

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH WORK

in the Republic of Serbia

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1. Context of youth work

Although it is believed that the youth work is a completely novelty in Serbia, historically it was present even in the 19th century, only in a slightly different form. Organizations which existed in that period were primarily engaged in humanitarian activities. That pattern existed until the World War II when new forms of youth work began to emerge. During the 20th century several small-scale organizations were formed and actively contributed to the interests of young people in different areas of social life (e.g. Youth Hostels Association of Yugoslavia, Youth Music of Serbia, Youth Researchers of Serbia). The most popular values promoted among youth were equality, solidarity, friendship, volunteerism, patriotism and collectivism. The systematic measures for youth employment and scholarship were developed, and youth organizations participated in decision-making process. Youth Day on 25th May was established and celebrated ceremoniously involving many children and young people all over the country. Those forms of youth work were initiated, recognised and supported by state structures and promoted as a complementary part of youth education in addition to the formal one. Political changes of the late 1980s and early 1990s influenced the transformation of youth work. For more than a decade there was neither institutional, strategic nor legal framework regarding national youth policy, nor systemic support to youth activities.

At the end of 2001, the Youth Sector was formed within the Ministry of Education and Sports of Serbia. In that moment, it was the only state body dealing with youth issues. But this sector existed only three years. That was the reason for a decisive reaction of the civil society organizations in youth area, which established the Youth Coalition of Serbia in 2003. The main aim of this youth initiative was to raise public and local awareness on the position of youth in the country and establishing an institutional body in charge for youth.

Thanks to the efforts of the Youth Coalition of Serbia, the Ministry of Youth and Sports was created in May 2007. The National Youth Strategy adopted in May 2008, the Action Plan for its implementation adopted in January 2009, followed by the Strategy of Career Guidance and Counselling adopted in 2010, and the Law on Youth endorsed in 2011, were the first steps in developing systematic solutions to support young people in different areas of social life. Parallely, the role and importance of youth work started to become clearer and was institutionally supported at the national and local level. The Ministry of Youth and Sports adopted in 2015 the new National Youth Strategy for the period 2015-2025, which highlighted the recognition of youth work in the context of non-formal education. In 2021, the Ministry of Youth and Sports launched the process of revising the National Youth Strategy and based on that opened the process of preparation the new Youth Strategy 2022-2030. According to the draft of the text of the new strategy the role of youth work will be more emphasized and elaborated.

From the very beginning, the Ministry of Youth and Sports initiated the opening of youth offices in local self-governments, youth clubs in municipalities, as well as organizing trainings, seminars and workshops as the means of providing non-formal education. During this period, some federations of youth associations were established and they took care of the quality of youth work. The National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) was initiated in May 2008, as a reaction of civil society organizations to the absence of a legitimate national association of professionals in the area of non-

formal education which will influence policy development and quality assurance mechanism for its implementation at the national and local level. They recognized the need for quality assurance of youth work programmes, the need to standardize, professionalize and recognize youth work by youth, institutions that deal with youth, the state and society. NAPOR was founded in 2009.

In 2010 NAPOR had done the research "Cross-section of the situation of youth work in Serbia" which aim was to gain an insight into the general state of youth work in Serbia, in relation to the adequacy of human resources, the structure of users and sources of funding for youth work programmes (<http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/presek-stanja-omladinskog-rada-u-srbiji-2010.pdf>). Besides, dr Zora Krnjaic prepared the document "The history of youth work and its relevance for youth policy in Serbia today". The paper's primary aim was to give one possible perspective with an accompanying historical background on youth policy in Serbia (<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262055/H3-Serbia.pdf/9efea5b3-2980-4c4c-a8a2-7cea380c1303>).

Over the past 15 years, the number of programmes and projects for young people has increased steadily, and the need for professionalization, standardization and quality assurance of youth work became apparent. NAPOR has created three vocational standards in the area of professional non-formal education (Youth leader, Youth worker, Specialist for youth work and policies) that are included in the National Vocational Qualification system. Apart from it, the Ministry of Youth and Sports in cooperation with GIZ prepared Youth office standards and competences of youth office coordinators guidelines, which provides support and recommendations on how to improve the work of the local youth offices and is another step towards ensuring the quality of their work. Within the document it is underlined that local youth offices' coordinators should be trained in accordance with the set of standards

(<https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/ck/uploads/files/Dokumenta/Omladina/publikacije/Implementacion%20of%20the%20national%20strategy%20for%20youth%20on%20local%20level.pdf>).

Finally, the youth worker as an occupation/profession has been recognized in Serbia in 2019, when it was included in the National Classification of Occupation as a specific profession and vocation.

2. Strategic and legislative framework of youth work

The Law on Youth (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 50/11) was adopted by the National Assembly on July 5, 2011 <https://mto.gov.rs/extfile/sr/1097/The%20Law%20on%20Youth.pdf>. The Law defines the framework and conditions for supporting young people in organising, social activities, developing and reaching potentials for personal and social benefit, definition of the youth sector structure, with clearly specified competencies, rights, obligations and responsibilities, depending on the level of reference, recognising the autonomy of youth associations and umbrella federations. The Law stipulates establishing of the Youth Council, where young people will be represented together with other principal subjects in this area, and also establishing youth councils on the provincial and local level. In addition, the Law on Youth defines the meaning of youth work. According the Article 3 of the Law, the youth work shall mean “such youth activities organized by and for young people, based on non-formal education, carried out in young people’s free time and undertaken with the aim of improving the conditions for personal and social development of young people, in accordance with their needs and abilities, in which young people voluntarily participate”.

The definition of youth work that NAPOR uses is more detailed: “Youth work is planned educational curriculum, created with the purpose of providing support to young people in the process of independence, by helping young in personal and social development to become active members of the society and participants in the decision-making process. The idea of youth work is to create a safe environment and opportunities for active participation of young people on a voluntary basis in the process of acquiring skills, competencies and knowledge”. Youth work: a) is complementary to formal education; b) is carried out by youth workers; c) conducts activities using non-formal education methods and information.

In 2015, the first Youth Policy Dictionary was prepared by NAPOR with the aim to define terms, youth policy actors in Serbia and their roles, <https://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/recnik-omladinske-politike-2015.pdf>. According to the dictionary “Youth work is a professional, pedagogical work with young people which takes place outside the formal educational system, i.e. within the leisure time and in which young people participate on a voluntary basis. Youth work is complementary to formal education. It represents a planned (and continuous) process of education, created with a purpose of supporting young people in their process of independence. Youth work is conducted by youth workers, who help young people in their personal and social development to become active members of society and to participate in a decision-making process. The idea of youthwork is based on creating a safe environment and opportunities for active youth participation. Within the youth work young people acquire employability competences, create its values, attitudes and identity”. The Ministry of Youth and Sports financially supported creation of this document, while National Youth Council of Serbia and National Association of Youth Offices contributed to its preparation. The second edition of the Dictionary was published in 2017, <https://koms.rs/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Recnik-omladinske-politike.pdf>

The Permanent Expert Team for the implementation of the Bonn Process was established in May 2021, within the governmental Youth Council. The main tasks of the Permanent Team encompass: conducting consultations with young people, associations, youth offices, federations, institutions and experts in order to collect data and define priorities at the national and local level that are necessary for the implementation of the Bonn Process; coordination of the Bonn process at national and local level; establishing cross-sectoral cooperation with relevant institutions at the national and local level in order to implement the Bonn Process; advocacy and expert support in harmonizing the conclusions and recommendations from the European level with the national and local normative framework;

preparation of a national report on the processes implemented within the Bonn Process; organization of promotional activities. The Team consists of 16 members, representatives of the state bodies, institutions and youth associations and federations. Coordination of the work is performed by NAPOR.

