ABOUT TIME!
A reference manual for youth policy from a European perspective

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Youth Partnership

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A reference manual for youth policy from a European perspective

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Council of Europe and European Commission

The opinions expressed in this work, commissioned by the European Union–Council of Europe youth partnership, are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of either of the partner institutions, their member states or the organisations co-operating with them.

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Introduction

This reference manual for youth policy draws significantly on Finn Denstad's (2009) original work in the same area but also revises and develops it substantially. The manual published in 2009 derived from some particular models of youth policy development that seemingly had a sequential, systematic and linear character. In the light of a further 10 years' experience and knowledge of and inquiry into youth policy formulation, development and implementation at national level within the member states of the European Union and the Council of Europe, a more cyclical perspective is now proposed, within which youth policy making takes on a more dynamic character. On the one hand, it is informed and enabled by political championship, research and evaluation knowledge, professional debate and practice experience; on the other hand, it can also be obstructed by political change, an absence of timely and relevant knowledge transfer, professional infighting and practice inertia.

The reference manual explores youth policy making through the knowledge-gathering work conducted at European level in recent years, looking at theoretical and conceptual frameworks, the landscape of national and regional youth policy initiatives across Europe and the governance and support mechanisms that have been developed at European level by the Council of Europe and the European Union. While 10 years ago, policy makers had to be convinced of the need to ensure young people's participation in policy making, today the important principle of participation is understood and integrated, to various degrees, in policy making. Similarly, it is widely understood that some forms of evidence gathering and evaluation of past initiatives have to be carried out when planning new policy initiatives. Today, youth policy makers in Europe can resort to large knowledge and information databases on youth policy such as the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) or the EU Youth Wiki platform. A quick scan of these databases shows that the youth policy landscape is complex and diverse, but is driven by standards commonly debated and agreed by stakeholders in European forums.

So here we are, a decade after the first published manual, with a much richer understanding of youth policy set-ups, principles, governance, conceptual approaches, implementation and funding systems. Several themes have also emerged that have driven a European understanding and approach to youth policy making, and many instruments, tools and implementation systems have been rolled out at national and local level for the benefit of young people.

It is hoped that this new edition of the youth policy manual will energise those within the youth sector – those already within the policy arena, those in research, and those in practice, and of course the young people and their organisations involved in such initiatives – to recognise the contribution they can make to positive and purposeful youth policy making through better understanding, active engagement and grounded action. This reference manual aims to promote

reflection, dialogue and implementation and to shape a more realistic view of the cyclical nature of youth policy making.

Youth policy, as a concept, can range from being very narrowly to very broadly constructed. This manual begins with this broad idea of positioning youth policy in the general context of public policy. Thematically it focuses very specifically on those areas of youth policy that have been formulated, developed and driven at the level of European consensus: participation, information, volunteering, social inclusion, access to rights, youth work, mobility and digitalisation. These are, of course, also themes and issues that should lie at the heart of youth policy at every level of policy development and implementation; after all, many of them thread through most aspects of youth policy and practice. But the manual does not consider in any detail those specific aspects of youth policy that remain largely the prerogative of national or local public authorities – for example, formal education, vocational training and employment, health, housing, criminal justice, social protection and financial and economic independence. There may well be a European-level purview of these policy domains that is of relevance to the youth sector where they touch the lives of young people, but they have not been central to the deliberations of the youth sector at European level.

The place and purpose of the youth policy manual

The EU–Council of Europe youth partnership has already developed a range of other documents and resources to do with youth policy since the publication of the first youth policy manual. These include the following.

Youth policy essentials – a brief presentation of the key features of youth policy making (EU–Council of Europe youth partnership 2019).

Insights into youth policy governance – a user-friendly presentation of the diversity of national governance systems for youth policy and how they ensure youth participation (EU–Council of Europe youth partnership 2018a).

Massive open online course (MOOC): Essentials of youth policy – a course about the key features and processes of youth policy making and European resources to support them (available at https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/online-course-on-youth-policy).

Youth policy evaluation review (Lonean et al. 2020) and *Insights into youth policy evaluation* – a comparative study on how evaluation is applied in youth policy across Europe.

Country information on youth policy – a database of youth policy overviews at national levels, available in the EKCYP.

This revised youth policy manual sits, therefore, between providing a description of youth policy and sharpening an understanding of it. It is about what actors in the youth field need to do to optimise their contribution to youth policy making and

to sustain a momentum for youth policy in their countries. It is a practical guide to the challenges that are likely to emerge, the resources that are available, and the actions that are needed. Building on some essential conceptual thinking, it draws on a variety of sources and illustrations that have become available since the first youth policy manual was published.

This manual is aimed at all those within the fabled triangle or pyramid that constitutes the youth sector – those already working in youth policy at all levels, those involved in youth research, and practitioners in the youth field as well as young people and their organisations. Of course, those with long experience in the sector are likely to be already well informed about the structures of governance, familiar with at least some of the conceptual debates and knowledgeable about the instruments available to "make youth policy happen". However, unless that experience has been significantly at a European level, the manual will provide additional information on the European infrastructure of youth policy – its aspirations and guiding themes, governance, funding and delivery mechanisms – that may strengthen argument and advocacy for youth policy at national, regional and local levels. To help the readers engage with the content, the manual is structured in five parts.

- Part 1 is dedicated to concepts and ideas of youth policy, reflecting also on the dynamics of policy making and implementation.
- Part 2 describes the landscape of youth policy making at national level in European countries, looking at the diversity of governance systems and structures and roles that different actors play in policy design, funding, implementation and support systems.
- Part 3 looks at the European and international governance of youth policy and the role and resources available for national and local policy initiatives, from the European Union, the Council of Europe and the youth partnership between the two, to the United Nations system and the European Youth Forum as a platform bringing organised young people's perspectives to bear on policies designed to benefit them.
- Part 4 looks at instruments and mechanisms through the prism of the 10 themes and the resources developed through research, political debate, resources, tools and funding supporting national and transnational co-operation in the field of youth.
- Finally, Part 5 briefly explores what the research tells us about what works in youth policy in Europe today.

This manual is a reference tool for initiating youth policy and for learning about the diversity of national and international governance and infrastructure available for youth policy and for review of implementation. We hope the questions for reflection will help you to consider the youth policy puzzle and perhaps build the youth policy architecture in your context, from your own perspective, and will give enough pointers at all stages of policy making. Most importantly, the manual includes a wide range of standards, tools and resources that have been developed by youth policy makers, practitioners, researchers and activist young people across Europe since the publication of the first manual.

Good luck reading this manual for youth policy and making the best use of both the conceptual and more practical material it presents. If you would like to share feedback, reflections and thoughts about the manual, please contact the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership. Let's discover and develop European youth policy making together!

Part 1

Concepts and ideas

Chapter 1

What is "policy"?

Introduction

This chapter briefly considers the idea of "policy", both the wider social and public policy that responds to, and shapes, the lives of all people and the youth policy that in myriad ways – both as a distinct concept and as part of wider policy – responds to and shapes the lives of young people.

Social and public policy

Social policy, at its simplest, is policy within the societal domain. Social policy is concerned with the ways societies meet human needs for security, education, work, health and well-being. Public policy is a broader concept, famously described by Dye (2016) as "anything a government chooses to do, or not to do" but perhaps more usefully depicted as the decisions made by government to either act, or not act, in order to address or resolve a perceived problem. Public policy is a course of action that guides a range of related actions in a given field. It can, therefore, of course, encapsulate the social sphere, and so be "social policy", but it may span issues other than patently "social" ones, from military to economic considerations. While the broad sweep of "classical" social policy, according to Beland and Mahon (2016), has been concerned with issues such as solidarity and social citizenship, particularly through attention to equalities and rights, the authors argue that there are now also three contemporary "big ideas" and challenges in social policy – social exclusion, social investment and new social risks. These are the result of changing economic, social and demographic and, many would now also suggest, ecological circumstances, not least more women in paid work, ageing populations, labour market exclusion of those with low qualifications and the privatisation of "public" services (Taylor-Gooby 2004). This is mentioned here because these issues have an impact on young people from a number of directions and in a variety of ways, and this changes the nature of the imperative for social policy addressing particularly the needs of young people – notably adding further dimensions to the framework of "youth policy".

Policy emerges in diverse, sometimes mysterious and often complex ways. Policy can be enshrined in law, framed by guidelines, expressed through written or oral statements, launched by press releases, anchored in research documents, constructed through strategies or articulated in presentations. Policy emerges, usually, through many different combinations of these. Policy is sometimes described as the essential work of government. As Freeman (2009) has argued, policy formalises and structures the work of government, representing problems and challenges as "questions and positions, interpreting and converting them into decisions, programmes, and instruments". Indeed, as Howard Williamson suggested in his keynote presentation at the

First Global Forum on Youth Policies, policy is developed and implemented through "ideas, initiatives and instruments". The same area of policy (from housing to crime) or the same target group for policy (from children to old people, or mothers to problem drinkers) can manifest itself in many different ways, depending on principles and ideology, knowledge and awareness of programme options available, and the human, material and financial resources that can be enlisted. Like a cake, social and public policy can be sliced in many different ways. Again, somewhat simplistically, the broad aspiration of social policy is to ensure that societies are cohesive and secure, and their people comfortable, healthy and safe. And to achieve that end, policies are put in place to promote positive steps in that direction, prevent negative trajectories and protect those who are more vulnerable – in family life, communities and the economy.

We must also acknowledge right at the start that the politically expressed goals of public policy, when first articulated by government, are subject to interpretation and change as they find their way towards the ground. As Guba (1984) has argued, social policy can be viewed as "policy-in-intention", as having something to say about the purpose of a policy and why a particular policy may have been formulated in the first place; as "policy-in-implementation", including those actions, interactions, and behaviours that occur in the process of implementing the policy; and "policy-in-experience" linked to the experience of the persons whose original needs were targeted in the first place. This is not dissimilar to Evans' (1998) assertion that youth policy has to be considered at three stages: what is espoused, what is enacted and what is experienced. It is an important way of thinking about social and public policy generally, and youth policy in particular.

Wherever the momentum for social policy making may start (and it really can start in any corner of social life), if it is to take root, it ends up for review and ratification at governmental level, which may be local government, national government or, indeed, supranational government (such as the EU) or intergovernmental (such as the Council of Europe). In other words, policy is ultimately approved, progressed and evaluated at the level of politics. Parliamentary committees may conduct their own inquiries into aspects of public policy, and advise or criticise government departments. Departments and other public bodies (such as politically affiliated think tanks) may develop policy that is accepted or rejected by ministers. Ministers themselves may determine policies that are favoured or silenced by more senior ministerial colleagues and their advisers. In other words, even within the political environment, influence over policy development will be balanced in different ways across parliamentary, governmental and non-governmental players.

Prior to political decision making and any subsequent political drive, the evolution of public policy is likely to have been informed by "evidence". It is a popular policy mantra to proclaim that policy is "evidence-based". But what kind of evidence? Cynics sometimes counter claim that the approach is "policy-based evidence", not "evidence-based policy", arguing that policy development only makes use of evidence that squares with the political desire and direction of travel. Evidence that might undermine it is conveniently side-lined or overlooked. Hence the sensible advice that one should not confirm the evidence base of a policy document by looking at the evidential footnotes within it; one needs to look further afield for countervailing

evidence. Indeed, an even more fundamental question underpinning the making of public policy is that of the research framework that has been invoked to drive the policy. In relation to young people, this search for a framework will be discussed below.

Public and social policy therefore embraces a range of political measures directed towards the cohesion and presumed well-being of a society. These are usually grounded in some form of "evidence", though sometimes not (being more spontaneously reactive to events or driven by political whim and presumption); however, "evidence" is a very contestable concept and can be, as we have seen, drawn from and provided by many sources. The evidence behind public and social policy can be constructed in many different ways and for many different reasons. The most obvious public and social policies are those in the domains of education and training, employment, health, housing and justice, though others would include digital, transport, security and environment policies. All affect young people in some way, though some to a greater extent than others.

Youth policy

Youth policy exists in all countries to some degree or another, though it is often not explicit or coherent. Every country has a youth policy – by design, default or neglect. Youth policy, the frameworks of public policy that seek to reach and touch the lives of young people (who are differently defined by age or other criteria across countries), in both emancipatory and regulatory ways, takes many forms and involves a diversity of stakeholders and actors. Youth policy is rarely packaged coherently, though it may have a coherent core. It is invariably a somewhat disjointed mosaic, perhaps bound together with some overarching goals or strands, but more often constituted through a rather disparate collection of statements of intent and practical initiatives that often reveal significant fault lines in logic and consistency when subjected to any overarching scrutiny and analysis.[1] It is also critical to recall and check on the state of youth policy at any particular time. Policies set out in "10-year plans" may in fact last only a week! Pilot measures can quickly become embedded in mainstream policy and practice. Not only do governments come and go, but ministers do too; in both cases, there is likely to be change but perhaps also continuities. Sometimes initiatives carry on, but their name may change. Sometimes the names stay the same but the content of the initiative alters. The message is that the ideas within this reference manual are indicative, not conclusive: youth policy in any context is constantly evolving, shifting its priorities and practices and building from (or rejecting) different forms of "evidence". It is hoped, therefore, that the manual will equip readers with a more in-depth understanding of what shapes youth policy development and implementation, encourage their curiosity to critically interrogate the claims for and constitution of youth policy in their context, and arm them with the knowledge and skills to advocate for strengthening opportunity-focused, rights-based and democratic youth policy.

1. The classical, not completely hypothetical, example is of children's ministers invoking the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and celebrating young people as a resource whose voice must be heard, while down the government corridor the justice ministers are ignoring the said Convention, proclaiming that young people are a problem whose behaviour must be sanctioned, if necessary by more routine loss of liberty.

Conclusion

This short chapter has sought to convey the critical message that the vague but often attractive concept of "policy" invariably conceals and clouds a range of ideas derived from different sources, designed to achieve different purposes and developed in a range of directions. Within the broad canvas of "social and public policy" lies the idea of "youth policy" – sometimes a distinctive, almost "stand-alone" concept or sometimes embedded within wider social policy, and often both.

Questions for reflection

What is the social policy direction/focus in your country?

What influences the public policy in your country?

What are the driving developmental factors affecting the essence and priorities of public and social policies?

What are the underpinning conceptual/philosophical/theoretical foundations and approaches it is built on?

What is the place of youth policy in general social and public policies?

Chapter 2

Debates, approaches, models

Introduction

This chapter addresses what is perhaps the overarching goal of most youth policy: social inclusion. It also considers the mosaic that constitutes the broad framework of youth policy and suggests its foundational elements – dimensions of youth policy which, unless sufficiently developed, will render youth policy incomplete and ineffective.

Social inclusion

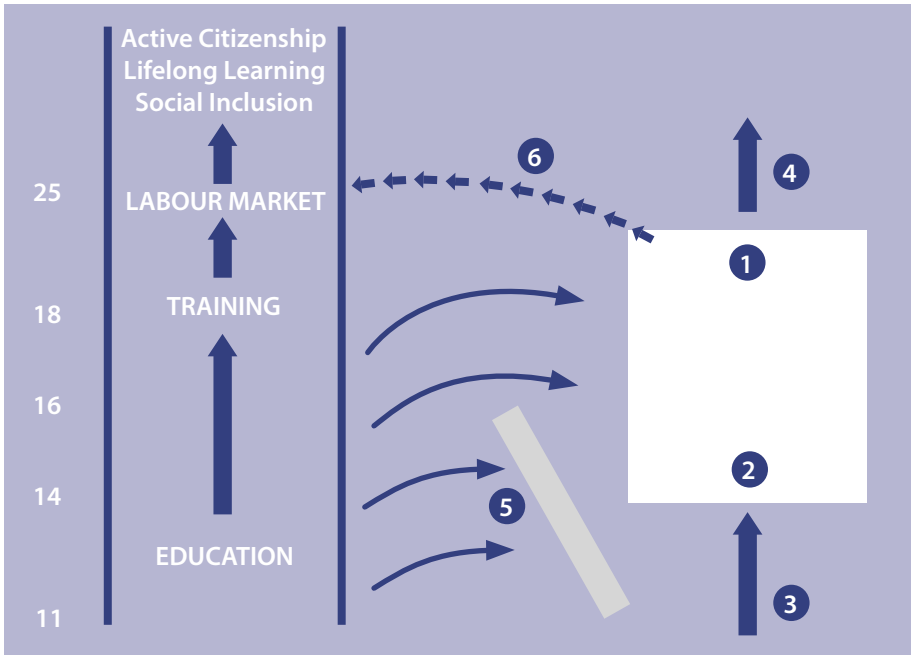
Arguably, the most significant overarching goal of youth policy, irrespective of its specific themes and aspirations, is to ensure equal opportunities for all young people – to be inclusive through establishing equal access to rights and possibilities. Youth policy often has a "vision" for young people that might be generically described, and is always rhetorically proclaimed, as supporting young people on a pathway (or highway) to successful futures: a vision of active citizenship, lifelong learning, social inclusion, and personal and community safety – originally, in 1999, a youth policy planning framework for the first devolved administration in Wales and later the basis for the Council of Europe youth policy indicators discussions in 2002-03.

However, youth policy also often depicts young people in very different ways and responds accordingly. Where it values young people (for example, those who are "well-behaved" and engaged in education, training or employment), policy is primarily emancipatory and opportunity-focused; where it perceives young people as victims or vulnerable (for example, those who have suffered abuse or who have learning disabilities), policy is more likely to be protective; where it considers young people to be "villains" (for example, those involved in "antisocial behaviour"), policy leans towards more regulatory and restrictive interventions. Of course, most young people are some mix of all three, just as most youth policy is also a similar combination. Youth policy accommodates the promotion of opportunity, protection from harm and the prevention and, if necessary, punishment of "deviance". In short, when most youth policy is carefully interrogated, one finds elements of preventative and promotional practice, support measures that are sometimes non-negotiable, and enforcement (often, ideally, as a last resort). It is the balance of these elements that demands consideration and sometimes challenge.

Despite an explicit determination to combat "social exclusion" in many countries, significant numbers of young people find themselves on the margins on account of circumstances such as early school leaving, health risk behaviours, premature

parenthood or youth offending. As a result, policy not only endeavours to strengthen the barriers required to combat social exclusion but also seeks to ensure there are appropriate bridges to support re-engagement with more positive and purposeful life-course directions. On the specific aspect of addressing social exclusion, there are some simple questions that demand answers, though the "answers" are invariably complex and the implications for policy therefore far from straightforward, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Simple questions, complex answers



Source: Howard Williamson's keynote speech at the launch of the UK Government's Children and Young People's Unit in 2000.

Scale and differentiation

1. What is the scale of the challenge? How big is the population in the "box"?
2. How should/could those in the "box" be differentiated?

Causes and consequences

3. What caused them to slip off, fall off, or be pushed off the main pathway?
4. What are the consequences if nothing is done, if policy "leaves the kids alone"?

Barriers and bridges

5. How can the preventative barriers be strengthened?
6. What kinds of bridges for re-engagement and reintegration are needed?

The beauty of this model for youth policy thinking is that it can be invoked for local, regional and national policy debate, and applied to any group or issue.

A complex mosaic – frameworks that cannot be cast in stone

Youth policy also exists at numerous levels. At the core, there may be national strategies and policies, though these are (or could be) guided by European and international frameworks and they also need to be moved forward through regional and local action. There is, therefore, a complex youth policy process, commencing usually with a political declaration or ratification, moving through strategic and operational planning and implementation by managers and practitioners, reaching and being experienced by young people, and (sometimes) being subjected to monitoring and evaluation. Throughout that process, from vision to delivery, there is, necessarily, interpretation, action, reaction, obstruction and revision. However, as Marris and Rein (1972, p. 260) wrote well over 40 years ago, albeit in an account of community development and social change projects:

> The whole process – the false starts, frustrations, adaptations, the successive recasting of intentions, the detours and conflicts – need to be comprehended. Only then can we understand what has been achieved, and learn from that experience. Even though no one ever again will make exactly the same journey, to follow the adventures of the projects offers a general guide to the dangers and discoveries of their field of action.

The same might easily be said of youth policy development, with its twists and turns, stops and starts, conflicts and consensus, and successes and failures. This manual cannot capture every nuance of youth policy development, delay and delivery, but it can tell a story (or stories) of that process, building on widespread experience throughout Europe over the past decade and more. Indeed, an early framework for thinking about "youth policy" derived from the findings of just seven of the Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy. Though subsequent learning called some issues into question and also demanded a broader spectrum of content, the framework (Table 1) remained one useful benchmark for thinking about "youth policy", alongside later alternatives, including those proposed within the original youth policy manual.

Table 1: A framework for thinking about "youth policy"

Defining concepts – "youth"/"youth policy".
Legislation and budget.
Structures for delivery.
Policy domains – such as education, health, housing, employment and justice.
Cross-cutting issues – such as participation, information, equal opportunities and social inclusion.
Underpinning enablers – training of professionals; information exchange; research.
Monitoring and evaluation.

Source: Williamson (2002).

Table 1 frames a number of areas for inquiry about youth policy, in order to be able to understand and explain youth policy more clearly. It is not a list of essential requirements for youth policy. Youth policy does not, for example, always require legislation, though it might be noted that without legislation, in some countries, policy is unlikely to be developed or supported. Conversely, however, laws do not necessarily guarantee appropriate action on the ground. Youth policy clearly does require financial support, though "budgets" for youth policy are deceptively hard to determine: resources often come from numerous sources, across government departments, from charitable foundations, private philanthropy and beyond. There are, then, further questions as to how such resources are deployed and the extent to which available resources reach their policy "targets" efficiently and effectively.

Tables and lists therefore demand incisive interrogation and careful scrutiny. Too often, we can be seduced by their convenience and simplicity, not only accepting them at face value but also passing them on as "fact" when they require deeper critical attention. There is usually, in fact, enormous overlap at every step in the procedures and processes of youth policy, whether in defining transition stages within the concept of "youth", developing appropriate structures for delivery (from the centre to the ground), or in the relationships between different policy domains. As one sharp observer once said, "you don't solve youth crime through criminal justice policy". The most effective policies to address youth offending lie elsewhere: in education, health, housing and employment. This raises questions not only about where responsibilities for elements of youth policy should be located (and it may not really matter, anyway) but also about who should take the lead. Should, for example, policies around substance misuse by young people be led by education, or health, or the police? Sometimes some of the most creative, imaginative and progressive youth policy thinking emerges from the least expected sources.

Some important questions – the five "C"s and in which direction to slice the cake?

What is important as a foundational element to youth policy thinking is what has come to be known as the five "C"s.

The "components" for effective youth policy - the five "C"s:

Coverage
Capacity
Competence
Co-operation
Cost

Source: Williamson (2002).

Youth policy initiatives need to make sure that they are comprehensive enough to reach those young people they are designed to reach (Coverage). It is relatively

easy to produce policy aspiration and intention but there have to be "structures for delivery" (see Table 1): these do not need to be institutions of the national, regional or local state and could be youth organisations and other NGOs (Capacity). In many areas of youth policy (notably education, health and justice), there needs to be access for young people to appropriate levels of professional skill (Competence). To avoid both insularity and the risk of duplication, and to promote synergy and synchronicity, those involved in youth policy need to ensure platforms for dialogue, exchange and complementarity (Co-operation). And, ultimately, youth policy can only be effective if supported with sufficient human and financial resources (Cost).

As noted, like a cake, youth policy can – indeed, has to – be sliced in different ways if we are to properly understand it. Youth policy takes shape – and takes its shape – in many different ways and forms and, indeed, with increasing pressure and demand to both universalise (ensure that youth policy offers are accessible and available to all) and specialise (ensure that youth policy offers reach particular "targets"), is increasingly cross-sectional, not just cross-sectoral. Youth policy delivery ranges across places, contexts, cohorts, groups and issues, as Table 2 suggests.

Table 2: Cross-sectional youth policy

Places (pilot projects and/or priority areas).
Contexts (schooling, leisure, family, culture, justice, etc.).
Whole populations/cohorts (within age bands).
Specific **Target groups** (young offenders, young people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, young people from public care systems).
Particular **Issues** (substance misuse, rough sleeping, antisocial behaviour).
Infrastructure challenges (delivery mechanisms, workforce development).

It should be clear that each of these channels of youth policy is not completely independent of the others and there are always questions as to whether overlap is a form of reinforcing effective targeting or indulging in unnecessary and wasteful duplication. For example, if a youth information strategy promoting youth mobility is focused only on schools in disadvantaged areas and on young people in public care systems, is that a "concentrated fusillade" seeking to reach young people most in need of such information? Or does it neglect many other young people equally in need of it? If such a strategy was universally applied, might that be viewed as a rather wasteful "scatter-gun approach", committing significant resources to many young people who did not need it?

Moreover, there are always youth policy questions as to who should deliver different initiatives and services and whether or not they are properly equipped to do so. These are infrastructure questions about delivery mechanisms and the training of those charged with that delivery. Imagine youth policy plans for an initiative around personal and community safety. Are police officers best placed to deliver the key messages, or would the desired impact be better served by social workers or teachers, or indeed youth workers?

A final, persisting youth policy question is in fact a classic social policy question to do with universal or selective (or targeted) provision. There are strengths and weaknesses in each. Public policy has increasingly moved in the direction of more targeted approaches, in the proclaimed interests of "spending wisely" and "focusing resources". Politicians are skilful at invoking clever mantras such as providing a "universal service differentiated according to need", suggesting that although theoretically available to all, in practice there is likely to be a focus on those most "in need". The prevailing professional view from the youth sector, however, especially from activists and advocates within youth organisations, is that while there will clearly be young people who are more "at risk" than others and who do need more support, youth policy should generally target all young people and consider them as rights holders. In other words, where policy is developing particular provision, and in order to avoid stigmatisation, all those young people who feel that they need to benefit from it should be ensured, and entitled, to access it. Fortunately, there is still a diversity of approaches to youth policy on the European continent and at least some elements of youth policy are still built on universalist principles with measures and services offered and accessible to all young people.

Conclusion

The idea of "youth policy" is framed and debated in many different ways. Its overriding objective is often considered to be "social inclusion", though this itself is a contested concept, as societies seek both to "win consent" and to "coerce compliance" – rarely in equal measure, depending on perceptions of "youth" and the extent to which it is believed there is a need for emancipatory or regulatory opportunity and intervention (see Davies 1986). Moreover, there are recurrent debates as to the extent to which policies directed towards young people should be universally accessible or specifically targeted at those considered to be most "in need" of them.

Questions for reflection

How are young people perceived in your society?

Who is considered to be "youth"?

When and how are people transitioning from child to youth, from youth to adult?

What is the underlying thinking that informs youth policy in your context (for example, emancipation, protection, regulation, promotion, restriction)?

How are various paradigms/approaches balanced, and what determines this balance? What prevails in your policies, universality or targeted approach?

Which young people does your national youth policy particularly focus on?

What shapes the youth policy debate about its direction, priorities and goals?

How is "cross-sectionality" addressed and dealt with in your youth policy debates?

What instruments ensure it?

Chapter 3

Researching young people and the quest for evidence

Introduction

As noted above, there is a recurrent demand for policy, including youth policy, to be "evidence-based". Indeed, it is routinely claimed that youth policy is solidly grounded in evidence. But what kinds of evidence? What exactly is the research base when it comes to youth policy making? There are many choices to be made here; there is not just one simple scientific blueprint. Let us think through just some of the options about the kind of research that may help us to understand both the general "social condition"[2] of young people in Europe and some of the specific challenges that may be affecting or shaping their lives – the kind of research that should be the catalyst for more commitment to various forms of "youth policy". Not all youth research is necessarily designed to inform youth policy (see Petkovic et al. 2019), but a great deal of the findings of youth research can be invoked to argue, in different ways, in favour of different aspects of youth policy. Smith et al. (1996) described the diversity of research approaches to discovering and uncovering the "social condition" of young people that, in turn, might inform various justifications for dimensions of, and aspirations of, youth policy.

What is "youth"?

Defining "youth" has constantly exercised the minds of youth sociologists and those involved in youth policy. This has always been a challenge, even when the concept hardly existed (see Gillis 1981) or as the idea of youth steadily entered public consciousness (see Savage 2007). Those involved in policy concerned with youth invariably invoke age definitions, striking some form of boundary between "childhood" and "adulthood", within which "youth" can be located, though there are inevitably overlaps between them. As a result, "youth", once considered to be a relatively short time period that coincided with puberty and adolescence – somewhere in the mid-teenage years – is now often considered to stretch downwards to around the age of 11 and upwards to at least 25, sometimes 30 and, in a few countries, even 40. The reasons for this, it is argued, is that while children now grow up faster, adulthood is often deferred. The broader age range provides a baseline

2. This is a term first used by the sociologist Paul Willis in his "youth review" for an English municipality, on the social conditions of young people in Wolverhampton in 1984. He argued that irrespective of national youth policy, there was a place for local youth policy that was positively responsive to the needs of young people locally. He presented these arguments to the Council of Europe in 1986 (Willis, P. et al. 1985).

for "youth" policy, though necessarily there has to be some subdivisions within it, usually still with a primary focus on young people somewhere between the ages of 15 and 25 or 30. Age is, of course, a proxy measure: the concept of "youth" is as much guided by status, particularly with regard to questions of autonomy, independence and freedom for decision making. While formally defined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as persons up to the age of 18, children now often become more autonomous at a younger age in some ways (and "some ways" is important to remember). However, "youth" often does not achieve full adult status (again, in some ways at least) until well into classical and chronological adulthood, particularly as young people often remain in education for so much longer. Young adults have been described, for this reason, as "quasi-citizens" (see Jones and Wallace 1992), and Williamson (1985), as a youth worker, observed that young people were becoming "trapped as teenagers" – youth workers were so preoccupied with the "acute anxieties of adolescence" that they were failing to notice the emerging "chronic crisis of young adulthood".

It is that situation that led sociologists, subsequently, to consider multiple transitions to adulthood, not just the transition from school to work. Beyond those economic transitions, there are also housing transitions, as young people move from dependent to independent living, and family transitions, as young people move from family of origin to family of destination. There may be other equally significant but perhaps less commonplace transitions for some young people. But whereas these transitions used to take place sequentially in the past (work, housing, family), they are now far more complex in their interrelationship, both between each other and over time (see Furlong and Cartmel 1997). It is this complexity that compels researchers to take considerable care when talking about, and seeking to understand the circumstances of, "youth" in order to contribute to the making of youth policy. We may tire of hearing the mantra that "youth is not an homogeneous group", but it remains critically true. By age group, education or employment status, living conditions, level of responsibility, geographical location, ability and disability, and many other things – as well as the usual classical differentiation by social class, ethnicity and gender – "youth" embodies many characteristics and experiences. We group "youth" together at some risk. Nevertheless, with that enormous caveat, we may still have to consider understanding youth as a category in our advocacy for the idea of "youth policy".

There are, nevertheless, many different ways in which we might explore "evidence" about young people in order to inform the future and further development of youth policy. Below, seven sets of questions are considered, each of which provides rather different answers and implications for youth policy.

