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REVIEWS ON YOUTH POLICIES AND YOUTH WORK IN THE COUNTRIES OF **SOUTH EAST EUROPE,** **EASTERN EUROPE & CAUCASUS** **- SERBIA -**



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1. Introduction

Objectives

This study aims to assess position of young people and youth policies in the Republic of Serbia from both the perspective of authorities and the point of view of the associative structures involved in their implementation.

Methodology

All quantitative data (Annex 6 Additional statistical tables/charts) used in this study are compiled from already existing and available sources- official statistics of the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, The Institute of Informatics and Statistics of Belgrade, The National Employment Service, The Public Health Institute, databases of the Ministries and international organizations etc. Also, very valuable sources of information were empirical researches on youth, with relevant samples and national coverage, initiated and financed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant actors in youth policy. Sources for qualitative data were abovementioned researches, different reports, assessments, evaluations, and analyses available online and published.

Challenges

The biggest difficulty for each analyst is to find reliable sources of information in the situation where national statistics on youth is not yet established, last census was almost ten years ago and evidence is missing in too many cases (for instance, the number of young and educated immigrants, young entrepreneurs, young people with disabilities, young Roma or coverage of young people in non-formal education etc.). Still, it must be mentioned that the most important informations are available and that the system is improving.

I would like to express my gratefulness to following people for their great contribution to this work: on behalf of the Ministry for Youth and Sport State Secretary Ms Ivana Kovačević and Assistant Minister for Youth, Ms Snežana Klačnja, who had many usefull comments and also Ms Aleksandra Knežević, who helped me in part of international cooperation. On behalf of the civil society: Ms Vanja Kalaba (Center for Youth Work and association NAPOR) who informed me about the state in youth work, Ms Bojana Perovic from Belgrade Open School, Mr Milan Nikolić, director of Center for political Studies (CPA/CPS) and Ms Sonja Licht, director of Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence, who helped me with gathering all relevant documents and advices how to aproach the subject.

On behalf of the institutes I wish to thank to Mr Vladimir Vuletić (Institute for Sociological Research) with whom I had useful conversation about youth research and Ms Zora Krnjaic (Institute for Psychology) about the „brain drain“ process.

The Republic of Serbia is the largest country in the former Yugoslavia (88,361 km²)¹, positioned in the Western Balkans (SEE), with a population of 7,498,001 citizens² excluding the Southern-east Serbian Province Kosovo and Metohija³. Serbia is classified as an emerging and developing economy by the International Monetary Fund and an upper-middle income economy by the World Bank. Basically, Serbia is a country struggling with late and prolonged transition period since 1990s.

During the time of the country's dissolution and economic crisis in 1980s and 1990s issues of children and the young were hardly ever the subject. Democratic changes that followed the October 2000 and the collapse of the whole society in the 1990s brought children and the young into view as one of the socially most vulnerable and the poorest population category⁴. While 2000s were still the period of prolonged transition yet democratization and reform period, there are some assessments that during this period business environment in Serbia improved to some extent, the image of the country is better and in 2009 the process of the European integration speed up, which resulted in visa liberalization⁵ and official application for the EU membership. Amongst young people, Serbia became known by the successes of sportsman and different cultural and sport events such as the EXIT, the BEER FEST, the Guča, the Belgrade Marathon, the Basketball International, the Tour de Serbia, the Belgrade Roller Cup, the European Challenge Day⁶ and others which brought many young tourists from abroad.

As a consequence of the social and economic difficulties that developed in the 1980s and 1990s, many problems related to youth still remains unsolved: A rising and long-term youth unemployment linked to an outdated system of formal education; an emigration of the skilled young workforce to seek opportunities abroad; an increasing poverty among young people which led to a prolonged economic and housing dependency on parents; as well as social exclusion of youth from decision-making structures; low birth and marital rates, etc⁷.

¹ www.eng.wikipedia.org/wiki/serbia

² The 2002 Census, the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade

³ According to the UN Security Council Resolution 1244

⁴ The Serbian Government Poverty Reduction Strategy recognizes the children and youth as one of five most vulnerable population categories.

⁵ On 7th December 2009. the EU unfroze the trade agreement with Serbia and the Schengen countries dropped the visa requirement for Serbian citizens on 19th December

⁶ For further information please visit the site www.adresarsporta.rs

⁷ Nikolic, T. (2009) Report of the Serbian National Correspondent to the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy, <http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/ekcyp/index>

Accumulated issues lead to severe consequences in the form of high emigration rate among the best educated and the most active population, such is youth. Because of the lack of precise evidence during 1990s, precise number of young people that left the country remains unknown. According to the leading expert on this subject, Prof. Grecic, from 1990s to 2000, 73.000 inhabitants left Serbia, among them 17.000 with university degree. After 2000 around 50.000 people left Serbia, of which 2000 highly educated⁸. Highly educated immigrants from Serbia are mostly experts in information technologies, biomedicine and mathematics.

According to surveys, during 1990s every second young person wanted to leave the country, while since 2000 this is the case with every fourth or fifth person⁹. Due to high emigration and low natality rate Serbia takes the fourth place on the list of demographically oldest countries in the world¹⁰.

⁸ Abstract from the Strategy of Science and Technological Development in Serbia for the period 2010-2015

⁹ Mihailovic, S. ed. (2004), Youth Lost in the Transition, CPA/CPS, Belgrade and Mihailovic, S., Popadic, D. Youth in the Waves of Transition (2002), CPA/CPS, Belgrade

¹⁰ Rašević, M. (2007), The Phenomenon of Aging of the Population in Serbia, the Centre for Demographic Research, the Institute of Social Sciences, Belgrade

2. Executive summary

The National Youth Strategy in the Republic of Serbia defines youth as young people between fifteen and thirty years of age. Youth represents a significant category of the population in Serbia, both by number and important features. The numbers from last Census in 2002 showed that there are about a million and a half young people in Serbia, which makes 20 per cent of the total population.

Due to prolonged transition period to labor market economy, basic issues that young people face in Serbia are high unemployment rates, housing issues, financial dependence upon parents, postponement of marriage and parenthood, low degree of social mobility, as well as the lack of information and participation in different areas of interest. Prolonged schooling, postponed marriage and child birth, by some experts, were a young people strategy in transition period to cope with the economic crisis, especially lack of job opportunities.

Studies show that the main problem for young people is unemployment. A large number of young people between fifteen and thirty years of age remain unemployed or trapped in temporary and underpaid jobs mostly in the informal labor market. The labor market quality has deteriorated also due to low investing in Serbian education (3.8% in 2008 in Serbia as opposed to 5% GDP in EU)¹¹ and a conservative educational system with traditional and non-participatory teaching methods. Educational system reform is slowly progressing towards development of school and university curricula that will correspond more with the needs of the labor market.

Also, studies show the considerable differences in chances for development and quality of life for different youth groups. Especially vulnerable youth groups in risks of social exclusion and poverty are young Roma, young disabled persons, young refugees and internally displaced persons, young returnees in the readmission process, young people in the institutions for social care, young people without parental care and young people from the streets.

The main public authority at the national level in charge of youth is the Ministry of Youth and Sport, formed in May 2007. On a provincial level, public authority in charge of youth is the Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sport, founded in 2004. On a regional level there are also six district offices for youth (Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Subotica, Užice, Valjevo and Niš) established by MYS and one in Belgrade, established by the Belgrade local self-government. At local level, opening of local youth offices and adoption of local plans of action for youth have been initiated by the Ministry in 2007. For

¹¹ The second report data on the Poverty Reduction Strategy implementation (2007) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy- public expenses for education (% GDP) rose from 2.7% to 3.8% in 2009.

now, 115 out of 165 local self-governments recognized the importance of supporting youth on local community level and have opened Local youth office. Before the 2007, there were only 5 local youth offices.

First goal of the newly formed Ministry was to develop a National Strategy for Youth. The National Youth Strategy was adopted on May 9 2008, symbolically on the Europe Day. On the January 22nd 2009, the Action plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period of 2009-2014, was adopted by the Government, as well.