[The Youth Strategy in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2023 to 2030](#), was developed through a broad, transparent, consultative process, in which, in addition to representatives of various ministries, institutions and the civil sector about 7,000 young people participated directly. The focus of the Strategy is on the process of working with young people and the effects of that process. The Strategy was adopted by the Government on 26 January 2023. The focus of the Strategy is on the process of working with young people and the effects of that process.

With the adoption of the Strategy, the continuity of the systematic regulation of the subject area was continued, given that the previously valid “umbrella” document – the National Youth Strategy for the period from 2015 to 2025, established the basic principles, directions and expected results of the actions of all subjects of youth policies towards improving the social position of young people and creating conditions for exercising the rights and interests of young people in all areas. The Strategy has one general goal - Improved quality of life of young people. There are five specific goals, as follows:

1. Youth work is standardized in the system of non-formal education and is continuously implemented;
2. Spatial capacities and services for the implementation of youth policy have been improved and functional in all local governments;
3. Young people are active participants in society at all levels;
4. Young people have equal opportunities and incentives to develop their potentials and competencies, which lead to social and economic independence;
5. Create conditions for a healthy and safe environment and social well-being of young people.

Following the adoption of the new Strategy, the [Action Plan for the implementation of the Youth Strategy 2023-2025](#) was adopted on July 6, 2023.

In comparison with the previous Strategy (2015 -2025) where Youth Work was recognized as one of the measures under nonformal education, the new Strategy places greater emphasis on Youth Work. First of five specific goals is solely dedicated to the youth work: specific goal 1: Youth work is standardized in the system of non-formal education and is continuously implemented To achieve this goal, 6 measures are planned: Measure 1.1 Developed system of professional development of youth workers; Measure 1.2 Established system of quality assurance of youth work programs and nonformal education of young people; Measure 1.3 Youth work programs are implemented continuously in cooperation with local partners; Measure 1.4 Youth work is recognized in the system of formal and non-formal education and among young people; Measure 1.5 Research and knowledge management in the field of youth work and non-formal education of young people are continuously conducted; Measure 1.6 Harmonization of youth work with international standards.

Law on Youth

The formation of the Working Group for the Draft Law on Youth was announced on February 13, 2023. The working group consisted of 30 representatives of institutions and the youth sector. NAPOR representatives advocated for official recognition of youth workers within the Law as well as for opening the possibility for an association of youth work practitioners to be entrusted with the public authority to issue licences for youth workers. Even though the process initially aimed to be finished by the end of 2023, it was concluded that that it is necessary to create additional analyses and map good practices at the EU level in order to define proposals that are particularly related to the acquisition of the youth umbrella union status, and that the work will be continued in the coming year.

3. Recognition

Process related to recognition of youth work at national level is done by and within NAPOR. The main areas relating to recognition are:

- development of three vocational standards in the area of professional non-formal education (1. Youth leader, 2. Youth worker; 3. Specialist for youth work and policies);
- development of standards for non-formal education programmes in the youth field and a mechanism for its implementation ((re)accreditation process of youth work programmes based on eight standards) that ensures building necessary skills and life values of young people to take active participation in community development along with promotion of democratic principles;
- development of non-formal education curricula for two vocational standards in the area of professional youth work (Youth leader and Youth worker) through which non-formal education providers gain standardised professional competences to be able to make a greater impact on youth empowerment;
- development of a mechanism for validation of previously attained competences for two vocational standards for non-formal education in the youth field;
- establishment of a pool of licensed organisations and trainers for delivery of multi-modular trainings for non-formal education vocational standards;
- establishment of a pool of mentors for validation of previously attained competences;
- creation of a tool for recognition of competences of young people gained through youth work programmes and non-formal education (Passport of Competences). The Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant actors from the public, private and civil society sectors cooperated in this process. Main purposes of this tool are: recognition of transferable skills (competences) that young people gain through youth work programmes by employers, in order to foster youth employability; more efficient planning of professional and personal improvement of young people; recognition of impact of youth work on development of young people.

There have been also the activities related to support youth work by the European initiatives.

Serbia is one of several European countries which have youth centres awarded the Council of Europe Quality Label. The Ministry of Youth and Sports was a part of the process of accreditation of the Ecological Centre "Radulovacki" according to the Council of Europe quality standards. This Centre in Serbia obtained the "quality label" in 2015. The Centre is owned by the regional NGO "Vojvodina Environmental Movement" and it is supported by local and national authorities in strategic and programme areas.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports also supported the application of Novi Sad for the European Youth Capital. After the first candidacy of Novi Sad (the city entered the top five cities, but did not receive the title of the European Youth Capital 2018), youth associations and associations for young people in Novi Sad gathered and decided to support the city for the candidacy once again, but under different conditions. The city will be the title holder, but the title will equally belong to the youth sector. Novi Sad won the title of the European Youth Capital for 2019. With OPENS19 programme Novi Sad provided: new spaces for youth, youth association, centres, info points; improvement of health and social service in the city; support for innovations and creativity; opportunity for youth to improve their skills and knowledge; possibility for young people to share experience and opinions with youth from all over Europe.

The delegation of the Republic of Serbia took part in the 3rd European Youth Work Convention organized online in December 2020. The Serbian delegation consisted of 15 participants, representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, NAPOR, Tempus Foundation, National Youth Council of Serbia, Eco Centre "Radulovacki" and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office. As a result of work, the Declaration on Youth Work was created and the document has been translated into Serbian language.

Current process related to the recognition:

Implementation of the Bonn process

Since May 2021, the Youth Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (coordinated by the Minister of Tourism and Youth) has established the Permanent expert team for the implementation of the Bonn Process. The team is consisted of 16 representatives of institutions (Ministry of Tourism and Youth, Ministry for EU integrations, National Agency TEMPUS, Regional Youth Cooperation Council - local office Serbia and National Youth Council), as well as representatives of National Association of Youth Workers – NAPOR and Eco Centre Radulovacki (holder of Council of Europe quality label). NAPOR is coordinating the Expert team.

The creation of a new Law on Youth is underway, in which, in addition to recognizing youth of work (currently valid Law) refer to a special chapter on the professionalization, accreditation and licensing of youth work in order for it to be recognized and recognized by all authorities, as well as for youth workers to work in youth clubs at youth offices and in youth centres.

Development of qualification standards

With the support of UNICEF Serbia and Ministry of Tourism and Youth NAPOR worked during 2023 on defining qualification standards for youth workers. The process began with the revision of the competencies of youth workers, which was created by NAPOR in 2010 and revised in 2015. The revision was made in accordance with the National Framework of Qualifications, for levels: five (specialist education) and seven (higher education - master's studies) through a consultative process with youth workers, national institutions, international organizations and national associations operating in the youth sector.

Based on the revised competencies, documents were created for submission of the initiative for the development and adoption of qualification standards to the Agency for Qualifications of the Republic of Serbia. On the basis of the held strategic meetings, it was concluded that before submitting the initiative, it is necessary to wait for the finalization of the drafting of the Law on Youth of Serbia, which should define youth workers, and/or the completion of the process of drafting occupational standards for youth workers. NAPOR focused resources on both processes in order to ensure a legislative framework for the introduction of a qualification that has not been systematically regulated so far.

