

HISTORY OF YOUTH WORK IN MONTENEGRO

Draft paper

Sladjana PETKOVIC

December, 2014

Acknowledgements: The autor expresses appreciation for the support and assistance to all individuals, institutions, and organizations involved in the process of drafting of this paper, especially to the Directorate of Youth and Sports of Montenegro, and to the NGOs: The Forum MNE (Tamara Cirgic), and The Education and Training Center (Aleksandra Radoman, and Sava Kovacevic).

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	
1.1. Setting the context.....	3
2. THE MODEL OF AN OPEN SOCIETY (1996-2001).....	5
3. THE PRONI MODEL OF SOCIAL EDUCATION (2002-2007).....	6
3.1. Forum MNE (2007- nowadays)	9
4. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS (2010-2012).....	10
5. CONCLUSION.....	14
6. REFERENCE.....	16

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of existing practices, strategies, initiatives and measures supporting development of youth work and non-formal education in Montenegro in the context of transition and social change. The paper is based on both the literature review, and the professional experience of the autor which was gained in this context during the last decade. The paper could be potentially used as starting point in exploration of this topic in the future as well.

1.1. Setting the context

Despite the belief that the concept and practice of **youth work** is new in the Western Balkans, historically, it was already present in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). The origin goes back to the previous system of comprehensive care about yourh based on ideology of socialism. Of course, we're talking about pioneers, Young Communist League of Yugoslavia (Communist Youth), and the Union of Socialist Youth (SSO), as well as of formal youth organizations that were consulted in the decision-making process. Apart from the structures, within the system of care for youth, there were also measures on youth employment, scholarships, housing construction etc. While formal education was responsible for the acquisition of academic knowledge, through participation in these forms of 'youth work', the social values were mainly gained.

With the demolition of socialism in late **1980es** of the last century, this form of 'youth work' disappears. Transitional processes after the conflict in the former Yugoslavia during the **1990es** brought various social and political challenges in the ex YU countries. While young people had an important role in Yugoslavia, the collapse of the communist system and its corresponding youth programs created a **policy vacuum** regarding young people in newly formed states, including Montenegro.

Consequently, young people in the region of Western Balkans became **marginalized** – socially, economically and politically. While facing different challenges, they needed more specific and better organized means of support, since traditional sectoral approaches were not adequate enough to address the multidimensional nature of youth issues.

Although the governments of the countries concerned become aware of the need for concerted efforts in the area of youth, the authorities at both national and local community level often appeared to be at a loss how to deal with youth issues. They had no firm youth policy, they lack relevant information and they had a limited experience of fieldwork at community level. Their previous experience of youth activities stemed mostly from the strongly centralised, authoritarian and politically structured youth

movements during earlier regimes¹. Despite examples of good practice, support and care for the young in the previous period was often **fragmented, insufficiently functional** and primarily **protective**.

In contrast, the recommendations of the EU, in accordance with the signed Stabilisation and Association Agreement (1999)², emphasized the obligation of the state to provide and develop a **structured system** of youth care at the national level. The purpose of these 'integrated' youth policies was to provide **systematic and coherent approach** to the needs of young people, to involve different stakeholders, and provide planned and coordinated measures in order to create conditions and opportunities for youth to develop the knowledge, skills and competences empowering them to become agents of change and social transformation.

While realising that the youth capacities are crucial for building more stable and cohesive societies and while being influenced by different national and international stakeholders, decision makers in the ex YU countries, including Montenegro, re-established youth policy mechanisms by adopting relevant policy documents and establishing bodies responsible for youth related issues.

Development and adoption of the National Youth Action Plan in Montenegro (**NYAP 2006**), as the first of its kind, represented in this regard important step in creating multifunctional and common framework of the existing and new, previously missing, social measures in all areas important for the healthy development of youth.

According to the NYAP, young people between 15 and 29 years of age make up 23, 2% of the citizens of Montenegro, and accordingly they should represent one of the most important segments in creating general social reality. The document stresses that young people should be active and equal participants in all spheres of social life and have equal rights and opportunities to develop their full potentials, implying their active role in political, economic, cultural, educational, sports and recreation, family, religious and other spheres. Within the new strategic framework, **youth work** represented a part of its strategic aims related to the area of youth participation.