The National Youth Strategy (hereinafter called NYS) is a cross-sectoral strategic document, with coordinative role in youth policy. This strategic document contains eleven general goals, each and every one representing one of the areas considered as the youth policy priority. Objectives of the National Youth Strategy are: to improve the system of informing youth on all levels and in all fields; to support the development of an open, functional, efficient, and just system of formal and non-formal education which is accessible to all young people and in compliance with the European trends in education, as well as with the national context; to support all forms of youth employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship; to improve the possibilities of quality ways of spending leisure time among youth; to improve youth safety and security, to prevent and improve youth health, to reduce risks and the prevailing health disorders and to develop youth-friendly medical care; to encourage youth towards initiative and activities that are in accordance with the basic principles of sustainable development and healthy environment; to support youth in taking active part in solving social, peer and personal problems; to develop a sustainable institutional framework for the cooperation, organization and participation of youth in decision-making processes; to equalize life opportunities for all groups of young people and to reduce the risks of social exclusion and inequality and to support and assess systematically the outstanding results and achievements of youth in various areas. Besides this, one of the major principles of work in youth policy is to make evidence based decisions on a basis of a conducted scientific research about youth.¹²

So, the legislative framework of youth policy in Serbia is consisted currently from the National Youth Strategy and Action plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period 2009-2014¹³. The main aim of the Ministry at the moment is to develop the Youth Law to systematically regulate the youth policy and to support founding of the Umbrella youth organization to advocate and

¹² Since the Strategy is implemented from the 2009, the Serbian Government adopted the first Report on the Application of Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period January- September 2009.

¹³ The Annual Report on the progress in the National Youth Strategy implementation for 2009 is available in English at www.mos.gov.rs

to represent the rights of young people. Also, the Strategy for Career Guidance and Counseling was adopted on the proposition of MYS.

On a regional level, the Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sport are working on a basis of the Action plan for Youth in Vojvodina for the period 2011-2014 and on a local level, the Local Youth Offices are trying to adopt the Local Action Plans on the basis of the unique methodology principles set by the Ministry¹⁴.

It must be mentioned that youth CSOs are very active in Serbia since 1990s. More than half of them (56%) were established during the former regime and have great experience in the field of youth work and non-formal education. Analyses showed that 12% of the total number of active CSOs focuses on youth as a primary target group and 64% have implemented youth programs among the other¹⁵. Consequently, youth policy and youth research are one of the major focuses of Serbian NGO sector, on a significant third place after the socio-humanitarian work and researches. Also, young people take the greatest percent of direct users of the CSOs programs (13% as a primary target group and 59% as a majority).

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has spent over 4,5 million EUR on various CSO projects towards the implementation of the National Youth Strategy since its adoption during 2008¹⁶ and thus became the number one donor for the CSO sector in Serbia. In this period, Ministry supported more than 260 youth organization and organizations that deals with youth in implementation over the 500 projects.

¹⁴ It is expected that 90 Local Youth Action Plans will be adopted till the end of 2010.

¹⁵ CSO Sector in Serbia (2005), FENS, Belgrade

¹⁶ Serbia Needs Assessment Report (2010), TASC Serbia Office, SIPU International, Belgrade

3. Situation of Youth

3.1 Definition of youth

The basic definition of youth is given in the National Youth Strategy. In the Strategy, youth is referring to young people between fifteen and thirty years of age.

The concept „youth“ in the National strategy refers to the stage of life between childhood and adulthood, which is socially rather than biologically determined. Based on the main criteria of defining youth- the age- and the fact that the youth is a highly heterogeneous population, several youth subgroups can be determined: age 15-19, 20-24 and 25-30¹⁷.

In the countries undergoing transition, such is Serbia, the prolonged youth is often the issue of compulsion. The top youth age limit has been shifted to the age of thirty, because of the challenges that young people face in the process of their transition to adulthood.

3.2 Key figures on young people

There are about a million and a half young people in Serbia, which makes 20 per cent of the total population.

The total population of the Republic of Serbia by last Census¹⁸ was 7,498,001 and the total number of children and young people aged 15-29 was 1,512,646 or 20.2% of the total population. There were 768,221 boys between 15-29 (10.24% of total population) and 744,425 girls in the same age bracket (9,93% of total population).

The total number of children and young people aged 15-24¹⁹ in 2002 was 1,008,080 or 13.4% of the population. Young people aged 15-19 take up 6.6% or 495,651; and those aged 20-24 take up 6.8% or 512,429. The estimated number of population 15-24 for 2009. shows a population decrease to a total of 918,361, excluding Kosovo. Each year this population is smaller for about 20,000 young people²⁰.

¹⁷ National Youth Strategy of the Republic of Serbia (2008), Ministry for Youth and Sport, www.mos.gov.rs

¹⁸ The 2002 Census, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

¹⁹ Different age span is not the part of the Serbian statistics, since this age span (15-19, 20-24, 25-29) simplifies the insight into educational and other issues concerning young people in Serbia.

²⁰ See ANEX 2, Table 1 and 2

3.3 Living conditions and situation of young people

Nowadays, basic issues facing the youth in Serbia are still the ones of life importance, first of all high unemployment rates, housing issues, financial dependence upon parents, postponement of marriage and parenthood, low degree of social mobility, as well as the lack of gaining information and participation in different areas of interest.

Standard "easy" transitions towards adulthood that existed during the socialist period (end of school-employment- marriage- living parental household- child birth) were disrupted at the beginning of 1990s with emerging economy crisis. Consequences were prolonged schooling, increase of unemployment amongst youth, ending of social housing policy and housing deficit.

Many authors believe that the individualization process of young people in last two decades was disrupted already at the beginning of their transitions into the adulthood with two main factors- first one is a protective cultural model towards children and youth (traditionally strong bonds between parents and children in South-East Europe and therefore strong supportive networks for young people that led to some degree of infantilization) and more important, second one- structural limitations because of the overwhelming and deep crisis in the Serbian society for the last 20 years.

In one of the most comprehensive studies of young people (19-35 years) in Serbia²¹, researchers came to the conclusion that prolonged schooling, postponed marriage and child birth

was a young people strategy to cope with the economic crisis, especially lack of job opportunities. In this study, 77% of young people between 15 and 35 were single and unmarried, 5% cohabitated, 10% were married and 2% were already divorced. The most significant condition for marriage was to have a job. Statistically average age to get married for boys is 33 and for girls is 30²².

Also, housing is a great problem and one of the major precondition for gaining independence, because in average almost 70% of young people in Serbia live with their parents (77% of respondents between 19-24, 64% of those 25-29 and even 41% of those 31-35), 6% live in students dormes and 23% have their own flats (mostly inherited than rented and/or bought). The most difficult is the position of young people in big cities, such as Belgrade or Novi Sad, where the prices are highest to rent or purchase a flat. In the province, more young people have their own house or flat and the number of subtenant declines, but job opportunities are lower. Only 13% of those married or single lived on their own.

²¹ Tomanovic, S. and Ignjatovic, S in Mihailovic, S. ed. (2004), Youth Lost in the Transition, CPA/CPS, Belgrade

²² The 2002 Census, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, Belgrade

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Almost half of the newly formed families live in a household with their parents and 85% of single people 31-35 still lived with their parents.

Regarding their financial (in)dependence, 63% of young people between 19-35 were financially dependent upon their parents, 32% had their own income, and 15% combined some sort of income and parental financial support. In age bracket 25-30, 56% were financially dependent upon their parents and so were 9% of young people in bracket 31-35.

Even so, the study on social participation of young people²³ shows that in comparison to the rest of the population the young have a brighter perception of their future and the future of the whole Serbian society; they have more positive attitude towards the EU integration processes and they especially have more entrepreneurial spirit. In general, young people show more flexibility and willingness to adapt to social changes and higher levels of IT literacy.

Regarding roll models, 44% doesn't have any role models. Most of the roll-models young people find among their own families members or among public figures- in international movie stars or young tennis players from Serbia. Politicians are most disliked public figures.²⁴

Preferred personal values are in accordance with their age (friendship, love and independence) and their social values indicate very realistic understanding of social circumstances they live in (they want more opportunities for finding employment, free schooling and reducing the prevalence of crime in their country)²⁵.

3.3.1 Participation and volunteering

Young people in Serbia have a positive attitude towards activism as a value but only a minority of young people tend to be personally active (3- 6%), especially in politics²⁶. Still, the percentage of activism in sports and hobby organizations is very high- up to 70%. In general, boys tend to be more often member of organizations than girls. They are more numerous and active in political, syndical and especially sports organization. Girls tend to be more numerous and active in cultural and humanitarian organizations and in pupils councils. There is a considerable difference in decision making structures, where boys tend to have more active roles than girls.

²³ Vukovic, Dj. ed. (2007) Personal and Social Activism of Young People, CeSID, Belgrade. This study was financed by MYS and key results were integrated in the NYS.