Creation of occupational standards

The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs with the support of the project "Knowledge to Work - E2E" is working on the development of proposals for standards for 20 occupations from the Occupation Code. One of the 20 occupations is youth worker (code: 3412.03). The draft methodology for the development of occupational standards envisages the following stages in the development of the proposed occupational standards: 1) Adaptation of the standard form of the

Occupational Questionnaire, for selected individual occupations; 2) Conducting field research: 3) Preparation of proposals for occupational standards based on data and information collected by desk and field research. The first meeting of the expert working group was held in 2023. After providing feedback on the desk survey and the questionnaire proposal, it was finalized and a field survey was started, for which NAPOR provided data from member organizations and informed the members about the importance of the process. The next meeting is planned after the analysis of the collected data, on the basis of which the occupational standard will be defined.

4. Funding youth work

Funds for the implementation of the Youth Strategy are provided in the budget of Serbia, as well as in the budget of the Autonomous Province and the local self-governments, with the planned contribution of the EU funds, the participation of the private sector, associations that carry out youth activities and with other national and international programmes and donors. The funds planned for the implementation of the Action Plan for the period from 2023 to 2025 amount to RSD 10.648.263.494 (EUR 90.878.753¹) while in 2023 a total of RSD 3.201.116.142 (EUR 27.320.271) has been allocated.

For the activities which should contribute to the Specific goal 1: Youth work is standardized in the system of non-formal education and is continuously implemented, allocation of funds from 2023 up to 2025 are RSD 531.619.000 (EUR 4.537.160).

The main funder of the youth work activities is the Government/Ministry of Tourism and Youth (previously Ministry of Youth and Sports). The majority of funds dedicated to youth policy are spent on financing programmes and projects of public interest in the youth sector. The funding or co-funding of those programmes and projects is carried out on the basis of public calls, managed by the Ministry in accordance with the Law on Youth and the Rulebook on funding and co-funding of programmes and projects of public interest in the area of youth sector (Official Gazette of Serbia, no. 30/18). This represents the regular mechanism for supporting youth associations and local self-governments (only those which have established a local youth office).

The Ministry of Youth and Sports continues to work on providing support to all subjects of youth policy. For the implementation of the Youth Strategy in 2023, 168 projects of youth organizations/organizations for youth, federations and local governments in the amount of RSD 290.861.929,00 (EUR 2.482.392,50) were supported. The construction/reconstruction of 4 youth centres was also financed in the total amount of RSD 180.000.000 (EUR 1.536.229) and the total amount of funds provided in 2023 is RSD 470.861.929 (EUR 4.018.622).

When it comes to the municipalities, they do not have a legal obligation to assign certain amounts of money for youth issues. In line with the Law on Youth (Article 26), local self-governments could allocate their budget funds for financing the needs and interests of young people, but it is up to local self-government to decide whether it should be done and set up the budget, respecting the right to autonomy of local self-government and its distinctive needs.

Since the establishment of NAPOR, the Ministry has been financially supporting its activities which have systemically contributed to the development and professionalism of youth work in Serbia. Up to now, the Ministry has supported 18 projects of NAPOR in total amount of RSD 80.382.922 (EUR 686.037)

So far, NAPOR has managed to receive funds for its projects from international donors and EU Erasmus+ Programme. From October 2018 until November 2019, NAPOR implemented the project "Youth work – uprising beyond the borders" which was supported within the Erasmus+ with EUR 49.573. The project was realized in partnership with the Estonian Youth Work Centre. Additionally, NAPOR is included in the implementation of the project "Our community, our future – toward greater cooperation and youth employability" which objective is to improve long-term employability of NEET youth and promote sustainable cross-sectoral cooperation at the local level, towards an inclusive community based entrepreneurial mechanism. The project is coordinated since December 2018 by the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights with total amount of EUR 226.261 supported within the IPA project 2014 "Youth employability and active inclusion" (NAPOR had budget of EUR 40.168). Project "Under the

¹ The official middle exchange rate of the dinar of the National Bank of Serbia on February 14, 2024 (EUR 117.17) was used.

Loupe: Rural Youth Work!" started on 1st February 2020. NAPOR implemented it in a partnership with Society for Youth Development Idrija 2020, Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade, Institute of Social Sciences „Ivo Pilar“and Association for promoting human potential and creative development - Prism. It was funded by the Tempus Foundation Serbia through the ERASMUS + program with EUR 71.460. Within the project the research study "Under the Loupe: Rural Youth" was developed. This document is the first in Serbia that brings together in one place all the data related to the life and habits of young people in rural areas. A comparative presentation of data is given in relation to young people in urban areas, as well as in relation to gender differences. Ten areas are covered by the research study: socio-economic status of young people, health and risky behavior, education, work and employment, participation, family and partnership, free time, values and trust of young people, life satisfaction and use of digital technologies. The project "The art of ethics in youth work" is joint project implemented by NAPOR, Finnish Youth Research Society - FYRN (Finland), Victoria University, (Australia), Institute for Social Research in Zagreb (Croatia) and European Youth Card Association (Bulgaria). The project aims to improve the quality and recognition of youth work through advancing ethical frameworks on policy and practical level, in Europe and beyond. Project is co-funded by European Commission through the Erasmus+ programme, KA2 – Capacity building in youth field with EUR 112.702 (NAPOR had budget of EUR 32.345). "ACT AS PROFESSIONALS - Improvement of the youth work practice with young people with fewer opportunities" is an Innovation Strategic partnership in the field of youth project, focused around creating a new, dynamic training module for youth workers, with the idea of enhancing the quality of the use of professional principles in the youth work practice with youth with fewer opportunities. The objectives of the project involve innovating the non-formal education of youth workers, improving competences of youth workers in implementing professional principles in their practice with youth with fewer opportunities and improving the quality of youth work practice with youth with fewer opportunities. The project was setup by the team of professionals from humanistic sciences from Serbia and Denmark with the cooperation of NAPOR. The central activity of the project was creation of a training module, based on applied drama training session as its main learning methodology. The project lasted from October 2020 till September 2021 (NAPOR had budget of EUR 6.580).

Project "The Melting pot!" started on the 1st of March 2021. Project is implemented across 3 countries (Croatia, Serbia and The Republic of North Macedonia), in partnership among NAPOR, Galerija Matice Srpske, Mreža mladih Hrvatske, Pogon – Zagrebački centar za nezavisnu kulturu i mlade, Sojuz za mladinska rabota Skopje and Opstinska ustanova Muzej na grad Negotino. It's funded by the Tempus Foundation Serbia through the ERASMUS + program with EUR 89.690. The partnership overall aim is to bring cultural institutions closer to people through youth work programs by applying interactive, innovative methods and tools, as well as create preconditions for the professionalism of youth workers and employees in cultural institutions.

As a result of cooperation which has been established during the 3rd Convention on youth work and as a first step for the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda between National association of youth workers, the project "European youth workers unite to empower youth and youth field – Youth worker is a lifestyle" has been developed. Its implementation started on the 1st of November 2021 with the support of Estonian National Association (Haridus-Ja Noorteamet-HARNO) through Erasmus+ programme with EUR 400.000. Lead is Estonian National association of youth workers (EESTI NOORSOOTAJATE KOGU) and Serbia is partner with 7 countries more (Italy, Greece, Malta, North Macedonia, Portugal, Czech Republic and Netherlands). NAPOR budget is EUR 38.421. The project has 4 main objectives: 1) explore problems and best practices for political, professional, and learning outcome recognition of youth work and enforce strategic communication of youth field to improve recognition, 2) increase quality and innovation of youth work via improved peer learning, advocacy, training development, cooperation, between youth workers in Europe (both EU and CoE countries); establishing stronger links between policy, research, and practice, 3) prepare, establish, and implement

a European network/association of youth workers, based on green and innovative management and communication approaches, as well as to analysis needs and possibilities for using (green and digital) tools for peer learning, advocacy, internal and external communication, management of the network, practice sharing between members of the network, 4) build the capacity of the network and its' members, including development training packages and other necessary services to support national associations of youth workers and youth work quality development.

