogue. These areas are employment, housing for young people, and issues of space and youth programs offered at the local level. In 2019, several meetings were held with the Cabinet of Prime Minister Ana Brnabić with the aim of establishing a continuous annual program within which young people and the Prime Minister, as the highest decision-maker, would participate equally. In August 2020, the first activities for the realization of the second Dialogue with the Prime Minister were launched. A public call was announced for the participants in the event, and the Government in the technical mandate and the President were notified about the intention of the Umbrella Organization of Serbian Youth.⁹³ In 2020, KOMS launched an initiative to establish a dialogue between young people and the line minister, which was accepted and first dialog with Minister Vanja Uvodičić was held in December 2020.⁹⁴ Additionally, other CSOs organized a dialogue with other ministers in Government, e.g., the

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Ibid p 15

⁹³ Please see more information regarding Second Dialog with Prime Minister: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTojs6Hh2YI> Accessed on 6 January 2021

⁹⁴ <https://koms.rs/2020/12/15/realizovan-dijalog-mladih-sa-ministrom-omladine-i-sporta/> Accessed on 6 January 2021



Youth Department of the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights organized a dialogue with the Minister for Human and Minority Rights and Dialog, Gordana Čomić.⁹⁵

4.1.2 Participation at the local level

The existence of municipal/town bodies and authorities implies functional structures that unite local youth care, guarantee the implementation of the Local Action Plans (LAP),⁹⁶ and advocate for the most critical issues and problems of young people in decision-making places. Therefore, during the implementation of LAP, it is necessary that the following bodies function: the Local Youth Office (LYO) and the Local Youth Council (LYC) that is in charge of youth. These structures provide management at the municipal or town level. They also mobilize specific potentials in society, especially young members of the community, to create new material and spiritual values, contribute to open and self-sustainable development, and play an active role in developing a democratic society and the rule of law. Their task is to advocate for creating conditions for the affirmation of young people, the incentivizing of young people to stay permanently in the local community, and the building of a constructive partnership relationship with youth organizations, organizations for youth, and institutions of the public administration and local self-government in achieving goals for the well-being of young people.

Apart from the *Youth Council*, the LoY (Article 17) also gives the opportunity for the establishment of *Provincial Youth Councils* and *Local Self-Government Youth Councils*. However, this stays at the level of a recommendation that, especially on the local level, has not been implemented by many local self-governments. Moreover, out of 72⁹⁷ established Local Youth Councils, in 2020 58 remained active.

Local Youth Offices are a local youth service within local self-government units that plays a crucial role in implementing the National Youth Strategy at the local level. From 2009 until today, the MoYS supported the local planning process through direct funding and cooperation with international donors and other partners. The result of their support is reflected in 144 total local action plans adopted thus far for young people, of which about 90 are in force in 2019. There are 137 LYO, and out of 97 are active. In 2020, due to Covid-19, no new LYO has been opened.

Young people can also join informal associations whose goals or areas of achievement are aimed at young people, which operate following the law governing associations' establishment and legal status. 90 youth associations and associations for youth comprise the bulk of youth services at both the local and national level. The central government, province, city, municipality, or local

⁹⁵ <http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/na-amplitudi-dijaloga-mladipitaju-razgovor-sa-ministarkom-gordanom-comic/> Accessed on 6 January 2021

⁹⁶ There are 81 LAPs adopted.

⁹⁷ Data received by the National Association of Youth Offices, based on their internal monitoring data for 2018/19.



communities do not provide such services to young people. Such associations are both a response to and an intervention into young people's growth and current problems and present development opportunities in local communities.

4.2 Evidence-based youth policy

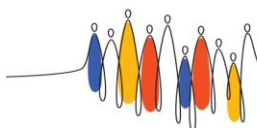
One of the main principles underlined by the first NYS was evidence-based policy making, which means that all strategic concepts, principles, and activities should be based on firm and relevant data and on the results of studies on youth. Also, the current strategy envisages a youth policy that is based on complete, systematic and comprehensive information on the status and trends of young people in all areas of society.

Several external assessments have been conducted: *Evaluation of the National Youth Strategy (2008-2014) and its Action Plan (2009-2014)*⁹⁸, as well as the *Report on the Evaluation of the Level of Implementation of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period 2015-2017*. Moreover, at the request of the MoYS, in 2015 an independent expert team of the Council of Europe conducted a Youth Policy overview in Serbia in order to understand the achievements and give recommendations for improvements to work in the youth field.

However, the current NYS underlined a shortage of comprehensive and continuous research on youth issues. Additionally, most of the available research and population tracking did not recognize the youth cohort in accordance with the Law on Youth (i.e., as persons from 15 to 30 years of age). Therefore, one of the NYS's specific goals is to increase knowledge on young people based on relevant data to be used as a basis for planning in all areas and levels of government.

In line with the LoY (Article 20), funds from the public budget shall be provided for conducting research on the position and needs of young people in Serbia. Thus, since the adoption of the first NYS in 2008, the MoYS has been conducting annual research on the assessment of the current situation and needs of young people in Serbia. Those studies were one of the basic starting points for the development, monitoring, and implementation of all strategic documents in the field of youth policy, as well as for setting priorities for funding programs and projects of public interest in the youth sector.

⁹⁸ Evaluation of the National Youth Strategy (2008) in the Republic of Serbia and Action Plan 2009-2014, Ohana Y, Bulat M, commissioned by the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia and the United Nations Population Fund in Serbia, 2015, Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/Dokumenta/Omladina/publikacije/final%20evaluation.pdf>



4.3 Establishment and functioning of Youth Councils and umbrella organizations

In Serbia there are three main national youth policy actors, often referred to as the “three pillars of youth policy”. Those are: the National Association of Youth Workers – NAPOR (established in 2009), the National Youth Council of Serbia – KOMS (established in 2011), and the National Association of Local Youth Offices (NALYO), established in 2014.

Initiated through a bottom-up approach, the establishment of all three has been supported by the MoYS and each contributes to the participation of young people from its mandate:⁹⁹

- Voluntary and Active Participation of Young People is one of the eight quality standards of the programs implemented by the organizations, embedded into NAPOR’s quality assurance mechanism. It consisted of several elements: the right of young people to choose, participation in decision making and management, equal participation of young people, and informing young people. Moreover, active participation is one of the main topics within education for youth leaders and youth workers based on the NAPOR Curricula.
- The NALYO promotes “Standards for work of Local Youth Offices and competencies of coordinators.”¹⁰⁰ One of the four standards is *high participation of young people in local youth policy*, defined as: “The Local Youth Office provides a supportive environment and gives active support to young people in the realization of youth activities and undertaking initiatives and their involvement in the decision-making and implementation processes that contribute to personal and social development; young people actively participate in all segments of youth policy at the local level (planning and implementation).”¹⁰¹
- KOMS is an advocacy platform representing the interests of young people, provides active participation, and develops systemic solutions in order to improve the situation of young people through the development of strategic partnerships, cross-sectoral and international cooperation, as well as strengthening the capacities of member organizations and other subjects of youth policy.

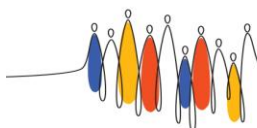
The focus of KOMS is on young people, represented through organizations, political parties and syndicates. It is the highest representational body of youth and represents 108-member organizations. In 2012, KOMS became an associate member of the European Youth Forum (YFJ), gaining full membership on November 18th, 2016.

⁹⁹ Vocabulary of Youth Policy – Definition of concepts and actors of youth policy in the Republic of Serbia and its roles, NAPOR, 2015 (Rečnik omladinske politike – definisanje pojmova i aktera omladinske politike u Republici Srbiji, NAPOR 2015.). Available at: <http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/recnik-omladinske-politike-2015.pdf>, p74-98

¹⁰⁰ Standards for work of Local Youth Offices and competencies of coordinators, Ministry of Youth and Sports and Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, 2012 (Standardi rada kancelarija za mlade i kompetencije koordinatora, Ministarstvo omladine i sporta i Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, 2012. godina). Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/mladisuzakon/attachments/article/386/standardi%20rada%20KZM%20i%20kompetence%20koordinatora.pdf>,

p26

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*



In 2015 KOMS applied to the MoYS for the status of an Umbrella Federation.¹⁰² The KOMS application was rejected as it did not fulfil all the requirements stated in the LoY related to the number of counties¹⁰³ and administrative confirmation of the number of its member organizations¹⁰⁴. In mid-September of 2019, KOMS re-applied for the status. The next formal request for the status of an Umbrella Federation to the MoYS (September 20, 2019) was preceded by months of administrative obstacles, as well as exhaustive work on collecting and consolidating the documentation provided for in Article 14 of the LoY. On July 20th 2020, KOMS was recognized as having the status of the umbrella association by the MoYS, in accordance with the LoY.

Funding of KOMS activities, infrastructure and staff at the secretariat is project based, supplemented by membership fees. It relies heavily on the funds received by the MoYS through a program grant for the *Development and Implementation of Youth Policy* (introduced in 2014). Since these funds are distributed through an open call annually, it covers part of the operational and program costs for less than a year (up to 9 months for implementation). In order to become truly independent, this fund has to be given through an infrastructural grant, guaranteed in the LoY.

4.4 Platforms of youth cooperation at the national level

NALYO is an umbrella association of cities and municipalities that have an established Youth Office and are actively working to develop local youth policy. It was established with the aim of ensuring the quality of youth policy at the local level and embraces Youth Offices. The establishment of the Youth Office is stipulated by the LoY (Article 18).¹⁰⁵ Currently there are 137 Local Youth Offices in Serbia, out of which approximately 80 have Local Action Plans. The number of established Local Youth Councils is 83, and around 50 are operational.¹⁰⁶ This situation also indicates that the Local Youth Office Coordinators are replaced after each local election, thus significant efforts are given by the National Association of Local Youth Offices to provide capacity-building activities for newly-appointed coordinators.