²⁴ Stepanović, I., Pavlović Babić D. and Krnjaić, Z. (2009). Questioning the roll-models and idols of the highschool students in Serbia, Collection of works of the Institute for Pedagogical Research **2009**, Vol. 41 (2)

²⁵ Stepanovic, I., Pavlovic-Babic, D., Plut, D., Pesic, J, Krnjaic, Z. and Videnovic, M. ed. (2007), Everyday Life of Young People in Serbia, Institute for Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade.

²⁶ Vukovic, Dj. ed. (2007) Personal and Social Activism of Young People, CeSID, Belgrade

Most active segments of youth population are those financially independent upon their parents, better educated and young people from suburban areas. Even young people from the villages are a bit more active than young people in big cities.

Political activism: Youth are more interested to participate in social and economic life than in politics and shows less interested to take part in political life than the adults. Around 72% of young people are not interested in politics, 32% consider themselves informed regarding politics but don't engage personally and 6% are active²⁷. Even so, 61% of young people²⁸ regularly vote and only 10% of young people are abstinent when elections. Regarding the opinion towards political parties, most of young people have negative attitude or are indifferent. The rest are followers (22%) and members of political parties (9%).

Economic activism: Youth are more interested to take a risk in private economic sector than the population elder than 30 years (indicator – “desired job”). Even though every fourth respondent didn't have the job at the time, young people showed larger interest to start up their own businesses for 30% than the elders.

Civic activism: Young people are most often members of sport organizations, where is also the biggest proportion of young people in a membership structure. Most intensive level of participation (the difference between the active and passive membership) of young people is in sport and hobby organizations, and the lowest level is in political and professional organization (like trade unions etc).

Volunteering: According to surveys, about 20% of young people volunteered. Analyses showed that volunteers were the most active part of youth population, mostly boys and in age bracket 24-30. Most incentives when volunteering were to help those in need and to be social active and have fun. Gaining work experience and possibilities of employment were not the priority.

In order to improve youth activism, MYS annually organizes capacity building seminars for representatives of youth CSOs, coordinators of youth offices and youth leaders, trainings for projects proposals writing in EU format, finances youth initiatives and campaigns, supports informal youth groups and volunteer actions, mobility programmes etc.

²⁷ Vukovic, Dj. ed. (2007) Personal and Social Activism of Young People, CeSID, Belgrade

²⁸ The right to vote have those with 18 and over

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3.3.2 Employment and entrepreneurship

During the 1990es Serbian society switched from the system of the so called full-time, steady employment with which the future of the young was certain, to a new system of employment based on the rules of market economy. Although according to some indicators since the year 2000²⁹ comprehensive economic reform has been successful, the number of the registered unemployed has been increasing on a year to year basis³⁰ with the largest number of young people who have not been able to break in the labor market. Development of the private sector did not create enough working places for the young. At the same time, due to 'brain drain' and overproduction of young people graduating from vocational schools and having skills in trades that are no longer required on the labor market, the labor market quality has deteriorated. Consequently, a large number of young people remain unemployed or trapped in temporary and underpaid jobs mostly in the informal labor market.

Up to 20.1%. of the active population were unemployed in April 2010. Employment in the informal economy is very high and stood at 17.2% in April 2010. Particularly worrying is the situation of young people in the labour market. The unemployment rate of people aged 15-24 in Serbia was 46.4% in the first quarter of 2010, compared to 20.3% in the EU-27, and 9.6% of young people are neither in education nor working.³¹

According to the National Plan of Action for Employment, 15,1% of young people between 15-24 were employed, 46,4% were unemployed and 28,2% were actively seeking for employment. A large number of young people, in stress of unemployment were continuing their education.³²

The largest percentage of the unemployed make up the young between 15 and 19 (years intended for secondary education), women, secondary and elementary school graduates. Among 19-24 employment rate is similar to the population over 64 years of age, i.e. non-working population. The most disturbing is the number of young 19-24 that are economically inactive (economic inactivity rate is 71.7%). Most common reasons for their inactivity are that they are still in a process of education or training. Among those aged 15-24 who are looking for a job a half is unemployed and 78% seek their first employment³³.

²⁹ In 2000-2007 there was a steady industrial growth – average 6% GDP with the poverty rate cut in half

³⁰ For example, in January 1999, 665,602 unemployed persons were registered, and by the year 2005 this number rose by 25%, when 890,057 unemployed persons were registered. More than a half of them were young people seeking their first employment. Many of them have been unemployed for a long period (i.e. they have been seeking employment over two years).

³¹ Labour Force Survey April 2010

³² National Plan of Action for employment for 2011, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development

³³ Krstić, G. and Corbanese, V. (2008) Situation analysis of youth employment in the Republic of Serbia, ILO ENG

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Many young people are neither competent nor skilled enough to perform the work they were trained to perform by the formal education system. In Serbia there is no tradition of young people working during their studies, so a small number of students have part-time job experience. Besides, career guidance and counseling system in Serbia is still underdeveloped and consequently a small number of people are ready to volunteer in order to obtain some working experience³⁴. Still, there are six university centres for career guidance and counseling, one is within the CSO sector and one is for young talents (Centre for Career Guidance and Counseling of Young Talents, MYS).³⁵ Studies show that almost 80% of young people work for an employer, but also that youth are more likely to risk and start their own businesses. The main problem for them is lack of start-up capital and connections in business sector³⁶.

3.3.3 Education and training

Closely related to unemployment is the issue of education. Total investing in Serbian education is lower than average investing in education in EU members (3.3% in 2009 as opposed to 5% GDP)³⁷.

In general, Serbia has a conservative educational system with traditional and non-participatory teaching methods³⁸. The education system as a whole, although reform has started, is based on outdated curricula and with little stress on the acquisition of transversal key competences. The average performances of students aged 15 in mathematical, scientific and reading literacy is scored about 60 points lower than the OECD average. PISA results for 2009 shows that 33% of Serbian pupils can be considered functionally illiterate³⁹. Still, these results show significant improvement since the PISA 2006. However, a new Law on the foundations of the educational system adopted in 2009 enable further reforms in the education system.

The high unemployment rate indicates that school and university curricula are in need of revision and do not correspond with the needs of the labor market. For example, only 18% of VET schools are included in newly reformed profiles. On institutional plane, most important is adoption of The Strategy for Career Guidance and Counseling with Action Plan in March 2010. Main aim of this document is to „connect“ loose ends in the labor market demands and personal competences of youth.

³⁴ Krstić, G. and Corbanese, V. (2008) Situation analysis of youth employment in the Republic of Serbia, ILO ENG

³⁵ In Serbia there are six Universities, and each have their own university centre. Also Belgrade open school, which is a CSO have developed a long term program on career guidance and counseling

³⁶ Vuković, Dj. ed. (2007) Personal and Social Activism of Young People, CeSID, Belgrade

³⁷ Ministry of Education data, September 2010

³⁸ Denstad, F. (2008) Developing a National Youth Strategy in the Republic of Serbia, An External Evaluation, Ministry for Youth and Sport, Belgrade ENG

³⁹ PISA Survey 2009, OECD

Non-formal education (NFE) is also an area that lacks basic recognition in Serbia. There are no precise evidence of the number of young people who take part in non-formal education activities, but there are, however, ongoing activities within the non-governmental sector to train young people in NGOs as well as training teachers in the formal education system in the use of new and creative methodology in line with European standards⁴⁰. MYS has conducted in 2010 a research „Nonformal education in Serbia“⁴¹ which aimed to analyze contextual framework for NFE development within civil sector, quality of the existing programs and usefulness for the users. Research showed that although only 6.5% of the civil sector primarily deals with the development of NFE, most of the organizations use NFE methods in their work. The missing link is developed system of quality assurance and TFT (trainings for trainers). Besides that, institutions still don't apply instruments for recognition and validation of NFE (Europass, Youthpass etc.).

The Ministry for Education covered within the Strategy and Action plan for the Education of Elders the area of NFE with set of measures that aim to secure quality of NFE and validation of its results. Besides this, new Law on Education of Elders, which is in a process of development, will regulate the issue of work quality of the institutions in the area of NFE of elders, programs and procedures of accreditations of the institutions and programs.

3.3.4 Social inclusion

In period 2000-2007 there was a steady industrial growth in Serbia – average 6% GDP with the poverty rate cut in half. Still, many young people are considered as at-risk-of-poverty, especially considering those in risk of education-related exclusion and labor market exclusion. Young recipients of social welfare aged 16-30 represent 17.2% of general number of social welfare recipients. The average number of social welfare is approx. 58€ per family. Bearing in mind their unsatisfying material position, young Roma population is more often benefiting from the social welfare system than other vulnerable groups of youth.