Project "The Future of Youth Work"ers" founded by Portuguese National Association (Erasmus+ Juventude em Ação) with EUR 175.527, started on the 1st of November 2021. It is the flagship project of the Portuguese Association of Youth Professionals in conjunction with other National Youth Workers Associations from 7 countries (Serbia, Estonia, Italy, North Macedonia, Greece, Italy, Netherlands) in the EU representative space, but also of the CoE, in defining a training and capacity building plan for youth professionals who focus on the priorities described above and who affirm the Youth Work and the "Youth Work"ers in the new European commitments. It has 3 main objectives. The first is linked to the need to map the existing models in Europe, of training and qualification of Youth Professionals and to realize the existence of National Associations of Youth Professionals, in which they promote quality programs of training and qualification of Youth Professionals. A second objective is focused to analysis if the training and qualification programs of youth professionals are oriented and adjusted with the fundamental documents of the EU related to the Youth area and with the new transversal priorities of the EU and, of course, with the strategy European Youth 2019-2027. A third objective is related to the design of a European training proposal for Youth Professionals, designed, recognised and transversal to the work of all national associations of Youth Professionals. These three objectives are intended to give a complete answer to the Bonn process, which continues the III Youth Work Convention and in which the commitment to create the European Network of National Associations of Youth Professionals was born. The result of this project will be the contribution of Portugal and APP Juventude in particular to the heritage of this future European Network, but also a contribution to increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the European Youth strategy 2019-2027. NAPOR budget is EUR 24.834.

Project "Measuring impact in youth work – mission (im)possible" founded by Tempus Foundation Serbia through the ERASMUS+ with EUR 116.877 started on the 1st of March 2022. It gathers National associations of youth workers from four countries (Serbia, Italy, Portugal and North Macedonia) and two research institutions (Institute for social sciences in Belgrade and Sofia University). The overall aim is to develop a mechanism that will prove the importance of youth work in Europe, create a legacy for future advocacy activities in order to ensure recognition and quality of youth work programs. Specific objectives of the project "Measuring impact in youth work- mission (im)possible!" are: 1. to conduct mapping of existing practices, mechanisms tools, instruments at EU, national, local levels related to the impact of Youth work on youth; 2. to develop mechanism and instrument(s) related to the impact of youth work on youth and its usage for advocacy purposes; 3. to develop and test mechanism and instrument for measuring the social impact of youth work (economical aspect incorporated) and its usage for advocacy purposes (with a segment which implies how to translate data for advocating); 4. to foster multi-sectoral cooperation in the field of youth.

Project "A youth work oriented 'Sport Plus' coaching online training course for sport-for-employability organisations working with young NEETs" (acronym COACH+) founded through ERASMUS-SPORT-2021-SCP with EUR 400.000 (NAPOR budget EUR 45.000) has been started on the 1st June 2022. It is running by University of Brussel (VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT BRUSSEL) in cooperation with RHEINFLANKE GMBH (DENMARK), SPORT 4 LIFE UK (UNITED KINGDOM), National association of youth workers - NAPOR (SERBIA), VLAAMS INSTITUUT VOOR SPORTBEHEER EN RECREATIEBELEID (BELGIUM). The objective of the COACH+ project is to increase the competence of sports coaches to deliver youth work based Sport Plus sessions in Sport-for-Employability (SfE) organisations that work with young NEETs. For that purpose, a comprehensive and user-friendly online training course for Sport Plus coaching

methodology (MOOC), drawing on good practice from youth work, will be developed.

Significant support for education of youth leaders and youth workers was received by the German development cooperation project "Perspectives for young people in rural areas in Serbia" implemented by GIZ in partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Youth of the Republic of Serbia, in the total amount of EUR 124.517. In the period 2022/23, capacities of 20 Youth Workers and 34 Youth Leaders from rural areas were built through NAPOR educational curricula, involving directly 590 young people through 49 fully completed small projects in rural areas on various topics and 80 institutions from local and national level.

In light of the shocking events that took place in Serbia in May (2 mass murders in a few days) at the 21st session held on May 17, 2023, the Youth Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia accepted that the Ministry of Tourism and Youth propose long-term measures to deal with the youth mental health and non-violence. The Ministry opened a public call to which several youth unions jointly applied – NAPOR, National Youth Council, National Association of Youth Offices, OPENS and the Association of Scouts of Serbia. The main goal of the proposed program is to improve the mental health protection system to implement prevention programs and provide comprehensive, integrated services intended for young people. During 2024, the program will be piloted in 10 local communities in Serbia. Part of the development of long-term measures is development of a national, standardized youth work program focused on high school youth and centered around youth workers, peer educators and psychologists. For the first phase (creation and preparation for piloting) the Ministry allocated the funds in the amount of RSD 26.600.000 (EUR 227.021).

Some of the organizations which are dealing with youth work also use the funds of the European Youth Foundation.

5. Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision

5.1. State structures/public authorities deciding on or providing youth work

On the state level, the Ministry of Tourism and Youth is providing support for youth work through an institutional framework (the Law on Youth, Youth Strategy in the Republic of Serbia for the period from 2023 to 2030,) and through public calls for projects funding through which NAPOR projects and projects of the youth associations that practise youth work are supported.

For more information: <https://mto.gov.rs/>

In accordance with the Law on Youth ,, For the purposes of providing conditions for active involvement of young people in the life and activities of the social community, empowerment of young people, providing support to the organization of various social activities of young people, learning and creative expression of young people's needs, a local self-government unit may, within the scope of its authority, needs and capacity, establish a Youth Office" in Serbia, currently 70% of local governments have established local youth offices. The National Association of Youth Offices (NAYO) is an umbrella alliance of cities and municipalities (currently 115) of the Republic of Serbia that have a Youth Office and are actively involved in the development and implementation of local youth policy. The Ministry supports the professional development of youth office coordinators in the field of youth work in cooperation with NAPOR and NAYO.

When it comes to the Erasmus+ programme promotion and implementation of Erasmus+ in Serbia in the fields of education, training and youth is delegated to the Foundation Tempus-National Agency for Erasmus+ in Serbia. In February 2019, Serbia became fully fledged member of the Erasmus+ programme and can participate in all parts of the programme. The Foundation Tempus has a number of opportunities available for young people and youth workers:

- Participation in seminars, conferences and webinars organized by the Foundation Tempus throughout the year;
- Information about possibilities for participation in the Erasmus+ Programme through the website, email, individual consultation and Information Centre.