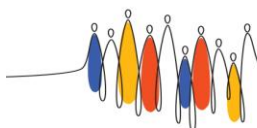
¹⁰² The LoY (Article 14) stipulates requirements for the status of an Umbrella Federation: *...shall have every federation consisting of at least 60 registered associations ... having their head office on the territory of at least two-thirds of counties in the Republic of Serbia and which have carried out youth activities in several local self-government units for at least two years, and which have at least 2,000 individual members, registered once, of whom at least two-thirds are young people.*¹⁰²”

¹⁰³ There are 29 counties in RS and 2/3 is equal 19,33. KOMS applied with 66 organizations coming from 19 counties.

¹⁰⁴ Article 28 of the Law on Associations (Official Gazette, No. 51/09 and 99/11 - other laws) stipulates the obligation to register membership of the organization in the union of organizations in the Register of Associations (kept by the Agency for Business Registers). Out of the 66 organizations listed in the KOMS application, only 12 fulfilled this obligation.

¹⁰⁵ stating that: *“...a local self-government unit may, within the scope of its authority, needs and capacity, establish a Youth Office. The Youth Office shall be funded from the budget of the local self- government unit, and other sources in accordance with the Law.”*

¹⁰⁶ Data received by the National Association of Youth Offices, based on their internal monitoring data for 2018/19.



4.5 Regional platforms and networks

Regional initiatives are: Dialogue for the Future: Fostering Dialogue and Social Cohesion in and between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia; Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO);¹⁰⁷ Western Balkans Youth Cooperation Platform (WBYP);¹⁰⁸ The Young European Ambassadors (YEA)¹⁰⁹ platform.

4.6 Critical assessment

One of the main strengths of the Youth Policy is developing a legislative framework that gives preconditions for youth participation in decision making processes. The unique situation of having three umbrella organizations in Serbia is perceived as an example of good practice by many economies in the region. The division of the roles and mandates leads to the clear strategic development of each umbrella organization, and consequently contributes to the implementation of the NYS goals. In regard to participation of youth in formulating policies, the MoYS has used several methods (working groups, surveys, focus groups, round- tables, public debates, and so forth) to ensure involvement of all youth policy actors, including young people. This participatory approach is an example of good practice that has to be embedded in the practice of all government structures. One of the possibilities is the Structured Dialogue¹¹⁰ (SD), proposed by KOMS and NAPOR. Implementation of this mechanism would provide an ongoing platform for youth and decision makers to jointly define and implement policies relevant to youth at all levels. An additional advantage of SD is set in its methodology that combines offline and e-participation of youth, which is very important especially as young people use the Internet and mobile technology to voice their ideas and opinions.

The data provided in the Alternative Report on the Position and Needs of Youth for 2020,¹¹¹ show that young people that make more use of opportunities to form associations or join those already established, are encouraging. The number of young people who are members of an association has almost doubled – from 12% in 2019 to 23.9% in 2020. This data is encouraging because freedom of association is one of the ways in which public policies related to youth are influenced. Furthermore, associations advocate improving the position of young people in society and encourage more active participation of their members in social processes. 41% of young people involved in associations believe that working in an association can influence and improve the situation in society. Despite the relatively positive data, it is very worrying that

¹⁰⁷ Government representative of Serbia is Vanja Udovičić, and Youth Representative Marko Kostić. Serbia has the largest local branch office with 4 employees.

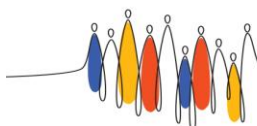
¹⁰⁸ Western Balkans Youth Cooperation Platform, available at <http://connecting-youth.org/about.php>, (Accessed October 15, 2020).

¹⁰⁹ The Young European Ambassadors, available at <https://www.webalkans.eu/>, (Accessed October 15, 2020).

¹¹⁰ Structured dialogue Serbia, National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS). Available at: <http://dijalog.rs/>, accessed on June 15th, 2019

¹¹¹ Alternativni izveštaj o položaju i potrebama mladih u Republici Srbiji 2020. KOMS

(Alternative report about the position and needs of the youth in Republic of Serbia, 2020, available: <https://koms.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Alternativni-izves%CC%8Ctaj-o-polo%CC%8Caju-i-potrebama-mladih-u-RS-2020.pdf> Accessed on 6th January 2021 p 232



every fifth young person (21%) who is active in the association was discriminated against only because they are a member of the association. It is particularly discouraging that the percentage of such discriminated young people has decreased only slightly compared to last year – from 22% to 21%.

On the other hand, research showed the issue of Local Youth Councils and the politicization of its work. As stated by interviewed youth organizations: *“At the local level it is visible that the youth members of the Local Youth Councils are politically active and very often is the case that they ignore all the inputs coming from the civic sector or different political parties. Besides that, usually mainstream youth are represented in the Councils, while involvement of representatives of various disadvantaged youth groups remain in the role of passive consumers”*.¹¹² This is also demonstrated by other studies such as the CoE assessment of youth policy in Serbia highlighting that *“the politicization of the youth sector, mostly in relation to the management and administration within LYOs, raises doubt about the productivity (impact and effect) of local youth policy implementation.”*¹¹³ The Interviewees echo a previous study that notes that the landscape of youth office provision does not fully ensure reliable sites for information and services to young people, or serve as pivotal meeting points for young people and youth workers, particularly so for young people from rural municipalities who are especially disadvantaged.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Information received during interviews from CSOs representatives.

¹¹³ Youth policy in Serbia, <https://rm.coe.int/youth-policy-in-serbia/1680903561> p. 67 Accessed on 6th January 2021

¹¹⁴ Youth policy in Serbia <https://rm.coe.int/youth-policy-in-serbia/1680903561> p. 23 Accessed on 6th January 2021



CHAPTER 5: MAPPING OF DONOR INTERVENTIONS IN THE FIELD OF YOUTH IN SERBIA

This chapter presents the programs and interventions of key donors in youth-related issues. It also outlines how donor coordination works in Serbia and what priority areas are for the future in the field of youth.

5.1 Key donors in the field of youth

Major donors working in the field of youth have been selected based on the following criteria: 1) duration of their engagement in Serbia; 2) amount of funding they have allocated for improving the position and rights of youth; 3) their influence on decision-makers; and 4) the changes their interventions effected in the field of youth:

- The Delegation of the European Union to Serbia
- The German Organization for International Cooperation (GIZ)
- The OSCE Mission to Serbia
- The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- The Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)

Delegation of the European Union to Serbia is the largest donor in Serbia.

The *European Union Support to Active Youth Inclusion*¹¹⁵ is a project funded 90% by the EU (IPA2014) and managed by the Ministry of Finance. The project spans 2019–2021 and the overall objective is to foster high-employment economy cohesion through the implementation of the Employment and Social Reform Program priorities. Youth employability is focused on social innovation in youth employability, emphasizing cross-sectoral cooperation to deliver sustainable solutions addressing the needs of youth with a total value of EUR 2,190,778.46 with a budget covered 90% from the EU and 10% from the Government of Serbia. Active inclusion addresses the implementation of the active inclusion measures in Serbia targeting different disadvantaged groups, mainly social welfare beneficiaries, by implementing activation mix packages and promoting inter-sectoral cooperation at all levels (total value EUR 1,878,435.65). A package for Technical Assistance in the amount of EUR 596,800 is mainly focused on employability with the specific target groups being NEET youth.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ For more info regarding project, please visit: www.uključivanjemladih.rs

¹¹⁶ For more info please visit: <http://europa.rs/files/ipa2014/IPA%202014%20AD%20Youth%20Employability%20Active%20Inclusion%2006042016%20TC.pdf>

visit:



IPA 2016 is in the process of negotiation. The program called the "Instrument for Support of European Integration", worth EUR 35.8 million, will provide support to Serbia in critical areas related to EU accession. The program's benefits will be felt by over 40 beneficiary institutions and millions of citizens in gender equality, Roma integration, support for internally displaced persons, transport and environmental sectors, improvement of statistical reporting in Serbia, and others. Support for internally displaced persons and social inclusion at the local level remains the focus of EU funding. The goal is to provide free legal aid to internally displaced persons in about 2,000 court proceedings. The good practice of mobile teams supporting Roma integration established in 2013 thanks to EU assistance will be continued and such teams will be formed in another 50 municipalities across the economy. The teams consist of social workers and health mediators who support Roma integration in all areas, including education for young people and their families.¹¹⁷

IPA 2020: Support to youth employment¹¹⁸ aims to respond to one of the most significant needs of young people: a lack of practical experience. This activity envisages scaling up internship programs, traineeship programs, professional practice, and self-employment. This will significantly increase employment opportunities for young people and their position in the labor market. The emphasis will be on improving cooperation with employers by further expanding the network of employers participating in ALMPs. The intervention will promote an entrepreneurial spirit among young persons through self-employment packages and cooperation with existing employers active in particular areas. NEETs will be targeted in particular. All participants in the measures mentioned will be monitored for at least 6 months upon completion of the support program.¹¹⁹

The main areas in which the EU has been providing support for youth are: social protection, improving the position on the labor market, education, and direct support for youth from vulnerable groups.