Trends over time

One starting point for seeking to renew commitment to youth policy is to consider trends in the circumstances and lifestyles of young people over time. The methodology to determine such trends can, however, take different forms. Two are paramount. First, there are comparisons between different cohorts of young people, at the same points in their lives and with the same "classifying" characteristics (typically social class, ethnicity or gender, but also geography or disability, or even offending records or

schooling circumstances) but at different points in time. This allows for generational contrasts on issues such as leaving school, educational qualifications, levels of social exclusion, housing tenure, family formation or employment stability. Such analysis is costly and paints "broad brush" conclusions about the longer-term changes taking place in young people's lives and therefore, perhaps, areas where more support and positive intervention (or sanction and regulation) may now be required. For example, it was reported recently that in the United Kingdom, only one in four "middle income millennials" own their own homes, whereas 20 years ago, the level of home ownership amongst that group was 65%. Access to (affordable) housing – and its implications for disposable income, occupational aspiration and family formation is a huge youth policy challenge for the current cohort of young people. Secondly, there are data derived from the longitudinal study of the same young people over time. These provide powerful evidence of the longer-term consequences of earlier events, pointing to probable relationships (not iron laws). One can then think of relevant policy measures over the life course, perhaps to strengthen childhood experiences in order to improve prospects in young adulthood, or to strengthen youth policy initiatives to enhance prospects in adulthood and old age. Beyond numerous methodological challenges within this approach (not least considerable attrition, as there are fewer and fewer respondents to the survey), its main weakness is the time lag: policy debate is being informed by data that are already significantly out of date. For example, a UK minister once said, in 1998, reporting on newly published data, that "it is better to stay at home and watch TV than go to a youth club". She was drawing on an analysis of life-course outcomes from a 1970 birth cohort study which showed evidence of worse outcomes at age 26 for those who had attended youth clubs at age 16 (in other words, some 10 years earlier, and – however strong the validity of the data reported – presuming that the quality of youth work had not changed in the intervening years).

Across whole generations

There is, however, another set of comparisons that might be made in relation to the "social condition" of young people, not with their predecessors, and not with themselves at an earlier stage in their lives, but with other age groups – that is with the rest of us, now. Have the "terms of trade", the "rules of engagement" or the "generational contract" changed significantly over the past two or three decades? We have to consider this question as it applies to all young people, not just those in more disadvantaged circumstances. But it is extremely difficult to interrogate and answer. Pinning down the nature of the question more precisely is problematic. Are we talking about the share of resources allocated to young people, or the type of opportunities, or the quality of experiences? What about the distribution of those resources, whether they are an investment in positive opportunities or more about containment and control, and whether they are allocated to organisational and professional support, or more directly to young people in the form of wages, benefits or grants? How are gains in one area of policy weighed against losses in another? This notion of a "balance sheet" may be very difficult to explore, and extrapolate conclusions from, but it should not be side-tracked for that reason. There may be some absence of "scientific" evidence, but the arguments are pervasive: while young people in Europe today may have peace and security, technology, education,

democracy, mobility and a wider canvas of opportunity, they also face occupational insecurity, unemployment, a shrinking civic space, populism, burgeoning mental health problems, threats within social media and an impending climate crisis. Youth policy, arguably, has to rebalance generational inequities.

Amongst young people themselves – fractured transitions

A third set of questions, the one that is often paramount in youth policy deliberations, draws implicitly from some of the evidence available from the other methodologies but focuses more on the specific issues arising from the lengthening and complexities of youth transitions. For well over a generation now, youth studies academics have discussed "fractured" or "broken" transitions and how these have become extended/prolonged, reversible, have multiple dimensions (school to work, family of origin to family of destination, dependent to independent living – and perhaps a more "street culture" transition from leisure-time deviancy to more embedded criminality for economic survival) and are characterised, simultaneously, by greater opportunity and risk (Furlong and Cartmel 1997). Young people are, at the same time, both more autonomous and more vulnerable, with autonomy and vulnerability playing out in different ways for different groups of young people. Academics have sought to describe and analyse the "trajectories", "navigations", "niches" and "pathways" (Evans and Furlong 1997) that now reflect youth transitions, and youth policy has endeavoured, in many different ways, to reinforce positive approaches to the future during this increasingly extended period.

Between different groups of young people

A fourth set of questions for which evidence is sought has to do with the growing gap in experiences, opportunities and outcomes for different groups of young people – what Gill Jones (2002) has referred to as the "youth divide". Has the gap widened between those who succeed and those who do not? Is it possible to identify those groups of young people who become systematically socially excluded from better opportunities through failure (partly through lack of support) at critical stages in their lives? To what extent does the impact of increased diversity of choice and opportunity – itself partly a result of intentional policy as well as wider economic and social change – play out very differently for different groups of young people, perhaps with more advantaged young people taking more advantage and the reverse applying to those who start with fewer opportunities (the notorious "Matthew effect"). This raises policy questions about choice and compulsion: if some interventions are considered to be valuable and important for young people, should young people be compelled to take part in them? Kurt Hahn said that it was an abdication of social responsibility not to "impel young people into new experiences" (see Hogan 2002). Within this approach to analysing the "social condition" of young people, one has to consider the persisting impact of traditional inequalities shaped by factors such as social class, gender or ethnicity together with more recent risks such as environmental pollution or the sudden collapse of industry, which can have a sudden and unexpected effect on the life chances of those groups or individuals affected (see Beck 1992). While there are now more choices and options, as well as more pitfalls and risks, rather less is known about their consequences. Though societies may

have become more "individualised", with young people expected more and more to determine their own "choice biographies", we know that what was once sometimes considered to be "benign neglect" (sometimes called "judicious non-intervention" – preferring to "leave the kids alone", untouched by youth policy that might have stigmatising and labelling effects) is now more likely to be "malign indifference" (Drakeford and Williamson 1998); if we do nothing for young people at greater risk, their prospects of becoming excluded over the long term and "scarred" for life will be dramatically increased.

Geographical and historical considerations

Research also needs to consider the importance of locality. Whatever other divisions and equalities prevail, we are aware of major social and economic polarisation not only between but also within European countries, and not only between rural and urban areas but also within cities, with the concentration of the more socially disadvantaged in some neighbourhoods. There are also strong regional disparities, some of which traverse contemporary national boundaries. And at times, the legacies of history – through culture, politics and religion in particular – also bear down on this geographical landscape. All of this, in various ways, affects broad life chances and more specific issues such as access to education, employment, leisure and housing, and the nature of education, identity and citizenship. Where people live is, of course, a major factor in migration, between countries and from the countryside to the city. And although there are certainly policy implications around this "geographical" evidence, they are by no means clear: there is a spectrum of alternatives, ranging from strengthening opportunities "at home", to improving capacity and services in places of destination.

Perspectives from young people

There is also "evidence" from young people themselves, namely their own views and attitudes on many of the issues mentioned above, based on their own experiences and expectations. Moreover, societies, especially those with ageing populations, have increasing expectations of the young, as indeed do families having fewer children. The voice of young people within the policy debate has certainly increased – through improved structures of representation, participation and engagement – but we may still need to know more about what shapes their sense of identity, and the meaning and relevance they ascribe to the policy context that affects their lives.

Since 2003 in Ireland, for example, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA) Participation Unit has collaborated with government departments and state agencies by conducting consultations, surveys and dialogues with children and young people on a wide range of policy, practice and legislative initiatives. In 2017, the DCYA established the "Hub na nÓg", a national centre of excellence and co-ordination that supports government departments, state agencies and non-governmental organisations in giving children and young people a voice in decision making on issues that affect their lives, with a particular focus on those that are seldom heard. The DCYA committed to the establishment of the Hub to support implementation of the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making 2015-20 (for more information, see https://hubnanog.ie/consultations/).

The contexts and issues shaping young people's lives

Finally, there is also the "evidence" that flows from a deeper understanding of the specific contexts of young people's lives and the issues that emerge from them. For policy purposes, we may wish to know more about the spectrum of educational attainment and underachievement, considering factors such as attendance and support. We may wish to explore young people's leisure and lifestyles, perhaps to consider available "options", from youth groups and sports clubs to commercial venues and self-organised activities, the latter of which may range from voluntary work to substance misuse. Indeed, on the specific issue of volunteering, we may want to explore why some young people are ardent volunteers on a range of fronts, while others do very little or no voluntary work at all. Or we may seek to understand the relationship between the night-time economy, alcohol consumption and knife crime in order to shape policies that construct a safer environment.

Conclusion

This manual is not concerned with research methods. It simply needs to be noted that the collection of "evidence", for any of the reasons above invariably depends on some combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative methods are more desirable for revealing experiences and connections, and for explaining what may be taking, or has taken, place. Qualitative methods are more able to illuminate why and how such experiences and connections have taken place. Research methods are constantly evolving, whether using surveys or interviews, observation or participation, or more innovative approaches such as photo-elicitation. The instruments available for research have also become more sophisticated, largely as a result of technology. No longer are researchers dependent solely on paper or tape recorders! What has not changed is the credibility of different methodologies. Some approaches to securing evidence are considered to be more robust than others; it is always important, however, to recognise that while drawing "conclusions" may be the gold standard sought after as a scientific benchmark, the art of shedding light on a particular issue, and its relationship with other aspects of young people's lives, may also be very important in contributing to the youth policy debate.

In conclusion, it is easy to assert the need for "evidence" on which to base youth policy development, but on digging a little deeper into this assertion it becomes clear that there are many forms of evidence that may be invoked for different reasons. One of those reasons, as Coles (2000) has argued, is political convenience and expediency: there is plenty of evidence to choose from and, rather than tussling with sometimes competing evidence or conflicting interpretation, policy making prefers to select only that evidence that supports its direction of travel. At least being aware of that can assist reflection and thought as to why particular evidence has been chosen to underpin particular youth policy initiatives.

There is, further, the thorny question of the relationship between researchers and decision makers in policy and politics. Both parties can be reluctant to engage in dialogue and, typically, they inhabit different networks. Strengthening that dialogue and connecting those networks has been a particular mission of the youth sector (see Milmeister and Williamson 2006), though it remains a challenge to establish

and maintain platforms for exchange, not least because researchers can (for various reasons) be reluctant to get too close to policy-making processes, while political decision-making machinery invariably reserves the right to select and interpret research "knowledge" as it sees fit. Tensions will therefore always persist, but the evolution and development of youth policy will undoubtedly benefit from a greater commitment to sharing views; otherwise the youth policy "clock" (see Chapter 4) will grind to a halt.

Questions for reflection

What kind of evidence is used to inform your youth policy?

How is it gathered, by whom, and how participatory is this process?

Who decided what evidence is needed?

How representative, balanced and focused is the evidence on various groups of young people?

Are young people part of the "policy informers"?

How is research independence ensured?

Is an "evidence base" a principle enshrined in your youth policy documents?

How do you ensure the up-to-date nature of the evidence used in policy making?

What are the mechanisms/instruments for the evidence to impact and shape youth policies at various stages?

On which platforms can policy makers and researchers meet and collaborate?

Chapter 4

The youth policy "clock": making youth policy happen

Introduction

Youth policy evolves, of course, over time. But different dimensions of youth policy evolve over very different lengths of time, depending on many factors but critically on the strength and depth of political championship. Where senior politicians, at any level, agree that "something needs to happen", something usually does, though it may not necessarily be grounded in robust evidence, allocated an appropriate budget nor supported by the professional field.

In May 2005, in Warsaw, officials were wrongfooted when Council of Europe Secretary General Terry Davis announced a second "All Different – All Equal" campaign. There was no budget allocated and it was not part of the work plan, but nevertheless it went ahead, running for a year between 2006 and 2007. Similarly, in September 2016, European Commission President Juncker, in his "state of the Union" address, said he could not accept a Europe of youth unemployment and announced a European Solidarity Corps, to have 100 000 participants by the end of 2020. The "target" was reached, albeit with some skilful juggling of the statistics in order to include existing participants in the European Voluntary Service programme (now scrapped in favour of the European Solidarity Corps) and some very flexible interpretations of what could be included! In both cases, the political aspiration was delivered, though each initiative needed creative strategic and budgetary thinking for the vision to hit the ground.

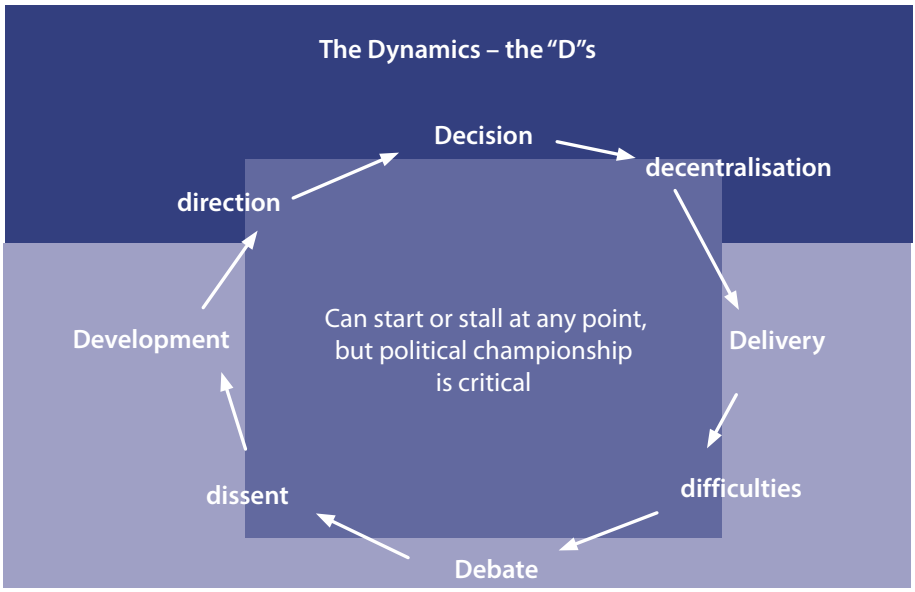
In 1997, in the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Blair announced a "New Deal" for Young People in fulfilment of a Labour Party election manifesto commitment to move 250 000 unemployed 18-24-year olds from welfare to work. In this example, huge resources were made available to make it happen but the Prime Minister wanted a report on progress every single week. It was a massive logistical challenge but the very generous budget, together with flexible systems for delivery, meant that everything was in place for its national roll-out by January 1998 – just five months after people started working on it. Youth policy can be developed and implemented very fast when high-level political championship is at the heart of it.

Conversely, even where there is robust evidence pointing to the need for particular developments, and these are also advocated by the field, when there is little or limited political appetite for a policy initiative, and insufficient budget to fuel a concerted policy drive, then that dimension of youth policy is likely to be deferred and delayed.

The youth policy "clock"

That the differential time youth policy may take to be established, however theoretically obvious, became confirmed empirically during the Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy. Reflection and analysis from the first seven reviews (1997-2001) confirmed strongly that various elements of youth policy not only evolved at a different pace but also could accelerate or slow down at any time. Momentum had to be maintained or youth policy evolution could stall. There was an inherent dynamic within youth policy formulation, implementation and review, that could be characterised as a cycle or a "clock", as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: The "dynamics" – the "D"s – of youth policy



Source: Williamson 2002.

It is important to register, and repeat, that "youth policy" – or elements of it – can start or stall at any point. Local projects have been known to attract wider interest and become the blueprint for national and indeed international initiatives. Professional advocacy for particular measures can sometimes win political hearts and minds. Learning from existing practice may alter the shape and format of subsequent policy formulation. Equally, changes in the political climate, the public administration or the professional environment (when other priorities take precedence) can stop the pace of development of youth policy in its tracks.

Decision – and drive

The pivotal moment in any youth policy cycle is, however, the securing of political support for the project or initiative, culminating in a decision to move – even drive – a policy idea forward.

The securing of political championship and decision – rather like the establishment of laws, decrees or resolutions at national level – does not necessarily guarantee anything but, equally, without it, youth policy development is likely to flounder.

Delivery

The production of youth policy aspirations following political ratification – through laws, policies, strategies and plans – is actually relatively easy. These are words on paper. For them to have any effect, there have to be mechanisms to turn them into action. This requires decentralisation through regional and local structures, both governmental and non-governmental. The delivery of youth policy can be operationalised by a variety of means.

There are, inevitably, difficulties encountered, commonly known as unintended or unforeseen consequences, or "perverse behaviour" arising from poorly constructed "targets" or policy objectives. Measuring police effectiveness on the basis of the number of arrests made may not be ideal if police officers take the easy route and start to arrest young people for the most trivial of offences – what is sometimes known as "cherry picking" or "picking the low-hanging fruit". Where there are reputational or financial pressures on organisations charged with delivery, they will naturally go for the "easy" targets. This is sometimes referred to as the "Pistachio effect", where the hard nuts to crack are quietly avoided or put back in the bowl.

Debate

Whatever the reason or explanation for the difficulties, further debate is clearly needed in order to address and resolve them. This requires practitioners and providers to come together again, very easy to say but sometimes hard to execute. Transversal and "intersectoral" or "inter-professional" practice is, rhetorically, always desirable (the collaboration and co-operation in the "C"s above), but each professional group involved invariably has its distinct values and philosophy, modes of practice and organisational priorities.

Cross-sectoral practice often rests on a "precarious equilibrium" of organisational, professional and, indeed, personal relationships (see Williamson and Weatherspoon 1985; Williamson 2017).

The trigger for debate is often the evaluation of policy, yet we have to take some care here. Youth policy evaluation can carry very different meanings (see Lonean et al. 2019). It is, of course, an important anchor for professional discussion of policy initiatives, though even at this point in the "clock", there can be controversies over the methodologies adopted, the issues prioritised and the conclusions reached. Even the most robust and prestigious evaluation research, unilaterally endorsed by the field, can still find itself ignored, side-lined or suppressed when policy is being further developed (see below) if it is not politically convenient. Nevertheless, the youth sector lags behind other fields with a more recognised place for evaluation in their policy-making processes. This ensures more transparency in, and understanding of, policy and practice. Youth policy needs to invest more in evaluation and in publicly debating the results with relevant stakeholders.

Development

Sooner or later, dissent and differences of opinion have to be overcome, if further development of youth policy is to be secured. No politicians want to engage with, let alone extend support to, a warring field (this has, arguably, often been a challenge within the youth sector). Some consensus is necessary if new directions are to be agreed and advocated, with the expectation and hope of renewed and continuing political support.

The Council of Europe international reviews of national youth policy, as a major influence on the direction of youth policy within the Youth Department of the Council of Europe during the period in which they were conducted (1997-2016), initially helped to establish an early framework for thinking about the idea of "youth policy" in Europe (see Williamson 2002). This was incrementally developed over the years. However, the youth policy contexts explored by the reviews eventually became overwhelming and beyond the competence and core business of the Youth Department. In 2017 a robust debate refined the key youth policy areas in which the Youth Department felt it was appropriate for the Council of Europe to provide youth policy support measures to member states: participation, information, access to rights, social inclusion, mobility and youth work. These are also key youth policy areas for the European Union and, complemented by a number of other youth policy themes, constitute the focus of this manual, as the prevailing and predominant youth policy issues in Europe.

Conclusion

Though it may perhaps seem a bit contrived, it is not unreasonable to consider the evolution of youth policy as akin to an analogue clock – ticking along, needing to be wound up, sometimes stopping and occasionally gathering speed. Rarely do all factors come together to produce a "perfect storm" of youth policy momentum; more often different factors, ranging from political change to austerity measures, impede the pace of development. But there is, eventually at least, development. Youth policy was hardly even a concept a few decades ago. Today it is an integral part of policy dialogue with, as we shall demonstrate in Part 2 and Part 3, significant national and transnational infrastructure and, as we document in Part 4, considerable resources to support it. That does not mean that youth policy development is inevitable. It still needs to make its case, argue its corner and compete with other demands on resources. That is no easy task and it demands a skilful balance that contains both robust internal debate (and, invariably, some dissent) and strong external advocacy, through effective alliances across what might be called a "youth policy" community of practice.

Questions for reflection

Can you think of one area of youth policy in your context that was established rapidly?

Can you think of one area of youth policy in your context that took a long time to become established?

Can you think of reasons for the differences between the two?

Where did a particular aspect of youth policy start?

Why did a particular aspect of youth policy stop?

What has sustained momentum for particular areas of youth policy?

What has stalled the momentum for particular areas of youth policy?

Conclusion to Part 1

Part 1 of this manual, following Kant's observation that "there is nothing more practical than a good theory", has: outlined the concept of policy, including youth policy (Chapter 1); discussed what is often regarded as the overarching goal of youth policy – social inclusion and equal opportunities (Chapter 2); considered the different ways in which "evidence" may be produced to inform youth policy (Chapter 3); and proposed that youth policy decision making at a political level, delivery and implementation, professional debate and (further) development should be viewed rather like a "clock", though ticking at different speeds and always able to both start and stop at different points (Chapter 4). Some of the key structures, actors and mechanisms for determining the development of youth policy at national level are considered in Part 2, and at European and international levels in Part 3. The key instruments and resources for the delivery of youth policy – its implementation on the ground – are discussed in Part 4. Part 5 considers some of the evidence as to "what works" in youth policy. A short conclusion draws the manual to a close.

Part 2

National governance and infrastructure

Introduction

Parts 2 and 3 of the manual focus on youth policy governance. "Governance" is a complex term that is not easily defined in a comprehensive format, but it is understood here as the way in which power is exercised in the management of youth policy in three areas.

- Who has a voice in decision making and shaping youth policy?
- How are youth policy decisions executed?
- Who is accountable for youth policy decisions?

Youth policy is governed by a wide range of actors and structures at all levels, from community and local level to international and intergovernmental level. As youth policy is an umbrella term, it is not necessarily linked to a single institution or articulated in a single strategy document, but can be a set of established policy practices developed by different legislative and executive actors. Hence the categories outlined in Parts 2 and 3 go beyond formal institutions and cover a broader landscape of actors and infrastructure.

Part 2 is concerned with the different ways in which youth policy is developed, governed and structured at national level and is divided into three chapters. The first, Chapter 5, focuses on governance (from local and community level to central government level). Chapter 6 considers mechanisms for youth policy implementation, including cross-sectoral co-operation, infrastructure and funding issues. Chapter 7 discusses the question of evidence and accountability.

Chapter 5

National youth policy governance

Introduction

Although international organisations play an important role in developing and consolidating various aspects of youth policy, the governance of most youth policy lies primarily in the hands of national authorities and other stakeholders (including subnational, regional and local actors). This chapter looks into three areas of governance at national level, including the legal basis for youth policy and the role of legislative and executive authorities in youth policy governance.

Legal basis

Youth and young people are referred to in a number of basic laws of European countries either implicitly or explicitly. The constitutions of most European countries provide at least a definition of the age of maturity as coinciding with active voting rights (eligibility to vote) but differing sometimes from the age at which passive voting rights are granted (eligibility to stand in elections). Many basic laws contain provisions dealing with the special protection afforded by the state to minors, orphans and other "vulnerable" groups, often based on international texts (such as those of the United Nations or the Council of Europe) dealing with human rights and the rights of the child. Legislative provisions applicable to young people are also to be found in laws, procedural or substantive legal codes relating to civil, criminal and family law and laws of succession and inheritance. In countries with a consolidated national youth policy or framework, youth policy can be anchored in higher order legislation, e.g. the constitution. For example, in Finland, Chapter 2, Section 6 of the Constitution stipulates that "Children shall be treated equally and as individuals and they shall be allowed to influence matters pertaining to themselves to a degree corresponding to their level of development".

The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic (2005) contains a separate article devoted to youth (Article 70).

1. In order to ensure the effective fulfilment of their economic, social and cultural rights, young people shall enjoy special protection, particularly:
    a) In education, vocational training and culture;
    b) In access to their first job, at work and in relation to social security;
    c) In access to housing;
    d) In physical education and sport;
    e) In the use of their free time.

2. The priority objectives of the youth policy must be the development of young people's personality, the creation of the conditions needed for their effective integration into the active life, a love of free creativity and a sense of community service.
3. In co-operation with families, schools, enterprises, residents' organisations, cultural associations and foundations and cultural and recreational groups, the state shall foster and support youth organisations in the pursuit of the said objectives, as well as international youth exchanges.

In other countries with a national youth policy framework, youth policy is itself part of a wider development framework. In Lithuania, both youth and youth policy are part of the national development framework, notably the Lithuania 2030 National Progress Strategy.

A number of European countries have specific laws concerning young people, whereas others embed issues of youth under specific sectoral law, for example on education or employment. In 1993 Ukraine adopted a law on assisting the social condition and development of youth. In Flanders, the authorities of the Flemish community of Belgium set out a detailed regulation relating to young people, and more particularly to the recognition of representative youth bodies in the Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012 (Government of Flanders 2012) on a renewed youth and children's rights policy. In Italy, although no specific legislation has been adopted at national level, half of the regions of Italy have adopted youth-related laws in those areas under their direct responsibility. Legislation in Iceland includes two laws dealing specifically with young people: the law on youth policies, which serves to define government aid granted to youth organisations, and which also deals with their establishment, and the law on youth activities. Slovenia has an elaborate national youth policy framework comprising a law on youth as well as a law on the National Youth Council guaranteeing its funding from the state budget.

Estonia, too, has two main youth laws: the Child Protection Act, which defines the principles of ensuring the rights and well-being of children aged 0-18 as well as the Youth Work Act, which defines the age range for young people as 7-26 and the obligations of different authorities in the youth field (Child Protection Act 2014).

Furthermore, countries with a clearly defined youth policy legal framework (such as Ukraine, Iceland, Slovenia or Estonia described above) have a number of secondary legal acts in place, further specifying and operationalising their youth policy framework, such as youth strategies and action plans.

Questions for reflection

What is the legal basis of youth policy in your context?

How often does it change and at what level?

What is the impact of the changes?

Central and local government structures

Actors and structures in central (governmental/national) and local youth policy vary from one country to another as they are a function of national customs, government priorities, character of the overall governance model (unitary versus federal, for example) and the nature of policy challenges identified in the respective countries. There are two broad types of youth policy institutional set-ups across Europe:

- a consolidated national youth policy or framework (the approach in countries such as Finland or Sweden), whereby the government's actions are guided by a single, national youth policy document; or
- a mainstreamed or sectoral youth policy, whereby youth policy is "mainstreamed" into other policy areas (the approach in countries such as Austria, Norway and Denmark); in Austria, all legislation proposed by government ministries has to be screened for impact on young people (Youth Check).

A number of countries combine the two models, in varying proportions.

When it comes to decentralised youth policy, covering regional or federal units and local authorities (municipalities), there is a great diversity of approaches across Europe. However, three main types of institutional arrangement can be distinguished, as follows:

- a decentralised (or federal) institutional model, allowing for vast differences between regions and lack of compatibility between its constituent parts (United Kingdom (covering England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), Switzerland); this model is the least common, as few countries in Europe allow for such a high degree of policy differentiation between their constituent parts;
- a subsidiary (or complementary) institutional model, typical of federal states such as Germany or Belgium, where different levels of youth policy complement each other and, although differences remain, act as part of the same system;
- a centralised or hierarchical institutional model, where regional and local youth policy is subordinate and co-ordinated via central level institutions (for example in Poland and Estonia).

Many European countries operate mixed models, combining elements of subsidiary and hierarchical systems. The examples below (Germany and Estonia) cover the two most common models of vertical co-operation between central, regional and local authorities.

Federal model – Germany

Due to Germany's federal state structure, youth policy governance is part of a complex system in which different actors – both public/governmental and non-governmental – and levels (federal, *Länder* (regions), municipal and local) have different responsibilities. In all policy and governance areas, co-operation between public and non-public institutions and organisations is determined by the principle of subsidiarity, which states that the central (state) authority performs only those tasks that cannot be executed by a person, group or organisation at a more local level.

At federal level, youth policy falls under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. At regional (*Länder*) level, it is the ministries in charge of youth affairs and the youth offices that initiate, promote and develop child and youth policy and services. At the local level, it is the towns and municipalities with their youth offices that plan and fund child and youth services. Local youth offices (*Jugendämter* – 600 across the entire country) comprise a committee (for decision/supervision) and administration (executive, staff) (Jugendpolitik 2020).

Unitary model – Estonia

In Estonia,[3] youth policy is under the purview of the Ministry of Education and Research and its Youth Affairs Department. Furthermore, a specialised unit of the Ministry – the Estonian Youth Work Centre (EYWC) – acts as a national centre for youth work. According to the Local Government Organisation Act, local governments across Estonia have a key role in organising the topics related to local life, notably youth work. Most of the financing of youth work comes from the central state budget and is supplemented by resources from the local municipalities. Although there is no separate regional or local level legislation on youth work, all Estonian municipalities either have a youth development strategy or include youth issues in the general development plan of the municipality. Co-operation between central and local authorities entails mostly:

- financial support to local youth work provision from the state budget;
- the provision of expertise to local authorities by the EYWC on youth strategy development and youth work activities;
- local staff (youth worker) training by the EYWC for all local authorities;
- the development of youth work recognition and validation schemes by the EYWC for the use of local authorities (Youth policies in Estonia 2017).

Questions for reflection

Does youth policy in your context fall within any of the models?

Is this model/set-up suitable to the needs of young people and other stakeholders?

Are there clear and sufficient access points for young people and youth organisations to youth policy governance in your context?

Parliamentary structures

Just as with government institutions, the practice of parliamentary oversight and accountability over youth policy varies greatly across Europe. The practice of parliamentary accountability in youth policy in Europe can be broadly divided into two groups:

- countries that have set up special parliamentary committees to deal with youth affairs, including Bulgaria, Croatia, Portugal and the United Kingdom;

3. The information on Estonia in this manual was correct at the time of writing, though the youth (work) sector in Estonia was going through a process of reorganisation.

- countries where youth affairs are covered by existing parliamentary committees, for example Poland (Committee on Education, Science and Youth) and Germany (Committee on Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth).

Parliamentary oversight activities include:

- controlling activities of public administration (in the case of youth policy, line ministries and executive bodies responsible for youth policy development and implementation), notably their compliance with the law and expenses incurred;
- considering and opining on legislative proposals;
- initiating public inquiries into general policy issues (including hearings).

Those generic oversight activities are only as strong as the powers of the parliament and its use thereof.

Although youth policy remains a minor policy brief, and as such is not often subjected to the large-scale parliamentary scrutiny afforded to more "strategic" policy areas such as defence or economy, parliamentary inquiries can result in substantial research and policy outputs leading to changes in policy frameworks. They can be undertaken by non-permanent statutory bodies such as parliamentary groups or investigative commissions set up ad hoc.

In England, the House of Commons (the lower house of the UK Parliament) All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Youth Affairs conducted a large-scale Youth Work Inquiry (All-Party Parliamentary Groups 2020), resulting in a number of outputs, which include:

- research on the role and place of youth work in England;
- investigation into the policy provisions (is there sufficient youth work?);
- conclusions and recommendations for the UK.

Another highly significant – "impactful" – inquiry was undertaken by the Welsh Government's Children, Young People and Education Committee following an indicative decision in 2016 by Welsh Government officials to withdraw funding for the umbrella youth work body for youth NGOs in Wales. Not only did the Committee conduct an urgent "snapshot" inquiry into youth work in Wales, it also pressured the minister responsible for youth work to commission a review of "Extending Entitlement"[4] and conducted a "follow-up" inquiry in 2018. There was considerable evidence of renewed commitment by the Welsh Government to youth work in its many forms, to the point where, in 2020, there was a doubling, and a doubling again, of funding for youth work in Wales. As we write, there is likely agreement that budgets

4. *Extending Entitlement: supporting young people in Wales* (National Assembly for Wales 2000) was the first independent youth policy for Wales. It resisted England's problem-oriented focus on teenage pregnancy, substance misuse, school exclusion and youth offending and instead drew up a list of positive opportunities and experiences (the "package of entitlement") that should be extended to all young people. Recognising that many young people accessed this package personally and privately, the Committee argued that the task of public policy was to extend such entitlements to those young people who were unlikely to access them by other means. The philosophy of Extending Entitlement continues to inform youth policy development in Wales and has influenced thinking about youth policy throughout Europe and, indeed, in other parts of the world.

in Wales for youth work will be maintained through and beyond the Covid-19 crisis. Youth work in Wales acknowledges the pivotal role of the cross-party Committee, which has championed youth work against the odds.