Still, the youth policy in Montenegro is estimated to have a re-active and **problem-oriented** approach towards youth perceiving them mostly as a marginalized group (Denstad, 2007). In this context, the government's main responsibility, apart from promoting sports, is to prevent young people from various types of risky behavior (such

¹ Sida SUPPORT TO THE PRONI INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL EDUCATION PROJECTS IN THE BALKANS – EVALUATION (2003).

² In order to create conditions for peace and stability in *South East Europe (SEE)* after the Kosovo conflict, a *Stability Pact* was concluded in June 1999 between a wide range of countries (the EU, G 8 etc.) and international organisations, and countries in the region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia-Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Romania). It has its focus on country-by-country reform and intra-regional integration, and also on integration with European and global structures.

as drug abuse or violence). It was argued that in this way the government shows inability to use and channel one of the greatest potential resources for prosperity and growth. As a result, a large number of young people feels socially excluded, which leads to an increase of passivity and powerlessness, as they can not perceive their role and value in society (Forum MNE 2007).

Various studies, furthermore, show that youth is preserved as submissive, less skilful, less experienced and dependant on adults both economically and socially in Montenegro (IOM 2011 and other), since traditional values are very distinct, patriarchal and authoritarian, and connectivity with a family is strong. All this represents an obstacle for development of **autonomy** and **active citizenship** of young people, reducing their independence and competitiveness, as it was described in the statement (IOM 2011):

'The biggest difference between young people in Montenegro and the youth in the EU is that there (in the EU) young people get prepared for life through various challenges, while here (in Montenegro) it is to be avoided! The young people in Montenegro remain in the illusion of protection in the shelter of families and relationships'.

Reflecting on possible solutions, it is worth emphasizing that, if the basic objective of youth policy is to increase the probability of the successful integration of young people in society, both educational efforts and integrated youth policy measures are needed to enable young people to be active citizens, and to help them to be actors of change in the social, cultural, political and economic fields (Siurala 2006).

The available data, furthermore, show that 46% of young respondents in Montenegro believe in the possibility of improving their situation by making **their own** contribution to the process of social change, although they recognize various challenges as well (IOM 2011):

'Young people are the driving force, mostly activists from NGOs. I think that all the potential young activists are not aware of their role; they should awaken, inform, empower and create conditions that contribute to change. Poverty is also one of the limiting factors, as students are not owners of the funds, nor have financial independence... in addition, there is no freedom of media, and young people have no courage to express and declare themselves publicly'.

On the other hand, majority of the respondents thinks that it is necessary 'to set the rules **from above**' by introducing the Law on youth in order to enforce creation of sustainable structure at the national level, and provide space for development and participation of young people on mandatory basis.

Importantly, and outside the family sphere and the school system, the life of young people in Montenegro become more influenced by the quality and scope of activities offered in their **free time**. Here the importance of **non-formal learning** comes in as the core function of youth organisations, and as an important method of learning about **democracy** and **the civil society**. Bearing in mind that today's society is characterized by rapid and intensive changes, thanks to its flexibility and an ability to quickly respond to the youth needs, non-formal education started to play an important role in this context. As youth work is largely based on non-formal methods of education, this is another reason why the youth work should be considered with more attention in Montenegro.

2. THE MODEL OF AN OPEN SOCIETY (1996-2001)

During the 1990s, the **international community** has increasingly tried to assist in the process of re-establishing services targeting youth drawing on experience from national youth policy reforms and youth work in their own countries. Apart from governmental efforts, the international and local non-governmental organizations carried out many activities and programs with young people aimed at developing the full potential of young people and their active participation in society.

One of the major efforts of this kind in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was the implementation of the '**Project for the children of Yugoslavia**', which lasted five years (1996-2001) and was supported by **The Open Society Fund**, Belgrade with the mission to contribute to the creation of equal opportunities for the development of children and youth, as well as affirmation of democratic values and empowerment of young people for active and responsible participation in the community.