National Youth Strategy recognizes the considerable differences in chances for development and quality of life for different youth groups. Therefore ten categories of vulnerable youth groups in risks of social exclusion are defined: young people facing poverty⁴², young Roma, young disabled persons, young refugees and internally displaced persons, young returnees in the readmission process,

⁴⁰ Denstad, F. (2008) Developing a National Youth Strategy in the Republic of Serbia, An External Evaluation, Ministry for Youth and Sport, Belgrade ENG

⁴¹ Vuletic, V. (2010) Non-formal education in Serbia, Institute for Sociological Researches, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade

⁴² For instance, Research of health in the Republic of Serbia 2006, Ministry of Health, showed that only 74% of young people have three meals per day.

vulnerable young people in terms of gender, young parents, young people with unsolved housing issues, young people without parental care and young people from the street (hobos). For each vulnerable group is developed set of measures and activities in order to improve their position on a long range.

In the framework of annual evaluation analyzes that MYS conducts, in 2010 focus was on vulnerable youth groups⁴³. Analyses showed that in average every fourth project is aimed to support some of the vulnerable youth groups in terms of enhancement of their employability, prevention of interethnic conflicts, mediation, prevention of risk behavior, inclusion, activism of youth from the rural areas, reduction of prejudices and discrimination behavior etc.

Young Roma represent aprox.5.7% of the population 15-20. They are the most vulnerable segment of the population in risk of education-related exclusion, because of the fact that large number of them leave school very early (especially girls) so that only 14.1% of Roma boys and 5.9% of Roma girls attend secondary schools. Inadequate education structure prevents them to find job in most cases, so 2/3 of unemployed Roma never had a job.

Young disabled persons are also in risk of education-related exclusion because the significant number of them finishes primary and secondary education in special schools, where they obtaine knowledge that is not required on a labor market, in addition with another difficulties such as psysical obstacles and discrimination. Even there is no precise evidence of the total number of young disabled persons 15-30 in Serbia⁴⁴, it can be estimated that only 13% of all disabled persons are employed. In greatest risk of labor market exclusion are those with mental and combined mental and physical disabilities.

3.3.5 Health and well-being

Among all population groups, as envisaged, the lowest rate of illnesses and deaths is detected in young population, but the existence of high risks resulting from unhealthy lifestyles as well. The data on drug abuse and other addictions and risk behaviors in Serbia is incomplete. Main information sources are surveys that are methodologically unsynchronized, but even so point to the rise in these tendencies: lower age at first contact with tobacco, alcohol and drugs, as well as lower age at first sexual intercourse. Smoking is the most frequent component of risky lifestyles among youth, but the percentage of smokers has been declining from 2003, especially among girls, as opposed to alcohol

⁴³ Ceranic, J. and M. Andjelkovic (2010) Achieved results in youth policy for vulnerable youth groups, CPA/CPS, Belgrade

⁴⁴ Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare registered 5,512 minors with mental disabilities, 3,484 with psysical disabilities and 1,958 with combined disabilities as a recipients of social welfare

and psychoactive substances abusers. The dominant causes of deaths in this population are injuries and poisoning where 38.2% have fatal outcomes and are often connected to alcoholism and drug abuse.⁴⁵

The frequency of smoking among young people aged 15-19 declined in the period 2000-2006, from 22.9% to 15.5%. As compared with the year 2000, in 2006 there were 6.4% less smokers among boys and 8.4% less smokers among girls⁴⁶. Still, there are more active smokers at the age group between 15 and 24 than in any other. The great majority of young people (97.4%) are passive smokers exposed to cigarette smoke in their families and/or school.

The frequency of alcohol abuse among youth had an upward tendency in the period between 2000-2006⁴⁷. The study shows that one third of young people aged 15-19 (27,4%) occasionally drinks alcohol and that 5.5% of the same age group gets drunk at least once a month. Around 63.6% of young people aged 15-19 have never tried alcohol or have so far tasted it once or twice. There is a significant difference in alcohol abuse by gender among young people aged 15-19. While the prevalence of alcoholism among girls was 1.9%, among boys it was 9.1%.⁴⁸

Data concerning psychoactive substance abuse are incomplete, but even so point to the rise in the number of substance users, lower age at first contact and more frequent use of two or three psychoactive substances. The age limit for drug abuse is becoming significantly lower and the average age at first use is 15, with a downward tendency toward 11 to 13 years of age (for example, in 1993 only 0.3% of drug users were between 15 and 19 years of age, and in 2002 and 2003 6.8%, or 13.9% of young people of the same age)⁴⁹.

Due to inadequate monitoring the STD⁵⁰ incidence rate remains unknown. However, according to medical analysis, a large number of sexually active adolescents have contracted STD. For example, according to the incidence of Chlamydia infection among 300 girls aged 19, this disease was contracted by 30.3% of girls. The number of young people diagnosed with STDs in the period between 2002 and 2007 proves constant rise in the number of young people diagnosed with STDs. Main reasons are a frequent change of sexual partners and the use of contraceptives that are not condoms. Average change of sexual partners was 2.4 in a year, and only something over a half of people

⁴⁵ Health of the Serbian Population, analytical study 1997- 2007, The Public Health Institute, Belgrade

⁴⁶ The 2006 Health Survey of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia

⁴⁸ Prevalence is the proportion of young people aged 15-19 drinking alcohol at least once a week per 100.000 persons

⁴⁹ Data from the Strategy for Development of Youth Health

⁵⁰ Sexually transmitted diseases

(51.6%) used a condom during their last intercourse. On average, young people have their first intercourses at the age of 16⁵¹.

The abortion rate decreased from 57.4% in 2000 to 33.1% in 2008. Since in the same period there was a decrease in the number of new births it can be concluded that in the last decade there has been a decrease in the overall number of conceptions. Explanation for this change is a wide spread utilization of contraceptives and the fact that there are many private clinics performing abortions that are not a part of official statistics⁵².

The institutional responses to this problem were numerous in past period. The decline of the frequency of smoking partially was the result of the national campaign of the Ministry of Health. Also, MYS invested more than 2.5 millions € in the prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles of youth through public campaigns, peer-to-peer education, seminars and trainings, development of health clubs etc. More than 10 000 young people participated in these activities.

3.3.6 Culture, leisure, time, religion, sport

Specific for young people, in comparison to the rest of the population, is above average consumption of social network communication, available on Internet. In group 15-19, every third teenager has its own profile on most favorite social network Facebook and almost 40% of those between 20 and 24. In case of young people from 25 to 29, this number is 27% and just 6% of people over 30⁵³. For the young people in the oldest age bracket (25-29) is most common to use Internet in search for jobs, scholarship, to travel and to read e-news⁵⁴.

Research on leisure time of youth and their everyday life⁵⁵, showed that young people spend their spare time most often in socializing with peers, using mobile phones, and in front of the TV screen; 40% of students in Serbia do not engage in any sports activities in their free time; only 30% of subjects read books that are not required by school curriculum; computers are used to connect with other people and to download music and movies. Very rarely are they considered and used as a learning tool; Almost 50% of students have never travelled abroad, and only 25% have travelled somewhere in the last two years.

⁵¹The 2006 Health Survey of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia

⁵² Vuletić, V. Young people in Serbia (2009), MONEE Report, UNICEF, Beograd

⁵³ Vuković, Dj. ed. (2007) Personal and Social Activism of Young People, CeSID, Belgrade

⁵⁴ See Anex 2, Table 3

⁵⁵ Stepanovic, I., Pavlovic-Babic, D., Plut, D., Pesic, J, Krnjaic, Z. and Videnovic, M. ed. (2007), Everyday Life of Young People in Serbia, Institute for Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade

It can be concluded that activities occupying youth free time are predominantly related to entertainment and that they are more oriented towards consumer activities than to proactive life style; There are differences between the ways young people spend their spare time regarding the following variables: region, urban-rural areas, SES; Cultural content is rarely available to young people from small towns and particularly from rural areas.

Religion- 85% of Serbian population are orthodox, 5,5% are Catholics, 1,1% are Protestants, 3,2% are Muslims, 2,6% didn't declare and 2,6% are atheists. There are existing tendencies towards retraditionalization in Serbia, since more than half of young people declare themselves as religious, especially in the youngest categories of youth (among 15-19).