This, however, differs from the support programs themselves. IPA programs focus primarily on direct aid and assistance to youth through the improvement of their social status and rights, e.g., their skills and status in the labor market, work and employment-related knowledge and skills, and the status of youth from marginalized groups (e.g., returnees under readmission agreements) and their reintegration in the system. EIDHR¹²⁰ and CSF¹²¹ recognize youth as a potential target

¹¹⁷ <https://europa.rs/pomoc-eu-republici-srbiji/ipa/ipa-2016/>

¹¹⁸ Activity 1.2. Implementation of innovative active employment measures and approaches to increase the integration of long term unemployed, youth, women, and PwD and hard-to-employ groups in the labour market.

¹¹⁹ European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) <http://europa.rs/eu-assistance-to-serbia/eidhr/?lang=en>
https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/c2020_503.pdf

¹²⁰ <http://europa.rs/eu-assistance-to-serbia/eidhr/?lang=en>

¹²¹ Civil Society Facility program: <http://europa.rs/eu-assistance-to-serbia/eu-and-serbia-15-years-of-partnership/civil-society/?lang=en>



group, devoting greater attention to the promotion of their civic and political rights. However, EU's EIDHR and CSF support is not visibly backing projects targeting primarily youth.

German Organization for International Cooperation (GIZ)

The project *Encouraging Youth Employment (GIZ YEP)* was supported by the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany (BMZ), implemented by the German Organization for International Cooperation (GIZ). The project goal is to support young people in Serbia aged 15 to 35 to improve their position in the labor market and find a job faster. The project supports organizations, hubs, and centers that provide an enabling environment for young people to acquire entrepreneurial skills and start their businesses. The total value of the project was EUR10,000,000 and its duration was 2015–2019.

The *Dialogue on Employment Creation, Initiative and Dual Education* covers the years 2020–2022. The objective of this project is to offer qualification and labor market measures in selected regions to be better oriented vis-a-vis the needs of young people and on the needs of companies for adequately trained staff. One of the main results is that 500 adolescents and young adults benefit from the improved formal (dual) and non-formal training offers as well as of active labor market measures.

The "*German Information Centre for Migration, Training and Employment*" (DIMAK) as part of the project *Migration & Diaspora* in Belgrade helps returnees from Germany and other economies to reintegrate socially and economically into life in Serbia. The center also advises locals about the new career opportunities in their own economy. DIMAK provides advice and support and its topics include: Return and reintegration, vocational guidance and job hunting in Serbia, starting a business in Serbia, vocational qualifications and training, and psychosocial support.

The main areas in which the GIZ has been providing support for youth: Youth employment and employability are the main field of GIZ's intervention. GIZ is also engaged in improving the status of youth from vulnerable social groups, e.g., Roma youth and returnees, and their reintegration into the system.

The OSCE Mission to Serbia is not a donor in the classical sense. Programs and activities are implemented in cooperation with the government and non-government sectors, which act as Implementing Partners on OSCE activities. Numerous programs implemented in the past have taken different forms: support to the development of the NYS and Action Plan, training on public relations and outreach for the MoYS, support to the drafting of the LoY, and capacity building of national youth policy actors in fostering an inclusive youth policy, direct work with municipalities with significant minority populations, and support to the local youth offices to



improve their capacity to address the needs of all youth. Work with and for young people in the OSCE is structured to be youth-centered. Youth are mainstreamed across all programmatic areas (democratization, rule of law, media, and security cooperation). Consequently, it is not possible to estimate the total budget invested in youth by the Mission. However, it is mapping the open calls in the past two years related to youth:

- Youth mainstreaming in the work of National Councils of National Minorities (NMCs)¹²²
- Promotion of intercultural dialogue among youth from different ethnic backgrounds¹²³
- Fostering a more inclusive school environment for the Roma community¹²⁴
- Assisting civil society in building the capacities of youth to use online platforms to promote public safety¹²⁵

The total amount of these grants stands at around EUR 10,000 and the OSCE Mission focuses its support primarily on the civic and political rights of youth (hate speech, education about civil rights, amongst others). For changes in civic and political rights to be visible, work with youth has to be continuous; small, rather than annual, grants are merely sporadic interventions. In Serbia, the support provided by the OSCE generated increased levels of knowledge and skills of the three pillars and of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) for the work with vulnerable subgroups of young people, and cooperation at the national and local levels (among themselves and with local authorities). RYCO's capacity to prepare and organize calls for proposals and to appraise the applications received also increased through OSCE support. A good example in terms of mid-term outcomes generated by the OSCE is the Club for Children in Novi Pazar, Serbia, which was established by the local Association of Psychologists. The Association developed a 360° methodology for the work with vulnerable young people with risky behavior.

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The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

The project *From Education to Employment: Development of Youth Skills and Private-Public Partnerships in the Republic of Serbia* is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Serbian Government's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU). Serbia's contribution was CHF 7,300,000, and the Swiss contribution was CHF

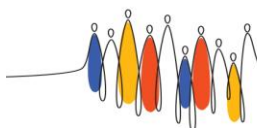
¹²² <https://procurement.osce.org/tenders/jpa-ser-02-2019-youth-mainstreaming-work-national-councils-national-minorities-nmcs> Accessed on 19 October 2020

¹²³ <https://procurement.osce.org/tenders/promotion-intercultural-dialogue-among-youth-different-ethnic-backgrounds> Accessed on 19 October 2020

¹²⁴ <https://procurement.osce.org/tenders/fostering-more-inclusive-school-environment-roma-community> Accessed on 19 October 2020

¹²⁵ https://procurement.osce.org/tenders/assisting-civil-society-build-capacities-youth-use-online-platforms-promote-public-safety?fbclid=IwAR1Mg_ZWiktesPs9i3ocWn7Ctf81_uzkH0Sph3sqdG0NwG3S36w2Y2jvUV4 Accessed on 19 October 2020

¹²⁶ It comprises the provision of psychological support in cooperation with schools, parents and centres for social work, combined with training on youth security and safety delivered with peer support. This approach had beneficial effects on the young people involved, as it helped them better understand the roots of their behavior, and its consequences at the individual and community level. Based on the experience gained by the Association of Psychologists with the Club for Children and Youth, the social protection system was reorganized by the municipality of Novi Pazar



8,000,000, with the total amounting to CHF 15,300,000. The project duration was 2015–2019 and the project's overall goal was an inclusive and sustainable increase in the employability of young people in Serbia. The program supported three types of projects promoting employment and employability: 1) innovative approaches to improving employment and employability of young people; 2) an on-the-job training program, and 3) informal training programs for categories of hard-to-employ youth.

From Education to Employment (E2E) - The E2E program supports direct labor market measures in 5 locations in Serbia through Career Guidance and Counselling and an Opportunity Fund for companies and training providers targeting 12,000 young women and men, of whom 20% are vulnerable. Based on Work Based Learning (WBL) that will generate a minimum of 625 decent jobs for young people, the program will contribute to the re-design of inclusive and innovative youth employment measures and policies over the period 01.01.2020 - 31.12.2023 with a budget of CHF 8,050,000.

The main areas in which the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation has been providing support for youth are youth employment and employability.

SIDA implemented by UN agencies

The Swedish International Cooperation Agency, or SIDA, funds the project Integrated Response to Violence against Women and Girls in Serbia. The project is implemented by 4 UN agencies – UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women, and UNICEF. The total value of the project is US\$ 1,856,475, while the youth component is worth US\$ 59,000. The project began in July 2016 and lasted until the end of 2019.

The main areas in which the SIDA (together with UN partners) has been providing support for youth are civic and political rights, improvement of the position of young women and girls, women's rights, and inter-generational solidarity.

UNFPA Serbia - CORE FUNDS: Program adolescents and youth

The economy Program output over the years 2016-2020 focused on youth and youth-related questions. The program objectives are: increased national capacity to develop and implement policies and programs that incorporate the rights and needs of adolescents and youth and promote age-appropriate, gender-sensitive, and comprehensive interventions. The program target groups include youth from general and marginalized groups, including from mixed migrant populations, youth organizations, CSOs working with youth, and decision makers.

UNICEF Serbia



The expected outcome of the UNICEF Joint Work Plan project with the MoYS is that by 2020, an efficient system will have been established that enables relevant, quality, inclusive, and equitable youth engagement, particularly for those most vulnerable, that increase learning and social outcomes. The duration of the project is over 2019–2020 and the main activities include: 1) Developing mechanisms to improve the quality and relevance of U-Report polls and data; 2) Dialogue for the Future: a situation analysis conducted on adolescent and young people, looking at overall skills development, including skills in peacebuilding; UPSHIFT program focusing on social cohesion, social entrepreneurship, and grants; Organize three youth dialogues in 3 LSGs within the program, focusing on peacebuilding and social cohesion; Training on youth participation, volunteerism, mobile journalism, and vlogging; Youth contribution to the Voluntary National Report; 3) Support the social inclusion of vulnerable children, adolescents, and young people by promoting collaborative actions on inclusive sports, play, and recreation. More than 6,000 youth will be included. The overall budget is EUR 500,000 (Funded by UN Peace Building Fund)

The main areas in which the UNICEF has been providing support for youth are youth participation, involvement in decision-making, interculturality and youth cohesion.

