

Youth Partnership

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



Youth Knowledge Book Angles and standpoints: demystifying the concepts of 'youth perspective' & 'youth mainstreaming'

Call for abstracts

Deadline for abstracts: 9 June 2024

Background and context

In recent years, the concepts of incorporating a 'youth perspective' and 'youth mainstreaming' have gained traction in the agendas of both the Council of Europe and the European Union (EU). [The Reykjavík declaration that followed the 4th Summit of the heads of states and governments](#) of the Council of Europe calls for the integration of a youth perspective in the Council of Europe's intergovernmental and other deliberations. The declaration emphasizes that youth participation in decision-making is a way to ensure a youth perspective, a principle affirmed by the Summit and upheld by the Council of Europe youth sector through its 'co-managed' processes that have prevailed for over five decades. For the European Union (EU), mainstreaming youth across different policy fields was a key objective of the 2022 European Year of Youth, as outlined in [the European Year of Youth legacy communication](#). Moreover, the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, and its specific tools like the EU Youth Dialogue, EU youth programmes (such as Erasmus+ Youth in Action and EU Solidarity Corps), is proposing actions to bolster young people's involvement and participation in decision-making. The position of EU Youth Coordinator was established by the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 with the objective of enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation, as well as knowledge development and exchange on youth issues within the European Commission services, thus supporting, also, youth mainstreaming.

Despite the longstanding priority of involving young people in policy-making across various sectors and levels of governance, the undeniable recent progress in this area, the development of several tools (such as [youth tests](#), [youth checks](#)), and the open debates on the subject, there remains a need for a systematic research of policy documents, practices and programs regarding this topic. The concepts of 'youth perspective' and 'youth mainstreaming' have been linked recurrently not only with

‘youth participation’, ‘youth engagement’, ‘co-management’ and ‘co-decision making’, but also with ‘cross-sectoral policy-making’ and ‘inter-institutional cooperation’. As the lines between these concepts are still invariably blurred, yet their use in political, practical and academic discourse has exploded, the need for more conceptual and empirical research is palpable. While having multiple viewpoints on a youth perspective and youth mainstreaming is scientifically valuable and can be politically fruitful, it is also necessary to seek greater clarity on the diverse angles and encourage a dialogue between different standpoints. Moreover, practices of involving young people in decision-making and ensuring their issues and concerns are accommodated in different policy fields are, arguably, already present in a variety of formats at local, regional, and national level. Understanding such grounded realities is, however, still at a very early stage, though both European institutions have recently elaborated on their own positions, with the Council of Europe providing a reference framework on a youth perspective, and the European Union providing [Council Conclusions on the promotion of youth mainstreaming](#).

Building on this background, this call for abstracts invites researchers, experts, and practitioners to engage critically with both the conceptual frameworks and practical applications of youth perspective and youth mainstreaming. We encourage submissions that will analyse how these approaches have been implemented across different political and cultural contexts and their effects on policy-making. We anticipate that papers will explore the authenticity and influence of youth perspectives in shaping policies, examining whether these perspectives are integrated as genuine contributions or merely as symbolic or tokenistic inputs. The contributions could also investigate the dynamics of power and conflict between traditional and more youth-centric approaches in political decision-making, scrutinising how these tensions are managed and what outcomes they produce. Additionally, we seek insights into the long-term sustainability of youth engagement in policy and decision-making processes and its ethical implications, especially in terms of respecting and fulfilling the aspirations of young people. Submissions might also consider the evolution of youth perspectives in influencing policy-making and how shifts in demographic structures and intergenerational dimensions could reshape the landscape of youth mainstreaming in the future.

Through this call for abstracts, we aim to foster a comprehensive dialogue that bridges theoretical exploration with practical implications, offering insights into how youth perspectives and youth mainstreaming can be more effectively embedded within the governance structures and decision-making processes of public institutions. This approach emphasises the active participation of young people as contributors in political processes, ensuring that their voices are considered in decisions that affect their lives and future. Our objective is to explore how building beyond established youth participation practices to enabling and ensuring a youth perspective and youth mainstreaming at every stage of policy design, development and implementation can enhance more robust democratic participation, policy effectiveness, and social cohesion.

Book Concept

The aim of this Youth Knowledge Book (YKB) is:

1. to develop a conceptual framework for analysing and researching the ideas of youth perspective and youth mainstreaming, in order to,
2. combine best practice examples at different levels of policy governance and decision-making, and,
3. draw lessons for policy, practice and research.

In a first instance, the YKB builds on the research carried out within the framework of the Youth Partnership on youth perspective / youth mainstreaming. This research consists of three parts:

- The development of a conceptual framework that, while recognising overlaps and relationships between them, advances distinctive understandings of ‘youth perspective’, ‘youth mainstreaming’ and related ideas;
- A mapping of national initiatives on youth perspective and youth mainstreaming (inter-ministerial delegates for youth; and including youth tests, youth checks, youth standards and other impact assessment tools);
- A mapping of youth perspective and youth mainstreaming initiatives in International Organisations (including but not limited to the Council of Europe and the European Commission).

Each of these three strands of research commissioned by the Youth Partnership will be covered in the YKB.