In the Republic of Ireland, the Committee on Children and Youth Affairs in the Oireachtas (Parliament) has wide-ranging powers, including: taking evidence, and printing and publishing it; inviting submissions from interested persons or bodies; drafting recommendations for legislative change and for new legislation; examining any statutory instrument (law); requiring any government department or instrument-making authority concerned to submit a memorandum to the committee explaining any statutory instrument under consideration or to attend a meeting of the committee for the purpose of explaining any such statutory instrument; inviting a member of the government or minister of state to attend the committee to discuss policy for which they are officially responsible; engaging specialists and experts; and visiting youth projects and programmes around the country (Oireachtas 2020).

Questions for reflection

Is the parliament an active youth policy actor in your context? What are its latest activities in this field?

Are you aware of parliamentary inquiries into areas of youth policy in your context? What has been the impact on the area of youth policy it has been exploring?

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the role of executive and legislative authorities in national youth policy. There are vast differences between the different institutional arrangements both in central and local government structures and in parliamentary oversight over youth policy. In some instances, notably where the executive is stronger than the legislative, only one institution can take the lead (central government); in others, all three elements co-operate or compete over youth policy governance. They all play an important role in the development of youth policy and how it is funded and implemented, which is discussed in Chapter 6 below.

Chapter 6

Implementation, infrastructure and funding

Introduction

Youth policy governance at national level is not only a matter of the key institutions responsible for developing it: other areas of youth policy implementation are also of importance, such as the sources of funding, the bodies responsible for implementation and the available infrastructure. This chapter looks into the various implementation, infrastructure and funding arrangements applied throughout Europe.

Implementation

Diversity in policy design is followed by diversity in its implementation. There are at least three ways in which European countries implement youth policy:

- through dedicated institution(s);
- through a single line ministry;
- through multiple line ministries.

Dedicated institution(s)

Countries with a ministry, a state secretary or a youth agency (arm's-length body) with responsibility for youth affairs and the implementation of national policy in the youth sector.

This particular scenario is not commonly encountered in the countries of Europe but such structures exist in Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovakia. Germany, as a large federal state, has a particular implementation system combining multiple elements: on the one hand, the voluntary and statutory support agencies stand for society's commitment and on the other, public support for young people is provided by youth offices (Jugendpolitik 2020). In many fields of youth work, voluntary support agencies provide most services and facilities. They are autonomous and they set the content and goals of their work themselves within the framework of the country's legal system.

Single line ministry

Countries that do not have a dedicated youth ministry but where youth matters come under a ministry whose purview includes matters not always directly linked to youth affairs: for example, ministry of culture and social affairs, ministry of education, ministry of sport.

In such cases, typical government practice is to set up special youth departments within these ministries. This is the case in the French-speaking community of Belgium, Latvia, Italy and Croatia.

Multiple line ministries

Countries that have neither a special ministry with responsibility for youth affairs nor a department dealing with youth affairs within a ministry.

Questions relating to young people are handled by different ministries according to the particular youth aspect involved. This is the case in Poland and Switzerland, where matters of youth are covered by ministries of social affairs, education, science and culture, amongst others.

Questions for reflection

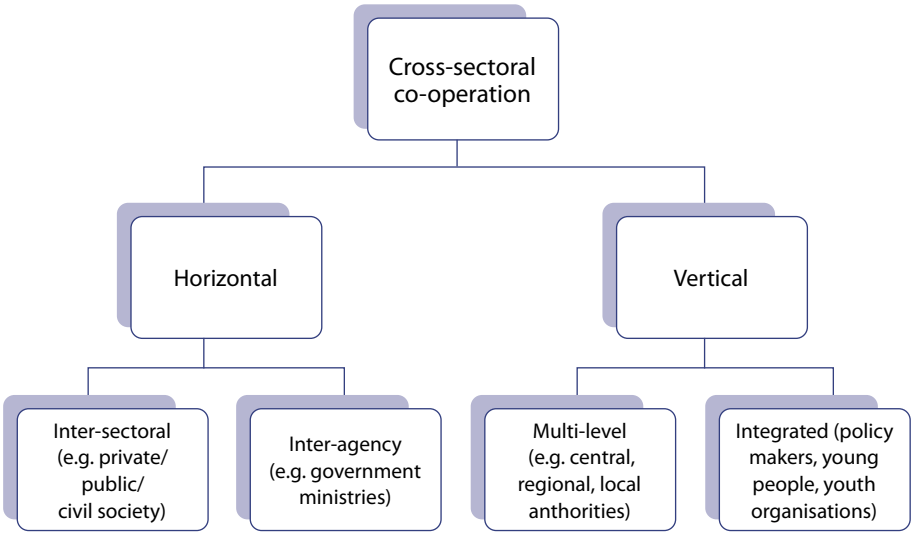
Who is responsible for youth policy implementation in your context?

How important is the implementation structure for what is happening on the ground in youth policy?

Cross-sectoral co-operation

Cross-sectoral co-operation is an important feature of youth policy implementation, albeit not always present in its governance structures. Good practices in youth policy, including the 2018 EU Youth Strategy guidelines, encourage national authorities to follow a common approach to policy implementation, including a cross-sectoral approach. This means that a quality youth policy should be formulated and implemented with the participation of the authorities responsible for all important domains for the life of young people. In practical terms, cross-sectoral co-operation in youth policy implementation implies that, at national and local level, effective co-ordination exists between the youth sectors and other policy sectors. Different institutions apply different terms to refer to a similar set of measures: intersectoral, cross-sectoral, inter-agency, transversal, integrated, interinstitutional. The main common denominator is that cross-sectoral co-operation involves different groups and institutions, going beyond traditional and state governance actors. There are at least two different ways in which cross-sectoral co-operation develops: horizontally and vertically, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: A typology of cross-sectoral co-operation



Source: Max Fras.

The most common form of horizontal cross-sectoral co-operation is intersectoral co-operation.

EU Youth Dialogue National Working Groups (NWGs) organise and co-ordinate the EU Youth Dialogue with young people at national level in EU member states (see Chapter 8). Composition of NWGs differs from country to country, but they would normally be co-ordinated by the national youth council and bring together decision makers in the field of youth and other policy fields, representatives of youth civil society as well as independent experts and youth policy and youth work practitioners (for example, youth researchers and youth workers) (National Working Groups 2020).

Another type of horizontal cross-sectoral co-operation for social inclusion brings youth sector co-organisations together with those working with youth in other sectors such as education, social work or justice.

In other instances, cross-sectoral co-operation occurs between different government departments and units – this is also called inter-ministerial co-operation. In Spain, the Youth Inter-ministerial Commission brings together government departments, the Secretary of State for Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the General Direction of the Injuve (Institute of Youth), Directors-General of the ministerial departments from the General Government Administration and the Chairperson of the National Youth Council (INJUVE 2010).

Vertical cross-sectoral co-operation can bring together different levels of public administration, including national, regional and municipal levels. Multilevel co-operation occurs where central authorities work directly with regional and local ones. In Latvia, the Ministry of Education works in over 100 local municipalities across the country, providing training for municipal youth specialists and

seminars on exchange of experience for youth workers. This mechanism helps to assure cohesion between national youth policy and local youth strategies and a shared approach to the inclusion of minorities (Latvian Ministry of Education and Science 2020).

Vertical co-operation can also help connect youth policy-making bodies (ministries or parliaments, for example) and young people themselves.

In Estonia, the Erasmus+-funded "Sinu mõju!" project brought together policy makers and youth. A group of minority young people from Narva met with local authorities, national government, members of the Estonian Parliament and members of the European Parliament to discuss young people's influence on youth policy (Sinu mõju 2020).

Questions for reflection

What platforms and processes ensure cross-sectoral co-operation among relevant actors in the youth field?

What facilitates or hinders effective cross-sectoral co-operation in your context?

Youth services

Youth information and counselling

Youth information and counselling can describe a range of different activities, can be set in various frameworks and can be provided by many different "information actors".

Youth information and counselling is a continuously changing field. In the past, youth information was mostly static, came from fewer sources and was controlled and provided by a few information providers. In today's Europe, the nature of producing youth information has changed dramatically: information changes and updates very quickly, and there are thousands of information sources and channels. As new formats are continuously being developed, the reliability of information is often hard to assess. In this context, young people must grow and find their place in society; they themselves are not only information users but also producers and multipliers. Youth information therefore plays a crucial role in assisting young people to identify and evaluate reliable information.

Although the youth information situation differs greatly from country to country, the following information sources and institutions fall under "youth information services":

- career/professional counselling and guidance;
- health information services, including on relationships and sexuality;
- social security information and benefits;
- youth rights information services;
- consumer rights information services;
- youth legal counselling services;

- European mobility opportunities for young people (volunteering, work, travel, education, traineeships, solidarity);
- non-formal and out-of-school youth activities and exchanges.

Many European countries integrate their youth information and counselling services mostly through online platforms. In Austria, the Youth Portal service (see www.jugend-portal.at) was designed and has been managed by the Austrian Youth Information Network on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Family and Youth since 2011. The portal is aimed at people living in Austria between the ages of 12 and 26 and facilitates access to information on youth-related topics including volunteering, active citizenship, employment, youth rights, health, equality and social welfare.

In Denmark, a public youth counselling and well-being service – Headspace – is offered to young people between the ages of 12 and 25. The service has been available online, over the phone and in 18 physical locations all over the country since 2013 (see www.headspace.dk).

In Latvia, the Jaunatnes Lietas ("Youth Affairs") portal (see www.jaunatneslietas.lv) provides information on youth citizenship, volunteering, education, youth participation and youth policy at both national and European level.

Youth work

"Youth work" is a summary expression for activities with and for young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature (Glossary on Youth 2020). As such, it is expressed differently in structures and institutions.

The Council of Europe's Recommendation on Youth Work describes "youth work" as:

> a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, in groups or individually. Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on non-formal and informal learning focused on young people and on voluntary participation. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision making.

For the European Union, in its EU Youth Strategy, youth work is:

> a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sport and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the area of "out-of-school" education, as well as specific leisure time activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and is based on non-formal learning processes and on voluntary participation.

Clearly there is huge overlap in the ideas that inform definitions of youth work, and some disagreement within a context of considerable consensus. The First European Youth Work Convention in 2010 celebrated the diversity of youth work (in terms of the contexts of practice, issues addressed, types of groups of young people involved, and methods invoked) while the Second European Youth Work Convention sought

to establish whether or not there was common ground within and across these diversities, concluding that all youth work is about winning and providing "spaces" for young people's participation and autonomy, and about building "bridges" to support young people's steps to the next stages in their lives.

Youth work structures differ greatly among and even within European countries: while youth work is widely recognised, promoted and financed by public authorities in many European countries, including ample public funding, it has only a marginal status in others and remains of an entirely voluntary nature in some. What is considered in one country to be the work of traditional youth workers – both paid practitioners and volunteers – may be carried out by consultants in another, or by neighbourhoods and families in other countries or, indeed, not at all in many places. The main objective of youth work is normally to provide opportunities for young people to shape their own futures. Increasingly, youth work activities also include sports and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the domain of "out-of-school" education, most commonly referred to as either non-formal or informal learning. The general aims of youth work are the integration and inclusion of young people in society. Another aim may be the personal and social emancipation of young people from dependency and exploitation. Youth work comes under both social welfare and the educational systems. In some countries it is regulated by law and administered by state civil servants, in particular at local level.

"The value of youth work in the European Union" report (European Commission 2014) revealed that while there are no common occupational standards for youth work across the EU, there are two common denominators of youth work across the continent: youth workers undertake their activities primarily in non-compulsory settings and carry out their work with young people who are participating on a voluntary basis. EU youth work legislation is also vague in this respect, allowing for diverse forms of youth work to be practised. Resolution 2010/C 327/01 of the Council of the European Union on youth work states that:

> Youth work takes place in the extracurricular area, as well as through specific leisure time activities, and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes and on voluntary participation…. these activities and processes are self-managed, co-managed or managed under educational or pedagogical guidance by either professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and can develop and be subject to changes caused by different dynamics. (EU Council 2010)

Youth work implementation structures are a reflection of the diversity described above.

In Estonia, the EYWC is – as already noted – a national centre for youth work under the administrative authority of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. The main objective of the EYWC is to develop and organise youth work in the framework of the Estonian national youth policy. According to the Local Government Organisation Act, the local governments also have a key role in organising the topics related to local life, including youth work, and most of the financing of youth work comes also from the budget and own income of the local municipalities.

In Lithuania, youth work is one of the two fundamental vectors of youth policy. The current National Youth Policy Development Programme, covering the period 2011-19, indicates two main policy directions: 1) security of interests of youth through public policy domains aimed at youth, namely education, culture, sports, work and employment, housing, health, creativity and related policies; and 2) youth work, namely youth education, aimed at enabling young people to learn from experience and experiment (voluntary activities, independence, autonomy).

In the Netherlands, youth work is largely decentralised and implemented by local and regional authorities and is part of an integrated set of youth services. Youth work provision is an integral part of the social intervention chain, together with the family, school, leisure time provisions, youth care, mental health institutions, police and justice, labour market agencies and local social policy (Ewijk 2010). The central government provides policy support and research and evidence through the above-mentioned National Youth Institute and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Education (Dutch youth care system 2020).

Youth infrastructure

Youth infrastructure, including youth work services at local and regional level, is closely linked to youth policy frameworks and their implementation. As is the case with education and learning policies and their infrastructure, national governments play an important role in youth infrastructure, notably in terms of funding and legal provision. A number of local actors, such as local authorities and civil society organisations and youth groups, also shape the everyday reality of youth spaces and infrastructure and provide resources in accordance with needs, interests, local conditions and the support available, often considering and influenced by political developments in a given country or community.

Youth spaces and infrastructure remain only loosely regulated across some European countries, especially those in southern and eastern Europe. Youth spaces and infrastructure differ greatly in terms of quality, scope and even rationale.

- The most regulated sector and infrastructure domain offering youth space is education, including out-of-school education. Another key area of youth space and infrastructure providers is local youth centres run by both state and private/civil society organisations as well as novel and innovative NGO initiatives offering youth services on a permanent and ad hoc basis.
- In countries with strong central state support for youth policy (for example Azerbaijan), substantial financial and infrastructure support from the central government is in place for youth work and youth services even at local level. This also means that many youth services are delivered by state institutions.

Local and regional authorities are key providers of youth services, especially in larger countries such as Germany or France, where they bear the brunt of service provision and where budgets far exceed those of central authorities.

In smaller countries such as Cyprus or Portugal, local and regional authorities suffer from resource deficiencies and commit very little funding to youth infrastructure, with the exception of capital cities that operate much higher budgets across all policy domains.

Today, the difficulty within state systems to adequately ensure global access to education and the labour market means that youth work increasingly deals with unemployment, educational failure, marginalisation and social exclusion. Increasingly, youth work overlaps with the area of social services previously undertaken by the welfare state. It therefore includes work on aspects such as education, employment, assistance and guidance, housing, mobility, criminal justice and health, as well as the more traditional areas of participation, youth politics, cultural activities, scouting, leisure and sports. Youth work often seeks to reach out to particular groups of young people such as disadvantaged youth in socially deprived neighbourhoods, or immigrant youth including refugees and asylum seekers. Youth work may at times be organised around a particular religious tradition.

Questions for reflection

What types of youth spaces are available in your context and how has their profile changed over the years, if at all?

Who finances those spaces and supports them with human resources?

How are young people using those spaces?

Which spaces are available to you and your organisation or community?

Youth policy funding

Youth policy funding structures and actors depend on the youth policy system in place and the general approach to policy, notably social and educational policy. Across all European countries, main sources of youth policy funding include:

- national budgets (funds managed by a single line ministry, as in Luxembourg, or transversally, as in France);
- local and municipal budgets (especially where local authorities/municipalities are tasked with particular services such as youth work, social work, formal education system, local transport, "hobby education");
- dedicated taxes and funds (the Games Tax in Finland, for example);
- private initiatives (the entrepreneurship development programme ENTRUM in Estonia, for example);
- international public funding, including EU funds (for example the European Social Fund in Slovenia) and other foreign/donor funds (such as EEA Grants and Norway Grants in Estonia, UN and USAID funding in Georgia, Ukraine, Serbia, Albania and Montenegro).

In smaller countries such as Estonia or Slovakia, funding is provided mostly by central authorities and disbursed through a single line ministry (ministries of education and science in both countries). Further funding can also be provided by specialised organisations within line ministries or managed by them (for example IUVENTA in Slovakia and the EYWC in Estonia). In larger and federal states, and in those with a broad youth policy approach, youth policy funding is disbursed in a transversal or

cross-sectoral manner through integrated programmes covering all youth-related fields, including education, employment, training and volunteering, as is the case in France. An important aspect of youth policy funding is the distribution of funds directly to youth and youth organisations, including civil society organisations and umbrella organisations. In most European countries, governments provide substantial support to youth organisations – in France, because of the broad approach to youth policy, funding for voluntary organisations only amounts to 0.5% of the transversal youth budget of the state (around €500 million), but in Estonia, it reaches up to a third of the entire youth policy budget (around €3 million).

The Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland funds youth issues from the proceeds of gaming activities and budget funding. According to the Ministry of Culture and Education "almost 30 percent of the proceeds of gaming activities used to promote youth work are allocated to the activities of youth sector organisations with the aim of strengthening the preconditions for civic activities and the youth work of NGOs" (Finland Youth Wiki 2020).

A key issue in how youth policy is funded is how the funds are earmarked and prioritised. In some European countries with a narrow youth policy focus and limited budgets, the majority of youth policy funds are often spent on flagship or priority projects and programmes, with little consideration given to balanced spending between the various areas and programming or priorities set in youth policy strategic documents. Countries with a narrow youth policy focus tend to commit resources to youth work, non-formal education and learning (for example Estonia). Countries with a broad youth policy approach pool resources for all aspects of youth-related issues, including education and employment (for example France).

On the other hand, in countries where youth policy is a cross-sectoral or mainstreamed approach rather than a consolidated policy brief, policy-making bodies and co-ordination institutions have no influence on funding. In England, although the line ministry (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport – DCMS) is currently responsible for youth policy, it is not a major provider of funding, and individual departments (ministries) are responsible for funding their policies and programmes. In the Netherlands, because four ministries (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport; Ministry of Security and Justice; Ministry of Education, Culture and Science; Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment) are responsible together for all youth-related policies, the public expenditure allocated to youth is hard to define.

Questions for reflection

Think about an element or an objective of youth policy implemented in your context – who was responsible for implementation and how was it funded?

What was good about it and what could be improved?

How aware are young people in your context about the funding allocated by the public authorities to youth policy?

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the national youth policy implementation process. As is the case with governance and government and legislative institutions, there are substantial differences in implementation in terms of funding (notably its sources), implementing bodies and youth policy infrastructure. Implementation is often informed by evidence and influenced by accountability structures (or the lack thereof). Both issues are discussed in Chapter 7 below.

Chapter 7

Evidence and accountability

Introduction

This chapter looks into sources of youth policy evidence, including research and data used at national level but coming from a range of sources, from local to international, as well as the notion of accountability and how it impacts policy planning and implementation.

Youth policy research and evidence

The shaping of youth policy through research evidence is desirable if effective practice is to be established; however, as we have seen, determining the type of research and what counts as evidence can itself be strongly contested.

Although there is no universal evidence standard for youth policy development, and even categorisation is problematic, the 2018 EU Youth Strategy encourages national authorities to develop policies based on the analysis of the real conditions in which young people live. Several EU member states have developed detailed guidelines on policy evidence.

Evidence-based policy making is a core feature of quality youth policy, based on the belief that youth policy should be developed not only in line with political and moral objectives, but also on accurate empirical information on the social situation of young people across society and their changing expectations, attitudes and lifestyles. A knowledge-based policy comprises two dimensions of knowledge: research/scientific knowledge and practical/experiential knowledge. Both are equally important to the development of policy and the collection of relevant updated research on young people; there is a need to initiate such research in circumstances where the existing material is insufficient.

Numerous institutions and sources provide evidence and research in the field of youth policy, including:

- international organisations (such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership);
- national public and private bodies (such as government research centres and universities);
- think tanks (such as youthpolicy.org) and youth research institutes (such as the Netherlands Youth Institute (NJI), Germany's International Youth Service (IJAB) or the Youth Research Platform (JOP) in the Flemish community of Belgium);
- international and local civil society and charitable organisations, such as Save the Children, Plan International or Transparency International.

In Luxembourg, an evidence-based approach is a basic, though general, principle of national youth policy. Article 2.3 of the 2008 Youth Law states that youth policy is based on knowledge of the situation of young people (Gesetzliche Grundlagen 2020). In the Netherlands, the connection with evidence is assured at institutional rather than legal instrument level. The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport has a systemic responsibility concerning the knowledge chain between the government and the youth research community, and the Netherlands Youth Institute is commissioned and financed by the Ministry for the collection, validation and dissemination of knowledge about youth matters that can support professionals in the field and help municipalities shape their local youth policy (NJI 2020). In Sweden, the 2004 Youth Policy Bill states that young people's living conditions should be followed up regularly, using indicators within all relevant policy areas (Swedish Parliament 2004).

Austria uses "Youth Check" – an effect-oriented impact assessment system, legislated in January 2013 – to mainstream youth issues across all departments and government policies. The Youth Check Law stipulates that all new legislative and regulatory proposals must be evaluated for the potential consequences they could have for children, young people and young adults. This instrument makes it easier for youth organisations, in particular, the National Youth Council, to become involved in the legislative process, and ensures measured impact assessment of all legislative proposals relevant to young people (Youth Participation 2020).

In Serbia, the Ministry of Youth and Sports carries out an annual national youth survey to analyse the needs and situation of youth in the country. Every year, state budget funding is committed to this survey, which is mandatory. The National Youth Council of Serbia also carries out its own national youth survey, in order to complement the Ministry's research on the situation regarding young people's needs.

Questions for reflection

Do you know a youth researcher in your community or country and do you read research about young people?

What youth policy research or evidence do you use in your context?

How do you use it?

Is it the same as the research and evidence used in your national youth policy (if applicable)?

Youth accountability

Accountability ensures that actions and decisions taken by public officials are subject to oversight and official scrutiny, guaranteeing that government initiatives meet their aims and objectives and respond to the needs of the communities and constituents they are meant to be serving, thus contributing to better governance. When it comes to overall and sectoral accountability in youth policy, it concerns the

accountability of executive (government) bodies vis-à-vis the core youth policy target communities and constituents (young people and youth groups and organisations). It is normally in the hands of a sector-representative body that is able to represent the views of young people and youth groups and organisations. This normally takes the form of a national youth council or a federation of youth organisations. Due to the diversity and complexity of legal and political systems across Europe, no single "European model" of youth council operations can be distinguished. Legal definitions of national youth councils vary in length and detail. Some countries only provide a basic definition. The youth council in Kosovo[5] is defined as a "youth representative body composed of representatives of youth non-profit organizations of central and local level". Other countries provide more specific links between youth councils and the youth policy system. In Belgium (Flanders), the government established an official youth council providing advice and expertise on issues that concern youth and to represent young people at the request of the government or parliament, thus forming part of the youth policy governance mechanism.

The most important aspect of a youth accountability system is the place youth accountability mechanisms (youth councils) have in policy governance. The first issue at hand is that of defining what a youth council is and what its functions are; youth councils can also play an important role in shaping youth policy (see Holtom et al. 2016). Slovenia has one of Europe's most comprehensive legal frameworks for its youth council. The full definition embedded in national law reads as follows:

> The National Youth Council of Slovenia is a voluntary association of national youth organisations with the status of an organisation in the public interest in the youth sector in accordance with the act regulating the public interest in the youth sector. (Youth Council Act 2000)

Slovenian law further states that the National Youth Council of Slovenia and local community youth councils represent the interests of youth organisations, which are their members, and co-operate with the local community youth councils and other organisations in the youth sector, which are not their members, and other entities. In Belgium (Flanders), the legal system provides for the youth council to be fully embedded in youth policy.

> The Flemish Government provides for the establishment of a Youth Council which aims to deliver on its own initiative, at the request of the Flemish Government and the Flemish Parliament, on all issues that concern the youth and to represent the youth. (Eutrio.be 2010)

The Flemish Government regularly asks the Flemish Youth Council for advice on its draft decrees and regulations draft decisions in implementation of Flemish youth policy. Further, the law states that the youth council has the right to approve the recommendations or reject them. The Flemish Government is expected to provide

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

interpretation and explanation to the youth council about its decision on the recommendations relating to the powers of the Flemish Government.

In Belgium (Wallonia), the French community Youth Council is also embedded in the region's law and ensures the participation and representation of all young people of the French Community. In Ireland, the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the legally recognised representative body for voluntary youth organisations. It uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people. It seeks to ensure that all young people are empowered to develop the skills and confidence required to fully participate as active citizens in an inclusive society. The NYCI's role is recognised in legislation through the Youth Work Act 2001 and as a social partner in the community and voluntary pillar of Irish social partnership. Likewise, in Denmark, the Danish Youth Council (DUF) is formally embedded in national legislation.

> The Danish Youth Council is a service and interest organization for children and youth organizations in Denmark. DUF promotes the participation of youth in organisations and in democracy – locally, nationally and internationally. (Danish Youth Law 2015)

Not all youth councils enjoy the recognition and support of their national authorities. In a number of European countries, active and representative youth councils are not recognised by their governments and no independent youth accountability mechanisms are in place; this is the case in Belarus, where the Belarusian National Youth Council "Rada", bringing together over 20 youth organisations, cannot legally operate within the country and is currently legally registered in Lithuania (RADA 2020).

Conclusion

Sources of youth policy evidence range from local to international and cover research and data generated by stakeholders both within and outside the youth sector. Their application in policy formulation and implementation differs, but accountability structures, notably those bringing together young people, youth organisations and policy makers contribute to greater use of available information and evidence-based policy making and implementation.

Questions for reflection

What systems, processes and instruments are used for assessment of youth policy in your country?

Are there any participatory structures, organisations or councils in your country that are legally recognised and able to hold the government accountable for youth policy decisions?

Do you think there is enough research and evidence about the different groups of young people in your country/context, their needs and the possible policies that could address those needs?

Conclusion to Part 2

Part 2 has considered illustrations of governance and infrastructure for youth policy development and implementation at national level. It should be noted that this is a complex mosaic that plays out in different ways in different contexts. National decision making and self-determination remain paramount in the field of youth policy; it is often a devolved responsibility to lower levels of governance and, rightly, often subject to principles of subsidiarity, so that many decisions can be taken at the local level. Nevertheless, the capacity and consequences of such local decision making may well be governed by national legal frameworks and parliamentary scrutiny. Moreover, effective youth policy is contingent on various forms of cross-sectoral co-operation and youth services that include meaningful youth information and youth work. The construction and sustainability of youth policy at national level also rests on the production of relevant research evidence and appropriate channels of accountability.

Part 3

International governance and infrastructure

Introduction

While Part 2 looked at youth policy governance and infrastructure at the national level, Part 3 considers the unfolding importance of international institutions in supplementing, shaping and influencing the nature of "youth policy". Chapter 8 considers the role of the European Union and Chapter 9 the contribution of the Council of Europe. Since 1998, there has also been a formal partnership between these two institutions that has made a significant impact on youth policy development across Europe; it is described in Chapter 10. At a global level, the United Nations has increasingly been concerned with youth issues and youth policy (Chapter 11), while the voice of young people at all these levels has been represented, *inter alia* (or perhaps *primus inter pares*), by the European Youth Forum (Chapter 12).

Chapter 8

The European Union

Introduction

The European Union is a political and economic union of 27 member states, and a legal community. In specifically designated areas of regulation, Union law takes precedence over national law, with direct effect and, while directives require transposition through national legislation, regulations enter into force immediately on national territories. Union law is an autonomous legal order, underpinned by a directly elected parliament, a council representing member states (together acting as co-legislators), a court ensuring uniform application and an administration accountable to its citizens. Since the 1950s it has been a Union (previously a "Community") of citizens and not merely of states. While the member states have transferred competence by signing international law treaties, it is not an international but a supranational organisation. Its roots initially lie in the desire to establish closer trading relations but it has since produced an "ever-closer union" embracing deeper political and social dimensions.

Economic integration has gradually entailed legal integration, with a growing component of fundamental rights protection and an increasing focus on values. Yet not all areas of regulation and policy making have been transferred to the Union, and the policy area of youth, as defined by Article 165 – in connection with Article 6 – of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), has remained a national competence. This, however, does not prevent member states from co-operating on youth policy matters. In so doing, they profit from being already deeply integrated in other areas.

Youth policy is a relatively new policy area for EU institutions and structures. Although the first official references to a European youth policy can be traced back to the 1957 European Economic Community (EEC) Treaty (Article 50 of the treaty stated that "Member States shall, within the framework of a joint programme, encourage the exchange of young workers"), youth and youth policy played a minor role in the Union's operations until the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht (see below).

EU political agenda-setting

The EU's overall political direction and priorities are defined by the European Council. The members of the European Council are the heads of state or government of the 27 EU member states, the European Council President and the President of the European Commission. The Council is not a formal institution and does not legislate, negotiate or adopt EU laws, but it sets the EU's policy agenda, traditionally by adopting "conclusions" during European Council meetings, which identify issues of concern and actions to take.

Although day-to-day governance of youth policy falls to formal institutions (Council of the European Union, Commission and Parliament – see below), the European Council adopted a number of important conclusions pertinent to matters of youth and youth policy, including those set out below.

- In March 2005, the European Council adopted the European Youth Pact, a cross-sector policy instrument concerning the needs of young people and their integration into the Lisbon Strategy.
- In December 2012, the European Council called on the Council to adopt a recommendation setting up a "Youth Guarantee".
- In December 2016, the European Council called for the continuation of the Youth Guarantee, welcomed the increased support for the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), and called for work to be taken forward on recent Commission initiatives dedicated to youth (European Council Oversight Unit 2019).
- In December 2017, the European Council called on member states and EU institutions to facilitate the recognition of academic diplomas, step up youth mobility, and improve digital skills and language learning (ibid.).

EU youth policy governance

Three main EU institutions are involved in EU youth policy governance.

- The European Parliament represents the EU's citizens and is directly elected by them; the Parliament's Culture and Education Committee (CULT) covers youth policy matters. For more information, see https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-parliament_en.
- The Council of the European Union represents the governments of the individual member states. Within the Council, the main structure covering youth policy at operational level is the Youth Working Party – Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council configuration (EYCS). Policy areas covered by the EYCS Council are the main responsibility of member states. The EU's role in youth policy is therefore to provide a framework for co-operation between member states, for exchange of information and experience on areas of common interest. For more information, see https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/council-eu_en.
- The European Commission represents the interests of the Union as a whole. The Commission's Education, Youth, Sport and Culture Directorate-General (DG EAC) is responsible for youth policy, together with its executive arm, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), which is responsible for the strands of the EU programmes in centralised management (e.g. some actions within Erasmus+). For more information, see https://ec.europa.eu/info/index_en.