RYCO

RYCO's programs are based on its Action Plan 2018-2021 and Strategic Plan 2019-2021. Through the First Open Call in 2017 for civil society organizations and schools, RYCO selected 12 youth exchange programs from Serbia to promote reconciliation in the region by increasing youth mobility, cooperation, and activism. The Second Open Call in 2018 aimed to support and empower civil society organizations and secondary schools to implement activities in the areas of regional youth cooperation, mobility and exchange, and an enabling environment for regional youth cooperation. Out of 44 awarded projects, 17 were from Serbia. The funds for the Local Branch Office in Serbia cannot be estimated separately, as they are part of the overall budget dedicated to the regional activities performed by the Head Office (based in Tirana) and other Local Branch Offices (Montenegro, Albania, and Kosovo*, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and North Macedonia). The open call for 2019 was EUR 300,000 for high schools only, and eight projects were supported. The total grant scope for 2020 stood at EUR 300,000. Support to youth participation is made on several levels: through the support of projects with the aim to strengthen youth participation, through partnerships with local partners, which enable implementation of activities with this aim, and most importantly for Ryco, the co-management principle in decision-making processes. In its Board of Directors, Ryco has six ministers of the Government

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



and six youth representatives who make decisions together, following the co-management principle. Serbia donated EUR 420,000 to RYCO on top of its regular yearly contribution.¹²⁷

The main areas in which the RYCO has been providing support for youth are education, intercultural dialogue, youth-led networks, cross-border/boundary exchanges and workshops as a tool for youth engagement.

Other relevant donor interventions:

UNHCR

With the help of implementing partners, UNHCR works tirelessly to protect forcibly displaced youth from abuse and exploitation, to nurture their potential, and to support them as they restart their lives, providing skills development, education, psychosocial support, family reunification, and recreational programs.

Local initiatives for improved social inclusion of young: The main partners are local self-governments and their duration ran from February 2018 - December 2020. The goals are to train and employ young Roma women and men in local self-governments and/or other governmental or non-governmental institutions at the local level. Results up to date include that 45 selected young Roma increased their knowledge on human rights, discrimination, legally invisible people, stateless persons, internally displaced persons and returnees; vulnerable group rights (access to social welfare, employment, education); functioning of mechanisms for social inclusion and Roma inclusion at the local level. Equipped with this knowledge, young Roma women and men are placed in local government institutions and local non-governmental institutions in the communities they live in so that they can contribute to, and advocate for the political, social and economic inclusion of Roma and other vulnerable populations in Serbia. Out of 45 UNVs engaged, 16 continued employment or got employed after the volunteering process.

Main areas in which the UNHCR has been providing support for youth include direct support to youth through legal and psychological advice (aid), integration-related aid and support, and interculturality.

UNDP: The project *Strengthening Capacities for the Improved Implementation of International Agreements in the Field of Environmental Protection* is supported by the Global Fund for the Environment and implemented by UNDP. Duration: 2016–2021. The spectrum of topics covered by the project is very complicated. A smaller segment includes youth engaged in strengthening the capacities of the associations for the implementation of projects and informing

¹²⁷ For more information please check Serbia Report 2020k: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/serbia_report_2020.pdf page 64 Accessed on 11 January 2021



the youth about the environment. The total project value stands at \$1,000,000, out of which the allocation for the youth component is between \$60,000 and \$70,000.

The *European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe* provides financial and educational support for European youth activities. It supports European youth activities organized by non-governmental youth organizations and networks, such as international youth meetings, conferences, campaigns, and training courses. In 2018, grants awarded to Serbian organizations for international activities were worth EUR 33,000. Moreover, pilot activities in the last two years (an activity addressing a contextual societal challenge affecting young people at the local level) implemented by Serbian organizations were supported with EUR 154,400.

The European Youth Foundation is launching a special call for local or national youth organizations looking for funding for activities responding to local needs arising from the COVID-19 crisis. Priority will be given to pilot activities that aim at demonstrating solidarity and support to all persons affected by the COVID-19 crisis, such as: reaching out to and supporting particularly vulnerable groups of people, including the homeless, refugees and asylum-seekers, people with disabilities, people living in isolation or remote communities; support to health, social and educational services; education and awareness-raising of the importance of human rights in responses to the COVID-19 crisis. It is unclear if any youth CSOs received support from this grant. The maximum EYF grant for a pilot activity is EUR10,000.¹²⁸

The main areas in which the EYF has been providing support for youth are direct support to youth CSOs, especially at the local level: youth work initiatives, youth rights, and education

Balkan Trust for Democracy

The Balkan Trust for Democracy (BTD) is an initiative that supports democracy, good governance, and Euro Atlantic integration in Southeastern Europe. This award-winning public-private partnership was created in 2003 by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. BTD's original ten-year mandate came to an end in May 2013. BTD then entered into its second mandate (2013-20) with structural changes to geographic coverage and grantmaking scope. One of the priorities set is Youth Leadership and Empowerment. For example, a CSO in Serbia called the Ane and Vlade Divac Foundation through the **Divac Youth Fund** supported participation of youth in local development processes by awarding grants to projects initiated and managed by youth. To date, the project has supported 467 youth initiatives

¹²⁸ https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/news-2020/-/asset_publisher/FTvIQw3ekKpT/content/ncrease-of-the-amount-for-a-pilot-activity-grant-in-2021?inheritRedirect=false



and projects that have contributed to an increase in the quality of life of youth in their local communities. This Fund is funded by the BTB.

Trag Foundation¹²⁹

Due to the global Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on everyday life, the Trag Foundation has recognized its adverse effects on communities throughout Serbia, especially among the most vulnerable populations. Areas of support include prevention measures that include all measures that reduce the consequences of the epidemic and the emergency situation in the economy (this includes the meeting of everyday practical needs, the availability of protection measures, and the distribution of equipment such as masks, gloves, and disinfectants); education and informing, that include conducting campaigns to objectively and timely notify the population of the availability of services and their rights, especially communities without access to the Internet, and psychological support and support for the preservation of mental health in emergency conditions, including the availability of social services. Several local youth CSOs were supported with EUR5,000 grants. This Open Call is funded by the BTB.

The US Agency for International Development

With the support of the US Agency for International Development, the Belgrade Open School (BOS), is implementing the project *Active Citizens – Better Society: Advocating towards Cooperation and Democratic Development*. The project aims to contribute to the strengthening of a democratic society in Serbia based on a culture of citizen participation in political processes and consistent respect for democratic principles. The project is a three-year initiative launched by BOS, cooperating with the Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence (BFPE) and the Balkan Investigative Research Network (BIRN) Serbia. It intends to promote civil society advocacy practices that represent the interests of local communities and establish which citizens actively participate, improve advocacy practices in civil society in Serbia, increase citizens' support for civil society organizations, enhance the decision-making process and public policy development, improve understanding of the advocacy role of civil society organizations among citizens, the media, and decision-makers. Four local youth organizations received grant support during the sub-granting calls during 2020. The total amount per grant was EUR 15,000.

5.2 Donor coordination

There is no donor coordination focusing solely on programs supporting youth in Serbia. During the interviews, the opinions of the donor community were divided. In general, donors do not believe in additional mechanical focusing only on youth, for as long as youth are seen as a sector-crossing topic. How high topics regarding youth will be on the agenda as per interviews mostly depends on the requests from different Ministers. Some donors such as GIZ, UNCEF, and

¹²⁹ Please check local Foundation in Serbia <https://tragfondacija.org/o-tragu/>



UNFPA pointed out development intervention in close cooperation and consultations with MoYS. Representatives of the donor community participate from time to time on YC meetings (RYCO, UNICEF, GIZ).

As for the coordination of EU pre-accession assistance, the Sectoral Civil Society Organizations (SECO) mechanism has been established to promote constructive dialogue between public authorities and CSOs in the programming process and improve the effective use of development funds, especially EU funds. The Serbian Government adopted a Decision on Officials and Bodies Responsible for Managing EU Pre-Accession Programs within IPA II for the 2014-2020 period and appointed a Minister without Portfolio charged with EU accession Jadranka Joksimović the National IPA Coordinator (NIPAC). The NIPAC is responsible for the entire process of strategic planning, programming coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on IPA II assistance and cooperation with the European Commission on the use of IPA II aid.

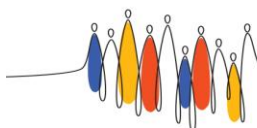
Other institutions and bodies engaged in the management of EU pre-accession programs in Serbia include: The Ministry of Finance Department for Contracting and Financing of EU Funded Programs within the Sector for EU Fund Management and other relevant Sectors. The SEIO is also responsible for meeting with donor community periodically (every 3 to 6 months) to discuss items not solely related to EU funding. According to the donor community, potential possible directions of cooperation and exchange are agreed upon at these meetings, and a particular donor chairs these meetings for a certain period.¹³⁰

5.3 Priority areas for the future in the field of youth

Various interventions described in this chapter are essential in addressing the gaps related, for example, to the implementation of NYC goals. Such gaps are the transition from childhood to adulthood, safety, development of inclusive youth policy, well-being, etc. A number of interventions are valuable as they focus on youth groups not prioritized through national interventions, such as institutionalized youth, rural youth, LGBTIQ, refugee and migrant youth, juvenile offenders, etc.

In the next period of time is important to focus on:

¹³⁰ Assistance planning modalities vary significantly among donors in terms of the headquarters and local staff's influence, consultations with local stakeholders (Government and civil society) on various priorities, and consultations with other donors. The trend demonstrates a general lack of strategic direction in the work of associations, which, in addition to the significant trend of narrowing scope for civic action, may also be the consequence of donor support pooling. Switzerland's Cooperation Strategy Serbia 2018-2021 focuses to a greater extent on innovations in various fields, youth employment, local development, and consolidation of civil society.¹³⁰ As opposed to the autonomous approach, some donors approach activity programming top-down, where the economy in which the headquarters are located play a significant role. The UNDP and all UN other agencies develop their five-year strategies in cooperation with the Government. The draft strategies are sent to other donors and development agencies for comment before they are forwarded to the New York headquarters for approval. The Serbian Government needs to approve all UN programmes. The five year planning for the next circle was made in January 2020. The Balkan Trust for Democracy has a set of priorities for all economies in the region, which have not changed in the past few years.¹³⁰ One of them is youth leadership and empowerment.



