

## Youth Partnership

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



# COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH WORK in MONTENEGRO



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# 1. Context of youth work

In July 2016 the Parliament of Montenegro adopted the Law on Youth, therefore Montenegro, for the first time, has a law that ensures the implementation of joint policy in this area, the improvement of the social position of youth in all areas, provides conditions for supporting youth in organising themselves and in their social activities, as well as their participation in decision making, development and fulfilment of personal and social potential.

In line with the law, the Government of Montenegro adopted the National Youth Strategy 2017-2021 in September 2016, which clearly positions youth as a matter of interest to Montenegro and through a holistic approach envisages intersectoral and interdepartmental co-operation of youth policy actors. Youth Strategy 2017-2021 is a document that positions young people not only as subjects of youth policy, but also as actors responsible for its planning, realisation, monitoring and evaluation.

For the first time in Montenegro, both the Law on Youth and the Youth Strategy define youth work. Namely, "Youth work represents the activities that are organized with youth and for youth, and are based on non-formal education, in accordance with their needs and possibilities." Even though the definition of youth worker is not given in the law, its explanation is covered by the National Youth Strategy ([www.strategijazamlade.me](http://www.strategijazamlade.me)). However, youth work is not a recognised profession in Montenegro, that is, there is no occupational standard.

On the bright side, Forum MNE in co-operation with the Centre for Vocational Education (Ministry of Education) has completed the process of recognition of the vocation of Youth Activist (on a European level equal to Youth Leader) which will significantly contribute to the professionalisation of youth work and enhance youth services at both national and local level. Additionally, it will provide an opportunity for young people who have no university education to be engaged in youth work in a responsible and professional manner. The vocation of Youth Activist was accredited by the Ministry of Education in March 2017, while a programme for the first generation of Youth Activists (15 participants) started in September 2017 and is financed by the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth. The programme consists of three trainings and three months of practice together with three exams, after which all the participants shall gain the Youth Activist occupation certificate. More information is available upon request at: [montenegro@forum-mne.com](mailto:montenegro@forum-mne.com).

Standards of the youth activist occupation have also been adopted, and some of them are:

- ensure quality in accordance with the standards in youth work;
- organise youth exchanges, festivals, events, campaigns, youth education camps, educational and entertainment programmes and leading info centres;

- devise and create project proposals in line with international recommendations and charters on the participation of young people in accordance with the needs of the communities in which they work;
- provide support initiatives for young people and children;
- detect, direct and use leadership potential in themselves and other young people and support participation in their communities.

In addition to this, the Faculty of Philosophy (University of Montenegro) and NGO Forum MNE were working on establishing Master Studies in Community Youth Work, within the framework of the TEMPUS IV project, Introduction and Implementation of Academic Programme in Community Youth Work (CYW) through Enhancing Inter-regional Cooperation in the Countries of Western Balkans. The memorandum of understanding on the TEMPUS IV project was signed by the former Directorate for Youth and Sports (now Ministry of Sports) and the project was implemented by Forum MNE as well as the Faculty of Philosophy. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the whole documentation for MA studies was developed and sent to the university, the programme was not accredited and due to lack of interest from the university the project was finalised without the result.

## 2. Strategic and legislative framework of youth work

As mentioned in section 1. Context of youth work, both the Law on Youth and the Youth Strategy define youth work as “activities that are organized with youth and for youth, and are based on non-formal education, in accordance with their needs and possibilities”. Even though the definition of youth worker is not given in the law, its explanation is covered by the National Youth Strategy :“Youth work is being implemented within extra-curricular activities, within youth clubs, centres, institutions, schools, etc., and contributes to the development of young people into aware, responsible and active members of society, who contribute to the development of the community, show initiative and respect diversity. In close collaboration with the families and other professionals, youth work assists in efforts invested in decreasing youth unemployment, dropping out of school, social exclusion and structured leisure time. In order to fill the gap in the system of support to the development of young people and their transition to adulthood, it is highly important to recognize and professionalize youth work itself” ([www.strategijazamlade.me](http://www.strategijazamlade.me)).