Contributions from those responding to this call will supplement these strands. The content of this YKB should, therefore, cover different theoretical and critical perspectives, case studies, as well as cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary approaches. Furthermore, the YKB seeks to explore policy and institutional strategies, the role of stakeholders involved in both policy design and implementation regarding youth perspectives/mainstreaming youth, assessment and evolution of these policy approaches and their effects on young people.

What types of submissions are we looking for?

We encourage contributions exploring a range of subjects and themes, and from a range of angles, including (but not limited to):

1. On setting the conceptual framework

- The recent historical and institutional development of youth perspective and youth mainstreaming concepts and related policy initiatives, discussing for example
 - o Council of Europe and European Union developments;
 - o the historical influence of youth perspectives on political movements and outcomes
- Theories and concepts on youth participation, engagement, involvement and inclusion in the design, decision-making, development, implementation and evaluation of policies affecting young people across policy fields not traditionally associated with or seen as impacting young people
- Relationships and demarcations between the main concepts of ‘youth perspective(s)’ and ‘youth mainstreaming’ as well as, inter alia, ‘youth participation’ and ‘cross-sectoral policy’
- Legal analysis of concepts and understandings of ‘youth perspective’ and ‘youth mainstreaming’
- Foundational questions, including theoretical underpinnings of youth perspective/youth mainstreaming and how theory translates into practice
- Relationships between youth perspective and youth mainstreaming, and contemporary theories of democracy and governance and/or traditional approaches to political participation and policy formulation
- Critical approaches to the use of youth perspective/youth mainstreaming concepts and related ideas, discussing for example
 - o the constitution of ‘youth perspective’ in intergenerational context as well as in the context of youth diversity;

- effective strategies and mechanisms for integrating youth perspectives into policy-making processes;
 - impact assessment of youth mainstreaming on policy development, including from a legal perspective on the potential compensation mechanisms;
 - the impact of inter-generational dynamics within political and social institutions on the integration and acceptance of youth perspectives.
- Relationships between youth perspective and youth mainstreaming and young people, discussing for example how youth mainstreaming affects young people; barriers young people are facing in expressing their political views and in being taken seriously by older generations and institutional bureaucracies and decision-making structures.

2. On existing practices

- Case studies and good practice on youth perspective / youth mainstreaming at municipal, regional, national, European and international level, discussing for example
 - how youth mainstreaming in policy-making can be compared across different political systems or cultural contexts;
 - lessons to be learned from successful and unsuccessful attempts at youth mainstreaming in various countries, regions or municipalities
- Good examples of bad practice or missed opportunities of youth perspective(s) / youth mainstreaming, discussing for example
 - how effective youth perspective / youth mainstreaming is in influencing policy outcomes as well as measurable impacts that can be directly attributed to this approach;
 - to what extent innovative policy tools and frameworks better facilitate the inclusion of youth perspectives in mainstream decision-making
- Challenges as well as supporting and hindering factors of youth perspective(s) / youth mainstreaming, discussing for example
 - effective strategies of integrating youth perspectives into the policy-making process;
 - the role of non-formal learning environments (such as youth work) play in preparing young people to actively engage in youth perspective / youth mainstreaming processes

3. On lessons from other sectors and fields

- Viewpoints on youth perspective / youth mainstreaming in different policy sectors (for example, agriculture, culture, education, employment, energy, environment protection, defence, foreign affairs, health, justice, good governance and fight against corruption, social inclusion, transportation, or tourism)
- Transferable mainstreaming concepts, practices and tools from different fields (for example gender equality, health in all policies/health for all policies, mainstreaming environment or urban policies)
- Research on the (measurable) impacts and effectiveness of policies incorporating youth perspective / youth mainstreaming on various sectors and departments (for example education, employment, health, or justice)

As this YKB examines an emerging field of knowledge, we are looking for original contributions of both

theoretical and empirical research on the topic, as well as case studies, reports and practitioner reflections which shed light on how public policies are shaped taking into account the perspectives of young people, or indeed not shaped in this way at all.

The geographic scope of this volume is not limited to the European experience and approaches, and presentation and analysis of cases from around the world is welcomed.

Process & Timeline

Deadline for abstracts: Please send your submissions by email to the editorial team at ykb.youthmainstreaming@gmail.com by the 9th of June 2024, at 23h59 CET. Only original works—not previously published or under consideration elsewhere—will be considered.

Your submission should include:

- Proposed title summarising the main idea(s) of your chapter;
- Abstract outlining the proposed contribution (300 words max.);
- Full names and biographies of author/s (150 words per author max.);
- Institutional affiliations of author/s, if any.

The Editorial team will take a final decision about the selection of contributions until **end June 2024**. Selected authors will be then notified by the Editors and requested to submit completed chapters by 1 October 2024, taking into consideration the feedback to the abstract from the editorial team. All submissions will be subject to peer review. Selected authors will receive a guidance document for writing their contributions.

If you are interested in submitting a contribution, or have any queries regarding the Youth Knowledge Book, process and timeline, please contact the editorial team at ykb.youthmainstreaming@gmail.com. Questions and clarifications requested close to the deadline may not be answered due to lack of time. Please consider these time constraints when submitting your queries. It is planned for the YKB to be published by mid-2025.

Editorial team

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