- Improving the employability of youth, and especially NEET youth and youth from vulnerable groups.
- Empowering the employability of youth with disabilities
- Empowering youth from rural areas to participate in the decision making process.
- Mental health and well-being and the right to the health of young people.
- Improving the position of vulnerable youth as a response to the Covid-19 crisis such as Roma youth, youth deprived of liberty, young parents, and poor youth.
- Youth housing with a specific focus on homeless youth and LGBTIQ youth.
- Cultural rights and the position of youth cultural workers.
- Media and digital literacy of youth, fake news in response to the Covid-19 crisis.
- Labor rights, especially freelance youth and their position in the job market.
- Internship practices to increase the employability of youth.

5.4 Critical assessment

The trend indicates a general lack of strategic direction in the work of civil society organizations working with and for youth. Donors are pooling their support, which seems to be mostly focusing on Belgrade. This is, on the one hand, understandable, because the largest organizations are mostly headquartered in Belgrade and most young people live in Belgrade. However, the trend has had a major impact on small local organizations, which have become unsustainable, do not continuously implement programs targeting youth, and modify their scopes of activities to respond to donors' priorities.¹³¹

Many CSOs of and for youth have great expectations of the government, especially the MYoS to provide an enabling environment for their development (legal and tax framework) and funding. This indicates the need to secure new sources of financing of associations and work on strengthening their capacity to open up to alternative ways of ensuring sustainability, e.g., through philanthropy, membership, donations, social entrepreneurship, and so on.¹³²

The three key youth pillars in Serbia working with and for youth are funded mostly by the MYoS. The general impression is that the broader donor community does not recognize them as essential stakeholders. They are funded mainly by donors capable of granting smaller donations, which significantly impacts their sustainability and program and strategic planning.

Only the largest CSOs in Serbia (which are partly addressing youth policies through their individual but not all programs) have the opportunity to discuss topics and priorities directly with

¹³¹ Youth organizations and organizations for youth mostly recognize the Erasmus programs. Large donors do not recognize them, but due to financial and program capacities, they are often unable to respond to donor requests and therefore give up on such applications.

¹³² An interesting good practice example of integrating the youth component in a broader call for proposals was published by the Regional Anti-Corruption Initiative, aiming to engage youth in its whistle-blowing endeavours.



the donors. Donors frequently set the trend of topics through their funding, which does not lead to the youth sector's sustainability.

Furthermore, project funding and budgets allocated for youth organizations and organizations working with and for youth are mostly small, around EUR15,000 on average; it is difficult to effect any long-term change in the community with such a modest budget.

Large organizations in Serbia, such as the Belgrade Open School, support youth organizations through sub-contracting and small grants, but these are not direct interventions targeting youth. The calls for proposals do not address youth as main target; instead, organizations submitting project proposals resort to creativity in their approaches and design of programs, turning them into programs for youth.

Most organizations working with and for youth lack large annual turnovers or the capacity to apply to the calls published by the EU Delegation to Serbia or Brussels. This, however, does not put a dent in the impression made that large and vital donors, such as the EU, do not recognize youth topics as central ones.

On the other hand, major donor organizations have mostly been implementing projects with their long-standing strategic partners. Some funding sources have remained invisible to other organizations working with and for youth. In addition, donors have increasingly opted to implement some activities, not acting as classic donors, and have funded the activities directly, paying out per diems to the members of organizations working with and for youth whom they have engaged.

Organizations working with and for youth are thus reluctant to apply because they cannot afford to cover the implementation of the approved projects for a year as they await refunding (hardly any CSO in Serbia can). Topics addressing youth human rights and civic literacy are not in the focus of the donors, who are primarily focusing on youth employability and their competence building, and are perceived as a direct intervention improving the status of young people in the long term.

Taking into consideration challenges that youth are facing, the main priority is to increase youth employability, especially of youth in the NEET category, refugee and returnee youth, and to support youth from vulnerable groups. There are few youth civic literacy programs, e.g., Youth and Rule of Law, Media Freedoms.¹³³ Such programs targeting the population at large have failed to focus only on youth needs and problems. As a donor, the EU mentions young people

¹³³ <https://koms.rs/category/young-media/> DW Akademie and with the support of the Republic of Germany - Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development



only as one of the target groups, but there are not a lot of initiatives related to youth as the central target group. Like the EU, other major donors have also prioritized improvement of the economic status of youth, and the social protection and economic and social rights of youth. It is important to plan projects that promote creativity in young people, the impact on decision-making, especially at the local level, and the impact on the creation of content for young people. Programs related to the realization of youth human rights and access to justice are lacking. There is a great necessity for the coordination of donor activities and the collection of data that would provide clear information on actions/projects that are indirectly contributing to the implementation of the specific objectives in line with the Action Plan. This process should be standardized and prioritized, in order to ensure quality monitoring of the activities and more precise budgeting. That would enable quality distribution of donor funding, and the possibility of channeling it to priority areas.



CHAPTER 6: GOOD PRACTICE AND GAP ANALISES

This chapter presents good practices in youth-related policy and programs as well as gaps in financing mechanisms following the same structure of the report itself. It analyzes the impact of COVID-19 on youth and outlines some key recommendations for each key actor.

6.1 Good practices

The existing legislative and strategic framework for Serbian youth policy, including the LoY, the NYS, and the AP for implementation of the NYS, are considered to be examples of good practice in terms of setting the ground for effective policy implementation. The MoYS provided support to establish various youth policy actors on the national level, such as: NAPOR, KOMS and NALYO, as well as local youth offices in 137 self-government units, which strengthened the structure for youth policy implementation. Still, there are continuous attempts by public structures and youth civic society to advance the Youth Policy system at the local and national levels.

The budget for the implementation of the NYS is regulated by the LoY and allocated to MoYS through the annual Law on the Budget of Serbia. This ensures sustainability in implementation of the strategic goals of the NYS. Additionally, contributions from other government structures are predicted (different ministries, The Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth, and the NES). Significant support is also given by various international donors, both for actions related to the NYS's fulfilment and for addressing issues not prioritized by the NYS.

Serbia has a unique structure when it comes to representative national bodies that consist of three national Youth Policy pillars. Each pillar represents one of the key stakeholders: a) the voice of young people; b) the voice of professionals working with youth and c) the voice of government representatives. The formation of the three pillars is a result of long national consultative processes where the rationale has been the identification of mandates and ensuring the clear strategic development of a systematic youth care network, respecting expert inputs from the key stakeholders involved. This has been showcased as promising practice, with evidence that Serbia has one of the most developed systems for the recognition of the youth work profession and quality assurance of its services, along with different mechanisms for fostering youth decision making on the national and local level, as well the introduction of initiatives for inter-ministerial cooperation (e.g. “Agenda for young people”, Youth Caucus in the Serbian Parliament, and Structured Dialogue) and 137 Local Youth Offices supporting Youth Policy development at the municipality level.

The current “walk the talk” initiative of the OSCE Mission to Serbia presents an example of good practice that should be promoted to other actors, especially national level institutions. In



2018, the OSCE embarked upon developing a comprehensive framework to youth mainstreaming as a strategic and operational method. As peace and security agenda can only be made sustainable with youth involvement, with this process the Mission aims to promote a comprehensive, in-depth and participatory approach to youth mainstreaming. For the first time, one practical framework will thus include guidelines, capacity building, and testing of various tools in integrating youth into all areas of its work, while building on the existing efforts and examples of good practice.

Another good example is related to the evidence-based policy. In addressing this challenge, in 2017 MoYS initiated the establishment of the network of researchers related to youth issues. In addition to the scientific community, the network should include the professional community (non-governmental sector, which has gained a lot of experience and can significantly contribute to the quality of research) and the public sector with its corpus of knowledge. The synergy of expertise should result in establishing a system that provides planned, systematic, continuous and timely research related to youth. Moreover, the network should ensure the quality of policy-oriented research. This initiative has been taken over by NAPOR with the support of the EU-CoE Youth Partnership and is still under development.

In 2019 the City of Novi Sad held a title of the European Youth Capital. In the light of preparation for the title, which started in 2016, many innovative initiatives related to the improvement of local youth policy were introduced and implemented by the youth sector. One of them is the *Novi Sad Youth Forum* that gathers youth organizations, organizations for youth, informal youth groups and youth from the territory of the City of Novi Sad. It serves as an ongoing platform for addressing important issues related to youth to the local municipality officials. The Forum was recognized in the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the City of Novi Sad and all Forum organizations. Moreover, Novi Sad is the only city that formed the *Novi Sad Mayor's Youth Council*, consisting of 5 young people delegated by the Forum and 8 representatives of relevant local institutions.

6.2 Gaps

Although the narratives “Youth are a resource, not a problem” and “Young people are not our future, but our present” have been stated many times by decision-makers, the key challenge of Youth Policy in Serbia is the limited prioritization of the youth sector as an indispensable driver for positive social, economic, and political changes. In relation to this, there is a lack of funds. As Mr. Tobias Flessenkemper, Head of the Belgrade Council of Europe Office, said: “The



indicator of how much a economy prioritizes a particular topic is most visible when looking at budget allocations.”¹³⁴

The sustainability of youth organizations is a primary concern because there are no reliable, continuous source of financing from national, regional or local levels. The budget for implementation of the AP is projected for the period of three years and it is allocated through open calls on an annual basis. This fragmentation has created short-term, project-based activities that cannot reach the maximum quality in implementation, nor can they create an environment that incentivizes continuous work on the NYS goals. The same funding mechanisms are applied at the local level through the LAP. In addition, administrative (institutional) grants are not foreseen, which greatly influences the sustainability of the main youth policy actors on the national and local levels.