Within this project, in the context of promoting the development of an open society and civil sector development, **13 'Open Clubs'** was established, mostly designed as youth clubs, but with slightly different and wider role. They were, inter alia, representing the associations for the protection and promotion of mental health of children and youth, whose aim was to develop informal forms of education and providing psycho-social support to children and young people, to facilitate their growth in a country with an unfavorable economic and political conditions for the socialization of youth. Following the needs of the community, furthermore, the 'Open clubs' implemented a number of programs aimed at changing public awareness of democratic values and empowering youth to participate in social and political processes. Open clubs were targeting groups of children and young people from 5 to 30 years, as well as older members of youth organizations, educators, teachers, parents and citizens.

Within the project, **two 'Open clubs'** were established in Montenegro, in the less developed northern region, within the refugee centers 'Vrela Ribnicka' and 'Berane'. The programs of these clubs were primarily focused on psychosocial support and reintegration of refugees, especially young people in Montenegro. Unfortunately, after

the withdrawal of donor (Open Society Fund), the viability of many 'open clubs', including those in Montenegro, has been put into question. Today, there is a very little written sources and information about their work, while only a few associations of citizens, primarily in Serbia, remained active being recognized by their programs for youth empowerment and development of civil society values.

3. THE PRONI MODEL OF SOCIAL EDUCATION (2002-2007)

Apart from other international organizations actively supporting youth work in South East Europe (SEE), The PRONI Institute for Social Education played an important role. The **PRONI model of social education** comprises practical youth work, community development and reconciliation in conflict areas in the Balkans, including Montenegro. The model consists of four components which were interrelated and were applied simultaneously:

- Preparation through seminars aiming at introducing ideas of youth work and motivating for education of youth workers,
- Education of youth workers,
- Start of youth activities and development of the organisation for youth work (as a basic element of the education, students organise activities for young people),
- Legitimation of youth service in the society on the municipal, regional and national levels (the aim is that the society should assume the overall responsibility for the youth service), (Sida 2003).

The PRONI Institute was represented on a *Task Force on Education and Youth* within the framework of the Stability Pact and the Council of Europe, which works on the national governmental level. This task force was, among other, supporting the formulation of National Youth Policies and National Youth Action Plans in the countries of SEE. To back up this work PRONI Institute received Sida-funding to organise a Regional Research Project in 2003 covering all parts of former Yugoslavia to map the situation of youth. Contacts with national ministries to offer counselling on various issues were also a part of the PRONI initiative (Sida 2003).

As many reports show, the work among young people by the PRONI Institute in areas badly affected by the conflict was difficult and challenging. Unlike some other countries of ex Yugoslavia, Montenegro was fortunately not affected by the war directly, so the consequences of the conflict were less visible. On the other hand, as multiconfessional and multiethnic society Montenegro represented a fertile ground for the development of PRONI programmes, especially in the central and southern region of the country.

The **education of youth workers** within the PRONI model was organised as university courses on different levels under a contract training program provided by the Jönköping

University. The first stage was a basic course, leading to a certificate in *Leadership and Developmental Youth Work* (Level A, 30 ECTS, European Credit Transfer System) from Jönköping University. This course was designed as one year of part-time studies. The aim was to produce youth workers able to operate in areas of conflict, and to make young people of different nationalities meet and become reconciled. In the course document it was stressed that the tool of the professional youth worker is social education, which means that youth work is seen as a situation of learning. In different activities, the youth worker will emphasise dialogue to promote skills and values. Self-knowledge is another element in the education. The course consisted of four blocks and of practical work. In the residentials, the students from the different towns were meeting to work together with reconciliation.

The continued education (Level B, 30 ECTS) was also designed as a one-year training, part-time. The students got a certificate in *Leadership and Developmental Youth Work, Level B*, from Jönköping University. The focus of this education was preparation of the youth workers as trainers of other voluntary youth workers in conflict-ridden areas. The aim was to further develop skills and knowledge from the first level. The youth workers as trainers worked in the context of social education, which implies environmental work to facilitate for young people to grow. Another element stressed in this course was conflict transformation, understood as bringing people together to challenge their prejudices and stereotypical attitudes.

As a third stage a Level B plus course was designed (5 Swedish Credits). The aim was to recruit local people as future trainers of youth workers. The participants were trained in lecturing and practise as mentors for students in Level B courses in group-work and practical work.