3.3.7 Human and youth rights

Especially vulnerable groups of young people whose human rights are in risk of violation are children and young people in institutions for disabled children and young people, young refugees and internally displaced persons in the collective centre, young Roma in unhygienic settlements, young returnees in the readmission process, young people without parental care and young people from the streets. Also, there are groups of young people in risk of discrimination based on ethnicity, race and/or sexual orientation.

Young people with severe mental disabilities and behavior disorders, residents of the institutions for treatment of disabled children and youth are in very unfavorable position. The efforts to reform the social system towards the de-institutional solutions- foster families, services of daily residence, programs like „Social housing with support“ and support to the families of origin with different social services in the community are continuous from 2005. The problem lies in the fact that those services are mostly in the authority of local self governments and most of them still don't have developed services.

Young disabled people and their families are therefore facing a lack of adequate social support, which leads to exhaustion of already limited family resources and often to abandonment or placing a child in the institutions. In Serbia there are five institutions for treatment of disabled children and youth where most of the children with mental and psychical disabilities spend their whole life in the institution, isolated from the outside world. Two reports⁵⁶ of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia stated that the conditions in the institutions are very bad in terms of material conditions, lack

⁵⁶ Reports People on the Margins No. 3 and 4, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Belgrade
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of inclusive approach, lack of programs for enabling those children and youth to develop basic life competences which makes them dependent to a system and practically life prisoners.

Also, prejudices and discrimination towards Roma and GLBT population are high. Research of the Gay Straight Alliance (GSA)⁵⁷ shows a high level of homophobia with all its entailing consequences. In general, after an attempt of LGBT movement in Serbia to organize Pride Parade in Belgrade (September 2009), there has been a slight increase in homophobia but decrease in "hard core" statements such as "In my opinion, homosexuality is an illness". Still, Pride Parade was very successfully organized in 2010. showing that Serbia moves to more tolerant climate in terms of respecting human rights. Also, the Law on Prevention of Discrimination is implemented for two years, the national minority Councils are established and working and young people can be educated in languages of the national minorities.

⁵⁷ Vukovic, Đ. ed (2010) Prejudices Exposed- Homophobia in Serbia 2010 (2010), Gay Straight Alliance and CeSID, Belgrade
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4. Youth policies and youth work

4.1 Institutions, actors and structures

National level- The main public authority at the national level in charge of youth is the Ministry of Youth and Sport, formed in May 2007. The Sector for Youth within this Ministry aim to develop, regulate and improve the youth policy and to conduct implementation of the strategic documents, support the establishment of the local youth offices on a local level, to build capacities of youth NGOs and to support their initiatives and projects and to conduct different analyses and researches regarding young people and international cooperation. Also, within the Ministry operates the Fund for Young Talents and Center for Career guidance and counseling of Young talents.

Regional level- On a provincial level, public authority in charge of youth is the Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sport, founded in 2004. In November 2005 Provincial Secretariat adopted in Action Plan Policy for Youth in Vojvodina for period 2005-2009, on which basis Provincial Secretariat has implemented many programs for youth, although the national youth policy did not exist at that time. The second Action Plan Policy for Youth in Vojvodina for the period 2011-2014, was adopted by the end of 2010.

The MYS opened six district offices for youth (Novi Sad, Kragujevac, Subotica, Uzice, Valjevo, Nis)⁵⁸. These district offices coordinate the work of local offices and they are entirely financed by the MYS.

Local level- In four years of existence of the MYS, there is an ongoing process of opening Local youth offices in all municipalities across Serbia as a main mechanism for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy. For now, 115 out of 165 local self-governments recognized the importance of supporting youth on local community level and have opened Local youth office. Long-term objective of the MYS is that every local self-government in Serbia establishes a youth office and becomes a reliable partner and a mechanism for youth policy implementation at local level.

Apart from support for establishment of local youth offices, the MYS actively increases their capacities for youth policy implementation through training of coordinators and supporting the process of preparation of local youth action plans. Also, 70 local youth offices have adopted Local Youth Action Plan so far, but the process is ongoing and it is expected that the number of adopted LAP by the end of 2010 will be around 90. The adoption of local youth action plans in these municipalities created conditions for the participation of youth in decision making process.

⁵⁸ Regional office in Belgrade was opened by the Belgrade local self-government
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Over 70 local self-governments formed Youth Councils (half of the members comprise young people). This council enables youth to directly participate in decision making process with regard to youth at local level.

4.1.2 Youth and civil society

The legal framework governing CSOs in Serbia is at a point of transition, as a New Law of Associations defining precise rules regarding CSO registration and their operations came into force on 22 October 2009⁵⁹. The new law provides a social definition of not-for-profit associations as “voluntary and non-governmental organizations organized for achieving and enhancing joint objectives and interests which are not prohibited by the Constitution or other Legal Provisions”. It also recognizes a number of specific types of organization for inclusion in a broader definition of civil society⁶⁰.

The New Law was drafted by a working group within the Ministry of State Administration and Local-Self Government's, with considerable civil society participation with the input from a wide range of legal and civil society experts, including the Council of Europe. It provides, for the first time, the complete legal framework for creation, status and operations of associations in Serbia. The Law will provide possibility of re-registration under within 18 month to the Serbian Business Registers Agency, the right of informal or non-registered organizations to operate, the creation of a unified official Registry of all associations and a provision for funding from the National Budget, the budget of autonomous province Vojvodina and municipal budgets for activities of those associations whose objectives are of general public interest⁶¹.

Important CSOs are numerous in Serbia and reasonably most of them couldn't be mentioned on this occasion, but some of them are: Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF), The Open Society Fund, Civic Initiatives (contact point for CSOs), The European Center for Non-Profit Law (ENCL), The Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CFED), The European Movement in Serbia, The Center for political Studies (CPA/CPS), The Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence (BFPE)⁶². In youth policy the most influential are Belgrade Open School (BOS), Group “Let's...“, The Young Researchers of Serbia, Euro26 Serbia (member of EYCA-European Youth Card Association), AIESEC Serbia and others. An

⁶⁰ Serbia Needs Assessment Report (2010), TASC0 Serbia Office, SIPU International, Belgrade

⁶¹ Although there is no legal definition in law of what constitutes “public interest,” this law suggests a long list of activities eligible for funding, mainly in the fields of health and social protection, the affirmation of minority and human rights, education and culture.

⁶² Official Directory of CSOs in Serbia can be found on the website <http://www.apr.gov.rs/>

umbrella pupils and student organizations in Serbia are Union of Secondary School Students (member of the Organizing Bureau of European School Student Unions - OBESSU) and Student Union of Serbia (member of European Students Union- ESU). Most of the organizations are members of international and regional networks and associations of CSOs. In area of youth policy, most important associations are: CEYN, All Different All Equal, European movement, Save the Children, Youth Peer, Dance for Life and others.

Collectively, the various programmes and instruments through which the EU supports CSOs and their activities represent the largest single source of civil society funding in Serbia. The USAID and the World Bank are also very significant donors and among the domestic private donors most notably stands Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF) and a corporate philanthropy.

A number of central ministries already have begun to provide increasing support to civil society, most notably the Ministry of Youth and Sports which has spent over 3 million EUR on various CSO projects towards the implementation of the National Youth Strategy since its adoption during 2008⁶³. The Ministry was founded partly due to the advocacy of the youth NGOs in the period 2005-2007, when the network of youth CSOs called "Youth Coalition of Serbia"⁶⁴ actively advocating for the formation of the national body that will conduct youth policy⁶⁵. Also, the process of development of the National Youth Strategy was seen by the Council of Europe as one of the best examples of civil society involvement in consultation processes as a part of political decision-making process.

In order to realize the potential contributions of non-governmental sector in the realization of general and specific aims of youth policy defined in the National Youth Strategy, Ministry conducted two content analysis of the projects and capacities of youth associations and non-governmental organizations in the area of youth policy. First was content analysis⁶⁶ implemented on the sample of 312 received project proposals for the first open call that the Ministry announced in 2007. Method of semantic content analysis was implemented on parts of application forms with the description of problems, users, aims and project activities. Results indicated that projects were mostly aimed at programs for encouragement of active participation of young people in different spheres of social life and their non-formal education. About fourth of project proposals dealt with constructive spending of free time, while only 10% or less related to health, employment, environment or safe surroundings for

⁶³ Serbia Needs Assessment Report (2010), TASC0 Serbia Office, SIPU International, Belgrade

⁶⁴ Youth Coalition of Serbia was founded by eight youth national organizations: Civic Initiatives, Student Union of Serbia, JAZAS, Youth Informative Center, Reconnoitres of Serbia, Young Researchers, The Youth Council of Vojvodina and The youth Council of Serbia at the end of 2004.