Even though mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and reporting are envisioned and described in NYS and its AP, there is a lack in systematic and continuous implementation of mechanisms. Moreover, Annual reports mandatory for public authorities on the local, provincial, and national levels are not results-oriented and connected with specific indicators set in NYS. Similarly, there is no comprehensive system for monitoring of the budget allocated and spent for youth, including the funds coming from outside of the economy. Furthermore, there is a need for the revision of the LoY in relation to active involvement of youth and relevant youth policy actors in the NYS monitoring and evaluation processes. On the other hand, youth organizations should take steps to monitor resource allocation and hold ministries and local authorities accountable.

Connected to this is limited cross-sectoral coordination. The legal framework for cross-sectoral cooperation on Youth Policy implementation has to be improved through revisions of the LoY and through establishing mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on the activities from the AP of the NYS, implemented by other ministries. An absence of continuous coordination and communication among ministries involved in overseeing Youth Policy has the potential to hinder its impact. The same applies for the coordination of the donor community. Gaps pointed out in the external reports are related to the overlapping of priorities (among the donor community and in relation to government structures), which may lead to the uneven distribution of the fulfilment of NYS goals.

The national legislative framework for youth policy is based on a diverse range of evidence-based methods (data, focus groups, surveys). However, the local youth policy measures have to reflect the specific conditions and challenges of the young people in the local area. The funding

¹³⁴ The quote is from Mr Flessenkemper’s speech at the national conference: “A supportive environment for young people” addressing youth policy actors and decision makers, Serbian Palace, December 2018



for the research on the local level is often not sufficient and many Local Action Plans for Youth are based solely on national data. On the other hand, the budget for the research at the national level is not sufficient and greatly influences the quality of the annual research conducted by the MoYS. Furthermore, independent research is not recognized enough and data and recommendations they produce are not used in formulating policies.

Local self-government units are under the authority of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Self-Government. When it comes to the implementation of the youth policy on the local level, the LoY can only stipulate recommendations addressing the establishment of local youth offices, the creation of Local action plans on youth and the allocation of a budget for its implementation. This creates a gap in meeting the goals of the NYS, as a significant part relies on the actors who are not under the jurisdiction of the MoYS. It also influences the monitoring and evaluation for the realization of the NYS.

On the other hand, the current LoY foresees that only the development of NYS must be done with the active participation of young people. This does not guarantee active involvement of youth and relevant youth policy actors in the NYS assessment processes. Moreover, there is no legal obligation to include youth in consultative processes when it comes to the formulation of strategies other than NYS. In addition, existing mechanisms for the active participation of youth in decision making processes are politicized leading to mere consultations, rather than the exercising of co-management practice.

6.3 The impact of COVID-19 on youth

Most organizations for youth and youth organizations in Serbia claim that certain groups of young people were at additional risk of greater vulnerability due to the measures introduced during the state of emergency. They cited the following groups as particularly vulnerable: poor young people and those from rural areas without access to electricity, the Internet, computers and other necessary means for communication, information, and distance learning; pupils and students accommodated in student dormitories, due to the very short deadline imposed for leaving the dormitories, as well as challenging conditions for returning home due to the ban on movement and the closing of borders or boundaries; young people with disabilities who are not independent; and young people who were exposed to domestic violence after returning home.¹³⁵

More than half of the youth organizations believe that the measures introduced during the state of emergency had a very different impact on young women as compared to young men. This is

¹³⁵ Impact of the COVID-19 on Vulnerable Groups and Groups at Risk – Causes, Outcomes and Recommendations. http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Posledice_Kovid_19_na_polozaj_osetljivih_grupa_i_grupa_u_riziku_ENG.pdf
Accessed on 6th of January 2021 p 19



primarily manifested in the increased risk of domestic and partner violence and the lack of adequate support. Also, the organizations state that the transition to work from home significantly affected young mothers and single mothers and their balancing of family and professional obligations.¹³⁶

The organizations cite access to work and sources of income as the area in which the risks for young people increased the most during the duration of restrictive measures and the government's response to the epidemic. The main manifestations of these risks are reflected in reduced earnings, the loss of jobs and basic sources of income (especially in the field of the informal economy, seasonal jobs and hospitality), as well as the inability to find new employment. According to the data,¹³⁷ 65% of young people stated that they could not find a job during the state of emergency, or that working from home did not allow them access to additional sources of income. Those who continued to work stated that they faced salary reductions or delays, an increase in the number of working hours, and an inability to use annual leave. They also faced challenges in reconciling business and family obligations.¹³⁸

Over 37% of the young people surveyed state that they worked without protective equipment, thus exposing themselves to an increased risk of infection at their workplace. Ipsos Strategic Marketing Agency surveyed 21% of young people aged 18–29 on the impact of the epidemic on the work of employees in the informal economy.¹³⁹ The survey shows that 71% of respondents believe that their financial situation has worsened compared to the pre-coronavirus period. 18% of surveyed employees lost their jobs, and 45% were forcibly sent on unpaid annual leave. 55% of those who worked during the state of emergency stated that their workload and their salary were reduced. A massive proportion (19%) could not meet their basic living needs for these reasons. The organizations state that one of the main problems was precisely that young people were not recognized as a group at increased risk. As a result, they were not covered by specially targeted systemic support measures.¹⁴⁰

In the field of information and communication, the organizations for youth state the expressed distrust of young people in the domestic media and the statements of the crisis headquarters. Young people also cited numerous cases of fake news on social networks and the lack of formats that are adapted to them. In addition, the risks in this area are manifested in the lack of access to

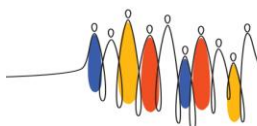
¹³⁶ Impact of the COVID-19 on Vulnerable Groups and Groups at Risk – Causes, Outcomes and Recommendations. http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Posledice_Kovid_19_na_polozaj_osetljivih_grupa_i_grupa_u_riziku_ENG.pdf Accessed on 6th of January 2021 p 18

¹³⁷ Online survey The Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Human Rights of Young People conducted within the online campaign Youth in the Age of Covid-19 Pandemic – Solidarity, Engagement and Activism. The survey was conducted by the Youth Program of the Belgrade Center for Human Rights with the support of the United Nations Human Rights Team.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*

¹³⁹ Results of the Ipsos Strategic Marketing research Impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on work in the informal economy, conducted in the period June/July 2020 at the request of the United Nations Human Rights Team.

¹⁴⁰ Impact of the COVID-19 on Vulnerable Groups and Groups at Risk – Causes, Outcomes and Recommendations. http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Posledice_Kovid_19_na_polozaj_osetljivih_grupa_i_grupa_u_riziku_ENG.pdf Accessed on 6th of January 2021 p 18



the Internet, television, computers, tablets, smartphones and other means necessary for information and communication. According to data,¹⁴¹ 83% of survey participants had very little to no confidence in the sources of information about the COVID-19 pandemic. Young people were also not overly confident of the opinions and attitudes of the medical profession, nor of the information that was presented at regular daily press conferences in Serbia (94.5%). Internet portals were the main sources of information for 75.4% of respondents on a daily basis. In comparison, 78.1% used television, 63.6% were informed via social networks, 7.2% via radio, and 6.5% were informed through printed editions of daily newspapers and weeklies. During the pandemic, 31% of the young people surveyed mostly visited the website of the World Health Organization, World meters/ Covid-19 and the Serbian website Covid19.rs. When it comes to particular TV channels, 47.6% of the respondents were informed about the epidemic via N1 Television, 33.3% followed RTS (the Serbian Broadcast Company). Of the foreign media, 6.5% followed the New York Times daily, 5% the BBC, 1.5% The Guardian, 1% Al Jazeera and 1% CNN. Furthermore, 3.5% of respondents followed information daily via Instagram, 3.5% on Facebook, 1.5% on YouTube, and 0.5% on Twitter.¹⁴²

50% of organizations cite access to health care as an area where the risks to young people were increased during the duration of restrictive measures and the government's response to the epidemic. The main manifestations of these risks are reflected in the cancellation or postponement of regular therapies and examinations, especially for young people with disabilities, chronically ill young persons, those living with HIV, and young transgender people, as well as in the absence of systemic psychological support in youth mental health. During the state of emergency and the coronavirus epidemic, 68% of respondents¹⁴³ stated that they felt very uncomfortable about the epidemic due to social isolation. Out of this group, 28% said they felt fear, and 9% were worried, felt anxiety, uncertainty, nervousness and increased stress. 22% of respondents stated that they were not aware of the existence of free psychological help via telephone or online, while 81% turned to partners, family members and friends for psychological support.¹⁴⁴

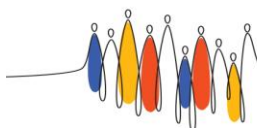
With the introduction of the state of emergency, educational programs of distance learning were held through the public television channel RTS 3, the RTS Planet platform, and Internet learning platforms. The results of surveys among young people show that the risks in the field of education increased during the duration of restrictive measures. The main manifestations of these risks are reflected in the lack of technical prerequisites for following classes (computers, tablets,

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* p 19

¹⁴² Impact of the COVID-19 on Vulnerable Groups and Groups at Risk – Causes, Outcomes and Recommendations. http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Posledice_Kovid_19_na_polozaj_osetljivih_grupa_i_grupa_u_riziku_ENG.pdf
Accessed on 6th of January 2021 p 25

¹⁴³ Online survey *On an Isolated Youth*, conducted as a part of the online campaign Youth in the Age of Covid-19 Pandemic – Solidarity, Engagement and Activism. The campaign was conducted by the Youth Program of the Belgrade Center for Human Rights with the support of the United Nations Human Rights Team.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*



smartphones) and a clear plan for educational activities, as well as contradictory information on taking matriculation exams online. Another problem was the non-involvement of students in the process of selecting learning platforms and ways of implementing educational activities. Thus, 73% of the students surveyed¹⁴⁵ think that the process of distance learning was extremely burdensome because they did not have a fixed schedule for each week, as they would have had under normal circumstances. Instead, teachers let them know in advance when each class will be held. 45% believe that the tools used by teachers should be standardized, or at the least, teachers should have to consult students on what suits students best for their work. 48.3% of respondents own a personal computer, 37% share a computer with family members, while 14.7% do not have access to a computer at all.