Another component of the PRONI model consisted of support to the **development of organizations** dealing with youth activities such as **youth clubs**. The examples of these were established in 3 cities in Montenegro (Podgorica, the capitol, and two multinational cities in the mediteranean, Kotor and Ulcinj). As part of their studies the students were doing practical work for 30 weeks, designed as small projects for youngsters in different places in the local society (schools, orphanages, organisations etc.), which can be seen as a start of regular activities, such as youth clubs and youth centres in premises of their own. The idea was to encourage young people to initiate activities and to formulate their own interest as a basis for youth club activities.

The PRONI model was to also dedicated to establishing **legitimacy** in the society for youth activities and to make such activities a matter for the authorities on all levels from the local community, municipality to county and to the national level. This implied to promote understanding among decision-makers of the role of youth work on all those

levels and preparedness to give concrete support. An agreement with the municipality was of course a prerequisite when opening a youth club or youth centre (the best example of this practice was established in Kotor, Montenegro). One further step in order to establish the youth work was to set up a Local Board for the centre and have municipality authorities represented on it, together with other influential people. Furthermore, training in leadership and youth work was offered to the authorities.

On the county level the PRONI Institute supported the structuring of **local youth action plans** by initiating small research projects in order to get a picture of the situation of the youth in the area. The first of this kind in Montenegro was created in municipality of Kotor in 2009, in cooperation with the local authorities and relevant stakeholders.

Furthermore, in contacts with **universities**, the main aim was to motivate and educate teachers to conduct training of youth workers as a programme of their own universities. The idea was to make this education a regular part of university education. Another aim was to stimulate the universities to work with youth issues through research work, in order to get a basis of knowledge about the situation of young people.

Overall, the PRONI Institute has acquired competence and valuable knowledge about the conditions for young people in the countries concerned, and participated in the imminent youth policy reforms offering, with the endorsement of Sida, its services to several governments. Still, there was a need for more exchange of information on the local level with other actors in Montenegro, both in connection with the imminent school reforms and in relation to the youth policy processes. From a sustainability point of view, the whole programme, with some small exceptions, remained totally dependent on Sida (and lately SIPU) for funding, so many of the programmes were jeopardized by withdrawal of the donor(s) after the finalization of the project. On the positive side, the results of the Sida evaluation (2003) show among other that the students appreciate the education highly, they find that it has changed their outlook on life, contributed to personal growth and made them realise their own capacity to bring about change and reconciliation.

3.1. Forum MNE (2007- nowadays)

One of objectives of The PRONI Institute was to establish local NGO(s), either by supporting existing organisations or by starting a PRONI local organisation. In the transitional period of The Forum Syd Balkans, there was in-service training organized to support the development of independence for the organizations, and strengthen their “inner life”, and to strengthen their networking with donors and other external bodies.

In Montenegro, the '**Forum MNE**'³ has been registered in Podgorica, as a nonprofit organization that achieves its vision by supporting the development of young people into conscious, responsible and active individuals and citizens who are able to recognize, demand and realize their rights and contribute to the development of a peaceful and just society. The organization develops and implements programs and projects that promote non formal education, community youth work, youth activism, EU values and democracy, human rights of children, and youth policy. The organization strives to ensure that its programs contribute to the sustainable development of the community and its business is socially responsible.

Based on the experience of practitioners in community youth work, the Forum MNE created the following **definition** of youth work in Montenegro:

'Youth work helps develop young people into conscious, responsible and active members of the community and works to create conditions for the realization of their full potential'.

Youth work carried out in the framework of the Forum MNE is complementary to the formal academic or vocational trainings and trainings implemented by professional youth workers, and volunteers. Having in mind that youth work is based on the needs, rights and interests of young people, the organization strives to provide a sound knowledge base for its activities and projects. Youth research is usually realized in collaboration with organizations, institutions and agencies that can help in both identifying the needs and problems of young people, and finding adequate solutions. Keeping close and direct contact with young people and representatives of the relevant institutions, the Forum MNE points out that it is clear that young people need new programmes and facilities having the right to a systematic and professional assistance in their growth.