5.2.National or local youth councils

In accordance with the law on youth, Youth Council of the Government of the Republic of Serbia coordinated by the minister responsible for youth, was established in 2014, and youth councils can also be established at regional and local levels. It currently exists Provincial Youth Councils in Vojvodina and a third of local self-governments have been established Local Self-Government Youth Councils. These tips are important for supporting youth work. In accordance with the Strategy for Youth, the development of standards for the work of these councils, as well as youth offices and spaces for youth, which will recognize the importance of engaging youth workers in these bodies and spaces in accordance with the standards that exist at the European level, is underway

NAPOR was established in 2009 as a result of the initiative of civil society organizations that were dealing with the youth work. It consists of 47 youth associations which practice youth work across Serbia. Since February 2023 the Statute was revised, defining NAPOR as a Union of associations and youth workers. In accordance with that, a new permanent body of NAPOR, which gathers youth workers, was formed - Professional Association of Youth Workers (SKOR)

NAPOR's vision is that every young person has its own youth worker. This association conducts training for youth workers and awards their certification, adding to the recognition of youth workers as professionals. Guidelines for quality assurance of youth work were adopted at the constitutive assembly of NAPOR. They served as a basis for creation of all other documents, processes and mechanisms that NAPOR has developed so far. Some of the main achievements of NAPOR:

- Developed standards for three occupational levels in youth work (Youth leader, Youth worker; Specialist for youth work and policies);
- Developed quality standards for youth work and a mechanism for their implementation;
- Developed educational programme for youth leaders and youth workers;
- Developed mechanism for validation of previously acquired competences in youth work;
- Prepared Code of Ethics in youth work and Ethics Council established;

Established partnership with the Ministry of Tourism and Youth, the National Youth Council of Serbia, the National Association of Youth Offices and numerous other organizations and institutions in the country and abroad.

For more information: <http://www.napor.net/>

5.3. Youth and youth work NGOs

Currently, NAPOR gathers 47 members organizations delivering youth work in Serbia. Topics they are covering are various and the connection lies in continuous work with young people. The majority of youth work programmes are supported by project-based funds, which greatly influence the sustainability of the work.

Centre for Youth Work (CZOR) is a member organization of NAPOR. It started its work in Serbia in 2001. As an organization operates at the local, provincial, national, regional and European level. CZOR is the first ones in Serbia to implement formal education for youth workers, through implementation of the university course cooperation with Jonkoping University in Sweden since 2001. Almost 400 youth workers have been trained so far. They were the first ones in Serbia who defined the difference between the terms of youth work and working with young people. It has established important strategic partnerships with relevant national institutions, organizations, associations and the academic community in Serbia, as well as in the region and at the European level.

For more information: www.czor.org/en/

5.4. Other relevant actors

From the very beginning of its work the Ministry of Youth and Sports initiated establishment of youth offices at local level, within municipalities, as a service which deals with local youth policy. At the beginning, competences of youth workers were one part of the profile recommended for the coordinators of youth offices. This practice lasted until 2015 when at the national level it was agreed that coordinators should not deliver direct youth work, but also that they should have key knowledge in youth work.

The Ministry of Tourism and Youth initiated creation of youth clubs and youth centres (as a part of local municipality, coordinated by youth office coordinators). Currently, only few deliver direct youth work. With the development of standards for youth spaces, which is in progress, it is expected that youth workers will be more engaged in these spaces.

6. Forms and examples of youth work in your country

There are various forms of youth work that are practiced among youth associations. Usually they cover the topics such as: active citizenship and political awareness; healthy lifestyles and well-being; prevention of social exclusion; life skills education; intercultural and international awareness; environmental protection; youth counselling and informing. Apart from traditional, there are different forms of youth work that are practised among associations. NAPOR included online youth work, detached and outreach youth work as forms for which organizations receive education, based on good practice from the national and European levels. In the Curricula for education of youth leaders and youth workers, each module of multi-modular education begins with online learning. In order to equip trainers for delivering modules, NAPOR organised training for the use of online methods in the education of youth workers. Since then, several associations have started practising online learning through youth work. At the beginning of 2018, NAPOR conducted a campaign Youth Work-One Story, with 40 titles on the importance of youth work with the aim of recognizing youth work as a factor in the development of social changes. The campaign was implemented at the national level and included 40 interviews with the beneficiaries of the youth work programmes and youth workers telling stories about the impact of youth work in their lives. "Strong efforts towards recognizing youth work" was a project implemented by NAPOR in 2018, financially supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Within the project, 14 participants were included in training which lasted 69 days online and 9 days of direct work in the process of acquiring competencies. Additionally, 28 organizations evaluated the level of achievement of the quality standards of their programmes and created plans for improvement. Recognition of youth work has been significantly promoted through a campaign of 28 organizations from 16 municipalities, reaching 218 representatives of local institutions, while 112 youth workers and youth reflected on ethics in working directly with youth. An online learning manual was created, as well as the document "The Impact of Social Innovation on Overcoming Marginalization and Youth Unemployment". During 2020 seven thematic digital youth clubs were opened within the project "First Decade of Youth Work Recognition", which was implemented by NAPOR with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The clubs are intended for young people aged 15 to 30 and are opened seven days a week, six weeks in a row. Representatives of NAPOR were lecturers at the training on youth policy and youth programs organized by the National Academy of Public Administration for newly elected mayors in the Serbia on December 17 and 18, 2020. They introduced mayors to the concepts of youth work and non-formal education, as defined by the Law on Youth, presented the most common practices and methodological approaches in youth work, 8 standards of quality of youth work and ways NAPOR plans to support local governments and the process of reaching these standards. In 2021 NAPOR has started with a national campaign „Join us. It's important!". The campaign was aimed primarily at parents with the idea of being informed about whether their children can become someone who makes decisions on important life issues in their community and how youth work can help them in that? How can parents themselves get involved in creating policies that affect their children's lives and support them in relation to their needs? And finally, why is it so important.

Examples of Youth Work Practice:

1) Centre for Youth Work (CZOR)

– "Mladi i solidarni" – online advocacy campaign workshops: from the second half of January until April 2020, the participants of these workshops have met with future youth workers every week in order to research and map social problems in the city of Novi Sad that they would like to address as a group. Upon that, they had interviewed the community using mobile journalism techniques. They learned about online tools which should help them to run social networks, to raise awareness and

mobilize community. Eventually, they developed a problem-solving strategy by creating an action plan and running online advocacy campaign presenting the results at the final public event in the form of a group profile instagram presentation or public debate depending on the group's interest. This programme is designed by two youth work students as a part of internship within the university course "Leadership and Youth Work Development in Community" conducted by CZOR and Jonkoping University, financially supported by OPENS19, Ministry of Youth and Sports and IOGT-NTO movement from Sweden.

– The Mobile Youth Club is a program of relocated youth work of the Centre for Youth Work, funded by Swedish donors and the Radiohalpen Foundation, which has been implemented since 2016 in partnership with Youth Jazas Novi Sad. From the very beginning, the program has focused on empowering and involving young people with disabilities. Using a branded van equipped with material for conducting youth work (games, educational material, props for various activities, etc.), volunteers and youth workers go to the place where they are young, and conduct field youth work there. During the first two years, the Mobile Youth Club conducted activities with young people accommodated in reception and transit centres for migrants in Šid, Subotica and Kikinda. In the period 2018 - 2020, the activities of the Mobile Youth Club were also supported by the OPENS 2019 program - Youth Capital of Europe Novi Sad and are aimed at social inclusion and empowerment of children and youth from Roma and non-Roma communities in the suburbs of Novi Sad, Klisa and Adice. Youth workers together with volunteers conduct a set of different activities aimed at quality leisure time, as well as activities aimed at improving social inclusion, strengthening and protecting the human rights of children and youth in these communities (music, sports and creative workshops, environmental workshops, programming workshops, etc.). From 2020, the activities of the Mobile Youth Club are implemented as part of the project of NAPOR and the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights "Our Community is Our Future - Greater Cooperation and Youth Employment".

From 2022, Centre for Youth Work is a partner in a new project supported through the Erasmus+ program, which deals with the topic of mental health of young people.

2) Centre for Culture and Education of Sonta

– Where is rural youth work in Serbia?: was a pilot project for youth workers, leaders and young people from four districts in Serbia, to explore with the project team rural youth work. Through the project participants tried to figure out extend to which rural youth work is carried out in Serbia by different mapping and animation of young people in different rural parts of Serbia. The project was implemented in 2019 with the financial support of the Council of Europe Youth Foundation.