Organizations cited adequate housing as an additional risk that has increased especially during the state of emergency and the coronavirus epidemic. Due to the closure of student dormitories, as well as job loss or worsened financial situations, these categories of young people were forced to return to their homes. According to the data, 46.9% state that living in overcrowded apartments is a severe problem, 36.7% lack access to clean drinking water, 26.7% lack access to sewage, while 3.7% of surveyed young people state that they were exposed to domestic violence upon returning home, and 28.4% suffered poor family relationships.¹⁴⁶

6.4 Recommendations

Policy/government recommendations:

1. Revision of the LoY is needed to address several issues related to:
 - The duration of the NYS and the mechanisms for ensuring flexibility and possible changes, if needed.
 - Active involvement of youth and relevant youth policy actors in the NYS monitoring and evaluation processes.
 - A need for external evaluation of the NYS implementation.
 - Reporting on achieved results.
 - Participatory decision-making and co-management principle at all levels.
 - The need to make a space for “youth” as a category in the constitution.
2. The amendments to the Law on Local Self-Government are needed to ensure that care for young people becomes the original jurisdiction of local self-government units and budget allocations related to the implementation of Local Action Plans for Youth.

¹⁴⁵ UNSS research on the attitudes of high school students in Serbia 2020, conducted within the #VanrednoObrazovanje Program, available at: <https://www.srednjoskolci.org.rs/prehled-srednjoskolskog-zivota-tokom-pandemije/>. p 13

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*



3. The MYoS should create clear and measurable performance indicators in order to assess NYS achievements through a consultation process with youth.
4. The MYoS should improve the reporting mechanism in order to collect relevant data from all Youth policy actors at the national and local levels.
5. A comprehensive system should be developed for gathering data related to the funds for the implementation of national youth policy, involving all relevant youth policy actors such as international donors' programs, external donor-funded projects and all government entities.
6. The MoYS should further strengthen the quality of the implementation and incentive environment for continuous work on NYS goals by introducing long term administrative and program-based grants for national and local youth policy actors.
7. The capacities of the MoYS should be strengthened to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of existing coordination mechanisms at the national level for ensuring cross-sectoral cooperation.
8. Representatives of all relevant actors should be included in forming Local Youth Councils, regardless of their political orientation. Furthermore, Local Youth Councils are to be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of Local Action Plans for Youth.
9. It would be beneficial to the youth sector to de-politicize the decision-making mechanisms, enabling the implementation of the co-management principle and allowing the young people to have a share in the decision-making in all matters related to youth.
10. Ensure efficient youth policy implementation and avoid politicization by introducing greater transparency in the distribution of funds to youth policy actors at the local and national levels.
11. Promote a participatory approach in formulating a youth policy exercised by MoYS to other Ministries as an example of good practice.
12. Owing to the cross-sectoral character of the NYS (involvement of several competent ministries) and the complexity of implementation, it is essential to ensure cooperation and coordination among all the partners.

Youth organizations:

1. Youth organizations should enhance efforts for networking, cooperation and partnership building with one another and other civil society actors.



2. Well-established youth organizations and networks should provide peer-to-peer support, guidance, and mentorship for smaller, grassroots organizations and youth initiatives from rural and remote areas.
3. Youth organizations should further develop their capacities both in terms of fundraising and networking, advocacy and lobbying, digitalization, communication and outreach.
4. Youth organizations should identify new streams of financial resources to become financially sustainable and break the cycle of donor-dependency.

Donor community:

1. The donor community should considerably increase funds for the youth research to ensure evidence-based data for the creation and evaluation of national and local strategies, as well as action plans.
2. Donor community should prioritize and recognize youth as a key driver for positive social, economic and political changes by significantly increasing the total budget aimed at the implementation of youth policy.
3. The donor community should invest more donor funds towards the civic and political rights of the youth in Serbia.
4. A number of interventions are valuable as they focus on groups of youth not prioritized through national interventions such as: institutionalized youth, rural youth, LGBTIQ youth, refugee and migrant youth, juvenile offenders, and others that should be recognized by the donor community.



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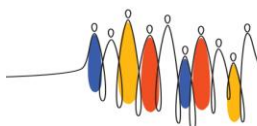
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ANNEXES

Annex 1: National Strategy on Youth

There are 9 priority areas of NYS, set forth in the same order in the Action Plan.

1. Youth employment and entrepreneurship;
2. Education, pedagogical work with and training of youth;
3. Youth activism and active participation;
4. Health and well-being of young people;
5. Youth safety;
6. Social inclusion of youth;
7. Youth mobility;
8. Informing youth;
9. Youth culture and creativity.

For each priority area of NYS, strategic goals¹⁴⁷ are set:

1. Improved employability and employment of young women and men;
2. Improved quality and opportunities for acquiring qualifications and development of competencies and innovation of young people;
3. Enhanced active participation of young women and men in society;
4. Improved health and well-being of young women and men;
5. Improved conditions for the development of youth safety culture;
6. Enhanced support for the social inclusion of young people at risk of social exclusion;
7. Enhanced youth mobility, scope of international youth cooperation and support to young migrants;
8. Improved system of informing young people and knowledge about young people;
9. Enhanced cultural consumption and participation of young people in the creation of cultural programs.

¹⁴⁷ [Ibid.](#), p11-59



Annex 2: Key Youth Programs/Instruments of the Ministry of Youth and Sports

Detailed information about Key Youth Programs/Instruments of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Provincial Secretariat of Sports and Youth and National Employment Service are outlined below.

Overview of the programs/instruments of the Ministry of Youth and Sports for 2019

1. Support to the local self –government (LSG) units in the implementation of youth policy on the local level¹⁴⁸

Overall objective: Creating conditions for improving the position and participation of young people in the local community and stimulating different forms of employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship of young people.

Activities: Promotion and implementation of healthy and safe lifestyles of young people in local self-government units, adapted to the needs of all categories of young people (enabled to open 9 gyms or smaller sports facilities in the open). The conditions for quality leisure spending, active participation in the society, implementation of cultural contents and information tailored to the needs of all categories of young people through renovation and equipping of 3 youth clubs. Approximately 10,000 young people were involved in programs and projects that promote healthy and safe lifestyles. Activities for developing services and mechanisms that promotes the entrepreneurial spirit, employability and employment of young people through cross-sectoral cooperation.

Indicative Budget: EUR 363,136.72 (43,000,000 RSD)

2. Development and implementation of youth policy¹⁴⁹

Overall objective: Providing support for developing sectoral policies and strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation, improving formal and non-formal education of young people in order to acquire practical knowledge and skills, raising the capacities of youth associations and youth offices for international cooperation and use of funds.

Activities:

- Support for active participation of young people, development of inter-sectoral programs and networking of all actors of youth policy through active participation of young people on the local, national and international level; strengthening the capacity of youth organizations and youth, individuals and other actors of youth policy; encouraging regional youth cooperation and exchange with the aim of promoting ideas of reconciliation, tolerance and other European values; introduction of a structured dialogue model; advocating the improvement of procedures and policies for active participation of

¹⁴⁸ Results of the Public Call for the support to the Local Self Government Units in implementation of the Youth Policy, Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2018. Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/vest/rezultati-javnog-konkursa-za-podrsku-jedinicama-lokalne-samouprave-u-sprovođenju-omladinske-politike-na-lokalnom-nivou3>, accessed on June 12th 2019

¹⁴⁹ Results of the Public Call for development and implementation of the Youth Policy, Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2018. Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/vest/rezultati-javnog-konkursa-za-razvoj-i-sprovođenje-omladinske-politike2>, accessed on June 12th 2019



young people in society and greater employability and youth safety - total amount of EUR 59,115.28 (7,000,000 RSD).

- Standardization of youth work through the accreditation of new associations, professionalism of human resources, visibility and recognition of youth work at the national and local level, the development of online tools for youth work and non-formal education, the development of support groups for youth workers, informing the public about youth work and its importance - total amount of EUR 54,892.76 (6,500,000 RSD).
- Capacity building of youth office coordinators, analysis of work and fulfilment of standards of work of youth offices and proposing measures for their achievement; development of services in youth offices and support for opening new offices for young people; support for the drafting / revision of local strategic documents and the establishment of functional and sustainable youth activities for international cooperation - total amount EUR 54,881.78 (6,498,700 RSD).

Indicative Budget: EUR 168,900.80 (20,000,000 RSD)

3. Stimulation of different forms of employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship of young people¹⁵⁰

Overall objective: Developing services and mechanisms that promote the employability and employment of young people through cross-sectoral cooperation, with the aim of stimulating different forms of employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship of young people.