⁶⁵ More detailed on the website <http://www.gradjanske.org/page/youthProgram/en/youthPolicy/YouthCoalitionOfSerbia.html>

⁶⁶ Kodzopeljic, J. and Simic, D (2008) Content analysy of the projects proposals for the open call of MYS for financing and co-financing of the projects in the area of youth policy, Institute for Psychology, Novi Sad and Faculty of Political Sciences, Belgrade

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young people. Most common target group were young people from vulnerable and socially excluded groups, whereas young people from the countryside are the least mentioned group.

Second was the field research⁶⁷ on capacities of non-governmental organizations to implement youth policy. Researchers combined different data basis on CSO and found 261 active youth organizations, which showed a significant potential for the support in the implementation of NYS in civil sector.

Civil society in Serbia remains dependent on international donors and anecdotal evidence suggests that as much as 75% of all CSO funding is from foreign sources. In recent times, as is the case across the Balkans, Serbia has seen a gradual reduction of activity by foreign donors and there is considerable competition for reduced funding opportunities in the country. Most European embassies and government development agencies have indicated that they will be gradually phasing out their support to Serbia as the country progresses towards European integration. On the other hand, the USAID 2008 NGO Sustainability Index observes increased support for CSOs from both local and central governments over the last year or so, attributing this partly to improved lobbying on the part of CSOs generally. In the absence of formal and transparent criteria for awarding CSOs government funding, successful lobbying is often dependent on personal connections and political affiliations.⁶⁸

4.1.3 Youth and welfare organizations

Most of the humanitarian organizations in Serbia are actually NGOs and collect help for different vulnerable groups, children mainly, but there are also international organizations like Red Cross Serbia, CARE or Oxfam International. Ortodox church has also active humanitarian organization „Čovekoljublje“(free translation: humanity).

Still, main donors for young people are state funds and international organizations. State funds that directly target young people in need are Fund for Young Talents (Government Fund, supported by the Ministry for Youth and Sport), Young People Employment Fund (National Employment Service and UNDP), Scholarships for Poor High School Students (Ministry of Education) and Grants for Talented Students (Ministry of Science and Technological Development) etc. Another funds that indirectly aim to help young people are The Social Innovation Fund (Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and UNDP), Development Fund (Ministry of Economy and Regional Development) etc.

⁶⁷ Vuletić, V. Institutional Capacities for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy, Institute for the sociological researches, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade

⁶⁸ Serbia Needs Assessment Report (2010), TASC0 Serbia Office, SIPU International, Belgrade
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4.2 Context of youth policies and youth work

4.2.1 Youth policy

In the period 1992-2005 there were several different, equally unsuccessful, institutional forms to address young people issues. In former state Federal Republic of Yugoslavia existed Ministry of Youth and Sport until the early weeks of 2001. After the country decay to a Serbia and Montenegro Union⁶⁹, jurisdiction over youth was transferred to the Youth Section in the Ministry of Education and Sport which has started a process of strategy development within the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe Working Group on Young People. Due to the internal reorganization of the ministry, Youth sector was closed down completely in 2005, without finishing the process of Strategy Development.

In this period most important was the influence of international partners on development of youth policy in Serbia, within already mentioned Stability Pact for SEE. The coordinating institution of the Working Group on Young People (WGYP) was Council of Europe, which represented Mr. Peter Lauritzen. Priorities of the Group were youth policy development (promotion and advocacy for young people and their needs to public authorities and other actors, promotion of National Action Plans development and advice on youth policy), promotion of tolerance education and regional co-operation and promotion of civil society development through an active contribution of young people. Group draw up, in parallel to the white paper process in the European Union, a White Paper on Youth Policy for South Eastern Europe using a similar approach and thus, connecting young people in South Eastern Europe with their peers in the European Union. Also, Group worked on collection of data on the situation of young people in Southeast Europe as basis for the development of indicators for youth policy development.

In period 2005-2007 the Republic of Serbia did not have a ministry with the specific responsibility to develop youth policy and was the only country in South East Europe without a governmental strategy to address young people. The Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia founded in May 2007 is now in charge of systematic monitoring and well-being of young people as well as youth policy development. Before that there were significant regional differences in youth support, since from 2004 there was only the Provincial Secretariat for Youth, AP Vojvodina, at regional level in charge of youth policy. At local level, opening of local youth offices and local plans of action for youth have been initiated by the Ministry in 2007.

⁶⁹ Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was successor of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, consisted from two ex Yugoslav republics Serbia and Montenegro (1992- 2003), when became Serbia and Montenegro Union (2003-2006) and finally break up after the results of the referendum in Montenegro

The National Youth Strategy was adopted on May 9 2008, symbolically on Europe Day. On the January 22nd 2009, the Action plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period of 2009-2014, was adopted by the Government, as well.

The National Youth Strategy development process gave special emphasis on ensuring a wide participation process, through which all stakeholders, particularly different groups of youth themselves, had a chance to voice their opinions and views, which contributed to sense of ownership of the Strategy by young people. In addition, a special effort was made to ensure policy formulation as evidence-based and responds to challenges identified through empirical research. Through organized participatory activities and with the input of experts, key themes have been identified⁷⁰, which are considered crucial for the quality of life of young people. Special emphasis were put on young people's leisure-time and participation of youth – as they are solely under the competencies of the Ministry of Youth and Sport and have not been covered in detail in other sectoral strategies.

Next main goal of the Ministry is to develop Youth Law to systematically regulate the youth policy and to support founding of the Umbrella youth organization to advocate and to represent the rights of young people.

4.2.2 Youth work

The definition of youth work in Serbia is: “Youth work is planned programme of educational character, created with the purpose of providing support to young people in a process of transition to adulthood, by provision of help in social and personal development, so that young people could become an active members of the society and participants in a decision making processes. The idea of youth work is creation of a safe environment and possibilities for active participation of young people on a voluntary basis in a process of gaining skills, competences and knowledge“. Also, youth work is considered as “a complementary to the formal education system, gaided by the professional youth workers and conduct activities which uses methods of non formal education and providing informations.“⁷¹

⁷⁰ Objectives of the National Youth Strategy are: to improve the system of informing youth on all levels and in all fields; to support the development of an open, functional, efficient, and just system of formal and non-formal education which is accessible to all young people and in compliance with the European trends in education, as well as with the national context; to support all forms of youth employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship; to improve the possibilities of quality ways of spending leisure time among youth; to improve youth safety and security, to prevent and improve youth health, to reduce risks and the prevailing health disorders and to develop youth-friendly medical care; to encourage youth towards initiative and activities that are in accordance with the basic principles of sustainable development and healthy environment; to support youth in taking active part in solving social, peer and personal problems; to develop a sustainable institutional framework for the cooperation, organization and participation of youth in decision-making processes; to equalize life opportunities for all groups of young people and to reduce the risks of social exclusion and inequality; to support and assess systematically the outstanding results and achievements of youth in various areas and to conduct scientific research about youth

⁷¹ Nikolić, T. (2009) The Socio-economic scope of Youth Work in Europe, Follow-up Study, Report for the Republic of Serbia, Institut fur Sozialarbeit und Sozialpädagogik, Frankfurt am Main

The first association of youth work practitioners, the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners, or The Effort (Serbian NAPOR), was established in 2009, with the aim of setting professional standards for youth work in Serbia. Till now, 77 organizations became members of the Effort. The members of the National Association of Practitioners of Youth work adopted the abovementioned definition of youth work in March 2009, at the conference „Embed effort“, where some consensus on the definition and main principles and action field in youth work was made.

The main public organizations that conduct the youth work are local youth offices. There are 115 Local youth offices that work within the local self government, 6 Regional offices and several youth clubs in Belgrade. In the civil sector, National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (NAPOR), is consisted out of 77 member organizations, which conduct youth work in Serbia.

The sistematization and acreditation of youth workers in the Nomenclature of professions is will be soon established. The aim is that necessary qualifications of a certain level of education are in relation to established system of vocational competences, in regard to both formal and non formal education of individuals. Also the aim is to create available education in form of acredited non formal educational programs and high education studies.

The total number of payed youth workers in NAPOR data base (77 member organizations) is 197 youth workers and the total number of volunteers is 2249.