– During 2021, the Centre implemented the project "Reason to stay - piloting youth clubs in rural areas of Serbia ". Through this project Centre wanted to share knowledge and experience, as well as examples of good practice with young people and empower young people and young leaders in various activities in villages and small towns in Serbia to establish new local youth clubs or youth organizations that will be independent, with quality and sustainable youth programs. The pilot project was implemented with the financial support of the European Youth Foundation of the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Family Care and Demography.

3) Association AzBuki – "Violent extremism against intercultural dialogue and peace" – This project was held in Durres, Albania in February 2019. The training course included 28 participants. Through interesting, interactive, team-building, workshops, participants talked about violent extremism, terrorism, radicalization, stereotypes, discrimination and how to prevent them. The project "Violent extremism vs intercultural dialogue and peace" aimed to increase the capacity of youth workers, activists and volunteers to build peaceful societies by playing more active role in preventing violent extremism.

4) Belgrade Centre for Human Rights – “Turning on live 3.0: From the standard of inclusion to inclusion as a standard” – This project was implemented in 2019 in cooperation with NAPOR, National Youth Council of Serbia and National Association of Youth Offices within the financial support from the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It represented an effort to continuously improve inclusive youth policy through partnership and synergy guaranteed by the National Youth Strategy and the Action Plan for its implementation. The main tasks of the project is to support building the capacity of youth associations and youth offices, as well as their employees such as youth offices coordinators, youth activists and youth workers, which are necessary for youth work.

7. Quality standards

The national quality assurance framework is developed by NAPOR and consists of:

1. Accreditation of organizations delivering youth work
2. Professionalism of human resources (through multi-modular training and validation);
3. Ethics in youth work;
4. Passport of competences.

1. Accreditation of organizations delivering youth work

In order to define quality in youth work, NAPOR has developed a set of eight standards that each youth work programme should fulfil. According to quality standards in youth work, a mechanism for their implementation has been created. The mechanism is based on the goodwill of member organizations to participate in the accreditation process during which the fulfilment of each standard is checked. It includes self-assessment and assessment of accreditors-persons with experience in youth work and advanced supervision skills. Accreditation implemented by NAPOR has a solely developmental function as it helps organizations to assess their practice in youth work and continuously work on its improvement. Therefore, the organizations that go through the process receive the certificate of accredited organization for implementation and promotion of quality standards in youth work, by which NAPOR guarantees their openness and readiness to constantly work on promotion of their youth work programmes. Accreditation is valid for three years and is followed by a reaccreditation process. Since 2015, the General Assembly of NAPOR decided that accreditation is one of the mandatory conditions for full membership of NAPOR. NAPOR accreditation is recognised by member organizations, as well as by the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

2. Professionalism of human resources

In order to have quality youth work programmes, competent youth workers should implement it. Therefore, NAPOR created a curriculum for the education of youth workers, which contains a training programme for two vocational levels (youth leader and youth worker) and a mechanism for validation on previously attained competences in youth work. The validation process is intended for persons who implement youth work in practice and continuously work on self-employment, but have no comprehensive formal or non-formal education in youth work. For those practitioners, it is possible to prove the competences that they gained through experience and different training courses in front of a board of experts, in order to receive a certificate of one of the two vocational levels. For those who don't have enough experience for validation, a training programme is created. It consists of several thematic modules and practice in youth work. Thematic modules with different learning outputs, cover competences defined in the Vocational Standard and contain a theoretical basis of youth work that is acquired through online learning, as well as practical skills, attitudes and values which are developed and practised through direct work of trainers with a group of participants. Practice in youth work as a part of training, is a continuous programme of youth work with a group of young people that every participant implements in its local community and its organization. Implementation of the curriculum can be coordinated by NAPOR or any of the member organizations. In both cases NAPOR issues certificates for all participants who fulfil a set of competences needed for the vocational level they are trained for. NAPOR certificate is recognised by member organizations and the Ministry of Tourism and Youth.

Since 2015, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Development has adopted by-laws regulating non-formal adult education and the participation of institutions and other organizations in realization of adult education activities prescribed by the Act on Adult Education. The rulebooks define

conditions (in terms of programmes, staff, premises, equipment and teaching) under which institutions and organizations may acquire status of publicly recognized organizer of adult education activities, as well as public document which will be issued. In 2018 Serbia has established the Agency for Qualifications, which took over those activities. Representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and NAPOR are members of Sector Councils that participate in defining the standards of qualifications and currently work on the development of occupational standards in Serbia. In respect to that, occupational standards for youth worker will be determined.

3. Ethics in youth work

In order to ensure that youth work practice is ethical, NAPOR has developed a Code of Ethics in Youth Work and has formed Council for Ethical Issues. The Code of Ethics is a document which defines ethical and professional principles of work and each organization and youth worker are bound to respect them.

The Council for Ethical Issues is an independent body in NAPOR which takes care that Code of Ethics is respected and promoted. It has a mandate to react in cases of violation of the Code of Ethics, through recommendations to member organizations, or opinions that they send to organizations which are members of NAPOR. The Council for Ethical Issues continuously works on promotion of ethics in youth work, among youth workers, young people and their parents, in order to ensure ethical practice in youth work in Serbia.

4. Passport of competences

Following the research from 2013 which shown that young people gain within youth work transferable competences valued by employers, NAPOR decided to open a process of creating tool which would facilitate recognition of these competences. Creation of Tool for recognition of competences of young people gained under youth work programmes/Passport of Competences was implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and those actors from the public, private and civil sector that contributed to development of the Passport and mechanism for improvement of youth employability within inter-sectoral consortium. The main purposes of the Passport are: recognition of transferable skills (competences) that young people gain under youth work programmes by employers in order to foster youth employability; more efficient planning of professional and personal improvement of young people; recognition of the impact of youth work on the development of young people. The Passport of Competences enables self-assessment of competences through an online platform, as well as assessment by youth workers. A programme of training of youth workers who would offer mentorship and supervision to young people and assess their competences was developed. During 2015/16 pilot testing of the passport was implemented by 200 young people who went through the process of assessment of gained competences via online tool and then used these results on experimental interviews with employers.

Centre for Youth Work has been cooperating with Jonkoping University of Swedish and provides training for youth workers. A course in leadership and development of youth work is being attended by a generation in Novi Sad. After completing the course, students gain 30 ECTS and it is equivalent to one semester at Jonkoping University. They also have a 6 months internship under which youth workers in couple, guide one group of young people through the whole development process – from getting to know each other to creating its own content. In order to enrol in this educational programme, young people should be 18 years old and have completed secondary school.

8. Knowledge and data on youth work

There is no research system in Serbia that follows development of youth work coming from the state level. Since it was established, NAPOR has conducted several areas of research which are listed above. However, there is a lack of continuous and systematic approach regarding evidence-based youth work research.