Activities:

- Implementation of the youth entrepreneurship programs (non-formal education in the field of entrepreneurship and starting a business, starting business incubators, hobbies, entrepreneurship firms, entrepreneurship in agriculture and creative industry with the support of mentors, promotion of successful young entrepreneurs)
- Implementation of programs that increase the employability of young people (non-formal education for the purpose of employment and increase of employability, working / professional practice in small and medium enterprises and civil society organizations, training for occupations where there is a shortage).
- Developing and implementing programs that develop entrepreneurial spirit and financial literacy among young people in elementary and secondary schools.
- Implementation of programs to increase the employability of young people facing additional barriers when entering the labor market (young people without qualifications, young Roma and Roma women, young people with disabilities, young people who left the system of institutional care and other vulnerable groups of people recognized by different strategic documents).

Indicative budget: EUR 436,203.21 (51,652,000 RSD)

¹⁵⁰ Results of the Public Call for stimulation of different forms of employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship of young people, Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2018. Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/vest/rezultati-javnog-konkursa-za-stimulisanje-razlicitih-oblika-zaposljavanja-samozaposljavanja-i-preduzetnistva-mladih>, accessed on June 12th 2019



4. Programs and projects for the implementation of National Youth Strategy goals and implementation of the program "Youth are the law"¹⁵¹

Overall objective: In accordance with the goals of the NYS for the period 2015-2025, the improvement of the social position of young people and the creation of conditions for achieving the needs of youth and their interests in organizing, socializing, developing and realizing the potential for personal and social well-being, with an emphasis on the active contribution of young people in solving problems and needs of local communities throughout Serbia, and the promotion of the culture of volunteering and solidarity.

Activities:

- Implementation of the NYS goals through the realization of 34 projects in the following areas: education, coaching and training; activism and active participation of young people; health, well-being, education of young people; safety; social inclusion; information, and culture and creativity of young people - total amount EUR 393,538.42 (46,599,948 RSD).
- Support to the implementation of youth volunteer projects and volunteer camps, financed through 11 projects - total amount EUR 111,447.08 (13,196,750 RSD).
- Support to coordinated implementation of the national program "Youth are the law" - total amount EUR 59,112.24 (6,999,640 RSD).

Indicative budget: EUR 564,103.34 (66,797,000 RSD)

5. Co-funding programs and projects in the youth sector, approved by the European Commission.¹⁵²

Overall objective: Improving international and regional cooperation in the field of youth and empowering young people for greater participation in the society and the international community, as well as creating conditions for co-financing projects approved by the European Commission that are directed towards active participation of young people in the realization of NYS 2015-2025 in the field of international cooperation.

Activities: youth participation and regional cooperation, regional platform for participation and dialogue of young people in the Balkans and international cooperation.

Indicative budget: EUR 16,890.08 (2,000,000 RSD) and annual binding contributions to international organizations EUR 436,186.32 (51,650,000 RSD).

6. "OPENS – European Youth Capital 2019" - project of national importance¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Results of the Public Call for programmes and projects for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy goals and implementation of the programme "Youth are the law", Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2018. Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/vest/rezultati-javnog-konkursa-za-finansiranje-i-sufinansiranje-programa-i-projekata-za-sprovođenje-ciljeva-nacionalne-strategije-za-mlade-i-programa-mladi-su-zakon2>, accessed on June 12th 2019

¹⁵² Results of the Public Call for co-funding programmes and projects in youth sector, approved by the European Commission, Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2018. Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/vest/rezultati-javnog-konkursa-za-sufinansiranje-programa-i-projekata-u-oblastima-omladinskog-sektora-koji-su-odobreni-od-strane-evropske-komisije>, accessed on June 12th 2019

¹⁵³ Ministry of Youth and Sports Information Bulletin, Belgrade updated on May 31st 2019. Available at: <https://www.mos.gov.rs/informator-ogradu>, accessed on June 10th, 2019, p.59.



Overall objective: Encourage active participation of young people in society (promotion of volunteerism and quality leisure time), greater participation of young people in creating and using cultural content, as well as mobility and greater awareness of young people.

Activities: Organization of a music festival for over 200,000 people, out of which 90% are youth.

Indicative budget: EUR 253,351.20 (30,000,000 RSD)

7. Fund for Young Talents¹⁵⁴

Overall objective: Encouraging and evaluating the exceptional achievements of the young talents of Serbia in various fields, in terms of their further theoretical and professional training, and professional advancement.

Activities: Scholarship Fund for Young Talents - "Competition for scholarships for foreign studies in the school year 2018/2019" for 468 students; "Competition for scholarships for studies in the Republic of Serbia in the school year 2017/2018" for 1303 best students, "Competition for awarding prizes to high school students for successful achievements at recognized competitions in the economy and abroad during the calendar year 2017" when 1,624 students were awarded.

Indicative budget: EUR 6,758,236.23 (800,261,000 RSD)

Overview of the programs/instruments of the Provincial Secretariat of Sports and Youth for 2019¹⁵⁵

1. Projects in support of the implementation of Youth Policy

Overall objective: Support for the implementation of youth policy defined by the Youth Policy Action Plan in AP Vojvodina for the period 2015-2020 in eight areas: youth education; youth employment; youth health and youth social policy; youth culture and information; youth activism and youth leisure time; volunteerism and youth mobility; youth security; environmental protection and sustainable development.

Indicative Budget: EUR 123,190.31 (RSD 14,499,500)

2. Support for the establishment and empowerment of Local Youth Offices

Overall objective: Support to Local Youth Offices from the territory of the Autonomous Province Vojvodina in financing the functioning of the Local Youth Offices, through the procurement of equipment needed for the work of the offices and for the realization of their program activities, as well as for the fees of the person engaged in office work.

Indicative Budget: EUR 61,172.47 (RSD 7,200,000)

3. Fund for Talents

Overall objective: The program is aimed at affirmed young talents to support and ensure their continuity of work and success, the improvement of conditions for their work and further professional advancement.

Indicative Budget: EUR 11,979.61 (RSD 1,410,000)

¹⁵⁴ Fund for Young Talents, Ministry of Youth and Sports. Available at: <https://www.fondzamladetalente.rs/o-nama/>, accessed on June 10th, 2019

¹⁵⁵ Open Call for Youth Sector in 2018, Provincial Secretariat for Sports and Youth, Autonomous province Vojvodina. Available at: <https://www.sio.vojvodina.gov.rs/index.php/en/konkursi/konkurski-omladina/87-omladina/konkursi-omladina/2018/1152-konkursi-2018>



4. Novi Sad – European Youth Capital 2019

Overall objective: Support to the activities and goals related to the implementation of the program "NOVI SAD 2019 - Europe Youth Capital", which, in a comprehensive way, contributes to increasing the energy, innovation and creativity of young people, promoting Europe and European values, promoting diversity and human rights, increasing active participation of young people and increasing their involvement in decision-making processes, strengthening youth organizations, i.e. networking and joint action in the implementation of youth policies, and improving the position of youth from marginalized groups of society.

Indicative Budget: EUR 192,013.59 (RSD 22,600,000)

Total budget allocated through open calls during 2018 for the implementation of the Youth Policy Action Plan in Autonomous Province Vojvodina for the period 2015-2020 was EUR 388,355.99 (RSD 45,709,500).

Overview of the programs/instruments of the National Employment Service for 2018

The youth service package includes:

- 1) Assessment of the employability of the person;
- 2) Establishing an individual employment plan and measures that are most suitable for activation and raising the employability of young people;
- 3) Mediation in employment or involvement in active employment policy measures that can contribute to employment (professional orientation and career planning counselling, professional practice, employment subsidies and support for self-employment, functional basic education program, acquisition of practical knowledge, etc.).

In order to increase employment and reduce unemployment, the following programs and measures of the Active employment policy have been implemented, along with a presentation of changes throughout the time period 2015 to 2018:





Annex 3 List of interviews

No.	Institution	Sector	Contact Person	Position
1	Ministry of Youth and Sport	Governmental	Emilija Panić and Snežana Klačnja	Adviser
2	Belgrade Open School – BOŠ	CSO	Milica Škiljević	Manager
3	National Youth Council – KOMS	CSO	Milica Borjanić	Program Coordinator
4	National Association of Youth Workers – NAPOR	CSO	Nemanja Obradović	Program Coordinator
5	Union of high school students of Serbia	CSO	Aleksandar Nikolić	V.d president
6	UNFPA	Donor	Jovana Petrović and Nevena Sović	SRH and Youth Program Analyst UNFPA Serbia
7	Divac Foundation	CSO+Donor	Bojana	Manager
8	UN Human Rights Team (OHCHR Serbia)	Donor	Aleksandra Petrović	Head of UN HR Team
9	Boban Stojanović	Independent Researcher		
10	Jovana Krivokuća-Milovanović	CSO	Youth with Disabilities Forum	Executive director
11	Sonja Tosković	CSO	BCHR	Executive director
12	Marija Bulat Ivana Antonijević	Donor	RYCO	Head of Branch Office
13	Marija Radovanović	Donor	GIZ	Senior Project Manager
14	Aleksandra Anđelić	Donor	UNICEF	Youth Engagement
15	Bogdanka Tasić Perinović	Donor	UNDP	Project Coordinator
16	Irena Radanović	Donor	EU Delegation	



17	Srđan Mitrović	Donor	Tempus	Coordinator Youth Unit
18	Jovana Mihajlović	Donor	SDC	National Program Officer Migration and Youth Employment

