

Romania

In Romania, the general framework of youth policies is aimed at the younger generation as a whole, and only specific targeted policies address issues specific to different categories of young people: Roma youth, girls, students, institutionalised young people, drug consumers, HIV positive young people or young people from rural areas. General policy documents and current Romanian legislation takes the young people as a whole, addressing a group ranging in age from 15/16 up to 29 or 35, depending on the policy. 'Young families' and non-governmental youth organisations are also a target of the general policy framework. As stated by the youth policy of the current Romanian government and also the Youth Law, the young generation of people ranging in age from 15/16 to 29 or 35 should be supported in their autonomy and independence. The general view is that the young generation represents a resource for the future, and this is why its initiatives, its values and its attitudes should be known, its problems solved and itself protected and supported for a better future. Yet at the same time, young people are viewed as a vulnerable group that needs protection, promotion and support. There is a specific policy at national level, for example, to support young families in terms of access to housing or starting a business. There are policies especially designed to address the needs of special categories of young people: people with disabilities, and members of minority groups, especially Roma. There is a national policy of encouraging employers to hire young people, especially young graduates; the national social security system offers unemployment benefits equivalent to 50% of the minimum wage to all high-school and university graduates. In conclusion, we can state that the target groups of the policies are both special groups of disadvantaged young people as well as this generation as a whole. The social participation of young people and, conversely, the social exclusion of some categories are considered important youth problems which must be addressed with measures fostering prevention, political participation of young people, inclusion, and integration. To solve these problems, to address the issues of exclusion or marginalisation or integration of young people, the state authorities at every level cooperate with NGOs on these matters, helping them to develop programmes and strategies and applying together for funding in order to address these issues.

The dominant concepts in youth work are: participation, especially political and civic participation, leisure activities such as summer/winter schools, and counselling for young people on different issues concerning education, jobs, travelling, associations, information, training and voluntary work. Programmes addressing issues such as reproductive health and HIV/Aids prevention have been designed and implemented by several NGOs in collaboration with hospitals, clinics, and medical cabinets at both public and private level. With regard to the institutions involved in youth work, in the last four or five years the role of non-governmental organisations in providing activities, programmes and projects has gradually been replaced by a better and broader involvement of national authorities both at national and regional/local level. A network of state institutions has been built under the coordination of the National Authority for Youth, the central administrative body in charge of coordinating, designing and implementing youth policy in Romania.