4.2.3 Youth research

In general, systematic approach to youth issues was established three years ago, when the MYS was founded in 2007. In the period 1990-2007. only few researches based on a national sample were conducted⁷². Before this period, there were many researches, but these researches refer to now essentially changed social and political system (socialism), in which the position of young people was significantly different. A basic problem still lies in the fact that there is no long-term strategy for analyzing the young people, the strategy based on a standard methodology and as a part of which certain aspects would be analyzed during a longer period of time.

MYS regularly conducts applied researches for evidence base policy development and organizes different public debates, produce annual analisys and reports regarding youth⁷³. But, other than the Ministry there is no other public body or institute that can carry out regular and sistematic researches

⁷² See Anex 2, Table 4

⁷³ See Annex 1/list of MYS resorces

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regarding the position of young people and youth policy in Serbia. Existing research institutes, mostly founded by the Faculties, or NGOs carry out youth researches on a non regular basis, leading to consequences that those are often not comparable neither in aims nor methodology.

There are two major types of researches regarding youth in Serbia – theoretical researches and empirical (applied) researches. **Theoretical researches** are mostly realized as parts of comprehensive projects undertaken by scientific institutions, addressing various specific issues belonging to the youth category, starting from the research on values and the attitude of young people up to youth sexual behavior and psychological disorders. The aims and function of the aforementioned surveys are mostly academic and cognitive.

Applied researches are most commonly ordered researches or researches aimed at realization of certain specific objectives inside youth policies that are then again implemented by youth organizations or government institutions, on a national, local or regional sample. Surveys at the local level⁷⁴ mostly resulted from activities connected with local youth policy development. Such surveys were conducted in most of the local self governments that founded Local Youth Offices and started the process of development of local action plans, based on a standardized methodology developed by MYS. Moreover, surveys are usually carried out by youth organizations and organizations for the young at the local level and are focused on analyzing issues facing the young of the same area, or prevalence of certain (usually harmful) aspects and habits among young people.

Subjects of surveys - The subject of most studies published in professional magazines and surveys conducted by different organizations is the subject of delinquency and values among young people.⁷⁵ The attention is often not on youth issues, but on the youth as a key issue of the researches, that is youth as a problem.

Following institutes conducted the researches on youth in Serbia: The Institute for Psychology, The Institute for Sociological Researches, The Institute for Pedagogical Research (Faculty for Philosophy, University in Belgrade), The Institute of Social Sciences and The Institute for Psychology (Faculty for Philosophy, University in Novi Sad) etc.

Market research institutes and civil sector organizations that conduct youth researches are: The Center for political Studies (CPA/CPS), The Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CFED), The Belgrade Open School (BOS), The Group “Let's...“, The Group 484 etc⁷⁶.

⁷⁴ Concerning the regional level we should mention a very simplified brochure *The Youth of Belgrade* (2008), presenting the most relevant statistic data about demographic, educational and working characteristics of the city youth.

⁷⁵ See ANEX 2 Chart 4 shows areas of interest of theoretical and applied researches

⁷⁶ See bibliography on available researches and other resources in English

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4.3 Legislation and provision of youth work

There is no specific legislation concerning youth work. The legislative framework of youth policy in Serbia is consisted currently from National Youth Strategy and Action plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy for the period 2009-2014. The main aim of the Ministry at the moment is to develop the **Law on Youth**. The First Draft of this Law was finished in November 2010 and it is expected that the law will be adopted during the International Youth Year by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia⁷⁷.

The Youth Law has a primary function to provide sustainable basis for development of youth sector, improvement of the position of young people in Serbia and provision of rights, conditions, opportunities and stimulus for growth and development of young people potentials. Youth Law should **regulate** existing praxes and clearly define addressee of the Law, origins and principles of youth policy, actors, coordinative acting and especially funding. In each and every phase of the Law development, wide consultative process will be organized by the Ministry in order to inform and include young people and other relevant actors in the process⁷⁸.

With regard to legislation in youth policy, it is important to mention that the **Law on Volunteerism** (Proposer Ministry of Labor and Social Policy) was adopted by the National Assembly on 4th March 2010 and that the **Strategy for Career Guidance and Youth Counseling** in Serbia and the Action Plan for its implementation (proposer Ministry of Youth and Sport in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and the Ministry of Education), was also adopted in March 2010. New **Law on Associations** was adopted (proposer MPALS) and came into effect on July 22nd 2009. This law is especially important for youth as it facilitates forming groups and envisages the possibility of registering associations for youth under 18 years of age, and older than 16⁷⁹.

One of the basic challenges of the Ministry of Youth and Sport in supporting the establishment of youth offices is the lack of clear legal base for action, given that no initiative was launched for the Amendment on Law on Local Self-government aimed at determining the role of local self governments in youth policy and providing regular budgeting of the existing offices.

⁷⁷ The Proposition of the Law will be submitted to the Government in February and adopted hopefully till the August 12th 2011

⁷⁸ Document on the significance and development process of the Youth Law (June, 2010), Team for Support, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Belgrade

⁷⁹ Annual Report on the Progress in the Implementation of the National Strategy for Youth (May, 2010), Ministry of Youth and Sport, Belgrade

4.4 Strategies, Programs, Action Plans in youth work and non-formal education/learning

For the moment, there are no Strategies and Action Plans in youth work and non-formal education area.

4.5 Strategies in cross-sectoral policies

The National Youth Strategy (hereinafter called NYS) is a crosssectoral strategic document, with coordinative role in youth policy. This strategic document contains eleven general goals, each and every one representing one of the areas considered as the youth policy priority. Besides NYS and the Action plan for Youth in Vojvodina, following strategies are important for youth policy⁸⁰:

Education and training: *The Strategy for Career Guidance and Counseling*, The Strategy of Scientific and Technological Development, The Strategy for Information Society Development, The Strategy of the Ministry of Education 2005-2010.

Creativity, culture, leisure and sport: The Strategy for Sport Development, The Law on Preventing Violence and Misbehave Conduct in Sport, the Bill on Sports, the Amendments to the Law on Prevention of Violence at Sports Events, etc.

Employment and entrepreneurship: The National Strategy for Employment 2005-2010, The Law on Employment and Insurance in the case of Unemployment; The *Action Plan for Employment of Young People*.

Social policies: The Social Welfare Development Strategy, The Poverty Reduction Strategy, The National Strategy for Sustainable Development, The Strategy for Impetus of Fertility, The Action plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion (2005-2015), The National Strategy for improvement of the position of women and gender equality, The Strategy for the Reintegration of Returnee on Readmission Agreement, The Strategy for Improvement of the Position of People with Disabilities etc.

Health and well-being: The Strategy for Youth Health and Development, The National Program for Health Protection of Women, Children and Young people, The Strategy of Public Health Protection, The Strategy for Mental Health Development, The National Strategy for Fight against the Drug Abuse,

⁸⁰ All relevant documents can be found on the web site www.srbija.gov.rs
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The Tobacco Control Strategy, The National Strategy for Fight against HIV/AIDS, The Strategy for Improvement of the Position of Disabled People, The Strategy for Protection and Control of Chronic and Noninfectious Diseases.

Housing and autonomy: No specific strategy

Youth justice: The National Strategy for Prevention and Protection of Children from Violence, The Strategy for Fight against People Trafficking in RS, The Law on Juvenile Offenders and Legal Protection of Minors; The Law on State Authority on Prevention and Suppression of Organized Crime, The Law on Readmission of Illegal Immigrants in EU.

Voluntary activities: No specific strategy

Military and alternative services: The National Strategy for Fight against Corruption, The Strategy for Fight against Organized Crime, The Strategy for Opposition to Illegal Migrations for period 2009-2014, The Strategy for Management of Migration

Youth in the world: complementary possibilities for participation in the Youth in Action Programs are offered to organizations from SEE under Action 3.1. – Youth of the world – which provides possibilities for financial support for youth exchanges, training and networking activities, as well as Action 2- European Voluntary Service.

4.6 European and International dimension

Republic of Serbia is a member of Council of Europe and United Nations and it participates in Stabilization and Association process towards integration to The European Union from 2008. Regarding youth policy, through the cooperation with CoE, Serbia accessed to The Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through Youth Card and The North-South Centre of Council of Europe. MYS is also encouraging young people to be creative and to participate in the open calls of The European Youth Foundation and different activities in The European Youth Centre in Budapest and Strasbourg, by displaying informations through the website. Also, Serbia signed The Agreement on Cooperation with Greece and Netherlands and Memorandum on Cooperation with YouthBuild Programme. In future, The Agreement on Cooperation will also be signed with Portugal and Ukraine, as well as Macedonia and Slovak Republic.