“The role of youth work is to provide support to young people during a specific development period of becoming autonomous and their transition to adulthood, as well as to assist their personal and social development, contribute to fulfilment of their potentials, so that young people’s voice could be heard, that they can make an influence and have their place within communities/society. Starting to live on their own has become extremely difficult for young people and they are quite often forced to start their families in multigenerational and quite frequently inadequate residential communities. Young people should be provided with direct support from institutions of the system through concrete and evenly available measures and incentives, which would enable them to start living independently and autonomously” ([www.strategijazamlade.me](http://www.strategijazamlade.me)).

Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, youth work is not a recognised profession in Montenegro, that is, there is no occupational standard. By recognising youth work as a professional occupation and by organising standardised and accredited training programmes for youth workers and youth activists it would enable professional staff to work in youth clubs, youth centres, schools, civil society organisations, local youth offices, etc.

### **3. Recognition**

See sections 1. and 2.

## 4. Funding youth work

From 2012 until 2017 youth work projects were only funded through the annual National Lottery Fund (centralised model of financing). However, by adopting the Law on Youth in July 2016, and a by-law “Rule book on the manner, procedure and criteria for the allocation of funds to youth organisations and control over the implementation of programs and projects” (adopted in April 2017), the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth was finally enabled to financially support the activities for youth which are being implemented by the NGOs in Montenegro. Within the Open Call in 2017, the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth financed 36 youth projects to the total amount of €170 000 for the implementation of the Youth Strategy (Action Plan 2017). A great number of projects were linked to youth work activities. This was great progress in financing youth work itself, comparing to previous years. On the bright side, the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth has managed to procure approximately €500 000 for youth projects in 2018, which will be the largest amount allocated specifically for youth activities.

Also, since 2014 the Directorate for Youth and Sports (now Ministry of Sports) has started opening youth clubs/centres. A youth club/centre is a place where NGOs practise youth work-related activities and the place where young people can improve their social skills, non-formal education, leisure time, culture and get information about various topics. The Directorate in partnership with the Foundation for Active Citizenship opened two youth clubs in Tivat and Pljevlja. Through youth initiatives in co-operation with the business sector and municipalities, youth clubs have opened in Herceg Novi, Rozaje, Niksic, Cetinje and Ulcinj. In 2017, the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth opened youth clubs in Berane, Budva and Mojkovac. In February 2017, the Ministry of Sports and the capital city, Podgorica, in co-operation with the UN system in Montenegro, opened the youth centre in Podgorica.

Furthermore, international sources for youth work activities are very important. During the past years the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth has implemented some joint projects with international partners:

In order to improve the position of young people, the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth in partnership with the United Nations System in Montenegro, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, as well as many other institutions, organisations and youth is implementing a joint UN programme for youth empowerment called “Kreativacija” (Creativation), and within the framework of this programme, the Youth Innovation Laboratory “Kreativator” was established. The laboratory offers programmes through which young people are supported to create and implement solutions to the problems they face in everyday life. In this way, young people develop their skills in communication, leadership, team work, financial literacy, and through their experience of contributing to their communities, they have the opportunity to look at their potential and develop self-confidence and responsibility, which are certainly the skills they will use in seeking employment, but also in work itself. Laboratory programmes are based

on modern work methods such as human centred design/design thinking. More information at: [www.kreaktivator.me](http://www.kreaktivator.me).

The initiative “Sebi želim” (I wish for myself), was another joint project launched for the first time in 2014 in partnership with the Directorate for Youth and Sports (now Ministry of Sports), the Ministry of Education and the United Nations System in Montenegro. Throughout this initiative, young people had the opportunity to define their aspirations. Activities such as motivational events, educational camps for young people, workshops for acquiring social-emotional skills, etc. were organised within it.

Also, very important international funding sources for youth work are Erasmus+ and the European Youth Foundation, thus numerous NGOs in Montenegro use those sources to apply for the funds.

## 5. Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision

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

Which government levels are involved in planning, supporting and delivering youth work? If there are separate agencies, please mention them here. Please include numbers of people or entities where data is available.

The Law on Youth states that youth policy is implemented by:

- the Government of Montenegro;
- state administration bodies and other administrative bodies competent for areas of relevance to young people;
- municipalities, the capital and the Old Royal Capital;
- non-governmental organisations, and other players participating in planning, implementation and enhancement of youth policy.