According to the Forum MNE, youth work in Montenegro shall be conducted in accordance with clearly established, ethical Code which includes various moral and professional principles. Unfortunately, it is currently recognized mainly through the work and project activities of various civil society organizations, and is widely used as a tool in the fields of non-formal education. The **need for formal recognition** of youth work (ers) is, most often, articulated by those who are tied to specific youth programs, either as implementers or participants.

The publication "Youth work in Montenegro", issued by the Forum MNE sets the framework of the process of recognition of the profession of youth worker that began with a meeting of experts / activists on January 31, 2008. Then, in the presence of all stakeholders (both organizations and institutions), it has been agreed that youth work **is**

³ www.forum-mne.com

required in Montenegro, as part of a structured care for youth. According to the respondents (young parents, and institution), the effect of youth work is manifold, both for the young and for professionals dealing with youth, but also for the whole society.

Finally, as youth clubs / centers are recognized within the NYAP as an important aspect that supports structured youth care, Forum MNE was striving to develop youth clubs in areas/cities of their operation (5 were established by 2010). Youth clubs were defined as places targeting young people where they can have the quality leisure time and become informed about things in order to improve their quality of life in accordance with their interests, and together with their peers, and create activities that could meet their needs using different forms of informal education (workshops on photography and comics, social skills, parenting and marriage, human rights, media literacy, different forms of art, school of guitar, computer or foreign language)⁴.

4. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS (2010-2012)⁵

In line with the Council Resolution on Youth Work (2010), and the adoption of the EU Youth Strategy (2010-18) which came into force in January 2010, the Government of Montenegro, through its Directorate for Youth and Sports⁶ and other relevant partners, has developed **strategic and legislative framework** in order to to **acknowledge, raise awareness** of, and **reinforce** the role of youth work in society.

In the frameworks of Tempus project implementing lifelong learning at the University of Montenegro, headed by The University of Montenegro, the **Strategy for lifelong learning** at the university is being developed. To strengthen the use of the range of tools established at the EU level for the **transparency and validation of skills and the recognition of qualifications**, The Law on National Vocational Qualifications (adopted in December 2008) was based on the principle of lifelong learning, encouraging the principle of equal access to vocational education and training of youth and adults and equal access to education and to young adults. This Act provides for the first time the **recognition** and confirmation of previously acquired knowledge and skills, as well as linking formal with non-formal education system.

In this regard, the Ministry of Education and Sports, together with educational institutions, is working on:

- Development of key competencies, primarily in their educational programs by incorporating regular school system, as well as non-formal education programs;
- Ensuring equal access to vocational education and training, to the same qualification can be reached in different ways;

⁴ According to the *Annual report* of the Directorate of Youth and Sports (2010),

⁵ According to the *Montenegro National Report*, of the Directorate of Youth and Sports of Montenegro(2012).

⁶ www.infoladi.me

- Linking formal with informal education;
- Creating conditions for the evaluation and validation of formal and informal knowledge, skills and competencies that will enable the implementation of the Law on National Vocational Qualifications;
- Providing conditions for better informing and consulting citizens about education and learning opportunities in Montenegro;
- Promoting the concept of lifelong education and learning.

To make the broader public aware of the **value of non-formal learning**, The Directorate for Youth and Sports has implemented other measures, such as financing projects which address non-formal education. For example, in 2011, a project ``The role of non-formal education and lifelong learning for the key competencies acquisition`` was realized by the NGO Education and Training Center⁷, aiming to raise awareness of the general public, especially youth, about the importance of non-formal education and lifelong learning and the acquisition of key competences. The activities of the project involved conference with key stakeholders and a publication containing the activities of organizations in the field, and recommendations for quality standards in non-formal education. The Festival of adult education was also taking place since 2001. The event lasts from seven days up to a month. As part of this event, lifelong learning and adult education were promoted, with special emphasis on the importance of non-formal education. The aim of the event was to inform the general public about different forms of non-formal education and learning institutions and organizations that offer these forms of education. In recent years, Ministry of education and sports is collecting data on realized forms of non-formal education and the number of participants involved. This is done for purposes of monitoring the implementation of the Plan of adult education, and to create a database of non-formal education.