MYS annually organizes international conferences on youth policy. In 2008 MYS organized conference "Development of Youth policy in SEE" in cooperation with the CoE. In 2009 again in cooperation with CoE, MYS organized European Conference on Youth Mobility and International Training about the active participation of young people. In 2010 The Summer University for young people and training course "Democratic participation of young people in the society" was held in Zrenjanin. Representatives of MYS are members of the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Youth, the Advisory Board, EKCYP and the former Expert Research Network. The representative of MYS is chairing the CoE Coordination Board on Partial Agreement on Youth mobility and Programs Board on Youth.

Besides the Council of Europe, important international partners in youth policy are The European Commission, The UN Country Team on Youth (IOM, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF)⁸¹ and other international organizations such as The German Association for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), USAID Serbia, The OSCE Mission to Serbia, The Youth Build International, The National Democratic institute (NDI), The British Council, The Institute for Sustainable Communities and others.

In cooperation with the European Commission, one of the main goals is establishment of the National Youth Agency, for the implementation of the Youth in Action Program. Since Serbia is a Neighboring Partner Country in SEE and does not have established National Youth Agency, it cannot participate in the „Youth in Action“ program directly, but state authorities support this program through NGO contact points. Until now, Serbia contact points were NGOs „Let's...“, „Youth House Niš“ and „Balkan Idea“. In the new cycle, the contact points become "Educational Center Kruševac" and „Let's...“ and „BalkanIDEA“.⁸² Still, state authorities are completely dedicated to form National Youth Agency, as soon as Serbia becomes a candidate country.

4.7 Budget/Funding

In 2010 Ministry for Youth and Sports, Sector for Youth, invested around 1. 9 million € in youth policy and 6. 5 million € was allocated for Funds for Young Talents. Priorities of the Sector were following: implementation of the National Strategy for Youth (support for NGOs on open calls, researches), implementation of the Strategy for Career Guidance and Counseling, building capacities of the Local

⁸² All the relevant informations for Republic of Serbia can be founded on the web site www.mladiukciji.rs
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youth Offices and helping them to develop and implement the Local Youth Action Plans and international cooperation.⁸³

There are three basic financial sources for all youth organizations in Serbia- on the national level different ministries (for example, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy) and especially, Ministry for Youth and Sport. On the local level, 165 local self-governments. Third source are the international organizations and donors, active on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. About 40% of the youth projects are financed by the international organizations and donors and about 35% from the budget. Almost every fourth project was financed from a different sources and half of those project are between one and ten thousands of euro. More than 10.000,00 € costs 39% of the projects and 15% costs less than one thousand euro⁸⁴.

⁸³ Finacial Plan of Sector for Youth 2010. Ministry for Youth and Sport

⁸⁴ Vuletić, V. Institutional Capacities for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy, Institute for the sociological researches, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade

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5. Trends, needs, challenges and expectations

Youth policy in Serbia is evolving very rapidly, especially on the institutional level. The main problem is a neglect of young people needs and young people themselves as a social priority in the last two decades. By the end of 80es and during the 90es, youth was no longer seen as a priority, so this was the time of almost total neglect of youth issues. In time of social and economic crisis, there was a great need for a different approach to youth, so that social response to a complex youth questions can be effective. This gap is still existing, so even thou there was a great number of civil initiatives, till the moment of establishment of the Ministry for Youth and Sport, the process of defining and establishment of youth policy and youth work in Serbia seemed to be over and over again at the beginning.

Ministry for Youth and Sport exists only for 3 years, but in that period more than 30 open calls for NGOs were conducted and more than 500 youth projects were implemented. As one study show,⁸⁵ more than 2/3 of existing youth organizations were conducting at least one youth program at that moment, due to the constant open calls for NGOs, which is impressive comparing to the situation tree years ago. Even it is still at an early stage, the situation is rapidly changing for better.

Possibly a problem is a fact that this is basically centralized model of youth policy, because the role of the Ministry for Youth and Sport as an architect of youth policy is of great importance in this early stage. Many local self governments realized the importance of investing in young people only after strong initiative and financial support from the Ministry. The aim of the Ministry is to strengthen local self governments to open Local Youth offices and to implement youth policy on local level, through support of development of the Local action plans for youth. As a financial source and experience partner, international organizations such as Council of Europe and UN agencies are also very important stakeholders, very closely linked to the Ministry.

Another weakness is the fact that Serbia has no established national reporting system related to quantitative and qualitative data on youth. Existing reports are related to specific project/program/organization/institution and are allied to procedures of specific funding sources (e.g. donors, foundations, government) and/or internal procedures of organization/institutions. Yet, there is no established national reporting system that would gather all available data at national level. MYS is installing software for youth NGOs and their programs as well as software of the Fund for Young talents.

⁸⁵ Vuletić, V. Institutional Capacities for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy, Institute for the sociological researches, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade

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With support of Ministry of Youth and sport, as a foremost responsible institutional body, R. Serbia recently entered into process of youth work professionalization and creation of systematic professional youth care network. Due to recent foundation of National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (NAPOR), that will lead the process of recognition of youth work in Serbia. The Association is supposed to represent a mechanism for creating recommendations for more good practices and information exchange, as well as to promote the cooperation between civil organizations and, with support of the Ministry for Youth and Sport, insure the youth program's quality. But this process is still at the beginning and the standards of youth work are still not established on the national level, so there are significant differences in terms of the quality of youth programs within the different regions. Hopefully, this will be the platform for the future legislative framework of youth work in Serbia.

But still, almost all activities regarding youth work in Serbia in last two decades were conducted within the frame of civil society organizations. Those civil society organizations learned from the western models of youth work and by modification of those models, they have tried to implement them in Serbia. Youth work as such, is still unacknowledged as a profession in Serbia, but the profession of youth worker will be added in the new Nomenclature of professions in Serbia. Profession of youth worker is in accordance with the international standards ISCO- 08.

In future, Serbia is hopefully part of the EU and the basis of the youth policy are already set and developed, since all the prerequisites already exist.

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Annexes/statistics

Table 1 Number of young people in Serbia 2000-2009

Year	General population	Young people 15/24	Young people 24/29
2000	7527952	1026642	
2001	7504739	1021616	
2002	7502126	1014867	
2003	7490918	1007498	
2004	7470263	997800	
2005	7456050	985683	
2006	7425487	970026	
2007	7397651	955916	
2008	7365509	937830	
2009	7334935	918361	

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS), Census 2002

Table 2 The number of young people 15-29 and estimated number for 2009, in absolute and relative proportion to the total population

Age	2002			2009		
	total	male	female	total	male	female
Total population	7498001	3645930	3852071	7411569	3603698	3807871
15-19	495651	253353	242298	456348	233817	222531
20-24	512429	261232	251197	506071	257773	248298
25-29	504566	253636	250930	515849	262060	253789
	%			%		
Total population	100	100	100	100	100	100
15-19	6.61	6.95	6.29	6.16	6.49	5.84
20-24	6.83	7.17	6.52	6.83	7.15	6.52
25-29	6.73	6.96	6.51	6.96	7.27	6.66

Source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (SORS), Census 2002

Table 3. What social networks do you prefer for gaining information? (in %)

	Don't use Internet	Websites of Ministries	Webbrowsers for finding jobs	Websites of students and other youth organizations	Forums and Blogs	Media Websites	Facebook, Myspace, etc.	Other websites	Portal
15 - 19	42	1	4	6	4	6	26	12	100
20 - 24	36	1	4	10	5	8	20	17	100
25 - 29	45	5	7	2	5	11	11	15	100
Older than 30	68	5	2	2	3	5	3	12	100
Average	61	4	3	3	4	6	7	13	100

Source: Personal and Social Activism of Young People (2007), CeSID, Belgrade

Table 4 Youth research subject areas

Subject areas	Survey number
Values and attitudes	11
Psychosocial disorders	8
Sexual behavior	7
Labor and employment	3
Crime and violence	14
Marriage, family, reproduction	8
Leisure time	4
The youth with special needs	4
Environment	2
The youth and religion	4
The youth and media	3
Demography	3
The youth and education	3
The youth and EU	5
The youth and safety	1
Youth habits	7
TOTAL	86

Source: Institutional Capacities for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy, Institute for the sociological researches (2008)