At national level, the most important institution in the domain of youth policy is the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth. It performs the tasks related to:

- improvement and implementation of the national policy, strategy and action plans and programmes for youth;
- co-operation with youth organisations and associations regarding organisation of international youth manifestations and events in Montenegro;
- assistance and co-operation with youth organisations and associations and their promotion;
- enabling youth organisations and associations from Montenegro to participate at international youth manifestations;
- stimulation and achievement of international co-operation regarding youth;
- stimulation of development of youth policy and work.

Other state bodies that participate in the creation and implementation of youth policy at national level are the ministries, directorates, agencies and other institutions. Bodies competent for specific areas of youth policy are obliged to co-operate in the implementation of youth policy and appoint the contact person for youth. The contact person for youth co-ordinates activities related to youth policy and co-operates with the Directorate in planning, implementation and evaluation of the Youth Strategy.

Structures dealing with youth within the local self-governments are secretariats, local youth offices and local councils on youth issues.

## **5.2 National or local youth councils**

Even though the National Youth Council is not yet established in Montenegro, however, local youth councils plan, support and deliver youth work in their local communities through their activities, programmes and projects.

## **5.3 Youth and youth work NGOs**

The civil sector in the area of working with youth is much broader than what can be seen from the official data and reports, therefore it is difficult to give the precise number of youth and youth work NGOs in Montenegro. Still, a great number of the NGOs in general implement youth work activities (some of them are: Forum MNE, PRIMA, ADP ZID, Juventas, Centar za mlade-Proactive, Da zaživi selo, Udruženje mladih sa hendikepom Crne Gore, Aktivna zona, Inicijativa mladih za ljudska prava, Mladiinfo Montenegro, Crnogorski omladinski forum, Građanski kreativni centar, Unija mladih srednjoškolaca, Novi horizont, youth clubs/centres, etc).

## **5.4 Other relevant actors**

International organisations.

## **6. Forms and examples of youth work in your country**

Youth work in Montenegro is youth centre-based, detached or outreach youth work, open youth work, etc. The main providers of youth work in Montenegro are NGOs with financial support from the government and local authorities.

Within the Open Call in 2017, the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth financed 36 youth projects with total amount of €170 000 for the implementation of the Youth Strategy (Action Plan 2017). A great number of projects were linked to youth work activities, and a number of them are targeted specifically at young people with fewer opportunities. And more, in 2018, the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth will finance activities foreseen in the Action Plan 2018, and some of the activities within the mentioned Action Plan are also targeted at young people with fewer opportunities.

## **7. Quality standards**

Having in mind the fact that youth work is not a recognised profession in Montenegro, that is, there is no occupational standard, it is hard to set competence frameworks or quality standards guiding youth workers and youth work activities. As for now, it is up to youth workers themselves to practise youth work professionally and responsibly.

## **8. Knowledge and data on youth work**

Unfortunately, not many studies or research on youth work have been done in Montenegro. In 2007, Forum MNE conducted a study “Omladinski rad u Crnoj Gori” (Youth Work in Montenegro): <http://bit.ly/2pQMq6m>.

Considering the fact that no recent studies have been conducted, there are no data available.

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

As mentioned earlier, youth work is not a recognised profession in Montenegro, that is, there is no occupational standard, thus, there are no formal national recommendations, besides the definition and brief explanation of youth work within the Law on Youth and National Youth Strategy 2017-2021. However, the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work, and relevant EU Council Conclusions are available to NGOs in Montenegro, and those whose scope of work is mainly related to youth work implement them.

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

Youth Strategy 2017-2021 clearly positions youth as a matter of interest to Montenegro and through a holistic approach it envisages, not only intersectoral co-operation (explained in other sections of this document) but also interministerial co-operation of youth policy actors. Therefore, the Ministry of Sports has established an interministerial co-ordinating body for monitoring the Youth Strategy 2017-2021, whose task is to monitor the realisation of key outcomes and the activities of the Strategy, discuss the adoption of action plans, inform them about the realised activities, propose possible intersectoral projects, give opinions and recommendations when drafting strategic documents in the field of youth policy and follow the recommendations of international bodies in this field. This approach enables better implementation of youth policy, better planning of youth activities and, with the joint effort of all relevant stakeholders, it will help in improving the position of young people in Montenegro.