The Directorate for Youth and Sports has, furthermore, signed an agreement of understanding with the Forum MNE and Faculty of Philosophy (University of Montenegro), in the framework of the TEMPUS IV project "Introducing academic programs in community youth work through the development of regional cooperation" which aim is to **establish academic studies** in community youth work. The Forum MNE and Faculty of Philosophy are the main implementors of the project. After implementing youth work programs on the faculty through elective courses in several departments, Faculty of philosophy established the **Master studies** in youth work in 2012.

To realise the full potential of youth work and youth centres as means of **social inclusion** the Forum MNE is also implementing educational program for **Youth leaders** in Montenegro since 2008. The Forum MNE is working with Governmental agencies on

⁷ See more on: me.linkedin.com/in/etcmne

accreditation of the vocation and educational program for youth leaders. Youth leaders' vocation was adopted in May 2011, while the final accreditation of the program took place in 2012.

The website of the Center for Vocational Education (www.cso.gov.me) furthermore provides detailed information about the Project Step by step - change, which is financed by UNESCO, within which are organized thematic workshops for parents of preschool children of **Roma** ethnicity, inter alia, in order to improve their awareness of the importance of education and learning for better life of their families and communities.

Appart from that, the working group was formed in this field, in December 2010, to support the development of youth work and other non-formal learning opportunities as a way of addressing **early school leaving**⁸. The working group includes representatives from the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Centre for Vocational Education and six high schools in Montenegro. It dealt with the analysis of administrative data from all vocational and mixed schools, and the product of this group was a document Guide for the prevention of early school leaving (available in English language). Montenegro presented this document in the Collection of good practices of Southeast Europe in the end of 2012. Further activities are planned in this area depending on the budget and donor aid.

The other measures implemented by the Government of Montenegro in order to **improve the recognition, and support the development of governmental and non-governmental youth work** were reflected through continuous support of the Directorate for Youth and Sports to youth work activities of NGOs, through annual grants for projects, and through its own resources or projects implemented with partners (from 2009-2012, more than 300.000€ was allocated for the youth work projects). Some youth work projects were funded through other governmental funds, such as annual National Lottery fund. Through partnerships with various NGOs, media and institutions, Directorate has implemented: human right campaign with young people; human rights training for youth workers; youth information conference; youth employment trainings and apprenticeships for senior students; youth led shows on a TV station, etc. Directorate has developed 3 websites, which support youth work. Website www.infomladi.me serves as information point for youth organizations, organizations working with youth, young people, and all other interested parties. The website shares information about national institutional and organizational structures in youth work and youth policy, as well as daily information useful for organizations, institutions and young people. Website or.infomladi.me serves as platform for youth workers, youth NGOs and NGOs working with youth, to network, share ideas, information. Web site

⁸ The working group was established with the support of the project financed by the Government of Montenegro and the Government of Luxembourg.

mapa.infomladi.me serves as a map of places for young people, which will connect them and youth work NGOs, among other stakeholders.

Finally, The Directorate for Youth and Sports and Ministry of Education and Sports are performing extensive information work on promoting **learning mobility** opportunities through their web sites and other online information tools. As of fall 2011, UoM joined the MAUNIMO project that deals with the strategic aspects of mobility on institutional level. It is lead by the EUA: <http://www.maunimo.be/>. The project will provide UoM with basis for development of the institutional action plan on mobility, as well as insight into ongoing good practices of EU and other universities. This exercise should contribute to strengthening `mobility culture` among management and academics on the level of the units, which will hopefully further facilitate and increase mobility.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that, despite significant efforts of particular nonprofit organizations and relevant institutions, there is **no generally accepted definition** of youth work in Montenegro, nor youth work is **formally recognized** as a profession. This `occupation` is not systematically supported by the state, nor recognized compared to the other occupations within the system of professional care of youth.

Overall, there is **no established system of quality assurance** of youth work in Montenegro - it is not defined and agreed what exactly youth work is at the national level, what types and models of youth work exist, which is an ethical code of conduct for the practitioners / youth workers, which are the needs of the qualifications of those working with young people etc. Instead of a standardized, systematic and comprehensive approach, there is partial access without the possibility of checking the quality of the models of youth work in Montenegro. In this context, youth access to such programs is limited, and available only in places / cities where there are some non-governmental organizations dealing with youth issues. This situation is discriminating, and requires a serious prioritization, so that possible solutions providing equal opportunities to all young people can be found.