Together, these three institutions produce policies and laws that apply throughout the EU. In principle, the Commission proposes new laws, and the Parliament and Council adopt them. The Commission and the member states then implement them, and the Commission ensures that the laws are properly applied and implemented (EU institutions 2020).

Besides current Article 165 of the TFEU (see below), the EU's competence in youth policy was established under the Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC), which is one of the least centralised policy-making mechanisms of the EU, and is based on the voluntary co-operation of EU member states. Under the OMC, EU youth policy relied most heavily on the European Commission elaborating soft policy instruments such as the EU Youth Strategy and indicators. All of those instruments are initiated and approved by the Council and Parliament; the Commission facilitates ongoing work and presents them to the two other institutions for final approval.

The evolution of EU youth policy

In 1992, Article 50 of the 1957 EEC Treaty on encouraging the "exchange of young workers" was moved to Article 126 of the Treaty of Maastricht, and the term "young workers" was replaced by the wider notion of "youth", thus widening the scope of the EU's youth policy, while still limiting it to education (as this is the remit of Article 126). Furthermore, the competence to deal with the subject is limited to encouraging co-operation among member states and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of member states for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity. In the first phase of development (1992-2001), EU competence was limited to supportive and supplementary measures.

Although the policy scope of the EU institutions in respect of young people became wider (from "young workers" to "youth" in general), the material scope became smaller – education – and the competence to deal with this became weaker, since Article 126 gives the EU institutions no formal law-making powers. This has remained unchanged during the revisions of the Amsterdam and Nice Treaties. The Lisbon Treaty added a new provision to Article 165 of the TFEU on encouraging participation of young people in Europe's democratic life (as well as encouraging the Union to support youth exchanges and youth worker mobilities, previously included in the article).

In the late 1990s, when the EU started co-operating more closely on social matters, the European Commission took a further step with the publication of the 2001 white paper "A new impetus for European youth" (European Commission 2001). This was the catalyst for the evolution of EU youth policy. The white paper proposed the appointment of a national co-ordinator from each of the member states as a Commission representative for youth-related issues. It also outlined four priority areas: first, the introduction of new ways of enabling young people to participate in public life; second, the improvement of information on European issues for the young; third, to encourage voluntary activities; and fourth to increase the knowledge and understanding of youth-related issues. The white paper also proposed to take the youth dimension into account to a greater extent when developing other relevant policies, such as education and training, including non-formal learning, employment and social inclusion, health and anti-discrimination, and the autonomy of young people. On the basis of the four priority areas outlined in the white paper, the Council established a framework for European co-operation in the field of youth. Since the early 2000s, EU co-operation in the field of youth has gone from strength to strength, leading first to the 2005 European Youth Pact, the development of the first EU Youth Strategy 2010-18 and then the second EU Youth Strategy 2019-27.

In short, the European Youth Pact of 2005 extended – with due consideration for overarching EU principles such as subsidiarity – the focus of European youth policy co-operation into the domains of education, employment and family life. "Investing and Empowering", the EU Youth Strategy for the second decade of the 21st century, was concerned with creating more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market, and promoting the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people, among other priorities (see below for a full list). The current EU Youth Strategy, "Engage, Connect, Empower", is concerned with reaching out to more young people, strengthening mobility opportunities and supporting them through youth work. These are elaborated below.

The EU Youth Strategies

As explained above, the EU's competences in the field of youth policy are limited to co-ordination of voluntary actions of member states and providing guidance and assistance where appropriate. The first EU Youth Strategy 2010-18 focused on co-ordinating such initiatives in eight areas:

- employment and entrepreneurship;
- social inclusion;
- participation;
- education and training;
- health and well-being;
- voluntary activities;
- youth and the world;
- creativity and culture.

The Strategy was implemented in two ways. First, it covered specific youth initiatives, targeted at young people to encourage non-formal learning, participation, voluntary activities, youth work, mobility and information. Second, it was concerned with "main-streaming" cross-sector initiatives, ensuring youth issues were given proportionate and appropriate consideration when formulating, implementing and evaluating policies and actions in other fields with a significant impact on young people, such as education, employment or health and well-being. The Strategy highlighted youth work, in particular, as a mechanism for contributing to young people's development, noting that it "has the potential to do more in all fields of action".

The broad character of the first EU Youth Strategy was one of the most important limitations in its implementation. The final evaluation of the Strategy noted that in EU countries where youth policy was decentralised, the EU approach to youth policy was often considered to be inconsistent with the diverse nature of devolved youth policy. A number of regional and local topics were not sufficiently reflected in the EU youth co-operation framework, leading to a disconnection between local and European policy and its implementation.

On the other hand, this first EU Youth Strategy was successful in triggering concrete changes at national and organisational level, and in the adoption of common youth policy approaches and principles across the member states. In EU countries

which did not have clear youth policy frameworks, there has been good progress in developing youth policies aligned with EU objectives. Finally, there was a general tendency across EU countries towards the adoption of principles and objectives set in the EU Youth Strategy, such as participation and the consultation of young people.

The second EU Youth Strategy 2019-27 builds on the experiences of the first Strategy and is based on a range of similar instruments, such as mutual learning activities, the EU Youth Dialogue (see below), the EU Youth Strategy platform and a number of evidence-based tools such as the dashboard of youth indicators (see below). The future EU Youth Co-ordinator will be the European Commission's contact and visible reference point for young people.

The second EU Youth Strategy activities are clustered around three thematic pillars: Engage (through youth participation), Connect (through cross-border mobility, volunteering and solidarity) and Empower (through youth work). For the first implementation period (2019-21), the Council work plan envisages the following.

- Engage: EU Youth Dialogue cycles; Council conclusions on youth and democracy; Council conclusions on promotion of youth work by raising awareness of the youth sector through information and strengthening of resources; Expert group and Council conclusions on ensuring a rights-based approach to youth policies; Council conclusions on strengthening multilevel governance when promoting the participation of young people in political and other decision-making processes at local, regional, national and European levels.
- Connect: Expert group on cross-border solidarity; Peer-learning activity on national solidarity action; Updating the 2008 Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union; Council conclusions on youth work in rural areas and the promotion of intergenerational solidarity.
- Empower: Council conclusions on the education and training of youth workers; Council conclusions on digital youth work; Peer-learning activity on cross-sectoral approaches in youth work; Council Resolution "Agenda on youth work"; Third European Youth Work Convention (scheduled to take place in December 2020 in Germany); Peer-learning exercise on digital youth work; Peer-learning activity on innovative ways of financing youth work.

As the Strategy is a long-term instrument, its detailed activities are likely to change slightly in line with the new political and policy priorities of the Union. For more information, see European Union (2018) and EU Youth Strategy (2020).

EU youth policy instruments

As of 2020, the EU has a considerable body of policy documents and programmes relevant to youth policy development and implementation. While they are not as comprehensive in governance support and standard-setting as the Council of Europe's programmes (see the following chapter), the EU has considerably more resources at its disposal and thus has a very high potential impact on youth, in its member states and sometimes beyond. A number of EU structures and programmes

are highly relevant and impactful for youth policy makers and practitioners in the EU and beyond. These include:

- EU indicators in the field of youth;
- EU Youth Wiki;
- EU Youth Dialogue and European Youth Goals;
- EU funding programmes for youth.

EU indicators dashboard

One of the most frequently referenced EU youth policy tools is the EU dashboard of youth indicators. This is a versatile and evidence-based mechanism that can be used, applied and adapted to national youth policy contexts. The mechanism is based on a set of sector-specific as well as contextual youth indicators, used to measure progress in implementation of youth policies across a number of areas.

Data on all of the indicators can be extracted from the relevant Eurostat databases.

In late 2019, the EU initiated a revision of the indicator dashboard. The revision process is centred around the works of the EU Expert Group on EU indicators in the youth field, established to facilitate knowledge gathering and an evidence-based approach to youth policy in line with the Council Resolution on the EU Youth Strategy (and the Work Plan 2019-2021) which sets out a framework for European co-operation in the youth field for 2019-2027.

The Expert Group supported the work of the European Commission's (European Union 2018) DG EAC by reviewing the existing dashboard of EU indicators in the field of youth and preparing a proposal for a new dashboard with quantitative and qualitative policy indicators and benchmarks tailored to the needs of member states and sectors concerned, to help monitor the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027).

A revised dashboard of EU youth indicators is expected to be made public in 2021.

The EU Youth Wiki

The EU Youth Wiki is a comprehensive source of information on youth policy matters in EU member states. It is a regularly updated online platform presenting information on European countries' youth policies, aiming to help the European Commission and member states in their youth policy decision making by providing information on the state of play of reforms and initiatives. The collection of qualitative information via the Youth Wiki also allows the exchange of information and innovative approaches and helps to substantiate peer-learning activities.

The content of the EU Youth Wiki is shaped by the policy priorities established by the European Commission and the member states in the framework of European co-operation in the youth field. As a result, the current iteration of EU Youth Wiki covers mostly areas identified by the EU Youth Strategy 2010-18 (youth policy governance; voluntary activities; employment and entrepreneurship; social inclusion; participation; education and training; health and well-being; creativity and culture; and youth and the world) and includes a specific youth work chapter.

The EU Youth Wiki is annually updated by national correspondents designated by the government of each participating country. Most of the EU Youth Wiki is based on self-reported qualitative data and allows for the analysis of reforms and trends in policy orientations in the participating countries. The main source of information consists of official documents originating from national top-level authorities in the youth field with responsibility for youth policy in each country. National correspondents also refer to studies, surveys, analyses or assessments/evaluations conducted directly by public authorities or commissioned to research centres, experts, think tanks and the like. National descriptions within the Youth Wiki seldom report national data and statistics as these are often collected through country-specific methodologies whose results can only be comprehended in the national context. For statistical and quantitative comparison purposes, the EU dashboard of youth indicators (see above) is a much more reliable and comparable source (EU Youth Wiki 2020).

The EU Youth Dialogue and the European Youth Goals

The EU Youth Dialogue is a central participation tool for young people in the EU. The dialogue mechanisms include direct dialogue between decision makers and young people and their representatives, consultation of young people on topics relevant to them and continuous partnership in the governance of the process at local, national and European levels.

The EU Youth Dialogue is organised into 18-month work cycles, spanning a trio of EU Presidencies, and consists of a number of European and national events in member states. Each cycle focuses on a different thematic priority (set by the Council of Youth Ministers). Each EU Youth Dialogue cycle focuses on a pre-set design with some regional and local variation. At the first EU Youth Conference of each cycle, youth representatives and policy makers agree on a guiding framework for the national consultations organised in each country. At the second conference, the outcomes of the national consultations are debated and joint recommendations, aimed at increasing the participation of youth people in politics, are endorsed. At the third and final conference of the cycle, the recommendations are debated by youth ministers from national governments, before being endorsed. The final recommendations form the basis of a Council Resolution addressed to European institutions and national authorities, to be endorsed by youth ministers at the end of the 18-month cycle. EU Youth Dialogue is governed at EU level through a European Steering Committee (renewed for every 18-month working cycle) comprising youth ministry representatives of the three EU Presidency countries, representatives of national youth councils of the three EU Presidency countries, the Erasmus+ national agencies of the three EU Presidency countries, the European Commission and the European Youth Forum. Furthermore, the EU Youth Dialogue process in each country is organised by national working groups. The groups' composition varies from country to country but they are usually made up of representatives of line ministries for youth, national, local and regional youth councils, youth organisations, youth workers, young people from all backgrounds and youth researchers, among others (EU Youth Dialogue 2020).

The European Youth Goals are the outcome of the 2017-18 cycle of EU Youth Dialogue and aim to serve as inspiration and provide an orientation for the EU, its member states and their relevant stakeholders and authorities with regard to the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy. The 11 youth goals identified in the consultation process are:

1. Connecting EU with youth;
2. Equality of all genders;
3. Inclusive societies;
4. Information and constructive dialogue;
5. Mental health and well-being;
6. Moving rural youth forward;
7. Quality employment for all;
8. Quality learning;
9. Space and participation for all;
10. Sustainable green Europe;
11. Youth organisations and European programmes.

(European Youth Goals 2020)

EU funding programmes for youth

The EU has a long track record of supporting youth policy development through its funding programmes, starting with the first Youth for Europe programme in 1988.

The current Erasmus+ programme includes a provision for young people and youth workers supporting:

- policy dialogue between young people and policy makers in the EU and Erasmus+ programme countries;
- youth exchanges for young people from EU and non-EU countries;
- youth worker mobilities for youth workers from the EU, its neighbourhood and the rest of the world (Erasmus 2020).

The EU also supports youth policy development outside its borders, notably in "European Neighbourhood" countries, eastern Europe, the western Balkans and the Mediterranean region. EU activities there cover both technical assistance to governments in developing and implementing youth policy (research and policy development, for example) as well as supporting youth organisations and young people directly, for example through project funding to organisations and networks.

Conclusion

The European Union may not have a strong role to play in member states' youth policy, but it remains a very important actor both internationally and domestically due to its substantial youth policy and youth programme budget as well as considerable research co-operation outputs. Furthermore, it actively supports youth and youth policy worldwide through its "European Neighbourhood" and international development programmes and structures.

Questions for reflection

For EU member states: have you been involved in any EU youth policy mechanisms? What was the direction and nature of this interaction – bottom–top (local to EU level), top–bottom (EU to local) – and what were the outcomes?

What is the relation/interaction between the youth policy in your country and at EU level?

How have EU level policies and approaches affected/supported youth policy in your country?

Which instruments of EU youth policies would you be interested to explore and adapt in your context?

Have you used any of the EU youth programmes in your context? What was the policy impact of those experiences?

Chapter 9

The Council of Europe

Introduction

The Council of Europe was established in 1949 to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law within post-war Europe. Its membership has grown steadily and now stands at 47 countries.

The Council of Europe has pioneered European youth work and youth policy in Europe since 1972, when the European Youth Centre Strasbourg and the European Youth Foundation were established. Council of Europe member states, youth organisations and young people work together through a number of intergovernmental and non-governmental structures, programmes and projects, offering wide-ranging support to youth policy development in Europe.

Council of Europe statutory bodies and youth sector management

Council of Europe governance

The Council of Europe's two main organs (statutory decision-making bodies) are the Committee of Ministers, comprising the foreign ministers of each member state, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), composed of members of the national parliaments of each of the 47 member states. Both bodies have been instrumental in the development of the Council of Europe's youth policy framework (Committee of Ministers 2020).

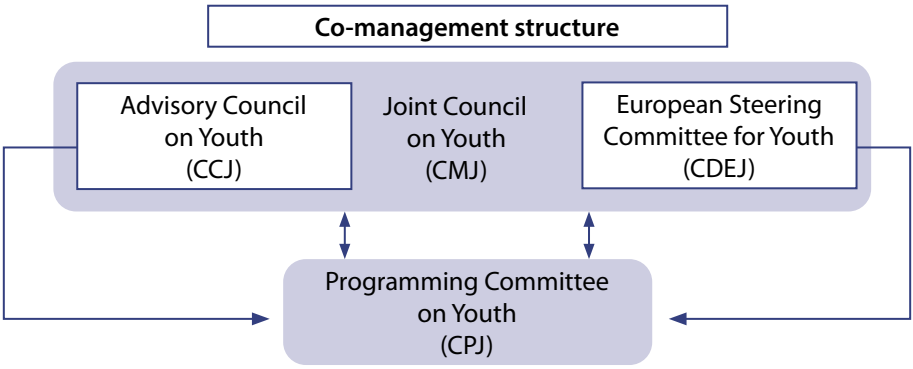
Youth sector co-management structures

In addition to its statutory decision-making bodies, the Council of Europe operates a unique co-management system in the youth sector. It is an example of participatory democracy in practice for the entire youth sector within the Council of Europe. It is a place for common reflection and co-production, combining the voice of young Europeans and that of public authorities responsible for youth issues, leading to a sharing and evaluation of experience. Thanks to this dialogue, where each party has an equal say, ideas and experiences can be exchanged, in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect, giving legitimacy to the decisions of the Joint Council on Youth (CMJ).

The co-management system is a complex architecture relying on regular and quality inputs from youth organisations, governments, Council of Europe institutions and other key partners, as shown in Figure 4. The key co-management institutions are

the CMJ, composed of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ), the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Programming Committee on Youth (CPJ).

Figure 4: Co-management structure



Source: EU–Council of Europe youth partnership.

The CDEJ brings together representatives of ministries or bodies responsible for youth matters from the 50 states parties to the European Cultural Convention. The CDEJ fosters co-operation between governments in the youth sector and provides a framework for comparing national youth policies, exchanging best practices and drafting standard-setting texts.

The CCJ brings together 30 representatives of non-governmental youth organisations and networks. It provides opinions and input from youth NGOs on all youth sector activities and ensures that young people are involved in the Council's activities.

The CMJ is the co-managed body which brings together the CCJ and the CDEJ. The Joint Council takes the decisions on the youth sector's priorities, programmes and budget.

The CPJ consists of eight government representatives from the CDEJ and eight non-governmental representatives from the CCJ. For more information, see www.coe.int/en/web/youth/co-management.

Youth policy within the Council of Europe's strategic goals

The work of the Council of Europe's Youth Department has been framed for more than a decade by a strategic vision for the youth sector within which it operates. First, "Agenda 2020", approved in 2008 by youth ministers of almost 50 European states, expressed a pan-European consensus on the principles, priorities and approaches of the youth sector's work and confirmed three prevailing priorities for the youth sector:

- human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- living together in diverse societies;
- social inclusion of young people.

This document was renewed between 2018 and 2020, with the Committee of Ministers adopting the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030 in January 2020. The youth sector strategy is a broad policy document, defining the framework within which the Council of Europe youth sector pursues its aim to enable young people across Europe to actively uphold, defend, promote and benefit from the Council of Europe's core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Its four strategic priorities for the coming decade are as follows:

- revitalising democracy;
- strengthening access to rights;
- living together in diverse and peaceful societies;
- youth work.

Council of Europe youth policy instruments

The main youth policy development instruments of the Council of Europe are:

- Council of Europe youth policy structures;
- Council of Europe standard-setting policy documents;
- Council of Europe assistance measures to member states;
- Council of Europe materials and publications (including youth policy reviews and manuals).

Each category above contains several components that can aid youth policy development at all levels, from local and community-driven initiatives to pan-European co-ordination and co-operation efforts.

Council of Europe youth policy structures

Council of Europe Youth Department

The Youth Department is part of the Directorate of Democratic Participation within the Directorate General of Democracy ("DGII") of the Council of Europe.

The department elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments supporting the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels.

The department also provides funding and educational support for international youth activities aiming to promote youth citizenship, youth mobility and the values of human rights, democracy and cultural pluralism. It seeks to bring together and disseminate expertise and knowledge about the life situations, aspirations and ways of expression of young Europeans.

The European Youth Centres

Within the Council of Europe, the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest are part of the Youth Department and are, together with the European Youth Foundation (EYF), an important instrument of the Council's youth policy.

They are international training and meeting centres with residential facilities, hosting most of the youth sector's activities. They provide a flexible and modern working environment for international activities, with meeting rooms equipped for simultaneous interpretation, information centres, audiovisual and computer facilities.

The European Youth Centres run an annual programme of 40 to 50 activities in close co-operation with non-governmental youth organisations. These organisations, some 40 of which co-operate regularly with the EYCs, represent a wide diversity of interests: party-political, socio-educational and religious youth groups, rural youth movements, trade-union and young workers' organisations, children's organisations and environmental networks (European Youth Centres 2020).

In order to promote the European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe as standard-setting instruments and examples of good practice for youth policy, the CDEJ developed the Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Centres project. The Committee of Ministers welcomed the initiative for an initial pilot phase of three years starting in 2010; it was then extended and has now become an established programme of the youth sector.

As of June 2020, some 14 youth centres spread across 11 Council of Europe member states have received the Council of Europe Quality Label (see Part 4 for more details). All youth centres co-operate as part of a network that meets annually.

The European Youth Foundation

The EYF is a fund established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial support for European youth activities (European Youth Foundation 2020). Its 2020 budget was approximately €3.7 million. The EYF supports projects of European non-governmental youth organisations and networks such as international youth meetings, conferences, campaigns, training courses, seminars and study visits, in line with the Council of Europe youth sector's priorities. It provides funding and advice to youth organisations, building the capacities of youth workers and youth leaders and sharing good practice. European Youth NGOs can apply to the Foundation to obtain support for the types of activities listed below:

- one-off international activities, such as multilateral meetings of young people from at least seven countries, organised by international non-governmental youth organisations or networks or national youth NGOs with at least three partners in other countries;
- annual work plans of international non-governmental youth organisations or networks: to be implemented over a period of one year, an annual work plan must include a series of activities which are interconnected and contribute to the same broader aim;
- two-year structural grants which cover the general administrative costs of youth NGOs and are accessible to international youth NGOs or networks that have received support (an EYF grant or study session on the annual programme of the European Youth Centres) for at least three international activities in the three previous years;

- pilot activities that aim to address needs identified and/or challenges faced by young people at local level, have a clear link to and impact on the local context and address the focus themes for pilot activities set by the Joint Council on Youth.

Council of Europe standard-setting policy documents

The Council of Europe engages in setting and promoting standards to address the challenges faced by young people. It guides member states in the development of their national youth policies by means of a body of recommendations and other texts, based on the institution's values, and aims to ensure a minimum level of standards in youth policy in Europe.

The Committee of Ministers adopts recommendations in the field of youth policy. They are drawn up, usually by groups composed of government and non-governmental representatives from the co-managed bodies, experts, researchers, and other major stakeholders. They are then approved by the CMJ and submitted to the Committee of Ministers for final adoption.

In recent years, the Council of Europe has adopted a number of highly relevant instruments on youth-related matters – set out below – including recommendations on youth work, access to rights and social rights.

European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life

In 1992, the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (forerunner to the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities) realised that youth participation requires a commitment from local and regional authorities to build a culture where young people are able to contribute in valuable and meaningful ways. The Standing Conference's commitment was translated into the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, which was the result of discussions between young people and local and regional elected representatives. The charter was revised in 2003 at the request of the young participants in a conference on "Young people – actors in their towns and regions", organised by the Congress in Cracow (Poland) in March 2002 to mark the charter's 10th anniversary.

The revised charter is divided into three parts: sectoral policies; instruments for youth participation; and institutional participation by young people in local and regional affairs. In Part I, the revised charter contains a review of different policy areas – including health, urban environment and education – and suggests a number of concrete measures that can provide the necessary support for young people's involvement in their communities. Part II explores ideas and tools that can be used by local and regional authorities to enhance youth participation, such as training, information services, ICTs and youth organisations, among others. Part III concentrates on institutional participation and the sort of structures and support that should be established in order to involve young people in processes where they can identify their needs, explore solutions, make decisions that affect them, and where they can plan actions

with local and regional authorities on an equal footing. These may include youth councils, youth parliaments or youth forums, which should be permanent structures composed of elected or appointed representatives and should give young people direct responsibility for projects and influencing policies. For more information, see https://rm.coe.int/168071b4d6.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 on access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights ("the Enter! Recommendation")

The "Enter! Recommendation", building on the eponymous Council of Europe project, aims to develop youth policy and youth work responses to situations of exclusion, discrimination and violence that affect young people, particularly in multicultural disadvantaged neighbourhoods. (Committee of Ministers 2015).

The recommendation is complemented by a roadmap, drawn up by the Joint Council on Youth, proposing specific tasks to the three main stakeholders: the member states; youth organisations; and the Council of Europe Youth Department.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)7 on young people's access to rights

The recommendation aims to improve young people's access to rights rather than addressing the specific rights themselves. It focuses on improving access by taking steps to promote awareness of the rights that young people should be able to enjoy and what they can do if their rights are violated. It also aims to remove legal, political and social barriers, and emphasises the importance of member states regularly monitoring and responding to rights infringements and ensuring adequate protection though legal provisions.

The recommendation is complemented by a roadmap, drawn up by the Joint Council on Youth, proposing specific tasks to the three main stakeholders: the member states; youth organisations; and the Council of Europe Youth Department (Council of Europe 2016).

Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 on youth work

As part of its efforts to help Council of Europe member states develop their policies on youth work, the recommendation advises them on possible strategies and legislation that will result in quality youth work, as well as quality education and training for youth workers.

The recommendation is meant to be implemented based on a mid-term strategy for the knowledge-based development of European youth work, which includes a roadmap proposing specific tasks to the main stakeholders: member states and youth organisations (Committee of Ministers 2017).

Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)4 on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood

This recommendation was originally proposed by the Advisory Council on Youth and constitutes the Youth Department's contribution to the Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe (2017-19) (Committee of Ministers 2019).

The recommendation concerns young refugees who are among the most vulnerable groups facing continuing risk of violation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. This situation is particularly difficult for those who are not accompanied or have been separated from their families, and for young refugee women. The recommendation advocates that member states provide additional temporary support after the age of 18 to young refugees to enable them to access their rights. The recommendation is to be implemented in the framework of the Council of Europe "Youth for Democracy" programme.

The recommendation is complemented by a roadmap, drawn up by the CMJ, proposing specific tasks to the three main stakeholders: the member states; youth organisations; and the Council of Europe Youth Department.

Council of Europe assistance measures to member states

Youth policy reviews

The Council of Europe has, for many years, offered comprehensive research and evaluation support for youth policy development at national level through a system of international reviews of national youth policies. There have been 21 such reviews over the past 23 years (see Williamson 2002, 2008, 2017). The international youth policy reviews have been the most complex and comprehensive of measures informing youth policy thinking and development within the Council of Europe system. The process involves wide-ranging commitment, from political to financial, from both the requesting country and the Council of Europe. The main milestones include the preparation of a national report about the youth policy and situation of young people in the country, two intensive field visits by an expert team to study particular perspectives from governmental to ground level, the finalisation of the international report in consultation with the host government, and its presentation at a public hearing in the host country as well as to the CMJ within the Council of Europe (National Youth Policy Reviews 2020).

Advisory missions

The Youth Department organises youth policy advisory missions, in co-operation with and at the request of member states. These are formally confidential to the country concerned, but the publication of their findings is strongly encouraged. Advisory missions, the first of which took place in 2003, assess the youth policy relative to a specific developmental question or issue of concern, for example participatory youth policy in a recent mission to Georgia or the implementation of national

youth strategy in Armenia (recent examples can be found on the bilateral measures website www.coe.int/en/web/youth/bilateral-measures). A team of independent experts visits the country to gather relevant information and perspectives and then prepares its recommendations according to Council of Europe norms and standards. The team is sometimes supported by a representative of the requesting national authority with relevant language and thematic expertise. A concise report containing concrete and practical recommendations pertinent to the youth policy development issues of concern to the country is produced for the authorities for follow-up in the immediate and medium term. The European Steering Committee for Youth might request a progress report from the authorities approximately 12 months after the visit (Council of Europe and Youth Policy 2016).

50/50 training events

"50/50" training events, organised by the Youth Department in co-operation with Council of Europe member states, are designed to develop the competences of youth-sector professionals, ranging from civil servants responsible for youth policy implementation at national to local levels to youth-led NGOs delivering youth work and services to young people.

The training activities aim to foster co-operation and partnership as an effective youth policy and must involve everyone concerned, notably public authorities (national and regional and/or local) and youth organisations or other structures of youth representation and participation.

As the name suggests, the course concept requires the participation of 50% governmental and 50% non-governmental representatives. Every aspect of the programme should support dialogue, bringing to the table the multiple perspectives of youth policy implementation, including the challenges of democratic and inclusive decision making, responsibilities and accountability mechanisms. The 50/50 concept can be applied to different formats, ranging from longer training activities to short or targeted capacity-building seminars (European Youth Centres 2020).

In 2017, the Agency of Youth and Sport of North Macedonia asked for assistance to support the implementation of its National Youth Strategy 2016-25 and a 50/50 training event was organised in November 2017. In 2019, Georgia's Youth Agency issued a similar request and a 50/50 course was held in February 2020 (recent examples can be found on the bilateral measures website www.coe.int/en/web/youth/bilateral-measures).

Council of Europe materials and publications

The Council of Europe offers a range of youth policy publications on matters ranging from policy and legislation through youth research to youth policy and youth work practice:

- published youth policy reviews (as explained above);
- manuals and handbooks, such as the *Compass Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People*;

- youth work resources such as the Youth Work Portfolio;
- publications on youth policy history;
- activity and project reports;
- adopted texts and recommendations;
- brochures;
- *Think Youth* Newsletter.

Conclusion

The Council of Europe is an important supporter of youth policy development at national and European level. Although its youth policy activities are limited by the organisation's profile (intergovernmental, rather than supranational like the EU) and the non-binding character of its youth policy instruments, its portfolio of youth policy support mechanisms to member states, youth organisations and young people across the continent allow it to make a substantial contribution in specific cases, notably where demand is driven by local and national stakeholders.

Questions for reflection

Have you been involved in any Council of Europe youth policy making or youth policy implementation?

Does anyone in your country or community apply the principles of co-management in youth policy?

What is the relation/interaction between the youth policy in your country and the Council of Europe?

Have you made use of any of the Council of Europe's policy support mechanisms in your country?

In which way have recommendations from the Council of Europe in the youth field impacted or shaped policy in your context?

How have principles and instruments developed within the Council of Europe youth sector impacted policy principles and practices in your context?

Chapter 10

The EU–Council of Europe youth partnership

Introduction

The partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth (routinely known as the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership or, within the field of youth, "the partnership") is a co-operation framework that began in 1998 with co-operation in the field of youth worker training and curriculum development. Since then, it has expanded and diversified to embrace a focus on, *inter alia*, knowledge gathering and management, youth work and policy. The EU–Council of Europe youth partnership is based on the principle of balanced involvement of the partner institutions in terms of political priorities, management, funding and visibility.

The overall goal of the partnership is to foster synergies between the priorities and programmes pursued by the two partner institutions in the youth field. It contributes to their respective work: for the EU, on implementing the aims of the EU Youth Strategy: engage, connect, empower; for the Council of Europe, on the 2020-21 priorities of the youth sector: young people's access to rights, youth participation and youth work, inclusive and peaceful societies, and the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030.

The partnership offers a platform for their co-operation and serves as a think tank and laboratory, gathering and producing knowledge, translating it for effective use in youth policy and practice, developing and testing new approaches, and considering traditional themes and innovative trends.

All decisions regarding the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership are taken jointly by the two partner institutions in the partnership management board, which brings together European Commission and Council of Europe representatives and observers.

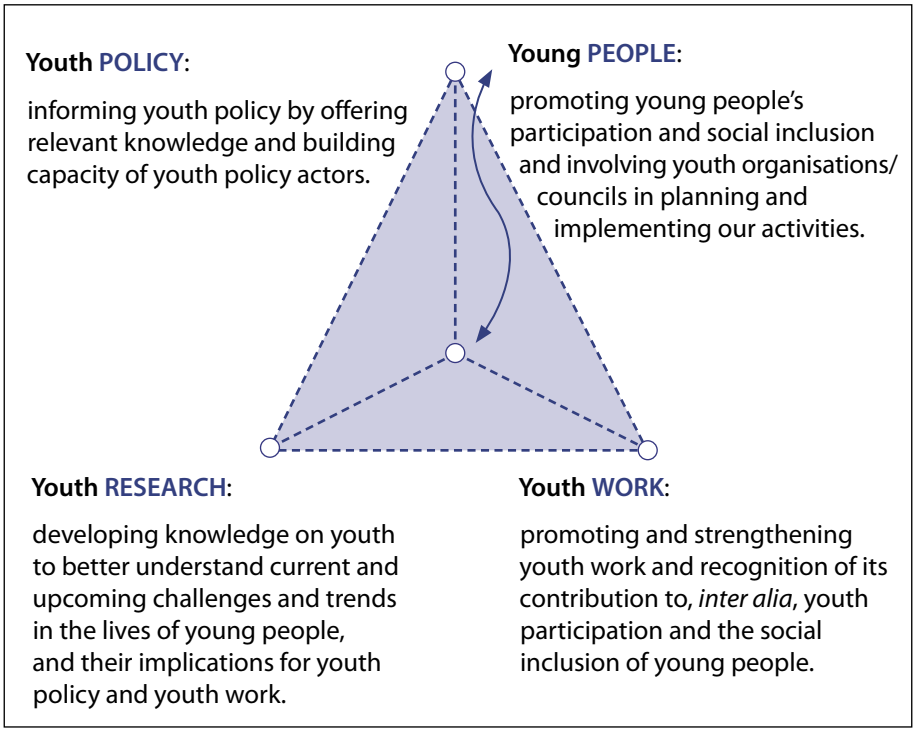
Spanning the two structures, the partnership has a wide range of partners from ministries responsible for youth issues in the organisations' members states (for the EU, within the Youth Working Party, and for the Council of Europe, within the CDEJ), to non-governmental partners. These non-governmental partners include: the Advisory Council on Youth; the European Youth Forum; the national agencies of the EU Erasmus+ (Youth in Action) programme; the SALTO Resource Centres; the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA); Eurodesk; the European Youth Card Association (EYCA); and national youth structures and research bodies.

The geographical coverage of the youth partnership encompasses the 50 signatory states of the European Cultural Convention (hence including all EU and other Council of Europe members), as well as neighbouring countries in the south-Mediterranean

region. Some of the activities may have an explicit regional focus on specific regions: eastern Europe (Eastern Partnership and Russia), South-East Europe (western Balkans), south Mediterranean.

The intervention logic and activities of the partnership are inspired by the triangle of governance shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Triangle of governance



Source: EU–Council of Europe youth partnership.

The three angles of youth research, youth policy and youth work are interconnected and the role of the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership is to strengthen the dialogue among them, involving young people and youth organisations. Wherever relevant, stakeholders from other sectors are invited to engage in a cross-sectoral exchange.

The EKCYP supports evidence-based youth policy making through the development of an adequate knowledge base. The EKCYP network includes correspondents from the 50 countries that are signatories to the European Cultural Convention. The network supports the knowledge-gathering process and has contributed to important projects related to education and training of youth workers in Europe, social inclusion of young people and digitalisation, and to youth policy evaluation. The EKCYP also complements EU Youth Wiki data for countries not covered by the Erasmus+ programme. The correspondents meet once a year to exchange on good practice

related to knowledge gathering and management and to agree on the thematic focus for the year. All the analytical work and country studies on youth policy, youth work and young people are published in the online database. See the "Resources" section of the partnership website to learn who the EKCYP correspondents are, and explore the country and thematic pages produced by the EKCYP in the "About youth/EKCYP" section of the partnership website to find out useful information related to youth policy making.

The PEYR is another important resource for policy making in Europe. The pool comprises 35 researchers in the youth and related fields who meet annually to exchange information about trends concerning young people and youth policy, ongoing research and new findings. The researchers support such policy processes as the EU Youth Dialogue and Council of Europe youth policy advisory missions to member states, and provide a knowledge base that informs expert groups and policy processes at European level and the youth field actors at large. They also help develop guidelines and educational material about the role of youth research, good youth policy monitoring and evaluation systems. See the "Resources" section of the partnership website to learn who the members of the PEYR are.

A Glossary on Youth updated on a regular basis brings together key concepts and terms in youth policy, youth research and youth work practice in Europe. The glossary references concepts as they are understood in research and academia but also as they are understood and used in policy standards and in European Union and Council of Europe youth sector debates.

The partnership also regularly produces publications and communication materials for youth policy, practice and research. Below is a short overview of these publications, all available for download from the website https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/publications.

Training kits to support learning in youth work

Published in an easily adaptable format for exploring complex topics in non-formal education and youth work activities in all contexts. The "T-kits" are translated into many languages and are updated according to needs. They cover such topics as sustainability and youth work, conflict transformation, social inclusion, citizenship education and learning mobility.

Youth Knowledge Books for youth policy, research and youth work practice

This is a series of publications collecting reflections on topics related to the situation of young people, youth policy and youth work. There is also a manual published in the Youth Knowledge Books series. Some of the books directly concern policy making, such as both the first and the current edition of the youth policy manual and *Needles in haystacks,* which explores cross-sectoral policy making. Other topics include digitalisation and social inclusion, political participation, supporting young refugees, and the history and concepts of youth work. Thematic studies and reviews focusing on general youth policy (for example, the *Youth policy evaluation review,*

the Insights series or *Study on digitalisation and social inclusion of young people*) shed light on how youth policy is designed and implemented across Europe.

Perspectives on youth

Formerly a paper-based journal concerned with youth research, policy and practice, *Perspectives on youth* is now an online reflection platform that through video, audio and short written opinion texts explores topics that stem from the current concerns and needs of young people. *Perspectives on youth* moved to a digital format to allow for more dynamic engagement with most topical issues of contemporary youth. Those explored so far, in print and online, include the future of young people, health, social values of young people, climate change, algorithmic stereotyping and inequalities, political participation and artificial intelligence.

Coyote magazine

For over 20 years *Coyote* has covered a variety of topics of interest to youth workers, trainers, young people, youth organisations and communities of policy and practice in Europe and beyond. Since 2018 *Coyote* has been published online and continues to support a large base of practitioners exploring matters related to youth work recognition, social inclusion, human rights education, digital and smart youth work and many more. Visit the *Coyote* online magazine, https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/coyote-magazine and read through the wealth of thematic contributions by youth workers, youth organisations, trainers, educators, policy makers and researchers.

Shaping European youth policies in theory and in practice

This project, run in partnership with Erasmus+ National Agencies for Youth, aims to build capacities of youth policy actors to strengthen and improve youth policy on the basis of the know-how and principles promoted by the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership and its partner institutions by bringing together national delegations with a special composition of actors from the different angles of youth policy. Through an educational long-term multicomponent programme (residential training, online learning, study visits, supported work on national plans) the project contributes to a culture of co-operation among different actors, supports developing specific country youth policy plans and creates a space for peer exchange on youth policy.

MOOC on youth policy essentials

This MOOC was developed to translate all the European knowledge gathered by the partnership and each of the institutions in order to explain and support youth policy making at national and local level across Europe. The MOOC brings to the wider audiences in a user-friendly format information about country and transnational youth policy-making standards and practices. It builds on the *Youth policy essentials* brochure and the country information on youth policy from the EKCYP. Follow the youth partnership website and social media channels to enrol in future editions.

Conclusion

Spanning two European organisations with their own dynamics of youth policy making, standards and support instruments (including funding), the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership reaches out to a wide variety of stakeholders in the field of youth, from national policy makers, through networks of researchers and youth work practitioners, to implementing agencies and young activists and their organisations at all levels across 50 states parties to the European Cultural Convention. Its knowledge- and evidence-based approach to supporting youth policy and youth work development in Europe stimulates critical reflection on young people's needs and aspirations and how they are addressed by European and national initiatives. The EU–Council of Europe youth partnership not only sheds light on current themes, but also reflects on lessons learned and conducts future-oriented analysis to help the youth sector anticipate future challenges. It is a good starting point to learn about youth policy realities in different countries and what is going on at European level. The youth partnership offers support in youth policy development not available elsewhere, and brings together a wide range of stakeholders of the European Union and the Council of Europe, enhancing their effectiveness in youth policy development and implementation.

Questions for reflection

What are various instruments and resources offered by the EU–Council of Europe partnership in the field of youth which you could make use of in your context?

Does your country have representatives in the PEYR, or a national correspondent in the EKCYP?

Are there any mechanisms in place to engage the professionals involved in the partnership work in your country's policy-related dialogues?

Have you participated in or contributed to any of the youth partnership's thematic symposiums, regional activities or expert exchanges?

Chapter 11

The United Nations

Introduction

Young people have been on the United Nations' agenda since the proclamation of the International Youth Year in 1985, followed by the adoption of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond in 1995, and the designation of 12 August as the International Youth Day in 1999. However, the true resurgence of youth as one of the top UN priorities came with the appointment of Ban Ki-moon as its Secretary-General, who appointed a dedicated Envoy on Youth (see below), and the development by a number of UN entities (including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Volunteers) of specific youth strategies. More recently, the UN launched its own overarching youth strategy (United Nations 2018) and adopted a comprehensive resolution on youth, peace and security, in which the role and place of young people featured prominently (United Nations Security Council 2015).

UN Youth Strategy "Youth 2030"

Youth development and youth engagement are cross-cutting issues in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed frameworks, and are a central aspect of Security Council Resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), acknowledging that young people play an important and positive role in the realisation of sustainable development, in the prevention of crises and in the advancement of peace.

The UN Youth Strategy acts as an umbrella framework to guide the entire UN system in its work with and for young people across its three pillars – peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. The Strategy seeks to strengthen the UN's capacity to engage young people and benefit from their views, insights and ideas and to ensure the UN's work on youth issues is pursued in a co-ordinated manner.

The Strategy aims to facilitate increased impact and expanded global, regional and country-level action to address youth needs, build the agency and advance the rights of young people in all their diversity around the world, and to ensure their engagement and participation in the implementation, review and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as other relevant global agendas and frameworks (United Nations 2018).

The UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth

The UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth is a recent UN initiative, established in 2013, in recognition of the world's growing youth population and the need for the UN system to engage with young people. The envoy serves as a global advocate for addressing the needs and rights of young people, as well as for bringing the UN closer to them.

The envoy's Office is part of the UN Secretariat in New York and supports multi-stakeholder partnerships related to the UN System-wide Action Plan on Youth and to youth volunteer initiatives. The office also promotes empowerment and fosters the leadership of youth at national, regional, and global levels, including through exploring and encouraging mechanisms for young people's participation in the work of the UN and in political and economic processes with a special focus on the most marginalised and vulnerable youth.

Ahmad Alhendawi was appointed the first-ever Envoy on Youth, and served in this position from 2013 until 2017. During his tenure, he tasked the UN Volunteers Programme with establishing the Youth Volunteers Programme and the UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development with developing the System-wide Action Plan on Youth. Since June 2017, Jayathma Wickramanayake has served as the UN Envoy on Youth.

The UN World Programme of Action for Youth

The United Nations youth agenda is guided by the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1995.

The Programme of Action provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people around the world. It covers 15 youth priority areas and contains proposals for action in each of these areas. The 15 fields of action identified by the international community are: education; employment; hunger and poverty; health; environment; drug abuse; juvenile delinquency; leisure-time activities; girls and young women; full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision making; globalisation; ICTs; HIV/AIDS; armed conflict; and intergenerational issues.

Each of the 15 priority areas identified by the international community is presented in terms of principal issues, specific objectives and the actions proposed to be taken by various actors to achieve those objectives. The objectives and actions reflect the three themes of the first International Youth Year in 1985: participation, peace and development, and are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. For more information, see www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/documents/wpay2010.pdf.

UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development

The UN Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development is a network consisting of UN entities (such as the UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNESCO ILO, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), WHO), represented primarily at headquarters level, whose work is relevant to youth. The aim of the Inter-Agency Network is to increase the effectiveness of UN work in youth development by strengthening collaboration and exchange among all relevant UN entities, while respecting and harnessing the benefits of each entity's individual strengths and unique approach and mandate.

In the framework of the World Programme of Action for Youth and its 15 priority areas (see above), the Inter-Agency Network advocates for, supports and reviews progress on the implementation of UN resolutions, conventions and the internationally agreed development goals that are youth related.

The network also contributes to increasing the understanding and visibility of the UN system's work on youth development. In particular, the network:

- provides a forum for co-operation and support;
- provides an opportunity for ongoing exchange of information on the UN system's work on youth development, including through knowledge-management initiatives and tools;
- strengthens and supports co-operation to promote youth development, through joint advocacy, initiatives and other forms of co-operation;
- draws on members' networks and relationships with governments, youth-led and youth-focused organisations, donor agencies, civil society organisations, multilateral organisations and others, to advance youth development;
- facilitates and supports youth involvement and participation in the UN system and its programmes or initiatives, at all levels.

As of April 2020, the Inter-Agency Network included 54 UN entities as members (IANYD 2020).

UN youth delegate programme

Participation in decision making is one of the key priority areas of the United Nations agenda on youth, as established in the World Programme of Action for Youth. One form of youth participation at the United Nations is the inclusion of youth delegates in a country's official delegation to the UN General Assembly and the various functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council. The youth delegate programme is co-ordinated by the UN, but it is the responsibility of member states to establish a youth delegate programme at national level, and to decide who will represent the young people of their country. The role of a youth representative varies from country to country, but normally includes providing input to their delegation on issues related to youth and participating in their delegation's general work through attending meetings and informal negotiations.

Youth delegates can participate in several intergovernmental meetings at the United Nations. Most official youth delegates participate in the General Assembly, but some also attend meetings of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council. For more information, see www.un.org/development/desa/youth/what-we-do/youth-delegate-programme.html.

UN agencies at local level

UN agencies and organisations can play an instrumental role in the development of youth policy, especially in developing and fragile states around the world.

In Lebanon, a UN task force composed of the UN Resident Co-ordinator, UNICEF, the UNDP and UNFPA, worked on the development of Lebanon's first youth policy document, adopted in 2012, and supported the establishment of the Lebanese National Youth Forum as a participatory mechanism for youth policy monitoring and implementation (Youth Policy in Lebanon 2012).

In Montenegro, the process of drafting of the 2017-21 Youth Strategy has been led by the Directorate for Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Education with the support of the UN system in Montenegro, within the framework of the UN Youth Empowerment Programme (harmonisation with international standards in the area of youth policy) (Montenegro Youth Strategy 2017).

In Ukraine, the UNDP local office initiated the launch of the country's largest youth worker programme, currently in its fourth year of operation, with over 2 000 youth workers trained and certified. The programme, initially a UNDP own project, eventually became part of Ukraine's national youth policy and is now funded largely by government and local authorities with substantial contributions of Ukrainian civil society organisations and youth policy experts. For more information, see http://youth-worker.org.ua.

Conclusion

The United Nations system is an important point of reference for youth policy, especially in matters pertaining to sustainable development and the global youth agenda. Its role differs greatly from country to country, and UN system organisations remain more active and visible in developing countries as well as in the global South, but the entire mechanism allows for connections to be made between different regions and areas of the world, notably on issues going beyond Europe.

Questions for reflection

Have you been involved in any of the UN youth policy mechanisms?

What were the entry points?

What has been the role and relevance of the UN in your country's youth policy?

What UN–state policy support mechanisms and partnership spaces are available in your context?

How far have you made use of the possibilities provided by various UN agencies in support of the youth sector?

Chapter 12

The European Youth Forum

Introduction

The European Youth Forum (the Youth Forum) is the platform of youth organisations in Europe, representing over 100 national and international umbrella youth organisations bringing together tens of millions of young people from all over Europe. The Youth Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations.

Objectives and activities

The Youth Forum's work is centred around three main pillars.

- Youth-friendly world. Young people and youth organisations are part of the solution for a youth-friendly world. Their engagement contributes to the betterment of the environment and the societies we live in. Young people need to be guaranteed the right to safe living conditions in a healthy environment. Current and future generations need to be educated on, and equipped to access, their rights and to participate in democratic life at all levels.
- Enabling environment for youth organisations. Flourishing youth organisations are a vital part of a healthy democracy. Civic space needs to be protected and expanded, so youth organisations can function without any barriers – financially, legally, politically and legitimately.
- Thriving platform. Further cultivating the platform to keep it relevant, strong and innovative. To remain and further strengthen being a credible actor as the main voice of young people in Europe.

According to the Youth Forum's Strategic Plan 2020-23, its work is structured around the following broad priorities:

- youth rights;
- climate crisis;
- sustainable development;
- engagement;
- recognition of youth organisations;
- resilient youth organisations;
- good governance;
- diverse and inclusive platform;

- sustainable platform;
- a regional platform in a global world.

The Youth Forum works in close partnership with the European Union, Council of Europe and United Nations institutions, advocating the needs and interests of young people and those of their organisations.

At the EU level, the Youth Forum works very closely with the Union's institutions, representing the youth voice in political discussions, decisions on policy measures affecting young people, programmes, funding and major youth events.

The Youth Forum is part of the Council of Europe co-management system in the field of youth; it holds 20 of the 30 seats on the Advisory Council on Youth (see Chapter 9 on the Council of Europe). All 20 members are elected at the Youth Forum's statutory meetings and come from its member organisations.

The Youth Forum also works with UN organisations on issues relevant to young people, and contributes to the relevant political processes, meetings and work of consultative bodies.

The Youth Forum also works in partnership with a range of regional youth platforms and organisations across the world, including in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the Mediterranean.

The Youth Forum develops tools and resources for youth organisations to engage with youth policy broadly, and with specific priorities of European and international youth policy. The Youth Forum's toolkit on quality standards for youth policy (European Youth Forum 2016) is a tool for policy makers and youth organisations, as well as young people themselves, to assess the state of youth policy in their context and accordingly call for improvements. The Toolkit covers the following eight core policy standards:

- standard 1: rights-based approach to youth policy;
- standard 2: evidence-based youth policy;
- standard 3: participatory youth policy;
- standard 4: multilevel youth policy;
- standard 5: strategic youth policy;
- standard 6: availability of resources for youth policy;
- standard 7: political commitment and accountability in youth policy;
- standard 8: cross-sectoral youth policy.

The Youth Forum has also developed an online tool to aid assessment of youth policies against the standards above.

When it comes to evidence-based youth policy development, the Youth Forum has launched the Youth Progress Index – one of the first international instruments analysing young people's situation around the world, going beyond economic indicators. The Index measures the well-being of young people, the fulfilment of their basic human needs and the opportunities that young people have. The Index seeks to enable policy makers, businesses and civil society organisations to develop

policies that correspond to the needs of young people, remove barriers that young people face in accessing their rights and provide the resources required to build a better society for young people (Youth Progress Index 2020).

Conclusion

The European Youth Forum is an important element of the youth policy accountability system, and gives a voice to young people and youth organisations at European and global levels. It has a unique status within the EU, the Council of Europe and UN systems as their youth sector partner, thereby giving young people and youth organisations direct and regular access to policy-making processes in the youth field.

Questions for reflection

Are young people from your country or community represented in the member organisations of the European Youth Forum, be they national youth councils or international non-governmental youth organisations?

What impact does this representation have on youth and youth policy in your context?

What other local, regional, national or transnational youth representation mechanisms exist in your context, and what is their purpose?

Conclusion to Part 3

Part 3 has addressed the governance and infrastructure for youth policy formulation, development and implementation at international levels. Given the manual's primary focus on the European context, more detailed attention has been afforded to the work of the European Union and the Council of Europe, and the institutional partnership between the two, while more cursory attention has been given to the wider remit of the United Nations and to the more specific advocacy work within youth policy of the European Youth Forum. Both, in different ways, sandwich the youth policy activity of the two European institutions, the former through providing a global umbrella, the latter both through holding the institutions to account in relation to youth participation and wider youth policy questions and through its contact with its counterparts in other parts of the world. All these supranational institutions have steadily developed standards and frameworks in relation to the youth sector, particularly on a range of opportunity- and inclusion-focused themes (which are set out in detail in Part 4). These have increasingly become a reference point and resource for youth policy improvement and innovation at national and even at local level.

Part 4

Instruments and practices

Introduction

Youth policy must be made to work. It is relatively easy to draft a policy framework. Aspirations for youth policy are broadly agreed: societies generally want their young people to be safe, healthy, active, successful, optimistic, creative, participative citizens. Implementing youth policy and securing change in those directions for an increasing proportion of young people is the real challenge. The expressed intentions of policy have to be converted into lived experience for young people.

Irrespective of the conceptual complexity of youth policy, as documented in Part 1 of this manual, and notwithstanding the institutional infrastructure at European and international levels (as discussed in Part 3) that set standards, produce innovation and provide support, all countries develop their own governance infrastructure (Part 2) and practical framework measures, informed by particular guiding principles, to put different aspects of youth policy into operation. Confusion and diversity at higher levels rarely produces inertia; rather, it compels choices in one direction or another, and those choices include whether or not to take advantage of the ideas and support more widely available. Part 4 outlines the instruments and practices that, in a variety of combinations, enhance the prospects of implementing effective and opportunity-focused youth policy grounded in participative and developmental principles.

Part 4 therefore seeks to address the following questions.

- How is "policy" translated into action and results?
- How can a document become a real instrument of transformation?
- What can be done to help the policy reach the people it is intended for?
- How are principles translated into programmes and actions?
- What are the structures and processes needed to take the steps from theory to practical impact?
- How can the most favourable conditions be established for the resources available to function most effectively?
- What role can various instruments play to ensure that policies do not end up "hitting the target but missing the point"?
- How can it be ensured that the resources available for youth policy are used efficiently and impactfully?

These questions are routinely raised and discussed in policy-related debates and they are asked by both policy makers and youth field practitioners. Part 4 considers some of the instruments, resources and tools that can be used to turn policy into practice and achieve the aspirations of youth policy within a particular context. These include the resourcing for youth projects and youth organisations, the promotion of non-formal education and learning, information and counselling services, the provision of youth work, structures for youth participation, and support for the capacity building of youth policy actors.

Many of these instruments seek to reflect the interconnectedness and interdependence that invariably prevails, explicitly or implicitly, within a youth policy framework. If these links function well, create the possibility to reinforce and cross-fertilise each other, and ensure that practice is both efficient and effective, then policies can yield relevant, realistic, needs-based, up-to-date and well-equipped results. There is regular discussion in the youth sector of the "magic triangle" or even more multidimensional character of youth policy, where various dimensions inform, support and influence each other (see Zentner 2016). An effective balance between policy, practice and research helps make maximum use of the potential of each of these dimensions. Many of the instruments in this chapter have their place within this portrayal of the mosaic of youth policy.

It is, nevertheless, important to underline that in order for any tool to work efficiently it needs to be carefully planned and reviewed, ensuring that its approach is suitably tailored to the specific national or local circumstances it is designed for. A mentoring programme, for example, can never simply transfer, without some tuning and adaptation, to another context. There is never one single magic bullet to fit all seemingly similar challenges across countries and communities; it is essential to have mechanisms of analysis, assessment, research and evaluation, and participatory consultative processes to help scan and analyse the context, consider gaps and fault lines, and (re-)appraise resources, priorities and methods. There needs to be sufficient information and a willingness to engage in policy reformulation. This is the area of the youth policy "clock" discussed in Chapter 4, referring to difficulties, debate and dissent.

The list provided below is by no means exhaustive. The instruments for shaping and implementing youth policy are in a constant state of innovation and evolution, but what is described reflects some of the most prevalent current practices in operation. Each instrument is briefly described, including an outline of its main principles, some of the current trends and debates relating to it, followed by a consideration of persisting challenges and instances of particularly successful implementation. Across the spectrum of practices presented, there will also be ideas for policies, together with suggestions for reflection that strive to stimulate further discussion about each instrument and its feasibility and applicability in the many different contexts in which public policy for young people is being developed.

Part 4 therefore explores the grounded practice issues relating to the core themes that lie at the heart of the youth policy debate at a European level:

- participation;
- information;
- volunteering;
- inclusion;
- access to rights;
- youth work;
- mobility;
- digitalisation.

Principles and core values

When we talk about efficient and functional youth policy that is meaningful and relevant to young people in the pluralist and democratic context of contemporary Europe, all mechanisms invoked need to be underpinned by a set of core values and principles.

It is those core values and principles that need to drive and direct decisions about the practices that follow.

They rest broadly on ideas of respect, understanding, appreciation of each individual, equality, honesty, integrity and solidarity. More specifically, in a youth policy context, these values and principles also encompass:

- participation;
- inclusion;
- a knowledge and evidence base;
- commitment;
- co-operation;
- transparency;
- accountability.

Participation, as a policy principle, is rooted in the understanding that all the policy decisions in all the spheres touching young people are made in close consultation with young people themselves, providing their meaningful and full participation at all stages and phases of the policy "clock". This also means that the policy should have formally established mechanisms to ensure youth participation in decision making.

Inclusion, as a policy principle, means that youth policies are open, non-discriminatory, and embrace various groups of young people with different life situations, identities and backgrounds, for whom equal opportunities to access, and benefit from, a policy are assured. The inclusion principle needs to ensure the minimisation of disadvantage, and the optimisation of advantage, for those already experiencing or facing marginalisation and social exclusion, thus securing a more "level playing field" for young people.

A knowledge- and evidence-based policy principle seeks to ensure that decisions made have a clear and objective understanding of the current situation of young people and that this information influences policies to make them relevant, up-to-date, targeted, efficient and needs-based. It means that the links between the evidence and policy are sustainable, continuous and impactful.

Commitment, as a policy principle, provides the basis for ascertaining a strong political will and the readiness of decision makers to sustain their support for young people through policy measures, regardless of various factors related to political, economic, social or other changes. Commitment means that youth is seen unequivocally as a specific, often vulnerable, policy target group.

Co-operation, as a policy principle, supports the approach that consolidation between different youth policy actors, stakeholders, sectors, levels and spheres is beneficiary and can make policy pull resources and strengths for feeding the sphere and its work.

It entails the existence and promotion of co-ordinating and co-operative mechanisms for both horizontal and vertical co-operation within governmental bodies; partnerships between sectors; and links between local, regional, national and international levels.

A transparency policy principle upholds the idea that policy, its actors, aims, objectives, priorities, funding sources, decision-making processes and implementation mechanisms should be clear, open and understandable to the general public. It also means that all interested parties have access to this knowledge and mechanisms, ensuring that their capacity to contribute is strengthened.

Finally, the policy principle of accountability suggests that policies have mechanisms, processes and structures in place to be held accountable for the way policies are developed, implemented and evaluated, to measure how far they are reaching the set goals, to what level of quality and through which means. This means that evaluation, monitoring and transparent reporting mechanisms are put in place to accompany the work.

As these are addressed, it is suggested that you refer back to, and assess, the youth policy situation in your country, to diagnose how far these principles relate to your work, how far they are present, what indicates that they exist and work, through what practices these principles are put to life, and – conversely – what instruments, structures and processes you have in place to ensure the principles remain threaded through the practice. It is important to realise that the priority principles of youth policy in any particular context are very much determined by the ways in which young people are perceived in a country and, in turn, shape the specific nature of the youth policy; in other words, however desirable it may be to assert some core or universal youth policy principles, these are invariably balanced in different ways both in the framing of youth policy and the ways in which the practices that result interpret the aspirations of that policy.

Chapter 13

Participation and active citizenship

Introduction

For many reasons, youth participation in government youth policy decision making and the role of non-governmental youth organisations as institutional partners in youth policy development and implementation has become one of the central features of European and international youth policy discourse.

Participation is a key to good governance in the 21st century in order to foster the fundamentals of democracy in a contemporary way.

As described in the Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (Council of Europe 2015a) participation and active citizenship is about having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, where necessary, the support to participate in and influence decisions and engage in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.

It is often alleged that youth is not participating in civic and political life and that youth is disillusioned with politics, and not interested in being engaged in any decision-making processes. The suggestion is that young people are apolitical and have no confidence in adult policy makers. Such stereotypes contribute to a vicious circle of young people and adults not trusting each other, not getting to know each other and therefore not being able to connect and communicate with each other.

It is one thing to create conditions for purposeful youth participation and another to remove barriers that exist for full, inclusive, impactful participation. These barriers include different communication styles, different levels and types of experience, lack of skills, lack of expertise on how to involve young people in a meaningful way, the place of youth in the social hierarchy, mistrust between adults and young people, negative stereotypes, lack of strategically legally backed youth-friendly procedures and policies, lack of other necessary resources, belief that nothing will change even if a young person participates, and that young people who participate are not representative of youth in general (Council of Europe, 2015b).

Today many practitioners and activists in the youth participation and advocacy field talk about several challenges for youth organisations. Youth organisations in many countries are an essential instrument for the promotion of, education for and practising of participation and civic responsibilities, and the exercise of democratic and social rights. Some of the current challenges include the shrinking space for youth civil society, general mistrust and lack of political recognition, sustainable funding of youth organisations, youth programmes, youth work in general, lack of

clear mechanisms for empowering and ensuring participation of unorganised young people in policy dialogue. Such concerns are shared by a wide European youth NGO community. International organisations have highlighted the importance of addressing the issues and developing recommendations for country and European level responses to this challenge. The youth sections of the European institutions, and other regional youth policy actors, have raised the issue recurrently through recommendations, resolutions and position papers, and have proposed measures to respond to it, calling upon national governments and international institutions to ensure civic and political participation instruments, support for civil society structures, and the provision of assistance to youth organisations, in order to ensure the sustainable and resourced work of national youth councils and international non-governmental youth organisations.

Ideas for policy measures

- Development of co-management and co-planning systems/mechanisms.
- Establishment of programmes that build competences for full and meaningful participation.
- Funding youth organisations, councils and similar platforms that advocate for and promote young people's participation.
- Development and introduction of instruments and channels for building trust and constructive dialogue between youth and decision makers.
- Establishment of new, innovative, modern, digital participation channels.
- Promotion of principles of youth participation at local, regional and national levels.
- Mainstreaming participatory practices into various areas of work, and also throughout other policies.

Turning policy into practice

Practising participation

There are several models and approaches countries have taken to structuring the engagement of young people and making it as meaningful and impactful as possible. Some of them show gradual, linear development building on each level (such as the approaches illustrated in various "ladders" of participation), while others show no specific hierarchy or sequence and talk instead about degrees and conditions for participation. Some concentrate on the contextual environments for participation, yet others on conditions supporting full participation. Some countries build their participatory approaches based on existing international frameworks supporting meaningful and continued participation through various processes and supported youth structures.

Slovenia has adopted the Public Interest in Youth Sector Act, which defines the Council of the Government of Slovenia for Youth as a consulting body for youth-related policy decisions and matters. The council gives the government and relevant ministries proposals, incentives and recommendations for strengthening the youth

dimension in various sectoral public policies. Similarly, the Students Association Act ensures participation of student bodies in matters concerning students, and the Youth Councils Act provides opportunities for the participation of young people in policy discussions and decisions (EU Youth Wiki 2020).

Participatory budgeting

The idea of involving young people in the programming and discussion of budget allocations has been tried in different countries, giving the possibility to young people online or offline to voice their concerns and come up with their suggestions, needs and creative ideas for work to be implemented for themselves.

In Portugal, the practice of youth participatory budgeting is a process set up by the government to ensure people aged 14-30 have an opportunity to present their ideas and decide on a project that will get public funding. These initiatives include face-to-face meetings in various municipalities with youth, presentations and debates on proposals at national and regional level, as well as clarifications and assistance to young citizens who wish to participate and suggest their ideas (Portuguese Institute for Youth and Sports).

Co-management and co-planning

Co-management refers to a model of youth participation where decision makers and other actors concerned with these decisions come together into an equal dialogical structure. The decisions may be related to policy priority settings, implementation mechanisms, funding allocations, or evaluation and monitoring.

This model has been widely promoted and is the basis for youth policy making within the Council of Europe youth sector, where representatives of the relevant member state governmental bodies and representatives of international youth organisations come together into a Joint Council, for common reflection and decision on European-level youth policy.

Co-planning is also gaining interest and popularity, as it supports direct participation in community life, providing a space for discussions, co-planning and co-production involving all relevant actors such as youth, NGOs, municipal authorities, pulling together their contributions based on open communication. In Sweden, the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions has developed a digital map of each city and made it possible for young people to get involved in city planning, management and safety improvement by informing the local authorities about their city experiences. Swedish cities also organise annual theme days where children and young people can propose how their localities should be developed (Finnish Youth Research Society and authors 2014).

Participation at local level

It is easier to learn participation by exercising it rather than by reading about theoretical models. For many young people, the first steps towards activism and participation is involvement in processes of discussion and decision making in

their local communities. This is where young people get a chance to see the direct impact of their involvement and participate in a small-scale democracy (Galstyan 2019). This seems to be a rather safe and fruitful space to experiment and learn how participation works and how young people can ensure and experience their impact.

For enhancing and developing youth policy implementation, and boosting youth participation and development on local and regional level, the government of Armenia initiated the mechanism of annual "youth capitals". It aims to promote the balanced development of communities, encourage and support local youth initiatives, support local civil society, stimulate the development of local youth policies, promote stakeholder partnership in the youth field within the locality, and develop youth participation and activities. Each year the responsible ministry organises a competition to which different cities and towns apply to be the youth capital. Considerable youth-related budgetary resources, activities, national and international initiatives and projects are directed to the selected winning city.

For supporting the development of social and civic competences of young people through non-formal education and learning initiatives, the National Youth Agency and the National Youth Council in Malta have a project involving young people in local municipal councils. The young councillors are involved in needs assessments and research, and needs-based project planning with a clear rationale, plan and budget. Young people wishing to be involved in the councils receive tailor-made training on local governance, youth council operation, and competences for participation in decision making. They meet and discuss their ideas and the best 10 projects then receive funding from the local municipality. The whole process is facilitated and assisted by a youth worker (EU Youth Wiki 2017).

Learning to be active citizens

Active citizenship, as stated in the Council of Europe's (2015c) Enter! Recommendation, is the capacity for thoughtful and responsible participation in political, economic, social and cultural life. Young people learn about active citizenship through introduction to the concepts and values underpinning citizenship in a democracy and, once they have reached the relevant age, by practising the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy (such as voting, or standing for elected office). It is at one and the same time a human right and a responsibility. Active citizenship requires both opportunity and competence.

The development of young people's social and civic competence is an important objective of Luxembourg's youth policy. One of the objectives of youth policy stated in the Youth Law is to contribute to the education of young people as responsible and active citizens, respectful of democracy, values and the fundamental rights of society. To promote civic education in youth, the strategy for civic education was initiated by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. Citizenship education is incorporated in curricula for general and vocational education at the upper secondary level. Participatory structures helping young people gain civic competence exist in various forms and spaces, such as school/student councils, youth parliament and the National Youth Council (EU Youth Wiki).

Participation and digitalisation

In recent years, digitalisation in general has created a new reality for youth participation, and today there is increasing talk about digital citizenship and participation. Online platforms, social networks and mobile apps are developing into accessible and user-friendly tools to voice opinions and enter a dialogue with decision makers. Using new ICTs and media as a means of being involved has become easier and more accessible than ever. Good examples include different mobile apps for active citizenship, connecting easily to municipal authorities and providing feedback to national governments and parliaments.

To encourage the social and political participation of young people in Germany, the German Children and Youth Foundation (DKJS), the German Federal Youth Council (DBJR) and the IJAB run the joint online participation platform "jugend.beteiligen.jetzt" (youth.participation.now). The main goal of the initiative is to promote digital participation through building capacities for e-participation, developing tools for various types of e-participation, such as ePartool, Antragsgrün, Yopad.eu Etherpad and the BarCamp tool Camper, providing and motivating participation projects through the mapping of good practices, and encouraging networking between main stakeholders. The platform provides an opportunity for policy makers and youth to connect in a youth-appropriate manner and format. For more information, see https://jugend.beteiligen.jetzt.

Participation through organised youth structures

Youth organisations have both fought for, and been given, an important role when it comes to presenting the voice of youth, representing their interests, mobilising them for action, and helping them grow and develop. They have played an important role in ensuring, promoting and claiming the right of youth to be part of decision-making processes, and have built capacity to enter this dialogue as equals. Their work needs to be supported through governmental instruments.

In Belgium (Flanders), under the Youth and Children's Rights Policy Plan renewed by the Flemish Parliament Act of 20 January 2012, specific types of organisations receive a structural subsidy for administrative costs and can also apply for project funding. These include nationally organised youth associations, youth information and cultural-educational associations. The Flemish Government also gives project grants to organisations for experimental pilot projects in the spheres of youth work, youth information, youth participation policy, and cultural education for young people. For more information, see EU Youth Wiki (2020).

In France, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport actively supports the development of youth associations. One of the Ministry's departments – the Department for Youth, Non-Formal Education and Voluntary Organisations (DJEPVA) – supports organisations with grants and accreditation for non-formal educational activities. The Ministry gives grants to accredited youth and public-education associations to carry out programmes and actions open and accessible to all, contributing to the wider public good. For more information, see EU Youth Wiki (2020).

Resources supporting youth policy implementation

European regulations and legal documents

- Council of Europe: Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18, and its Child Participation Assessment Tool.
- Council of Europe: Recommendation Rec(2006)14 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on citizenship and participation of young people in public life.
- Council of Europe: Recommendation Rec(2004)13 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the participation of young people in local and regional life.
- Council of Europe: Recommendation No. R (97) 3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on youth participation and the future of civil society.
- Council of Europe: Recommendation Rec(2006)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the role of national youth councils in youth policy development.

Thematic materials

- *New and innovative forms of youth participation in decision-making processes* (Crowley and Moxon 2017).
- *Competences for democratic culture: Living together as equals in culturally diverse democratic societies* (see https://rm.coe.int/16806ccc07).
- Compendium of Council of Europe documents related to youth NGOs and youth participation (see www.coe.int/en/web/youth/compendium#{%2240807103%22:[1]}).
- *Youth participation good practices in different forms of regional and local democracy*, 2014 *(see* http://www.nuorisotutkimusseura.fi/images/julkaisuja/youthparticipation_goodpractices.pdf).
- *Approaches to Youth Participation in Youth and Community Work Practice: A critical dialogue* (Corney et. al. 2020).

Chapter 14

Youth information

Introduction

Young people's right to information is enshrined and recognised in legal and political documents at national, European and international level. It is a practice in its own right, as well as being a critical component of other aspects of youth policy, such as participation, social inclusion, and access to rights. Youth information is also one of the important instruments of youth work. Through a variety of supportive activities, youth information services and professionals help young people to maximise the resources and opportunities available to them across the policy spectrum, from training and employment, through justice and welfare, to sports, travel and leisure. There is no shortage of information today, but distinguishing its value and reliability – spotting the difference between material that enables informed choices rather that what is marketing, propaganda or "fake news" – is critical, through professional exchange of information, counselling, coaching, advising, training, networking, and referral to specialised services, such as the European Youth Card Association, ERYICA and Eurodesk.

> The aims of youth information and counselling include providing and giving access to reliable, accurate and understandable information on relevant topics and opportunities, helping youth navigate consciously and responsibly through information, and increasing young people's media literacy (ERYICA – Council of Europe 2015).

Quality and ethics in youth information are essential criteria that have to be ensured within information and counselling services through clear guidelines, policies, quality management and assurance mechanisms, the development of competence frameworks and continuous professional development possibilities for staff.

The revised version of the European Youth Information Charter (adopted in 2018 by ERYICA) outlines that respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms entails the right of all young people to have access to comprehensive, objective, understandable and reliable information relating to all their questions and needs. According to the Charter, youth information must be built on several principles and be independent, accessible, inclusive, needs-based, empowering, participative, ethical, professional and proactive. These principles are ensured by specific measures concerning issues of relevance, equality, fostering autonomy, capacity development of field professionals, and the quality of services. All these principles apply both to offline and online youth information as an integral part of the current information field and are enshrined in the Principles for Online Youth Information, adopted in 2009. (See more details at www.eryica.org.)

A recent study on future youth information and counselling (ERYICA 2018a) looked into emerging realities with youth and information, and states that it is difficult to envision now how the information field will transform, and how the behaviour of young people with regard to information will change. The complexity and amount of information is likely to steadily increase. New forms of information management will be emerging. Fake news and manipulation will clearly be an increasing problem, alongside a lack of critical thinking amongst many consumers of information. Young people will face challenges in issues of internet and information safety. The education system will change, encompassing even more online work, tools and resources. The study also outlined that the areas of growing information needs will be leisure, education, safety, health and well-being, mobility, immigration, human rights, democracy, and data protection. Information needs in relation to artificial intelligence and big data are growing, especially on how to use these tools and data. These emerging realities place increasing demands and expectations on youth information and counselling services.

Ideas for policy measures

- Quality assurance of youth information and counselling services.
- Development programmes for competence development of youth information and counselling staff.
- Resourcing new channels of youth information work.
- Investment in strong information networks.
- Creation possibilities for media and information literacy of all parties involved (youth, parents, teachers, youth workers, etc.).

Turning policy into practice

Information and counselling services

Often, youth information services take on the role of "translators" or "interpreters" of material into a youth-friendly, comprehensible, acceptable, useful language for young people. They also work to organise the information in the most efficient way for young people, to make wider use of resources and opportunities available.

Eight neighbouring municipalities in the region of Satakunta in Finland experienced similar problems in reaching out to young people, communicating with them, and implementing digital youth work, owing to a lack of both time and technical expertise. It was decided in 2015 that to solve the problem, all the youth services in the relevant municipalities would be grouped together under two websites: Nuokka.fi and Jeesari.nuokka.fi. Nuokka.fi is focused on leisure-time services, whereas Jeesari.nuokka.fi is geared towards assistance in areas such as studying, health, and employment. The purpose of the sites is to make it easier for both young people and adults working with them to find information about local services aimed at young people (ERYICA 2018b).

Supporting young people to navigate the information field

There are several measures that can be taken to address and respond to the challenges of the current information and digital age, to help young people to manage information in their lives and make best use out of it for their personal and professional well-being and growth. Some of these measures include the planned and focused development of media and information literacy, support for the digital competence of youth information workers, comprehensive continuous research on current trends, and the development of inclusive strategies across the diverse mechanisms that are used to provide information to young people.

The Institut Balear de la Joventut (IBJOVE – Balearic Institute of Youth) and the government of the Balearic Islands in Spain initiated "Cybermentors", a peer-to-peer network for education and mentoring in secondary schools in the Balearic Islands. The project aims to raise awareness among young people at schools on the possible consequences of their internet activity, in order to minimise risks and misuse and enhance the positive effects of their online presence. The project aims to create a network of young people with knowledge about digital citizenship, which can be a reference for their peers. The pupils undergo training on safe internet behaviour and etiquette, learn how to approach these issues with their peers, and have networking and peer-learning sessions. The Cybermentors then pass on their training to secondary-school pupils in the two years below them. After this training, and throughout the school year, the Cybermentors spread information, tips, and videos among their target group about digital citizenship skills. For further information, see ERYICA 2018b.

Resources supporting policy implementation

European regulations and legal documents

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on youth information.
- Recommendation No. R (90) 7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states concerning information and counselling for young people in Europe.
- Internet Governance Strategy 2016-19 (https://rm.coe.int/16806aafa9).
- Recommendation No. R (97) 20 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on "hate speech".

Thematic materials

- *Young people's access to rights through youth information and counselling*, 2015 (https://rm.coe.int/16807023d9).
- Youth information starter kit (Council of Europe–ERYICA 2010).
- *Future youth information and counselling: building on information needs and trends* (ERYICA 2018a).

- Survey: Identifying the needs of youth (information) workers, ERYICA, EYCA and Eurodesk, 2017 (https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59ab1130ff7c50083fc9736c/t/5c62bfe5f4e1fcf05b96c75b/1549975531792/Results+of+the+survey.pdf).
- SHERYICA: Series of good practice in youth information (ERYICA, 2018b).

Chapter 15

Volunteering

Introduction

Volunteering is an important, almost essential part of a modern democratic society. It is an activity that provides the possibility for social participation, civic contribution, activism, philanthropy, the exercise of human rights and core European values. Voluntary work in its diversity offers space and opportunity for the development of personal, social, civic and professional competences. Volunteering is an instrument for social inclusion, solidarity and active citizenship.

Volunteers bring a valuable contribution to local communities ranging from social actions, emergency action, education, environment, rural development, cultural heritage, peace and reconciliation as well as other solidarity actions. It takes various forms that can be national or international, short or long term, organised or spontaneous, online/virtual or offline, non-specialised or professional. It can be carried out by individuals or groups.

> "Voluntary activities" refers to all types of voluntary activity, whether formal, non-formal or informal which are undertaken of a person's own free will, choice and motivation, and is without concern for financial gain. They benefit the individual volunteer, communities and society as a whole. (European Commission communication to the Council, 2004)

This broad definition aims to encompass the wide spectrum of forms, direction, systems, traditions and culture of volunteering across Europe.

Ideas for policy measures

There is clearly a significant need for the development of a legal framework to create an enabling environment and strategies for promotion of volunteering. The framework should include the measures set out below:

- development of systems for volunteer protection;
- support for organisations in their volunteering projects;
- encouragement of innovation in the volunteer sphere, including digital and online instruments;
- recognition of volunteers' skills and experiences;
- removal of legal and administrative obstacles so as to provide every opportunity for youth voluntary activity in a national and international context.

Turning policy into practice

Supporting youth volunteering at national level

Volunteering in some of the countries, especially ones where a culture of volunteering is new, still produces significant challenges, including the absence of or incomplete national strategies; no clear legal framework and definition; a lack of agreement on the rights and responsibilities of volunteers and on issues related to volunteer safety and security; and the quality of volunteering settings and services.

In Croatia, there is both a law on volunteering and a legislative act defining the concept of volunteering. There is also a volunteer support system set up by the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, that loosely co-operates with four regional volunteer centres and four local volunteer centres, providing support and funding for the development of volunteering in the country. As the body responsible for monitoring implementation of the Act on Volunteering, the Ministry expects all state and non-state actors involved in organising volunteering to submit, once a year, a report that contains information on the organisation of volunteering activities during the reporting period. The National Committee on Volunteering is established as an advisory body for the government on matters of development and promotion of volunteering. For more information, see EU Youth Wiki (2020) for national descriptions and European Commission 2018a for Croatia-specific information.

The Office of the Commissioner for Volunteerism and NGOs in Cyprus is the main actor involved in policy making and the main governmental authority responsible for youth volunteering. The Commissioner works to support the volunteering movement through implementing policies on active citizenship at all levels, and co-ordinating all voluntary organisations, local authorities and the church. It also supports the capacity building and autonomy of voluntary organisations, works towards implementation of the government's decisions relating to the field (for example through the Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers), and endorses the recognition of non-formal and informal learning on the basis of the Volunteer Legislative Framework, to contribute to combating unemployment. For more information, see www.volunteercommissioner.gov.cy/volunteer/volunteercommissioner.nsf/contact_en/contact_en?opendocument.

The Association of Volunteer Centers (AVC), the largest volunteer organisation in Russia, was created on the initiative of the country's president with the aim of preserving the legacy of the volunteer programmes of large-scale sports and cultural events and developing the volunteer movement in general. The Association has become a Russian think tank in the field of volunteering. AVC experts participated in the development of federal legislation on volunteering, a concept for the development of volunteering in Russia, and a plan for implementing this concept. The mission of the AVC is to create an infrastructure for the development of volunteering. For more information, see https://xn--80ae4d.xn--p1ai/programs/mobility.

The European Solidarity Corps is an EU programme that creates opportunities for young people to volunteer, work, train and run their own solidarity projects that benefit communities around Europe. The volunteers are young people who are

interested and motivated to take part in solidarity-related projects, and who agree to values, mission and principles of the programme. The European Solidarity Corps is open for people aged 18-30 and can last from two to 12 months. Following registration of an individual's details in the ESC system, organisations can search the database and select people for their projects. Organisations can apply for funding for their projects, and once their projects are approved, they can access the pool of participants. The programme is open for EU member states and neighbouring regions. For more information see https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en.

Promoting volunteering at different levels

One of the issues and concerns that volunteering has in common with youth work is the recognition, by actors on various levels, of abilities gained through volunteering practices and experiences and the promotion of the field as a system supporting personal and professional development. Often the lack of recognition instruments and absence of promotion programmes hinders the development of the field.

The European Volunteering Capital competition aims to promote and develop volunteering at local level. This open Europe-wide competition for municipalities aims to promote volunteering at local level by giving recognition to municipalities that support and strengthen partnerships with volunteer centres, and organisations involving volunteers, and celebrate and promote volunteering and the impact made by them. The project is initiated by the Centre for European Volunteering (www.europeanvolunteercentre.org).

The Netherlands National Europass Centre established the "Europass Mobility for Volunteers" initiative. This was a pilot initiative to use the existing Europass Mobility document in the context of local volunteering. The goal is to reach organisations that want to use the Europass for recognition and, at the same time, to attract young people to voluntary work. Using the Europass Mobility document provides a stepping stone to a paid job; the self-recognition of competencies gained by the volunteer enhances their opportunities through competence recognition on various levels. The Europass Mobility document for volunteers helps consolidate and objectively present learned outcomes from the period of voluntary activity. The document is validated, and signed by a sending and a hosting partner organisation. For more information, see https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/europass-mobility.

Resources for policy implementation

European regulations and legal frameworks

- European Parliament: Resolution of 12 June 2012 on recognising and promoting cross-border voluntary activities in the EU, 2012.
- Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe: Recommendation 1496 (2001) on improving the status and role of volunteers.
- Council of Europe: European Convention on the Promotion of a Transnational Long-term Voluntary Service for Young People (2000).

- Council of Europe: Recommendation No. R (94) 4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion of a voluntary service.
- European Council Resolution of 14 February 2002 on the added value of voluntary activity for young people in the context of the development of Community action on youth.

Thematic materials

- *Charting the landscape of European youth voluntary activities*, H. Williamson and B. Hoskins with P. Boetzelen, 2005, available at https://go.coe.int/RTBku.
- T-Kit 5: International Voluntary Service, available at https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/t-kit-5-international-voluntary-service.
- "The power of volunteering", *Coyote*, No. 17, 2011, available at https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/coyote-magazine.

Chapter 16

Social inclusion

Introduction

One recurrent underpinning or overarching element of youth policy is the question of commitment to social inclusion (see Chapter 2). In order to tackle the issues and improve the situation of youth inclusion, and in general make policies inclusive for all young people, it is essential to understand what inclusion is; who are excluded; why, on what grounds, and what makes them excluded; and what is being done to proactively prevent or stop exclusion. It is important to check on policies to "inclusive proof" them, and to understand what mechanisms and practices cement an inclusive approach in policy implementation.

> Inclusion is a term used widely in social and educational policy-making to express the idea that all people living in a given society (should) have access and participation rights on equal terms. This means, on the one hand, that institutions, structures and measures should be designed positively to accommodate a diversity of circumstances, identities and ways of life. On the other hand, it means that opportunities and resources should be distributed so as to minimise disadvantage and marginalisation. In the sphere of European youth work and non-formal education and learning, inclusion is considered an all-embracing strategy and practice for ensuring that people with fewer opportunities have access to the structures and programmes offered. (Council of Europe and European Commission, 2017)

Those young people who are socially excluded are often closely aligned with, or located within a category or concept developed some years ago, by the European Commission, of "young people with fewer opportunities" – in other words, young people who are at a disadvantage compared to their peers because they face one or more of the circumstances, experiences and obstacles that are known to produce exclusion. Young people with migrant backgrounds; young people with disabilities; young people with low educational levels; young people living in remote areas; young people with low household income; young offenders; young people abusing drugs; early school leavers; young people leaving care; homeless youth; lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning and intersex (LGBTQI); groups; young women; young people with parents at risk of unemployment; low education or divorced; young carers; and people experiencing mental health issues; make a non-exhaustive list of various groups at risk of exclusion. They are often the focus of social inclusion policies, but the social situation and condition of the same category and subgroup within each category varies significantly across Europe. In one country, migrants will be less at risk of being excluded than in another, and undocumented migrants or people without status might be at considerably greater risk than second-generation migrants.

In certain contexts, these situations or obstacles prevent young people from having effective access to basic social rights, such as housing, employment, health, culture, education and leisure. They often have little or no access to non-formal education and learning, transnational mobility and participation, active citizenship, empowerment and inclusion in society at large. Consequently, young people with fewer opportunities are those facing social, economic or geographic obstacles, dealing with educational difficulties or cultural differences, having health problems or disabilities and having limited access to social rights. One useful analysis of these issues is provided by Marcovic et al. (2015).

A summary report on social inclusion conducted by the European Union–Council of Europe youth partnership highlights several major predictors of social exclusion for youth (Pantea 2014) that include the socio-economic situation of parents, the ethnic-cultural background, often in combination with religion, young people's own educational attainment, disability, chronic illness and substance misuse, early pregnancy/motherhood and sexual orientation.

It is important, therefore, before making any policy addressing social inclusion, to ensure careful consideration and analysis in order to choose the most relevant and efficient policy measures that can alleviate the situation.

Ideas for policy measures

- Creation of mechanisms for improving the living conditions of young people regarding, for example, employment, education and training, leisure, health, housing, information and counselling.
- Establishment of policies breaking down segregation and the promotion of social inclusion.
- Development of inclusive and transparent processes which allow young people and their representatives to participate in decisions affecting them, ensuring that all young people are fully able to exercise their role as active citizens without discrimination.
- Development of support schemes for youth organisations and youth work settings working on social inclusion programmes and initiatives.

Turning policy into practice

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and living conditions

Access to social rights for young people can be examined under the following aspects: access to quality public services, to education, to health services, to social protection, to housing, to employment and to social rights for minority social groups. Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 on access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights underlines that access to quality education, secure employment, decent living conditions, adequate transport, health care, technology and opportunities for social, cultural and economic participation is a prerequisite for the inclusion and active citizenship of all young people. These young people

are more vulnerable to all kinds of risks, including poor physical and mental health, substance abuse, self-harm, violence, discrimination and exclusion. National policies should aim at preventing and eradicating the poverty, discrimination, violence and exclusion faced by such young people.

One of the flagship projects of the Council of Europe youth sector is "Enter!" – a project aimed at identifying and supporting youth work and youth policy responses to violence, exclusion and discrimination affecting young people in Europe, especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The project is based on the Council of Europe's Enter! Recommendation, the implementation of which it facilitates, at both European and national level. The project provides for long-term educational activities for youth workers, direct consultation mechanisms, local youth work projects, large-scale youth meetings, measures for local authorities to support implementation of the Recommendation, seminars and study sessions, and development of educational resources to address social rights and access to those rights. For more information, see www.coe.int/en/web/enter/home.

In Norway, the Government's goal is to make all public spaces accessible to everyone by 2025. "Minority youth" is an action plan designated for people with physical impairment experiencing challenges in using daily services or activities. Children and youths are particularly mentioned to secure equal access and right to participate through seven specific measures and initiatives. For more information, see EU Youth Wiki (2020).

The Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma men and women in Serbia is aimed at reducing poverty and elimination of discrimination against Roma men and women. The Strategy strives to improve the social inclusion of Roma men and women, both at national and at local level, ensuring their full enjoyment of human rights, and covers five priority areas (education, housing, employment, health and social protection). For more information, see EU Youth Wiki (2020).

The LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy 2018-20 introduced in Ireland by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs aims to create a safe, more supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people in various spheres of their life (education, employment, services, leisure, sports, civic participation, etc.), support parents and families of LGBTI+ young people, and provide capacity-building measures among service providers to improve their understanding of, and ability to engage with, LGBTI+ young people. For more information, see https://assets.gov.ie/24459/9355b-474de34447cb9a55261542a39cf.pdf and EU Youth Wiki (2020).

In Italy, the Agency for Family, Parenting and Youth Policy of the Autonomous Province of Trento has established a project called "Cohousing: io cambio status" (Cohousing: I change status) to address the need for access to affordable housing for young people and to support the young people's transition to autonomy, employment and independence. Under the initiative, young people aged 18-29 not in employment, education or training (NEET) live in co-housing for a period of two years. Coaches and tutors support the young people into employment through training and orientation, and career guidance. The beneficiaries meet one third of the costs and the local government meets the remaining costs. For more information, see Youth Partnership (2017).

Resources supporting policy implementation

European regulations and legal frameworks

- Council of Europe: Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on young people's access to rights.
- Council of Europe: Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 on access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights.
- Council of Europe: Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.
- Resolution 442(2019) of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on social rights of young people: the role of local and regional authorities.

Thematic materials

- *Social inclusion for young people: breaking down the barriers* (European Youth Centre 2007).
- *Finding a place in modern Europe: mapping of barriers to social inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations* (Markovic et al. 2015).
- Enter! project of the Council of Europe, available at www.coe.int/en/web/enter.
- *What can youth work do for access to social rights? Impact and lessons learned from the Enter! project (2009-15*) (Ohana 2018).
- *Taking it seriously – Guide to Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights*, available at www.coe.int/en/web/enter/taking-it-seriously.

Chapter 17

Access to rights

Introduction

Youth is often seen as a point in the life course of considerable vulnerability, which becomes even more vivid at critical moments of transition. This is becoming more visible in times of economic, social and political crisis. Often young people may find themselves discriminated against, with their rights denied or violated in the spheres of, *inter alia*, education, employment, housing, leisure and health. Youth policies in their various phases of development, and the instruments and interventions that flow from them, need to strive to support young people's access to rights, as without this it will be hard to ensure full enjoyment of the possibilities provided by policy measures, especially for those who, for whatever reason, already have difficulties in accessing them. Young people are entitled to enjoy full human rights and all other rights under national and international law. In order to facilitate access to rights for all young people, youth policy needs to ensure the reach of its provisions to all young people, especially those who are disengaged, discriminated against and disadvantaged.

Access to rights is a part of a rights-based approach that the Council of Europe has been strongly advocating in the youth field. This means that human rights and the access to their full enjoyment have been the focus of all policies, initiatives, approaches and interventions at European level. A human rights-based approach is about ensuring that both the standards and the principles of human rights are integrated into policy making as well as the day-to-day running of organisations and institutions. This is a fundamental and non-negotiable aspect of the Council of Europe's Recommendation on young people's access to rights, an extract of which is reproduced below.

> Young people's access to rights is an essential element in building a culture based on the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law … The recommendation aims to improve young people's access to rights rather than addressing the specific rights themselves. It focuses on improving access by taking steps to promote awareness of the rights that young people should be able to enjoy and what they can do if their rights are violated, and by removing legal, political and social barriers. It emphasises the importance of member States regularly monitoring and responding to rights infringements and ensuring adequate protection through legal provisions. The recommendation applies to all young people who, by virtue of their age, face barriers to the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms and to their active participation in society. (Council of Europe 2016)

Proposed measures and initiatives that governments are advised to undertake are in areas including access to education, autonomy and inclusion, mobility, exercising active citizenship, living in diverse societies, information and protection and health care.

The Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030 (Council of Europe 2020) has four thematic policy priorities, one of which focuses on strengthening young people's access to rights, with the aim of providing young people and all forms of youth civil society with an enabling environment for the full exercise of all their human rights and freedoms, including concrete policies, mechanisms and resources. The strategy expresses commitment to:

- furthering progress in the implementation of the Council of Europe's standards on young people's access to rights;
- increasing capacity building and resources for youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders, to provide human rights education and advocate access to rights;
- improving institutional responses to emerging issues affecting young people's rights and their transition to adulthood, such as, but not limited to, the effects of climate change and environmental degradation, artificial intelligence, digital space, increased mobility and new forms of employment.

Ideas for policy measures

- Putting in place policies and systems for addressing discriminatory practice in a continuous, structured, consistent way.
- Removing legal and practical obstacles to the right of young people to access their rights.
- Establishing and further developing youth policies to promote and facilitate young people's access to rights.
- Taking a co-ordinated approach to improving young people's access to rights with co-operation across all relevant policy areas at national, regional and local level.
- Promoting and mainstreaming human rights education in various educational settings and systems and work, through the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, with clear systems of monitoring and evaluation in place.
- Supporting structures and programmes for human rights and democratic citizenship education.

Turning policy into practice

Learning about human rights

One of the prerequisites of working towards facilitating access to rights for young people is to raise awareness of human rights and promote them through education. For these reasons, policies supporting youth and youth organisations and building their capacities to provide human rights education constitute one of the

core objectives of and tools for this work. Human rights education – as defined by the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education – is education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. For more information, see Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

The Human Rights Education Youth Programme of the Council of Europe Youth Department supports the role of non-governmental youth organisations as actors in the implementation of the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The aim of the programme is to ensure that the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law are mainstreamed, promoted and implemented, in and through education. It does so by provision of educational resources on human rights education and capacity-building activities for trainers, young multipliers and advocates of human rights education and human rights. One of the main resources for education for human rights is *Compass Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People* (www.coe.int/compass), which brings the themes of human rights into youth work, methodically supporting those involved in non-formal education to learn to address various human rights themes. The national and regional training courses of the Council of Europe in human rights education provide the opportunity and financial resources to train youth leaders, youth workers and also educators in schools and other public bodies in the use of Compass and its methodological approach. The training courses can be organised by local governmental and non-governmental organisations such as youth NGOs, youth centres, human rights monitoring bodies, etc. For more information, see https://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-education-youth/human-rights-education-youth-programme.

Supporting education for human rights and democracy

Co-operation, mutual support, sharing good practices and resources is essential in the drive to establish a culture of human rights, where the importance and value of human rights is not contested. It is also essential to support the joint effort in promoting, building capacity, popularising and advocating for this by giving support to human rights education actors.

The European Wergeland Centre (EWC), established by the Council of Europe and Norway, is a resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship, which builds its work on Council of Europe recommendations and policies, including the Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The Centre's goal is to strengthen the capacity of individuals, educational institutions and educational systems to build and sustain a culture of democracy and human rights. It has programmes and support mechanisms for all 47 member states and operates in partnership with national educational authorities. Currently, the EWC focuses on five action areas to build and sustain a culture of democracy and human rights in education, including

democratic competences, supporting teaching, and promoting inclusive learning environments. It works with schools and teachers, trainers, local governments and vocational training institutions, to help them implement human rights and citizenship education to a high quality. For more information, see https://theewc.org.

Local authorities promoting human rights through education

The lack of knowledge and awareness of the need for, and relevance and value of education for democratic citizenship and human rights, to address the current challenges in our societies, is a serious barrier to mainstreaming human rights education across institutions and across policies and strategies. Policies and programmes raising awareness can be a good contribution to the popularisation and promotion of the field.

With the slogan "We are the rights that we have" the municipality of Lisbon, Portugal, launched the SOMOS programme of education for democratic citizenship and human rights aimed at fostering a human rights culture in the city through training and awareness-raising actions for, and with, citizens and NGOs. The programme has about 2 000 beneficiaries yearly and is supported by a network of multipliers trained together with youth organisations. Together with civil society organisations, steps have been taken to initiate national training courses for trainers, translation of relevant resources, and the establishment of a national network of human rights educators, in partnership with various stakeholders from local authorities to formal education institutions. For more information, see www.coe.int/en/web/edc/case-studies#%7B%2226651549%22:%5B5%5D%7D.

Resources supporting policy implementation

European regulations and legal documents

- Resolution CM/Res(2020)2 on the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030.
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on young people's access to rights.
- Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.

Thematic materials

- *Compass Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People*.
- Portal of Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, available at www.coe.int/en/web/edc/home.
- *Coyote* magazine, No. 25 ("Citizenship Education Revisited"), available at https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/coyote-magazine/issue-25.
- World Programme for Human Rights Education, available at www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/Programme.aspx.

Chapter 18

Youth work

Introduction

We have already noted in Part 3 the slightly different but significantly overlapping definitions of youth work invoked by the European Union on the one hand and the Council of Europe on the other. Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on youth work, as the most recent political document available on youth work per se, defines youth work as:

> a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, in groups or individually. Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes focused on young people and on voluntary participation. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision making. It should be characterised by accessibility, openness and flexibility and at the same time promote dialogue between young people and the rest of society. It should focus on young people and create spaces for association and bridges to support transition to adulthood and autonomy. (Council of Europe 2017)

Youth work has become viewed increasingly as an important instrument for the development and delivery of youth policy aspirations at a European level, helping empower young people in their life. Youth work is a sphere of work encompassing activities, settings, programmes and approaches that support different groups of young people in relation to a range of issues in their lives. As the Recommendation goes on to say, "the primary function of youth work is to motivate and support young people to find and pursue constructive pathways in life, thus contributing to their personal and social development and to society at large".

The dual and sometimes admittedly competing aim of youth work is to assert and defend space for young people's association, activities and autonomy and, simultaneously, through advice and advocacy, create bridges that support young people's positive and purposeful transitions to the next steps in their lives. Through this development of personal and social aspects of young people's lives, youth work contributes to the active citizenship, lifelong learning, civic and political participation and social inclusion of all young people, especially those who are at risk and marginalised.

Youth work is one of the key tools for facilitating service delivery and reaching out to young people. It has a wide spectrum of various forms, frameworks, understandings and definitions, histories, philosophies, goals, practices and cultures. Youth work's strength lies in the variety of possible and relevant schemes of work; it can

be organised in various settings, varying from a youth centre or a club, to streets, parks, shopping centres, villages, prisons, schools, cafes, online spaces and social networks. The approach today is that youth work services need to be available, accessible, affordable and interesting for as many different young people as possible.

The functions of youth work are perceived in various ways: enabling action and opening up, unleashing potential, engaging in dialogue and change, emancipating and giving autonomy, transforming, providing opportunities, developing competencies and skills, or being a "transit zone" – not just or not mainly in terms of age, but a transit zone between the way young people are and the way they could become, and a forum for self-expression (*Coyote* magazine, No. 28, 2019; Council of Europe 2020). Youth work is quite a flexible tool, and can shape to respond quickly and efficiently to changing life situations, coming up with support needed for the current moment. A vivid example of this has been responding and dealing constructively to the challenges brought up by the crisis situations arising from the world's recent Covid-19 pandemic and the earlier refugee situation in Europe and beyond, where many youth work tools were adapted and developed in the service of the emerging needs of youth in these particular circumstances.

With the recent digitalisation of society and increased involvement with digital technology (accelerated on account of the Covid-19 pandemic), the new concept of smart and digital youth work has been established. Digital youth work means proactively using or addressing digital media and technology in youth work. Digital youth work is not a stand-alone youth work method but an additional technique for the building of voluntary relationships with young people and the delivery of non-formal education and learning – digital youth work can be included in any youth work setting (open youth work, project work, detached youth work, issue-based youth work) (European Commission 2018b).

Non-formal education and learning

Youth work lies at the heart of non-formal education and learning in the context of the lives of young people. Non-formal education and learning, understood as learning outside institutional contexts (out-of-school) is the key activity, but also the key competence of youth work. According to the Pathways 2.0 report:

> Non-formal learning/education in youth work is often structured, based on learning objectives, learning time and specific learning support and it is intentional. It typically does not lead to certification, but in an increasing number of cases, certificates are delivered, leading to a better recognition of the individual learning outcome. (EU–Council of Europe youth partnership (2011)

Non-formal education and learning is very often seen as not only advancing and developing essential life skills but also building capacities for active participation and civic-mindedness (see https://education.report/videos/what-is-non-formal-education/3111). These include self-confidence, responsibility, self-management, communication and interpersonal skills, intercultural competencies, empathy, solidarity, leadership skills, team-work spirit, critical thinking, creativity, autonomy, participation, problem solving, planning skills, and an entrepreneurial mindset. Non-formal education and learning is, further, closely connected with advancing

key competences for lifelong learning and modern life. When we talk about the role of non-formal education and learning, there are a number of questions that are interesting to explore.

- Which competencies do young people develop through non-formal education and learning?
- How does non-formal education and learning support youth policy implementation and the reaching of expected outcomes?
- Is there a national youth training and development strategy in the field of non-formal education and learning that is recognised at state level?
- What is the role and level of (financial, political and legal) support in youth policy planning and implementation?

Ideas for policy measures

- Resourcing sustainably the field of youth work in various forms.
- Establishment of programmes for youth worker training, qualification, recognition of the profession.
- Supporting innovative approaches and methodologies for youth work.
- Establishing and developing national systems of recognition of competencies acquired through youth work engagements.
- Safeguarding of the role of youth work and non-formal education and learning in young people's personal development and transition to autonomy.
- Supporting and funding innovation and creative approaches in youth work practice.

Turning policy into practice

Developing youth work practitioners

The value and importance of ongoing professional development and lifelong learning for those working in the youth sector is hard to overestimate when it comes to ensuring the quality of youth work and wider non-formal education and learning activities. These include investing in the training and development of practitioners, policy makers and researchers, establishing training programmes and qualification frameworks to promote the skills development of youth workers, promoting the exchange of good practice at local, national and international level, and involving young people, youth workers and youth organisations in policy dialogue to promote learning (Youth Partnership 2017).

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Ukraine, together with the State Institute for Family and Youth Policy, UNDP Ukraine, and UNICEF Ukraine, initiated the Youth Worker Programme. The initiative is based on prioritising the promotion of non-formal education and learning through the development of youth centres, summer camps, youth information services and social mobility in the strategic youth policy documents. The National Education Programme for Youth Workers is aimed at developing the capacities of public servants and NGO volunteers to empower and

equip young people with whom they work with the necessary skills to enable them to actively participate in their communities, as well as in policy and decision making at local and national level. The programme includes training ranging from a basic introductory level to the training of trainers (O'Donovan 2020).

Around 200 training courses for youth workers are offered by the National Youth Service annually in Luxembourg for both professional and volunteer youth workers. Funding for the courses is provided by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. Themes of the training include deeper understanding of youth policy, pedagogical skills, project development, support for youth projects and initiatives, facilitation of youth development and initiative, and youth work-related administrative competencies. Participation in the courses is compulsory for paid youth workers, who receive a certificate of participation.

Supporting and safeguarding the youth work sphere

There are several measures that countries can take proactively to develop the youth work field and increase its impact on both young people and society. As the Council of Europe (2017) Recommendation on Youth Work suggests, they include the following measures:

- providing an enabling environment and conditions for both proven and innovative youth work practices;
- strengthening the role and contribution of youth work in youth policy making at all levels and supporting other youth-related sectors;
- developing strategies, frameworks, legislation, sustainable structures and resources supporting youth work;
- promoting the recognition of the values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding developed through participating in and delivering youth work;
- promoting equal access to youth work;
- respecting and supporting the work and contribution of youth organisations;
- supporting non-formal education and learning interventions;
- supporting knowledge-based youth work;
- creating quality assurance mechanisms and outcome measurement tools and supporting professional development processes of youth workers;
- putting in place systems for documentation, validation, certification and recognition of competencies.

Moldova has a National Youth Centre Development Programme, which is implemented in partnership between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and the UNDP. The programme is implemented in the regions of Moldova, where the local public authorities develop and expand the territorial coverage of youth services. The programme includes building capacity of youth work professionals, developing youth centre infrastructure, and supporting funding mechanisms for the youth field. The youth centres are the most important tool for public authorities to carry out youth work locally (EU–Council of Europe youth partnership 2020).

In Slovakia, the Act on Youth Work Support defines youth work and also provides definitions of "youth leader", "youth volunteer" and "youth worker". The role of the state in relation to support for youth work at national, regional and local level, and funding arrangements, are also set out in the Act, which regulates and accredits educational bodies and programmes in the field of non-formal education and training. A concept paper on youth work development 2016-20, which was adopted by the government, focuses on five main areas: the needs of young people as a basis for youth work; quality youth work; stakeholders in youth work; financing of youth work; and recognising and raising the profile of youth work (EU Youth Wiki 2020, Concept of work development with youth for the years 2016-2020).

Quality assurance in non-formal education and learning

The issue of assuring quality in non-formal educational interventions is about making sure that both state and non-state providers of non-formal educational opportunities work to a set standard of quality, ensure the activities are effective, and respond to criteria, principles, methodological considerations of this educational form, minimising misuse and abuse of the learning opportunity. The tools developed for this ensure that youth are receiving quality services; at the same time, education providers get a chance to improve the quality of their offer to youth through implementing the required standards.

At European level, the Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Centres was developed as a standard-setting instrument to support the quality development and quality assurance of youth centres, and youth work in general. It includes a set of 15 quality criteria, indicators, objectives and advice for the work of an international youth centre. Different youth centres across Europe can apply to receive the quality label. Candidate centres can use the process of acquiring the label to improve the quality of their offer to young people and the youth sector in their country. For more information, see https://rm.coe.int/quality-label-brochure-en-2015/16806fcf1b.

In Lithuania, the Ministry of Education and Science has licensed 90 institutions to offer non-formal studies. Around 700 institutions, including state and non-state companies, are listed in the Register of the Ministry of Economy, aimed at adults and others. In addition, special departments for adult training have been set up in universities. The courses offered include training, particularly in the fields of pedagogy, psychology, and special or additional education (EU Youth Wiki 2020).

The "aufZAQ" is a system of certification of non-formal education and training courses for youth work actors, through which, the Federal Ministry of Labor, Family and Youth, the regional youth departments and the Office for Youth Work in South Tyrol ensure the high quality of training and education. The aufZAQ Competence Framework for Children and Youth Work acts as a base for educational programmes and is closely linked to the Austrian National Qualification Framework, which in turn makes qualifications visible and comparable through the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) across Europe. The aufZAQ Advisory Board (including state and civil society organisation representatives and field experts) verifies the quality of submitted and certified training courses and develops the certification programme. For more information, see www.aufzaq.at.

SALTO-YOUTH – which stands for Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities for youth – is a network of regional and thematic resource centres, that provide training, networking, educational resources for youth workers and youth leaders and support organisations and National Agencies (NAs), within the framework of the European Commission's Erasmus+ youth programme and beyond. SALTO tools include a toolbox for trainers, a European training calendar, thematic methodological manuals and resources, an online learning portal, a trainer network (TOY) and a tool to find partners for international projects (Otlas). SALTO's Training and Co-operation Resource Centre supports capacity building and the recognition of learning in youth work.

Recognition of youth work

In the European youth field, as described in Pathways 2.0, the term "recognition" has four different meanings. "Formal recognition" means the validation of learning outcomes and the certification of a learning process and/or these outcomes by issuing certificates or diplomas which formally recognise the achievements of an individual. "Political recognition" means the recognition of non-formal education in legislation and/or the inclusion of non-formal learning/education in political strategies, and the involvement of non-formal learning providers in these strategies. "Social recognition" means that social players acknowledge the value of competencies acquired in non-formal settings and the work done within these activities, including the value of the organisations providing this work. "Self-recognition" means the assessment is done by the individual of learning outcomes and the ability to use these learning outcomes in other fields (EU–Council of Europe youth partnership, 2011). Working on the recognition of non-formal learning/education and youth work often requires a systemic approach, addressing various stakeholders coming from "within" or from "outside" the youth field (EU–Council of Europe youth partnership 2013).

One of the tools for recognising and validating non-formal education in the Czech Republic is the Personal Competencies Portfolio (PCP), which provides its users with an opportunity to assess competencies developed and to formulate them meaningfully for employers. The PCP provides a picture of the competencies acquired through non-formal educational activities and is integrated into the National Qualification Framework (SALTO-YOUTH 2016).

European tools supporting the recognition of youth work include the Youthpass, the European Training Strategy Competence Model for trainers and youth workers working at international level, the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio – an online tool that helps individuals, teams and organisations doing youth work around Europe to understand and develop their competencies, which can also be used by trainers, youth work managers and policy makers and others, the Open Badge Infrastructure, which is now widely incorporated in training projects.

One of the widely used tools in European mobility projects is the Youthpass recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning experiences in youth work, used by the participants of the Erasmus+ programmes. The Youthpass certificate allows the participants to describe their learning experiences and learning achievements, as

part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning. For more information, see www.youthpass.eu.

Resources supporting policy implementation

European regulations and legal frameworks

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work.
- Council of the European Union: 2017 Council conclusions on smart youth work.
- Council of the European Union: 2013 Council conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people.
- Council of Europe: Recommendation Rec(2003)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people.
- Council of the European Union: Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning.

Thematic materials

- The handbook *Improving youth work – Your guide to quality development*, European Commission, 2017, available at https://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/2017/improving-youth-work-your-guide-quality-development_en.
- *Quality Youth Work – A common framework for the further development of youth work*, European Commission, 2015, available at https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/quality-youth-work_en.pdf.
- *Developing digital youth work – Policy recommendations, training needs and good practice examples*, European Commission, 2018, available at https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/fbc18822-07cb-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1.
- *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union*, European Commission and the Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2014, available at https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/study/youth-work-report_en.pdf.
- Declarations of the 2010 and 2015 European Youth Work Conventions.
- Council of Europe: Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture, available at www.coe.int/en/web/campaign-free-to-speak-safe-to-learn/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture.
- *Thinking seriously about youth work: And how to prepare people to do it*, EU–Council of Europe youth partnership, 2017, available at https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261623/Thinking+seriously+about+YW.pdf/6b620a71-f7be-cf80-7da9-17408a3960ba.
- *The History of Youth Work in Europe* (Volumes 1-7), Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.

- *Youth work essentials*, EU–Council of Europe youth partnership, 2020, available at https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/other-publications.
- *Youth work in eastern Europe – Realities, perspectives and inspiring initiatives*, EU–Council of Europe youth partnership, 2020.

Chapter 19

Mobility

Introduction

> Mobility concerns all young Europeans, whether they be schoolchildren, students, apprentices, volunteers, teachers, young researchers, trainers, youth workers, entrepreneurs or young people on the labour market. Mobility is to be understood primarily as physical mobility, which means staying in another country for study, a work placement, community work or additional training in the context of lifelong learning. (EU Council 2008)

Mobility activities can include a wide range of opportunities from formal and non-formal learning, ranging from school exchanges, voluntary work, work camps, an academic semester or year in a university in another country, training and seminars, vocational apprenticeships, youth exchanges, professional exchanges, short-stay educational activities, placements in enterprises, the mobility of youth workers, educational projects offered by the governmental or non-governmental sector, international internship or job shadowing, and more.

Youth mobility in Europe is seen as a strong instrument contributing to greater co-operation and integration, peace, understanding, dialogue, solidarity and European identity building. A central aspiration of the European institutions is to open up opportunities for all young people to benefit from programmes of youth mobility throughout their educational pathways. The mobility of professionals is also promoted.

There are a number of programmes supporting and promoting mobility in cross-border and bilateral programmes, between cities, through twin cities and their networks, and also through municipal programmes and partnerships within Europe.

In recent years, with the emergence of European youth and education projects, we have started to look into the wide range of opportunities provided by mobility for learning. Learning mobility is usually described as transnational mobility, undertaken for a period of time, and consciously organised for educational purposes or to acquire new competencies. It covers a wide variety of projects and activities and can be implemented in formal or non-formal settings. It aims to increase participation, active citizenship, intercultural learning and dialogue, individual competency development and employability of young people. The European Council recalled in 2011 that learning mobility is:

> widely considered to contribute to enhancing the employability of young people through the acquisition of key skills and competences, including especially language competences and intercultural understanding, but also social and civic skills, entrepreneurship, problem-solving skills and creativity in general. In addition to providing valuable experience for the individuals concerned, learning mobility can help to improve the overall quality of education, especially through closer cooperation between educational institutions. (EU Council 2011)

Ideas for policy measures

- Establishing mechanisms for facilitating access of all young people, including ones from difficult life situations and backgrounds, to mobility activities.
- Increasing knowledge about youth mobility.
- Developing or integrating existing systems for quality assurance of mobility activities.
- Supporting and resourcing youth organisations promoting and managing youth mobility initiatives and programmes.
- Developing systems for recognising competences acquired through learning mobility programmes, including international mobility.
- Establishing national programmes for youth mobility.

Turning policy into practice

European support schemes and structures for youth mobility

Mobility is one of the key values, policy spheres and responses and instruments for co-operation and development in Europe. Thus, many of the European level programmes supporting and promoting mobility across Europe and its neighbours provide opportunities for young people, professionals working with them and decision makers to use the potential of mobility schemes.

Eurodesk is one of the key partners in the field of information on mobility opportunities for youth In Europe. It is an international non-profit association created in 1990 working through a network of national co-ordinators in more than 30 countries. Eurodesk raises awareness on learning mobility opportunities in Europe, empowers young people to use those opportunities and helps information providers build their capacities and competences to provide guidance for mobility of young people at national, regional, European and international level. It supports the Erasmus+ programme by managing the European Youth Portal. For more information, see www.eurodesk.eu.

Supporting exchange and quality in the field of mobility at European level

In order to have an enriching mobility experience that encourages growth and development, the experience needs to be of a certain quality. The mere fact of learning abroad does not guarantee that the experience will be valuable and transformative. When we talk about ensuring quality, it is essential that the relevant standards and criteria are developed by people who are both making the policies and becoming their beneficiaries and primary users.

The European Platform on Learning Mobility (EPLM) in the youth field, established under the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership, aims to create an open participatory space for exchange and co-operation between practitioners, researchers and policy makers. Through work in conferences, seminars and research projects, and resources such as the Q! Portal, the Platform helps to continuously improve the field and supports actors to implement quality learning mobility activities.

For more information, see the *Handbook on quality in learning mobility*, available at https://go.coe.int/jcCbj.

The Quality Framework for Learning Mobility in the Field of Youth outlines 22 quality principles that help you deliver high-quality mobility projects. The Framework is aimed at those who implement transnational mobility projects in the youth field. The principles include clarity of objectives and learning outcomes based on the needs and profiles of participants, transparency in recruitment, inclusiveness, well-designed educational programmes, efficient preparation and management, provision of adequate supporting learning environments, proper analysis and evaluation, the capitalisation of experiences and the optimisation of impact of projects.

The quality mobility app "Q! App" was developed as part of the European Platform on Learning Mobility, in line with the principles for quality in learning mobility (EU–Council of Europe youth partnership 2018b). The app follows a project-cycle approach and encourages all users to utilise the app in addition to, and in connection with, the *Handbook on quality in learning mobility* (https://go.coe.int/jcCbj), which provides in-depth knowledge on principles and 116 indicators for a quality mobility activity, with advice for improvement and actions.

Resources supporting policy implementation

European regulations and legal frameworks

- EU Council 2008 conclusions on youth mobility (EU Council 2008).
- Recommendation No. R (95) 18 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on youth mobility.
- Council of Europe, *Self-assessment tool for youth policy* (www.coe.int/en/web/youth/youth-policy-self-assessment-tool).
- Resolution ResAP(2003)1 (replacing Resolution (91) 20) of the Committee of Ministers instituting a Partial Agreement on the Youth Card for the purpose of promoting and facilitating youth mobility in Europe.
- Principles for Quality in Learning Mobility in the Youth Field.
- A Quality Framework for Learning Mobility in the Field of Youth.

Thematic materials

- European Platform on Learning Mobility (see https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/european-platform-on-learning-mobility).
- *Handbook on quality in learning mobility* (Kristensen 2019).
- Q! app (see www.qualitymobility.app).
- MOVE European Policy Brief II, 2018, *Mapping mobility – Pathways, institutions and structural effects of youth mobility* (see http://move-project.eu/fileadmin/move/downloads/MOVE_Policy_Brief_II_EN.pdf).
- Eurodesk (see https://eurodesk.eu).

Chapter 20

Digitalisation

Introduction

New technological changes have increased the role of digital technology in society, affecting every area of our lives in terms of political, social, economic, political and cultural contexts. These changes will shape more actively the way we live and are already affecting every step of the life of young people. The increased digitalisation of all aspects of life calls into question how we think about policy's role in understanding, evaluating, interpreting situations and supporting young people to use technology safely and responsibly, basing their choices on values and ethics. Technological development, digitalisation and innovation have also enriched the potential and spectrum of possibilities for many young people, and an emerging challenge is to ensure equal availability, access and use.

Young people today spend a considerable amount of their time consuming, sharing and managing information and digital media (images, videos, messages, social media, etc). These instruments have a strong potential for young people to learn about communication, socialisation and sharing experiences, self-realisation, self-expression and creativity, assuming their role as citizens and active actors in the community and society they live in. With the increased development of digital technology, young people have not only increased their consumption of information, they have also become producers and creators of it and this has drastically changed the way the media landscape and communication impacts on everyday life.

This new situation requires young people and those working with them to develop new competencies of using and understanding technology. The Digital Competence Framework 2.0 (https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp/digital-competence-framework) identifies the key components of digital competences in five areas, which include information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety and problem solving, which are essential for making constructive use of the huge possibilities provided by current technology.

Digital competence is recognised as one of the key competences for lifelong learning and is defined as "confident, critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society". It involves understanding how digital technologies can support communication, creativity and innovation, awareness of opportunities, limitations, effects and risks, the general principles, mechanisms, use, functions and logic underlying digital technologies, and a critical approach to information, and ethical principles. It further outlines that "individuals should be able to use digital technologies to support their active citizenship and social inclusion, collaboration with others, and creativity towards personal, social or commercial goals" (Council of the European Union 2018).

The Covid-19 pandemic, and the associated lockdown measures, transformed many of the traditionally offline activities into activities with online adaptations and solutions. This encouraged all stakeholders, including those in the youth field, to develop, test, pilot, implement and strengthen digital responses. This included trying digital solutions for most youth services, youth work practice, information work, and educational opportunities. The youth field had a number of interesting digital solutions for transforming its main formats and tools of work: online and digital youth work practices, online Living Library, youth camps, youth clubs, online campaigns, digitally supported youth meetings and training activities. Numerous surveys have been exploring the experiences of young people and the transformation of practice directed towards them. Many of the service providers working with young people received intensive training on working digitally with young people in various settings. More use of digital tools also meant that institutions make digital services available for more young people. In some countries, rural schools received computers and tablets to be able to follow classes, in others, internet providers increased their coverage at lower cost, and many of the online courses from the best universities were made available online for free.

Ideas for policy measures

- Support of programmes for digital literacy, programmes and instruments for supporting youth in navigating an increasingly digitalised world.
- Inclusion of digital skills development as an essential part of youth development agendas and programmes.
- Ensuring safety and security measures for children and youth when using digital or online technology.
- Establishment of programmes of competence development in ICT use for educators, teachers, parents, and anyone working with youth.
- Incorporation of digital and smart youth work into youth strategies, policy and legislation.
- Establishment of instruments for continuous research into the role and impact of digitalisation on the lives of young people.
- Supporting and funding the youth work field to adjust their tools and methods of work to the digitalised contexts of work.
- Development of guidelines, standards and quality criteria for the ethical use of digital instruments.

Turning policy into practice

Digitalisation, inclusion and digital divide

The new generation of young people is often considered to be, by default, fluent in using ICT and digital instruments in their lives. This may make one think that all young people are easily accessing and using ICT, comfortably navigating social

media, have equally affordable access to ICT tools and gadgets, and have a natural and automatic understanding of the risks, challenges, traps, potentialities and opportunities offered through technology. It may also create an illusion that the digital world creates space for facilitating access to certain services for more young people than is actually the case. In Europe, young people from especially disadvantaged backgrounds often lack full access to computers, internet, smartphones or other gadgets. This divide deepens an already existing gap as this means even less inclusion, fewer opportunities, less voice, less visibility for some groups, and even more and larger opportunities to already advantaged groups. The situation is becoming even more serious, when it comes to the operation mode of machines. As McQuillan and Salaj mention in their 2020 article on algorithmic stereotyping,[6] Artificial Intelligence and digitalisation risk making the social divide even bigger, putting people into boxes and numbers, building the intended response on past situations and behaviours instead of striving to look for potential individualised care. National policies need to look at how to bridge this divide, and to create equal opportunities for young people and the professionals working with them to learn about ICT, by putting in place inclusion strategies for full, safe, facilitated access and use of digital resources. Starting from 2018, the youth partnership has taken up the topic of youth social inclusion and digitalisation, has organised symposiums and expert group meetings and has commissioned a study on young people, social inclusion and digitalisation, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the situation and discuss the responses to the situation in an open manner. For more information, see https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/study-on-social-inclusion-digitalisation-and-young-people.

In Estonia, the government has established the Information Technology Foundation for Education (HITSA) to ensure that everyone graduating from educational institutions is capable of using modern ICT tools and is competent to use these tools. HITSA is a non-profit association established by Estonia, the University of Tartu, Tallinn University of Technology, Eesti Telekom and the Estonian Association of Information Technology and Telecommunications, and its educational programmes strengthen the co-operation and contribution of all actors to the development of the field. HITSA also offers a training portal for educators, youth workers and others, in the area of digital technologies. For more information, see https://www.hitsa.ee.

In Sweden, a nationwide digital youth guidance centre financed by all Swedish regions has been set up for people aged 13 to 25 to receive relevant guidance and information about the body, sexuality, relationships, mental health, alcohol and drugs, self-esteem and much more. The centre works towards inclusively providing information to newly arrived young people, offering information in several languages, addressing young migrants in Sweden but also other young people still living in their countries of origin, where information of this kind is not available.

6. Available at: https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/perspectives-on-youth-web.

Digitalisation, safety and protection of users

With increased digitalisation we need to find a robust way to deal with issues of media literacy, safer internet use, information hygiene, manipulation, responsibility, freedom, protection, negative effects of excessive screen time, internet addiction, cyberbullying, spread of fake news, propaganda, harmful content, sexting, hate speech, online violence and violent radicalisation, and threats to privacy, including unauthorised use and misuse of data and other forms of potential harm. For more information, see 2017 European Council conclusions on smart youth work (EU Council 2017).

When it comes to internet safety at European level, several instruments exist. The European Commission has set up Safer Internet Centres that consist of national awareness centres, helplines (Insafe) and hotlines (INHOPE). These centres' main activities are raising awareness related to potential risks young people may encounter online, offering advice about staying safe online to young people and dealing with issues such as cyberbullying, developing information material, organising events such as the Safer Internet Day, as well as information sessions for parents, children and teachers. The possibility to report harmful content also exists through the hotlines. For more information, see https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/safer-internet-centres. The centres also have set up youth panels to allow young people to express their views and exchange knowledge and experience concerning their use of online technologies, as well as tips on how to stay safe. For more information, see www.betterinternetforkids.eu/web/portal/policy/insafe-inhope.

In Albania, the National Platform for Child Internet Safety (ISIGURT) (www.ISIGURT.al) informs children, youth, parents and teachers on internet use and provides tips and guidelines on the digital world, shows how to better navigate it, what is offered and how youth can safely make use of digital opportunities. The platform, available also for smartphones, has a reporting mechanism for children and youth to be able to report cases related to security, safety or abuse. It has established co-operation with the National Child Helpline, which provides counselling to children and youth through online chat services (Youth partnership 2020).

Smart and digital youth work

The widespread digitalisation of all aspects of society raises a number of challenges, including the need for digital and media competence development, upgrading of skills in the use of ICT for education, work and everyday life, and the need to learn to navigate digitalised systems and contexts. Youth work, as the space and the instrument for supporting young people in their development and helping orient them in their ever-changing and dynamic lives, is also adapting its ways to the new digital world. The smart and digital youth work practices that have emerged and evolved in recent years are to help youth work and support young people in the way that is most familiar to them (VERKE and EYWC 2019). It is important to acknowledge that "digital" does not only and always mean online. The term encompasses various ICTs which transfer and provide tools for digitally engaging in learning and development activities when it comes to youth work. These include video games, video content creation, work with virtual-reality (VR) and augmented-reality (AR)

gadgets, voice and image systems, using social media instruments, supporting digital literacy and enabling digital participation, and supporting the development of technological skills.

Verke is the Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work in Finland, one of the national centres of expertise established by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Verke is fully funded by the Ministry, and its operations are managed by the City of Helsinki Youth Division. It supports the implementation of the objectives set out in the National Youth Work and Youth Policy Programme. Verke aims at equipping practitioners working with youth with digital, creative, innovative youth work solutions and methods. It works through training and consultancy, production and dissemination of information, and development of digital youth work together with actors in the field. Verke also works closely with municipalities, organisations and parishes. For more information, see www.verke.org

Digital citizenship and digital citizenship education

The digitalisation reality of society has impacted and transformed the way one can practise citizenship. There are many emerging forms of digital participation in many aspects of our life and civic engagements. The concept of digital citizenship is also emerging as a new sphere of work to look into.

Digital citizenship refers to the ability to: engage competently and positively with digital technologies (creating, working, sharing, socialising, investigating, playing, communicating and learning); participate actively and responsibly (values, skills, attitudes, knowledge and critical understanding) in communities (local, national, global) at all levels (political, economic, social, cultural and intercultural); be involved in a double process of lifelong learning (in formal, informal and non-formal settings); and seamlessly defend human rights and dignity (Council of Europe 2017). A set of 10 digital domains has been defined as underpinning the overall concept of digital citizenship. The domains are clustered into three categories – being online (access and inclusion, media and information literacy, learning and creativity); well-being online (ethics and empathy, health and well-being, e-presence and communications); and rights online (active participation, rights and responsibilities, privacy and security, consumer awareness) (Council of Europe 2019). The Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on developing and promoting digital citizenship education defines digital citizenship education as:

> the empowerment of learners of all ages through education or the acquisition of competences for learning and active participation in digital society to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities online, and to promote and protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law in cyberspace.

Digital world and human rights

One of the challenges thrown up by the digital era is related to human rights and their violations (data protection, privacy, targeted violence, bullying, fraud, disinformation, abuse through social media, algorithms, controls, etc.). Many countries worked towards safeguarding human rights and dignity through introducing cybercrime-related

legislation and putting in place measures to help people protect their rights in the virtual space. Moreover, in 2012 the UN Human Rights Council passed Resolution A/HRC/20/L.13 on the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the internet, to ensure that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online (available at https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/LTD/G12/147/10/PDF/G1214710.pdf?OpenElement).

The No Hate Speech Movement youth campaign led by the Council of Europe Youth Department is seeking to mobilise young people to combat hate speech and promote human rights online. Launched in 2013, it was carried out at the national and local levels through national campaigns in 45 countries, online activists and partners. The movement seeks to reduce the acceptance of hate speech both online and offline, through human rights education and awareness raising, youth participation and media literacy. A number of educational resources have been created in the framework of the campaign supporting educators and activists to address the theme through their work. The movement also builds capacity, raises awareness and mobilises young people to report hate speech and cyber-bullying to the relevant authorities and on social media channels, and to enable them to counter hate speech and foster alternative speech that promotes human rights and democratic values online. For more information, www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign/no-hate-speech-movement.

Resources supporting policy implementation

European regulations and legal frameworks

- Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)10 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on developing and promoting digital citizenship education.
- European Council conclusions on smart youth work (European Council 2017).
- EU Digital Agenda for Europe (www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/64/digital-agenda-for-europe).

Thematic materials

- Digital citizenship education portal (www.coe.int/en/web/digital-citizenship-education/home)
- *Coyote*, No. 26 (https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/coyote-magazine/issue-26)
- Better Internet For Kids Portal (www.betterinternetforkids.eu/web/portal/policy/insafe-inhope)
- *Perspectives on Youth*: *Young people in a digitalised world*, Volume 4 (https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/issue-4)
- *Developing digital youth work* (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/fbc18822-07cb-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1)
- *Social Inclusion, Digitalisation and Young People: Research study* (https://go.coe.int/RE2AL)
- Digital youth work (European Council 2017)
- No Hate Speech Movement (www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign/home)

Conclusion to Part 4

Part 4 has covered only a small part of the large canvas of youth policy themes, focusing especially on the current and ongoing priorities of the European youth policy agenda – contemporary themes within youth policy that are the framework for debate, direction, development and decision at European level. This is by no means an exhaustive list of priority and key themes and areas of youth policy activity, where other key areas (such as formal education, training and employment or youth justice) are primarily the prerogative of national administrations.

The main goal of Part 4 has been to outline some of the main issues related to the themes addressed, with the intention of enabling policy actors to reflect on those areas of priority in the European youth policy field, to create space to learn about them, discuss their relevance for national and local contexts, map currently challenging issues, understand that policy responses vary from place to place, and plan advocacy and strategies for implementation and delivery at national and local level.

Part 4 also aimed to provide ideas for policy instruments, responses and projects; outline some of the key resources available at and from European institutions to help frame, fuel and support interventions; and to strengthen the capacity of those in the youth field to work in thematic directions.

Finally, Part 4 also described a number of underlying core values and principles of policy work, which are essential to ensure democratic, inclusive, human rights- and dignity-based, sustainable, effective and efficient youth policy at all levels and spheres, even if realpolitik may frequently challenge and undermine them.

Part 5

What works in "youth policy"?

Chapter 21

Youth policy development in Europe: promising practices and continuing challenges

Introduction

It is all very well discussing the concepts and philosophies of youth policy (Part 1), describing the infrastructure for its development and delivery at both national and international level (Part 2 and Part 3), and even pointing to the principles and instruments for implementation (Part 4). The critical question ultimately, however, is whether or not, after all this groundwork, youth policy actually makes some difference to the lives of the young people towards whom it is directed. Part 5 therefore seeks briefly to consider what we know about effective practice, about "what works" and where, arguably, youth policy should be heading. Evidence, as Part 1 suggested, may not always guide or govern policy development. Policy, including for young people, is made in many different ways and for many different reasons. One would hope, however, that evidence – in its myriad forms – does make a significant and substantial contribution to the youth policy debate.

Youth policy, as we have seen, incorporates and accommodates a range of activities and objectives, within which it might be argued that some central anchor points are as follows:

- prevention and promotion – through education, participation, diversion and deterrence;
- provision – direct intervention both generally and through attention to particular groups and issues, ranging from positive activities to punitive sanctions;
- parallel possibilities – engaging "cross-sectoral" or transversal co-operation and collaboration to ensure relevant and appropriate "holistic" responses.

Different elements of youth policy, as we know, are embedded within wider social policy concerned with matters such as family life, education, social protection and social inclusion, the labour market, housing and homelessness, criminal justice, and healthy lifestyles. Many of these, and others, are, of course, the responsibility of national authorities and not within the direct competence of the European institutions. The latter, nevertheless, contribute significantly to standard-setting, innovative ideas, some specific areas of youth policy and therefore, in broad terms, to transnational youth policy development.

What works?

There is no end to the challenges in trying to unravel "what works" in youth policy, as in many social policies. There is a complex array of programmes that flow from youth policy. These are difficult to untangle, particularly because – in their establishment – there has been increasing interest and commitment to ensuring that they are joined up! It is relatively early days to judge the lasting outcomes of youth policy: there is usually very limited evidence of impact over time. There is, as we know, a recurrent expression of the need for "evidence-based" policy making in order to ensure appropriate measures for the identification of groups most "in need", to enhance prevention and early intervention, and to promote participation and social inclusion. But there is still only rather flimsy evidence on how different elements of youth policy link together and affect young people, and the same people when they are no longer young, over the life course. There is still a lack of clarity as to whether the focus of youth policy should be "simply" promoting youth transitions to some normative sense of "adulthood", more concerned with strengthening support for "disordered" transitions and the risks and vulnerabilities associated with them, or more generally focused on what have come to be called the "resilience" or "capability" agendas (see, for example, Otto 2015, Otto et al. 2017). Evidence from research suggests that the target and constituency of youth policy beneficiaries varies widely between providing support for groups experiencing multiple disadvantages and discrimination to (albeit in very few countries) universal offers to all young people or, in some cases, support for the young people at the two ends of the spectrum: for the most talented and the most vulnerable.

Before considering some more specific conclusions about what might be called "policy winners" and, conversely, persisting "policy problematics", there are four overarching conclusions that can be drawn from the evolution of widely conceived youth policy. First, families remain important support networks during transition and in bolstering the futures of young people. This may sound all too self-evident, yet it was not long ago that it was being argued, academically, that family influence would decline dramatically with the emergence of new ICTs and the sustained impact of youth cultural forms, both of which would influence young people far more. Yet we now know that parental advice, financial support and access to networks of opportunities available (or not) to families continues to have a huge impact on the possibilities, decisions and routes taken by young people in their period of transition. Second, and this should not come as a surprise, there is overwhelming evidence – particularly when parental advice is not forthcoming or available – of the importance of what are differentially called "personal advisers", "lead professionals" or "trusted adults": contact with a highly skilled professional and access to a sympathetic adult. We will return to this below. Third, where there is any political desire to revert to more punitive youth policy measures, this should be approached with great caution. Sanctions of any kind, but particularly within social protection and criminal justice systems, need to be applied with great thought, care and sensitivity, particularly as they are likely to affect the most "troubled" (if also sometimes "troublesome") young people in a society. "European" youth policy, unlike national youth policy, does not dwell on such considerations as it has sought to promote a positive perspective on young people resting on the presumptions that they have agency, that they are

political and policy actors, not only in the field of youth policy but in the overall democratic development of society, and that youth policy has to ensure special care and outreach to disadvantaged young people. And finally, despite all the caveats and challenges involved, there is a strong case for what is often called "multi-agency working" and which derives from a desire for transversal or cross-sectoral youth policy. This is always the best means of matching appropriate provision, intervention and opportunity to individual need.

Youth policy concerns

There are also, perhaps, six broad concerns and challenges that need to be considered and hopefully addressed in reflection on and the development of youth policy:

- tensions within youth policy, between different areas of youth policy;
- focus of youth policy (providing universally for all young people or targeting specific groups, most often talented young people and young people experiencing discrimination and social exclusion);
- connecting special or targeted provision with mainstream programmes;
- ensuring geographically focused youth policy does not neglect young people outside of those areas;
- ensuring that criteria for targeted youth policy are not too narrowly drawn, which would exclude access for young people who may need it;
- ensuring age boundaries do not negatively affect young people as they get older.

These points are explained and elaborated below.

First, there are often tensions, sometimes quite profound, between policies, with some elements of youth policy working in one direction and other elements in another. Rehabilitative and opportunity-focused commitments within youth justice policy, for example, do not sit comfortably with regulatory and problem-oriented social security or youth training policy. There are many other examples.

Second, youth policy, if not in its stated objectives then in implementation instruments, is sometimes found to be targeting specific groups. An analysis of some youth policy country sheets from the EKCYP would highlight the way funding programmes sometimes target talented and high potential young people, on the one hand, and young people likely to live in disadvantaged areas and experiencing multiple discrimination, on the other. Youth services offers are another measure by which the objective and focus of youth policy easily comes forth.

Third, there are always questions as to how "special" or "targeted" measures and initiatives relate to "mainstream" interventions and programmes, in particular the criteria for deciding which young people are beneficiaries of special measures – for example, for additional support and guidance, or for more supervision and control. There is always a risk of propelling young people into such measures prematurely or, conversely, trapping young people into such measures for too long. While European youth and social policy argues for a combination of such offers to young people experiencing multiple disadvantages, these young people's families or their entire

community are often also experiencing those disadvantages. As a result, this can end up being used as arguments for certain dedicated programmes that are not sufficiently integrated strategically into universal or mainstream offers to all young people.

Fourth, as a related point, where some youth policy initiatives are area-based, often on the basis of targeting communities of entrenched social disadvantage (as argued above), there are many young people with similar socio-economic background characteristics who still live outside those designated areas and who therefore merit equal or equivalent support.

Similarly, fifth, where youth policy is explicitly concerned with targeting vulnerable groups, there is always the issue that not all young people who would benefit from such services and opportunities will necessarily receive them. In this, and the two previous points, the important policy consideration is that attention to one policy approach can produce situations in which significant numbers of young people in need are overlooked and fall through the gaps.

Sixth, the age boundaries that invariably govern "youth" policy are no more than somewhat arbitrary social (political) constructs. The attainment of an 18th, 21st, 25th or 30th birthday does not change circumstances, needs or experience overnight. Over the last decade, these boundaries have enlarged in legislation, allowing for what research has shown to be highly volatile, insecure, protracted "yo-yo" transitions to autonomy and adulthood.

These six policy observations point clearly to the fact that more attention needs to be paid to the connections between and integration of services, not just within but also beyond youth policy. In other words, there needs to be something that is sometimes called "permeable boundaries" or what European youth policy jargon refers to as cross-sectoral co-operation. Whether area-, group- or age-based (sometimes all three) youth policy has to classify and categorise whether focus and opportunity are to be prioritised and resources are to be managed effectively, the adverse effects of such an approach also have to be recognised and minimised as much as possible. This is a particularly growing concern with introduction of software or AI-based determination of who gets what service. As evidence recurrently suggests, oversimplification, including by machines, has the effect of exacerbating existing inequalities, and youth policy should still aim at delivering for all young people. What we also know is that there are some elements of youth policy that are already conveying their efficacy ("winners") while others continue to present challenges. These elements are considered below.

Youth policy "winners"

Trusted adults.

Young people's agency.

Understand culture and motivation.

Involve all groups of young people.

Facilitate access to, and reach of, services.

Checking, through evaluation, its meaning and relevance.

Safety nets.

Youth work.

Though youth organisations make a perennial cry for promoting and respecting the autonomy of young people, there is also a view that autonomy can be prematurely gained or conferred and is tantamount to abandonment: "freedom to the adolescent can look suspiciously like neglect" (Pitt-Aikens and Thomas Ellis 1989). Young people testify consistently to the importance of "trusted adults" in their lives, and those adults exist usually – although certainly not always (see Butler and Williamson 1994) – through youth policy frameworks: schools, youth work, health services, and so forth. However, while young people value a relationship with a trusted adult, they also have their own views on the world and the direction in which they wish to travel. Youth policy ignores young people's agency at its peril. Promises of a "youth guarantee" in England and Wales in 1988 had precisely the opposite effect to that intended. Far from young people joining vocational training programmes that lacked credibility to them, they dropped out, disappeared and became "disengaged": the young people now described ubiquitously as NEET. Youth training policy at that time simply paid no attention to young people's culture and motivation. Had it done so – and there was certainly "evidence" about it (Horton 1986) – it would have recognised that young people wanted "guarantees" but not on any terms.

Involving young people in youth policy development and implementation is critical if such policy is to make the right connections to young people's experiences, perspectives and aspirations. The mythical but all too real case of "Tommy Butler" captures this point perfectly (see text box).

Though since updated (in 2015), the original "story" of the mythical Tommy Butler was written in 1999, as Britain's New Labour Government launched its major social inclusion strategy for young people, called *Bridging the gap: new opportunities for 16-18 year olds not in employment, education or training (NEET)*. This led Howard Williamson to imagine similar 16-year-old "disengaged" or "excluded" young people in each decade since the Second World War and how they would have fared in their economic and youth policy context. Given New Labour's raft of proclaimed positive and opportunity-focused youth policy measures, Williamson imagined how the "Tommy" of 2005 (born in 1990) might respond:

> How will Tommy respond to all this? Much depends, of course, on his character and circumstance. Certainly this framework of public policy carries the prospect of far fewer young people slipping to the edge, but it fails to acknowledge that motivation to participate (to stay on board) is secured largely by the strength of certainty about the destinations that are likely to be reached. Today's globalised world carries little certainty, and the research evidence tells us that retention

in learning and the acquisition of qualifications is the best protective factor against all the indicators of exclusion (teenage pregnancy, criminality, drug misuse, psycho-social disorders). But Tommy is not interested in the research evidence. He will try to make sense of these "opportunities" in the context of his subjective realities. The power in the messages from his local culture and community (however misguided and misinformed) – about what's the point of education, the exploitative nature of government training schemes, the need for a "live for today" mentality (for the maintenance of psychological well-being), the suspicion of professionals, that volunteering is a cunning ploy to get you to work for nothing, the fact that there are other ways to "get by", and so on – must not be overlooked. It is how Tommy Butler weighs such information against that provided by the battalions involved in public policy initiatives which will determine the extent to which he connects with the inclusion, achievement and citizenship agenda or opts for something else (Williamson 2001).

There is also, clearly, a powerful case for joining up services for young people. It is a simplistic mantra but every preventative measure is also a promotional one. All young people, wherever they may be on some kind of youth policy spectrum, need combinations of support and opportunity. This point connects to the fact that every safety net in youth policy can and should also be a trampoline propelling young people to more positive futures. Catching young people from falling to the wayside as early as possible provides the best chance of launching them back into mainstream, opportunity-focused pathways. This demands the facilitation of access at the earliest opportunity in relation to young people's needs, which means that provision must not wait for young people to come calling but also go looking and extend its reach to be sure of engaging with those who need it. Moreover, what may look like a good and fair offer by those developing and delivering a policy (those who espouse and enact it) may not be seen in the same way by the young people who experience it. The meaning and relevance of youth policy for the young people affected by it must be a central dimension to any research or evaluation that is conducted on it. Youth policy that is considered to be meaningless and irrelevant to the young people at whom it is directed and who experience it is very probably pointless and ineffective. Unless youth policy reaches young people with a purposeful and meaningful offer, its own purpose should be called into question.

And this point, in turn, relates to the role of youth work in youth policy. At a European level, this has been steadily recognised since the 2000s, though less so in many European countries, and it is now enshrined within both European Union (2018) and Council of Europe (2020) youth strategies. Despite some continuing scepticism as to what "youth work" is and does, there is apparently growing recognition that youth work makes important connections for young people, both in relation to their thinking and in terms of their awareness, understanding and engagement with wider aspects of youth policy. Research does indeed suggest that youth work contributes significantly to personal change in young people that, for those young people on the wrong side of the tracks or undecided about the path to take, is a key prerequisite in informing positional change (whether engagement with the

labour market or youth organisations, or desistance from substance misuse or crime). Youth work, therefore, provided it is sufficiently resourced and oriented and provided its personnel are sufficiently trained in professional practice, has a key role to play within youth policy in reaching out to all groups of young people and providing them with the "spaces" to exercise autonomy and self-expression and the "bridges" to move positively to the next steps in their lives (Council of Europe 2017). Youth work, and particularly the education and training of youth workers, has only relatively recently become a focus of European youth policy and European youth research (see, for example, the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership's quite intensive recent work on youth work: https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/youth-work); research also shows that young people get into youth work by accident or by seeing inspiring youth workers engage with them in a trustful, voluntary learning relationship (see Kiilakoski 2020). Attention needs to be given to cultivating such motivation and ensuring retention and further professional development.

Finally, research has been highlighting that youth policy delivery is as diverse and complex as European countries are and youth work is one of its tools. Growing research and debate at European level show generational shifts in how young people relate to peers, to adults and to community. In this sense, there is also a growing interest in understanding how spaces to engage young people change – how important the role of infrastructure is in reaching out to and involving young people (for example, youth clubs are still an important space for disadvantaged young people, for those living in rural or more remote areas, for small local organisations and youth groups). However, digital connection also calls for other forms of outreach services to young people that are agile, speak to them in their own language and understanding and are still there to help young people make sense of their world – from joining global movements such as Occupy and Fridays for Future to receiving confidential counselling and support for coping with their personal realities and challenges. So far, such services have evolved in parallel but there are many strong arguments that it is time to rethink and rescope the landscape of actors, of their strengths and offers that can make youth policy relevant for all young people. This is a challenge and opportunity for revolutionising youth policy in the future.

Youth policy challenges

- Policy transfer
- Scaling up
- Windfalls versus "perverse behaviour"
- Hitting the target, missing the point
- Evidence-based
- The dilemmas of targeting
- Policy words, actions in practice
- Choice or compulsion

Despite the so-called "policy winners" discussed earlier, there remain some significant youth policy concerns and challenges that prevail at both national and transnational level. The first is the transferability of policy, between settings and countries, and the scalability of policy measures. A great deal of policy is initially piloted on a relatively small scale, but it is not just size that is relevant. New initiatives usually carry strong political championship and advocacy, which can diminish over time. New initiatives also often attract a highly motivated workforce, attracted to the "cutting edge" nature of the work, and new initiatives are often generously resourced. Therefore, for a number of reasons, the "scaling up" of promising, even proven, youth policy measures may not work, as political interest and support, professional energy and commitment, and resource levels decline. Add to this other political and cultural challenges when trying to apply policy across various kinds of borders and it becomes difficult to ensure the replication of youth policy on an even wider scale. This is one of the key findings of the *Youth policy evaluation review* (Youth Partnership 2020) which highlights, on the one hand, the limited use of evaluation results and, on the other hand, the challenges to transfer good practice and learning across borders because such exercises are on the margins of youth policy making.

Whatever the central goals of any youth policy, implementation can produce wider unexpected effects, both welcome "windfalls" and unwelcome "perverse behaviours". It is always important to remember that, whatever the aspirations and intentions of politicians and the managers who subsequently shape youth policy, it is also subject to "street-level bureaucracy" (Lipsky 1980) on the ground (see text box).

Street-level bureaucrats can "make policy" because they can exercise discretion (make a choice about how they will exercise their power). This discretion comes partly from the fact that they are regarded as professionals and therefore are expected to exercise their own judgement in their fields of expertise. However, it is also because they are often relatively free from organisational oversight and authority, and perform complex tasks that cannot be completely scripted or reduced to prescribed actions or activities.

Street-level bureaucrats may be in conflict with, or have perspectives that differ from, other groups in the organisation, such as their managers. They may therefore choose, and be able to resist, organisational expectations in a variety of ways.

It is this combination of discretion and a degree of freedom from organisational authority that enables street-level bureaucrats to "make policy" in both more desirable but also sometimes unwanted or unexpected ways. Their actions and decisions may not always conform to policy directives and so their agencies could end up performing in ways that are contrary to stated policy intentions or goals.

There can be both benefits and disadvantages flowing from this. On the one hand, new initiatives may be connected firmly and positively with existing ones, yielding "value added" impact; on the other hand, practitioners may seek to satisfy new policy demands by taking the shortest route to achieving them (picking the "low-hanging

fruit" and leaving the harder to reach untouched) or by working in ways that do not in fact square with the original policy objectives. In such cases, this becomes the problem of "hitting the target, but missing the point". Public policy is, today, preoccupied with setting and meeting targets, yet unless targets are carefully set they can easily distort goals and objectives. Youth policy is then delivered efficiently but not effectively, if it fails to reach those it was designed for. Targeting also carries an additional risk of stigmatising recipients and sometimes inadvertently marginalising them further. The classic example of this is vocational training measures targeted at early school leavers in order to improve their basic skills and enhance their prospects in the labour market. Sometimes the very fact of this leads to additional labour market discrimination, what Furlong (1992) called "double jeopardy". In the classical youth policy remit it is a question regarding the spaces for young people (youth clubs, youth centres/houses or even a room designated for youth work activities) that are sometimes set up to tick a policy box but are not properly designed, resourced and supported to be youth-friendly spaces.

There is, once again, the continuing thorny question of "evidence". Subtle distinctions as well as rather more crude claims are often made about evidence. Early pilot programmes may have "provisional" indicative findings. More established policy may have drawn some "promising" conclusions. On rare occasions, youth policy is claimed to be founded upon "proven" research. We have discussed some of the issues around researching young people and youth policy, yet we are not particularly wiser in our understanding of exactly how evidence influences policy. Many youth (and youth policy) researchers show limited interest in contributing directly to policy-making processes and platforms; many policy makers show limited interest in trying to engage researchers. More often, youth policy is delayed on the arguably rather more spurious grounds of needing more research. Yet the *Youth policy evaluation review* (Youth Partnership 2020) concludes that, on many counts, we often learn little from research and evaluation because it remains in the language of the country where it was produced and it is not really used even there, let alone elsewhere. Moreover, evaluation is also often done in order to tick a box rather than being embedded within policy development and implementation to test the logical connections within the policy (compared with its objectives, indicators, actions, impact and outcomes). With or without research, however, youth policy is made. And this simply resurrects the recurrent question of why exactly do we need the "evidence" at all?

There are other questions concerning choice versus compulsion. It is easy, academically, to celebrate (voluntary) emancipatory youth policy and condemn (compulsory) regulatory youth policy. Rarely is there any debate about some hybrid form of compulsory, emancipatory youth policy, as if it were an impossible idea to conceive. Yet if some forms of youth policy are deemed to have inherent developmental value for young people, there is a legitimate youth policy question as to whether all young people should be required to take part in them. After all, some research points very clearly to the fact that positive opportunities within youth policy are disproportionately taken up by young people who are already socially included and beneficiaries of other youth policy opportunities. More marginalised young people, as a result, get left even further behind. "Compulsion" is, of course, an emotive and loaded word. But more concerted reach, contact and persuasion – the apparent

luxury of time and patience – may be an important, often overlooked dimension of youth policy that seeks to narrow the "youth divide", promote social inclusion and provide more opportunities to young people with fewer of them. Otherwise, even the best of youth policies designed and proclaimed to be concerned with "social inclusion" will simply not reach the very people who need it most. This is why the social inclusion dimensions of youth policy are paramount, if the gap between those young people who are accumulating advantages and those accumulating disadvantages is to be reduced. One project is clearly never enough; there has to be concerted and transversal commitment to operationalising the principle of social inclusion as an overriding aspiration of youth policy.

Conclusion

Implicit within this broad canvas of issues is a central message. The reach of positive, opportunity-focused youth policy must be extended, by means of structural and professional development. Conversely, the reach of more negative, problem-oriented youth policy must be restricted, again through structural and professional limitations. Universal provision must be widely scattered, aware and accessible to all; targeted provision must be carefully focused and controlled. A balance between compulsory and opportunity-driven policy is always needed. Skilled, professional practitioners are essential to this process.

One can never underestimate the importance of distinguishing youth policy documents and structures from the empirical realities that are intended to flow from them. Politicians are adept at launching policies that almost assume that the job is done. But even the development of impressive "structures for delivery" does not confirm that this is the case. There is often far too much rhetoric that is very distant from the reality on the ground. As noted in a variety of ways, there are structural, cultural, personal and systemic barriers that have to be addressed and overcome before youth policy is converted effectively into grounded practice.

We must, therefore, treat all youth policy proclamations with some caution. Of course, the very fact of youth policy formulation is a signal that some degree of political championship has been secured, but it is only the first step on the way. Irrespective of its content, any youth policy document then faces a journey that, *inter alia*, will encounter implementation challenges, unforeseen delivery outcomes, the expression of professional concerns, and the need for re-appraisal and further development. As we have suggested, the circle will turn – the clock will both take and need its time – and all of those engaged in the process will be better equipped if they grasp the complexities at stake.

Conclusion

There is no magic wand to either determine or develop the shape of youth policy in any particular context. Like all forms of policy development, its pace and direction are contingent on multiple internal and extraneous influences and pressures. In other words, youth policy evolution is dependent on a range of political, economic, social and cultural factors. However, understanding something about the youth policy-making process means that we are better prepared to play a part: "forewarned is forearmed". Professional engagement, where it is possible and permitted, is critical for the development of relevant, meaningful and informed youth policy. In complex times and with constrained public resources, the arguments for youth policy have to be relearned, reframed and renewed, time and again.

Almost every dimension of youth policy has to be contextualised within a sense of exchange, or "trade off". (Chisholm et al. 2005 also talked about "trading up", when advocating the potential and performance of non-formal learning.) In English, the terminology is often about "swings and roundabouts": what you gain on the swings, you can easily lose on the roundabouts, and vice versa. The history of youth policy evolution is not always one of incremental gains on all fronts and across the spectrum. Where, for example, local (municipal) autonomy is ascendant and, as a result, the delivery of services to young people can be very variable (though arguably responsive to different needs), sometimes there is a critical cry for greater central direction and prescription. Where central control is ascendant in order to ensure consistent youth policy throughout its jurisdiction, the criticism is that "one size does not fit all" and that there needs to be more flexibility and local self-determination. One may have to distinguish between budgetary discretion and delivery discretion: where there is municipal autonomy, there is always a risk of variable expenditure on young people, which presumably is not desirable, even if some variation in the type of delivery is desirable. Even that can be contentious: with permitted discretion over what is provided, some municipalities may direct identical resources towards quite different measures, even within the same policy domain or addressing the same issue. And one approach may be "problem-oriented" while the other could be "opportunity-focused". A simple illustration would be the way policy is developed towards minority or discriminated-against groups of young people: with a discretionary budget, policy at the local level could opt for more constructive leisure-based (but also inclusive and educational) activities, on the one hand, or more controls and penalties in public space on the other.

Few easy conclusions can be drawn from processes of youth policy formulation, development and implementation: all successful youth policy needs some contribution of "perfect storms" and a fair wind. What is clear, however, is that those within the youth sector have some opportunity, as well as arguably a duty, to inform and assist youth policy making whenever possible. The material in this manual provides the foundations for understanding how this might be done. What is even more clear is that there are some clear lessons emerging from the now widespread interest in and political commitment to youth policy, as Howard Williamson captured in his

concluding remarks in his presentation to the First Global Forum on Youth Policies. First, there needs to be recurrent strengthening of opportunity-focused youth policy, based on rights and entitlements. Second, the reach of positive, emancipatory and participatory experiences within youth policy needs to be widened and deepened – otherwise they often fail to reach those young people who are likely to benefit from them most. Third, conversely, the reach of negative, regulatory and restrictive interventions within youth policy needs to be limited and carefully controlled – otherwise they often reach young people who have no need of them. And finally, the place of "critical support at critical moments" can never be underestimated. This may take the form of human advice and guidance or virtual information, but awareness of what is available and access to it when required lie at the very heart of any effective youth policy.

This manual has focused, very intentionally, on the principal European dimensions and the "opportunity-focused" principles of youth policy – those that are concerned essentially with recognising and engaging with young people as resources for shaping their own lives and for contributing to the democratic development of Europe. The manual has highlighted those youth policy themes that both enable young people to achieve those ends – through participation, mobility and volunteering – and try to ensure that as many young people can do so, through social inclusion strategies such as access to rights and the promotion of digital competence. Youth work and youth information are particularly important youth policy instruments across that spectrum. The manual starts, necessarily, with some definitional and conceptual thoughts about "youth policy", what it is, how we might understand the circumstances of young people through different processes of research and inquiry, and the more political and practical elements of youth policy development and implementation, presented in the form of a clock, albeit one that ticks along at different speeds and sometimes stops. It can take different youth policy actors in different places on the clock to get it going again. Part 2 provides the reader with what might be called the architecture of youth policy at a national level, highlighting the many ways in which "youth policy" may be framed in different national contexts. Part 3 then considers the transnational structures that surround those national pictures, drawing ideas from them (the bottom-up process) but simultaneously influencing them (the top-down process). The pace of youth policy in both directions varies significantly at different points in time, between institutions and between countries. Nonetheless, over time, in Europe, the youth policy momentum established by the European Union, the Council of Europe, their youth partnership, the United Nations and the European Youth Forum has developed traction in suggesting, in a necessarily flexible way, a European framework for youth policy and providing standards for emulation and adaptation at national level. That framework has been assisted in huge measure by the instruments and resources identified in some detail in Part 4 of the manual across a spectrum of key youth policy areas to which the countries of Europe routinely and increasingly express commitment: participation and active citizenship, information, volunteering, social inclusion, access to rights, youth work, mobility and digitalisation.

That increasing commitment has not come about by chance. The first youth policy manual, produced only just a little over a decade ago, was written at a time when youth policy at a European level was arguably in its infancy, fragmented and scattered

over various segments of institutional and professional activity. That manual was framed around the author's specific knowledge and experience and based on one particular country's powerfully coherent, still linear, story of youth policy development. It very usefully sowed the seeds for more widespread and detailed consideration of "youth policy" within the European youth sector, beyond training courses and the provision of programmes. The knowledge and resources that have accrued from the European exchanges and debates that have taken place since the publication of the first manual may have challenged some of the earlier thinking.

There is now a much more nuanced understanding of "youth policy". This youth policy manual is very different from the first one, but they are joined umbilically. The information and resources within this manual are much richer, given the investment made over the past 10 years in gathering and analysing knowledge about national and local youth policy realities. It can now anchor further debate, just as the first version did for the last decade. Youth policy challenges and winners reflected upon in the conceptual start of the manual (Part 1) and at the end of the manual (Part 5), when drawing on what research tells us about youth policy winners, have only opened boxes and doors to further reflection in the future.

Youth policy is still in development across Europe. It is still dynamic, dependent on many external factors. But we also know today that youth policy making in Europe is more reflective than 10 years ago and it now recognises the complexity of the cyclical approach. Youth policy makers in Europe see the importance of involving young people and of the principle of participation, and there are now serious attempts to roll out significant participatory processes in European youth policy. However, today we also know that important elements of policy making are not yet fully developed in the youth sector, particularly monitoring and evaluation, and the demonstration of outcomes and impact. Cross-sectoral, coherent and cohesive youth policy is far from established, and judgement on the balance between universal and more targeted approaches is still a critical platform for many debates to come.

It is hoped, therefore, that this manual will provide solid ground and myriad examples of the commonly agreed values, principles, standards, approaches, instruments and resources for the further cultivation, advocacy and implementation of youth policy in Europe for the next decade. The manual brings together a combination of conceptual, legal and practical ideas combined with examples and pointers to many useful resources. Given the complexity of these resources and ideas, the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership will develop some accompanying educational and support material to help youth policy makers apply these resources. And when the youth sector evolves further, debate has been extended (though probably not exhausted), and more lessons have been learned, it will be time to take stock once more and write another version. Until then, we hope this manual will accompany youth sector actors in their journey of understanding, advocacy and development of youth policy throughout Europe.

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Today, we know much more about national and European youth policy, the role of research, participation of young people and monitoring and evaluation of youth policy than we did when the first *Youth policy manual* was published in 2009 by the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership. The concept of youth policy can be very narrowly or very broadly constructed. This volume positions youth policy in the context of public policy and reflects on the complex, cyclical nature of policy making, bringing together the results of knowledge gathering and debates central to the European agenda in the field over the last 15 years.

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