Studies and researches by NAPOR and partners:

- [Cross-section of the situation of youth work in Serbia](#) (2010) – The aim of the research was to gain an insight into the general state of youth work in Serbia, in relation to the adequacy of human resources, the structure of users and sources of funding for youth work programmes.
- [Presentation of practical policies: Services for young people at the local level in Serbia](#) (2012) – The quality assurance of services for young people at the local level is one of the key issues on the way to the quality implementation of the National Youth Strategy and the Law on Youth at the local level. The subject of this analysis is to present existing services for young people offered at the local level and to look at examples of good practice, based on which proposals for the development of a unified youth services system have been developed. The problem that was examined within this document is the fact that the work of the providers is not co-ordinated, nor are the activities of some of them (Youth Offices, CSOs) integrated into a wider system of service provision in local communities.
- [Impact of non-formal education in youth work on competence acquisition for better employability of young people](#) (2014) – This survey conducted from November 2013 to February 2014 within the project "With the Good Tool Skills are Crafts" should help in the creation of a future mechanism that will recognise the competences acquired through participation in non-formal education programmes of youth work, which affect the employability of young people. The research was carried out by the NAPOR with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the USAID Sustainable Local Development Project and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team of the Government of Serbia.
- [Mapping Study on EU practices in recognition of competences gained through non-formal learning in youth work for the employability of young people](#) (2014) – The study is based on recommendations, studies, research and documentation related to non-formal education in youth work, its recognition and impact on youth employability, as well as analysis of existing mechanisms at EU and individual level. The study should contribute to gaining greater legitimacy of this topic when advocating among relevant actors at the national level, a better overview of existing mechanisms and policies at the EU level and ensuring harmonisation of processes that will later contribute greater mobility of young people and recognition of competences for their employability.
- [National Report, Serbia: "Needs for new services that stimulate the employability and role of youth work"](#) (2015) – Through intensive dialogue with stakeholders at the national and regional level, qualitative and desk research was conducted on the attitudes of relevant stakeholders on the employability of marginalised young people.

- [Researching educational needs of practitioners of youth work](#) (2017) – With this exploratory research, NAPOR tried to answer several questions concerning the need to improve the specific competences of practitioners of youth work from the member organisations, as well as suitable ways to acquire these competences. As a basis for the creation of a research and measurement instrument, the standard of occupation for the first two levels in youth work was taken – a youth leader and a youth worker.

- [Youth Work – Uprising beyond the borders: Serbian and Estonian learning from \(and with\) each other](#) (2019) – This document is one of the main outcomes of the international project "Youth work uprising beyond the borders", implemented by NAPOR and Estonia Youth Work Centre – Eesti Noorsootöökeskus. Main focus of the publication is to demonstrate the context of youth work, cooperation with youth field institutions and showcase examples of youth work practiced among the countries. The process aims to introduce potential for improvement in youth work practices in both Serbia and Estonia by exchanging good practices, analysis know-how and creating recommendations on national level.

- [„Under the Loupe: Young People in Villages“](#) (2020)- The research concerns rural youth work in Serbia and aims to create a national strategy for rural youth work. To this end, the availability of resources, the structure of youth needs, the potential for creating new resources, the ways in which young people and institutions can benefit were examined among young people in rural areas ([brief in English](#)). The research was created under the project "Under the Loupe: Rural Youth Work!" implemented by NAPOR in a partnership with Society for Youth Development Idrija 2020, Institute of social sciences in Belgrade, Institute of social sciences „Ivo Pilar“ and Association for promoting of human potential and creative development - Prism. It's funded by the Tempus Foundation through the ERASMUS + program.

[Research on parents' attitudes towards youth work](#) (2021)

The aim of the research was to find ways to motivate and involve parents in the creation of public policies for young people, as well as how parents can be adequately and timely informed about youth work programs. The research was conducted within the project "It is important! - system solutions for young people" implemented by NAPOR in partnership with 3 members organizations - JAZAS Youth from Novi Sad, JAZAS Youth Kragujevac and the Urban Stream association from Požarevac.

- Research paper "[The art of ethics in youth work](#)" lays the foundation for an in-depth exploration of the ethical dimensions, gives valuable insight of different modalities of ethical codes of conduct in youth work and explores how ethics influence the recognition of youth work. The research is conducted in 2021, by Slađana Petković, senior researcher and PEYR member within [the Art of Ethics](#) project funded by EU.

- Research paper - "[A strong statement on what a youth worker should or should not do](#)" is exploring the practice and how youth workers perceive ethics in youth work. It was conducted in 2022 by Tomi Kiilakoski, leading senior researcher (within [the Art of Ethics](#) project funded by EU) and based on youth workers' contributions from Serbia, Australia, Croatia, Finland, and Bulgaria.

- [Youth in Serbia - participation: opportunities and obstacles](#) (2022)

To what extent are youth and youth organizations participatory? Can young people participate in governance processes? What are the obstacles for youth participation (to a greater extent)? To what extent do young people feel competent and confident to get involved? Some of the key issues

addressed are the research on youth participation conducted by the Institute for Sociological Research of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, as an integral part of the "Having a voice, having a choice" project, which is carried out in cooperation with NAPOR and UNICEF.

Relevant publications on youth work by NAPOR and partners:

- [Glossary of Youth Policy](#) (2015) – The dictionary was created in 2014 and 2015 by a working group that, in addition to the representatives of NAPOR, consisted of representatives of the Serbian National Youth Council, the National Association of Youth Offices and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The dictionary contains definitions of close to 150 concepts as well as actors in the field of youth politics, their roles and positions. The dictionary contributes in particular to arranging relations between civil sector actors and the line ministry in the area of youth work and youth policy.
- [“Ethics – from poster to practice”](#), Handbook for Understanding and Implementation of the Code of Ethics in the Practice of Youth Work (2017) – The handbook should raise the awareness of youthworkers about the importance of establishing a professional relationship with young people. Analysing previous processes it became clear that there is no common understanding of certain aspects of the Code of Ethics. What is lacking is a clear operationalisation of the code that will lead to equalisation of practice and creating a safe environment for the growth and development of young people.
- [Youth Work Pathways – Pateki vo mladinskata rabota](#) (2017) – The brochure was created as part of the Youth Workers United project, which was implemented by the Youth Cultural Centre Bitola, where NAPOR was a partner in charge of supporting the capacity building of practitioners of youth work and creating a document that is basis for professionalism of youth work in North Macedonia (vocational standards and curriculum for training). The publication provides a brief overview of the state of youthwork in the surrounding countries, as well as at the European level, and the second part presents the practice of youth work in North Macedonia.
- [Youth Work – One story with 40 titles](#) (2018) – At the beginning of 2018, NAPOR conducted a campaign on the importance of youth work with the aim of recognising youth work as a factor in the development of social changes. The campaign was implemented at the national level and included 40 interviews with the beneficiaries of the youth work programme and youth workers.
- [A Practical Guide to Outreach and Detached Youth Work](#) (2021) For a long time, the youth sector in Serbia has been wondering what are the ways to reach new generations of young people. It is obvious that classic methods are not always efficient enough, that is, they fail to reach and include a large number of young people, especially those who are at risk of social exclusion. This publication should serve as an inspiration to youth workers. The guide was created as part of the project "OUR COMMUNITY, OUR FUTURE - greater cooperation and youth employment", which was implemented with the financial assistance of the European Union.
- Development of [Formal education curricula](#) for Ethics in Youth Work was led by Ivan Cerovac from the University of Rijeka. The curricula feature course description, learning aims and outcomes, content, teaching methods, student performance evaluation criteria and literature. The curricula were tested in the course ‘Odgoj i obrazovanje za civilno društvo’ (Education and Training for Civil Society) with pedagogy students. Testing included 16 hours of theoretical inputs, guest lectures, workshops, debates and practical examples, followed with [the evaluation of the course](#) (2022).

- [Non formal educational program for ethics in youth work](#) gives different modalities for education of youth workers and people working with youth in the field of ethics in youth work. The authors of the document are Valentina Gambiroža Staković, Darija Jeger and Branimira Penić (2022).

- [Educational youth work programs in cultural institutions](#) (2022) - 6 educational youth work programs developed in the field of culture. Three were tested by pairs of youth and cultural workers in Serbia, Croatia and North Macedonia, involving 60 youth from different groups, over a period of 4 months. Each of the tested programs was evaluated and all lessons learned were integrated into a detailed explanation of the program that can be applied in different cultural institutions.

- [Guidelines for creating cross-sectoral youth services](#) (2022)

The guidelines aim to facilitate the establishment of cross-sectoral services that contribute to a better position of young people and the recognition of youth work locally, as well as strengthening the capacity of the network through the development of NAPOR's network advocacy approach and the expansion of support groups. The guidelines were created within the framework of the project "It is important - systemic solutions for young people" which is implemented by NAPOR with partners Youth JAZAS Novi Sad, Youth JAZAS Kragujevac and Urban Stream from Pozarevac.

- [Guidelines for Parent Mobilization](#) (2022)

The project "It is important - systemic solutions for young people" aimed to improve youth work services through cooperation and mobilization of parents to address issues of importance for young people at the local and national level. The guidelines should facilitate future mobilization of parents and the creation of the programs intended for their inclusion. The guidelines were created by NAPOR in partnership with its member organisations: "JAZAS Youth Kragujevac", "JAZAS Youth Novi Sad" and "Urban Stream" from Pozarevac.

- [Handbook for Ethics in Online Youth Work](#) (2022)

During the pandemic, many activities of young people were moved to the digital sphere. All members of the youth policy adapted and faced various challenges. This handbook was born out of the need to approach online youth work ethically and is a starting point for anyone who is starting to research or has been practicing online youth work for some time. It was developed within the project "Youth work in focus from local to national level" implemented by the NAPOR and financed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia.

- [Guidelines for youth workers: Voluntary and active participation of young people](#) (2023)

These guidelines offer a reminder: why and how to participate and be socially engaged during the period of growing up and youth in Serbia. They remind of responsible ways of involving young people, responsibilities and rights, but also things that we must not forget and/or ignore in the processes of involving young people and putting them in front of the act of making responsible decisions for themselves, others and/or the community. The guidelines were created as part of the "Having a voice, having a choice" project, which NAPOR implements in cooperation with UNICEF.

9. European and international dimension of youth work in the country

The Ministry of Tourism and Youth and NAPOR closely follows developments at the European level regarding youth work, starting from recommendations at the Symposium "Recognition of NFE in the youth field" which was held in Strasbourg in 2011. In South-East Europe as a direct follow up of the "Strasbourg process", a similar symposium was organized in Tirana in October 2012. At the symposium NAPOR participated as the best practice case of quality assurance mechanism for NFE for youth.

Since 2014 Serbia has been invited to take part in the European conferences relating to structure dialogue. Representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the National Youth Council of Serbia and NAPOR took an active role in identifying recommendations for youth work and introducing it at the national level. Moreover, by taking part in relevant conferences and conventions on youth work, there is a continuous attempt to be in line with relevant documents from the European level and on the other side creating the environment for its implementation at the national level. Serbia has submitted in 2017 a comprehensive national report for the EU Youth Report 2018, summarising the results in the youth field, especially relating to youth work.

In respect to the cooperation with the Council of Europe, the representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports actively participates in the annual meetings of the CDEJ and CMJ. Serbia has supported in 2017 the adoption of the Recommendation to the Council of Europe member states on youth work adopted by the Committee of Ministers and remains dedicated to its implementation. Serbia is also aware of the content of the new Council of Europe Youth Strategy 2030 and the place and role of youth work.

NAPOR participated at the conference "Advancing youth participation in local and regional life" which was organized in Tbilisi in November 2019 by Georgian Youth Agency. The conference aimed to learn from innovative approaches and good practices in European countries on the matters of youth engagement, youth participation in local life and the development of inclusive and participatory youth policy work at local and national levels.

During 2018 and 2019, in partnership with Estonian Youth Work Centre, NAPOR implemented the project "Youth work – uprising beyond the borders". The project was funded by the Tempus Foundation Serbia through the Erasmus+ programme EU. Several international activities were implemented such as: study visits for 38 youth workers in Serbia and Estonia; development of analyses document on good practices focused to demonstrate the context of youth work, cooperation with youth field institutions and showcase examples of youth work practiced among involved countries; production of policy brief on the involvement of youth work into local public institutions in Serbia.

The Third European Youth Work Convention took place online from December 7 to 10, 2020. The delegation of Serbia took part at the event. Key outcomes of this event are summarized in the adopted declaration entitled "Roadmaps for the Future". An important conclusion, recognized by

this document, refers to the establishment of the European Network of National Associations of Youth Workers, which will strive to improve the conditions for recognizing and validating youth work as a profession and thus support the professional growth of youth workers through more systematic international cooperation and exchange opportunities. The idea of this network is not only to become an equal partner to decision-makers at the European level, but also to actively participate and promote current thematic strategies of the Council of Europe and the European Union, as well as to support the creation of national associations of youth workers. Based on that, NAPOR has initiated the process of establishing the European Network of National Associations of Youth Workers.

Many organisations delivering youth work from Serbia took part in different international activities, through which quality of practice and competences of youth workers were improved.

10. Current debates and open questions/policies on youth work

The current practice of implementing youth work programs shows that there are no youth work programs that have a longer-term and modular character, with enough practice. This reduces their efficiency and makes them insufficiently functional. Most are organized and implemented through semi-annual and annual projects, which does not ensure wider availability, systemic implementation and sustainability, as well as further development of competencies. Partnership with local actors should ensure the promotion of youth work and lead to more diverse and high-quality programs, aimed at young people of different ages, interests and needs.

The occupation of youth worker, as relatively new, requires further promotion among young people, but also other stakeholders at all levels. NAPOR is continuously working on the promotion of youth work through social networks, but it is important to increase the number and diversity of media, including the involvement of youth and youth associations, which send a message about the importance of this profession for young people, faster employment, personal development and at the same time improving the quality of life of communities, from local to national level.

Serbia is planning to establish a network of researchers in the field of youth policy, young professionals of various profiles and/or relevant associations. The mission of the network will be to continuously examine the position and needs of young people in various fields, the impact of youth work on young people and to get a picture of current aspects of life and work of young people. Networking will bring joint development of ideas, methodologies, instruments, respect for different regional needs, mutual capacity building through horizontal learning, more efficient data collection and field research, raising public awareness of opportunities, competencies, achievements, but also the needs of young people and the importance of youth work.

Through project "European youth workers unite to empower youth and youth field – Youth worker is a lifestyle" the establishing of official European Network of National Youth Work Associations has been planned. There is a need to strengthen youth work and youth workers associations to have a strong voice of youth workers on all levels of governance. As well as the need to have space for peer-learning and discussion to speed up digital transformation in the youth field, ensure that environmental topics are addressed, quality of youth work developed. It is crucial for youth work and youth work policy development to have a strong social partner as a European Network of youth workers. Thanks to the project and its results it will be able to encourage better recognition of the youth sector, set up a clearer political commitment, and stronger links with stakeholders and researchers which are essential for the existence of the youth work. During the third European Youth Work Convention, the participating youth workers from the EU and CoE member states and other stakeholders strongly recognized the need for an international network of youth workers, to give youth workers a voice and support peer learning, quality developments in the youth sector across Europe. Final declaration of the convention call to an action – create a European Network of Youth Workers Associations. To support the achievement of this goal, 12 organizations agreed on a memorandum to move towards the European Youth Workers Association. Most of them according to agreement joined forces to speed up the process in the frame of this project.