The biggest challenges in this process represents a lack of acknowledgment of youth as a resources and priority on the political agenda, as well as a lack of comprehensive strategic framework in the youth field in Montenegro, since the National Youth Action Plan expired in 2011, and the new one has not been created yet. Moreover, the data on effectiveness and efficiency of the previously implemented measures are missing since the impact analysis and evaluation of the former youth strategy are lacking.

These facts should be warning, having in mind that if the long term development of the country depends on the conditions in which young people live, their trust in the future

and readiness to live and work in Montenegro could be only built upon their ability and readiness to influence their own lives and the life of society. Mechanisms for creating space for these influences are strengthening the participation of youth in the social process. This cannot be achieved unless there is a certain level of social consensus, and opportunities created for youth to get involved in social changes, combined with empowerment and awareness raising in regards to their role in the social system.

What is encouraging, however, is the fact that the newly developed **Law on Youth** clearly defines the mechanisms for development and quality assurance of youth work, providing among other the definition of youth work at the national level, definitions of main relevant actors and their responsibilities, the rules and framework of their cooperation and coordination, it regulates and defines the mechanisms of state support to the processes of development and recognition of youth work, and defines the framework of qualifications of youth workers (and other professionals and non professionals working with youth). The Law, furthermore, defines the youth associations and youth clubs, their roles and the ways of their sustainable funding. The youth centers role has yet to be reinforced and developed through the forthcoming new National Youth Action Plan. The new Law on Youth is expected to be adopted by the Parliament of Montenegro by the end of 2014.

6. REFERENCE

1. Commission of the European Communities (2009), *An EU strategy for youth – Investing and Empowering; A renewed open method of coordination to address youth challenges and opportunities*, Brussels.
2. Council of Europe (2008), *“The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: AGENDA 2020”*, Kiev.
3. Centar za obuku I obrazovanje (2012), *Aktivnosti međunarodnih organizacija na primjeni neformalnog obrazovanja u Crnoj Gori*, Autor: Kovacevic, S., Podgorica.
4. Centar za obuku I obrazovanje (2012), *Neformalno obrazovanje ovđe i sada*, Autor: Kovacevic, S., Podgorica.
5. Directorate of Youth and Sports of Montenegro (2010), *Annual report*, Podgorica.
6. Directorate of Youth and Sports (2012), *Montenegro National Report: First cooperation cycle of the EU Youth Strategy 2010-2012*, Podgorica.
7. Denstad, F.Y. (2007), *Developing a National Youth Action Plan in Montenegro 2004-2006*, Forum Syd Balkans, Podgorica.
8. Fajgelj, S., Kuzmanovic, B., Djukanovic, B., (2004), *Prirucnik za socijalna istrazivanja*, Podgorica.
9. Forum MNE (2007), *Youth Work in Montenegro*, Autors: Kijevčanin, J., Marković, J. Podgorica.
10. Forum MNE (2010), *Youth and key competences for longlife learning' conclusions and recommendations, Regional project: Youth and key competences as a corner stone for the EU integrations*, Podgorica.
11. IOM (2011), *Challenges of youth participation in Montenegro*, Autor: Petkovic, S., Podgorica.
12. Jans, M. and De Backer, K. *Youth and social participation. Elements for a practical theory*, Flemish Youth Council JePI, Brussels, 2002.
13. Ministry of Education and Science, in partnership with The Forum Syd Balkand, and the Catholic Releif service (CRS) (2006), *The National Youth Action Plan in Montenegro (NYAP)*, Podgorica.
14. Kalaba, V. (2009) *‘Priznavanje profesije/zanimanja omladinskog radnika/ce i uloga praktičara/ki omladinskog rada’*, dodiplomski studij omladinskog rada u zajednici.
15. Kovacheva, S. (2000), *Keys to youth participation in eastern Europe*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg.
16. Open Society Fund (1995), *The Project for Children of Yugoslavia*, manual, Belgrade.
17. Sida (2003), *Support to the PRONI Institute for Social Education projects in the Balkans – Evaluation*, Department for Central and Eastern Europe, Stockholm.
18. Siurala, L. (2006), *A European Framework for Youth Policy*, Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg.