

Youth Partnership

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



INFORMATION TEMPLATE
ON
SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA



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1. The socio-economic situation of young people

Please inform which groups of the young people are perceived as being socially excluded. What are the main factors for being socially excluded as a young person in your country?

In the Republic of Serbia (RS) the term “social exclusion” describes the condition of individuals or families at the margin of the economic, political, cultural and social system, prevented from their full participation in social life because of poverty, lack of basic knowledge, opportunities of lifelong learning, or as a result of discrimination. Such situation of an individual or group of people exclude them from the possibility of employment, income and educational opportunities, as well as the inclusion and participation in social life and community activities. Excluded individuals or groups have insufficient and inadequate access to institutions, government bodies and decision-making processes¹. Unfortunately, the RS has a lack of appropriate data of social excluded young people, but it can be said that young unemployed people and young people without basic knowledge are perceived as being socially excluded. According to *The Survey on Income and Living Conditions – SILC*, conducted for the first time in the RS in 2013 by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, unemployment and poverty are the main factors of young people’s social exclusion.

In main strategic document of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, the National Youth Strategy (adopted in 2008) one of the main strategic goals (goal number 4) is: “Life chances of all groups of young people and risks of social exclusion and inequality”. It is also stated that young people are not a homogenous group, regardless of whether it is thought that they share a “common destiny” and that there are different vulnerable groups of young people: young people facing poverty, young Roma, young disabled persons, young refugees and internally displaced persons, young returnees in the readmission process, 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. Unfortunately, there aren’t any exact data regarding all of these mentioned categories, but in this questionnaire we will provide with all available data and information.

1.1 Please provide the percentage representing the share of young people (18-24) who are at risk of poverty (and/or severely materially deprived and/or living in a household with very low work intensity). Please compare it to the general population risk of poverty rate. What is the trend in your country – is the rate growing etc.?

According to *The Survey on Income and Living Conditions – SILC*, persons under the age of 18 are most at risk of poverty - **30.0%**. For a group aged 18-24 the available data are for 2010² - **21,1%** of them

¹ Definition downloaded from the official website of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the RS Government - <http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/>

² Publication *Monitoring the situation of social exclusion*, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit in cooperation with the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, August 2012 - <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/>

are at risk of poverty. If we follow SILC results, in 2012 general population at risk of poverty rate was **24.6%** while in 2010 it was lower **18,3%**. At-risk-of-poverty rate by age shows that since 2006 young people under the age of 18 were and stay most exposed to the risk of poverty. In the period 2006 - 2009 the rate was constantly decreasing³, while from 2010 it started to increase.

1.2 Has an impact of the current financial crisis on young people been observed in your country?

Spillover of the financial and economic crisis in the RS occurred at similar form and practically at the same time as in other countries. Increasing poverty is particularly evident among the less educated and young people under the age of 18. The financial and economic crisis contributed through various channels to the reduction in income, particularly by reducing employment and increasing unemployment of young people. In the RS unemployment rate for the age 15-24 is 49,1%⁴, while in 2008 it was 33% for a group aged 20-24⁵.

2. Policy measures for young people at risk of social exclusion

2.1 Social subsistence/protection and health cover for young people living in poverty

Numerous institutions, both national and local, civil society and international organizations provide young people in Serbia with social protection programs: line ministries (<http://www.srbija.gov.rs/>), National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia (www.parlament.gov.rs), the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit (SIPRU - www.inkluzija.gov.rs), local governments (<http://www.mrrls.gov.rs/>), civil society and social partners (for example: www.crid.org.rs) and International donors (www.unicef.rs).

But, the most important governmental body for this topic is **the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit** established in 2009. On their official website – www.inkluzija.gov.rs – all important documents, publications, newsletters, etc. can be found. Unfortunately there aren't any documents regarding young people only, but there are several documents regarding some groups of young people (Roma children, for example). On all of the given websites one can find out about the list of benefits which are available to the young people in vulnerable groups, not just the ones living in poverty.⁶

The status of vulnerable group of people in Serbia is regulated through numerous laws and bylaws (National Youth Strategy, National Employment Strategy, etc), and of course it is regulated in the Serbian Constitution ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 98/2006). When it comes to laws: **Law on Youth** ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 50/11); **Law on Health Care** ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 107/2005, 72/2009, 88/2010, 99/2010, 57/2011, 119/2012, 45/2013); **Law on Health Insurance** ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 107/2005, 109/2005 – corr. 57/2011, 110/2012, 119/2012); **Law on Social Welfare** ("Official Gazette of the

³ In 2006 the rate was 20,9%; 2007 – 21%; 2008 – 17,9%, 2009 – 17,7%.

⁴ Labor Force Survey 2013 conducted by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia - <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/>

⁵ Labor Force Survey 2008 conducted by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia - <http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/>

⁶ Data, statistics and all relevant information can be found on the website of the line ministry, the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy of the Republic of Serbia- <http://www.minrzs.gov.rs>

Republic of Serbia”, No. 24/2011); **Law on Pupil and Student Standard** (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 18/10 and 55/13); **Law on the System of Education** (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 72/09,52/11 and 55/13); **Law on Primary Education** (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 55/13); **Law on Secondary Education** (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 55/13); **Law on Higher Education** (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 76/05, 97/08 and 93/12); **Law on Preventing Discrimination of the Persons with Disabilities** (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 33/2006); **Family Law** (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 18/2005), etc.⁷

2.2 Measures to meeting the medical Care needs of Young people at risk of social exclusion

All relevant data regarding this topic can be found on the website of the line ministries – Ministry for Health of the Republic of Serbia - <http://www.zdravlje.gov.rs> – and Ministry of Work, Employment and Social Policy - <http://www.minrzs.gov.rs>.

2.3 Measures to re-engage the young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Not applicable for now because there isn't any strategy for particularly NEET group of young people in Serbia. There are plans to participate in the [Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance \(IPA II 2014 – 2020\)](#) regarding this topic, especially because, based on Labor force survey in 2011 and 2013 of the Statistical office of the Republic of Serbia, in Serbia percentage of NEET group is high: 18,5% (2011) and 17,6% (2013) of young people (15-29) belongs to the non-active category.

2.4 Measures to ensure access to decent housing for young people at risk of social exclusion

Exact plan for decent housing for young people at risk of social exclusion does not exist, but in accordance with the Law on Social Welfare there are some housing and accommodation measures.

2.5 Measures addressing the social integration of young people with disabilities

Beside the measures taken by civil society and NGOs, there are also institutional measures addressing specifically the integration of young people with disabilities. With the adoption of the Law on Preventing Discrimination of the Persons with Disabilities (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 33/2006) this field is specifically regulated. Also, Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2006 adopted National Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Persons with Disabilities in the Republic of Serbia.⁸ When it comes to more particular measures, there is also a Law on Benefits in Inner Traffic System for the Persons with Disabilities (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 22/93, 25/93 and 101/05).

⁷ List of the laws and bylaws can be found on Units official website: http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/?page_id=2347&lang=en

⁸<http://www.minrzs.gov.rs/doc/porodica/strategije/Strategija%20unapredjenja%20polozaja%20OSI.pdf>

2.6 The contribution of youth work (and youth centres) to social inclusion of young people

Yes, there have been measures taken at all levels regarding youth work and youth clubs and centers functioning. Since 2007 the Ministry for Youth and Sport through open calls financed and supported 354 local youth office projects which were in coordinated with National Youth Strategy goals with the total amount of 155 million RSD. On the national level line ministries are in charge for conducting all the measures relevant for the social inclusion for the young people.⁹ On the provincial level there is a provincial administrative body responsible for youth.¹⁰ On the local level local youth offices are conducting programs related to social inclusion. There are 145 local youth offices in the Republic of Serbia and they represent great potential for contributing toward social inclusion of young people. With the financial support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports 44 youth clubs have been established throughout the country so far. Ministry of Youth and Sports has also financially supported activities aimed to improve quality of youth work. In the last three years the National Association of Youth Work (NAPOR) has licensed 47 organizations for youth work; 38 youth office coordinators has been trained and certified for youth work. At the moment 26 representatives of youth offices and organizations are being trained for youth workers. Youth organization "Center for Youth Work" in cooperation with Jonkoping University, Sweden, has trained 32 representatives of political parties, NGOs, youth activists for youth workers. With support of OSCE mission in Serbia 75 youth office coordinators and 40 youth office associates were trained for principles of non-discrimination and work with vulnerable youth.

It's important to emphasize that Ministry of Youth and Sports developed Guidelines for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy on local level, more precisely the Ministry youth office standards and competencies of local youth office coordinators. Through these guidelines coordinators are acquainted with theory and practice within the area of human rights, non-discrimination, social inclusion, equal possibilities for vulnerable groups of young people in order for the coordinators to understand the needs of young people in vulnerable groups and to involve them into the activities of youth offices.

3. Research on social inclusion

3.1 Is there any national report/ national survey investigating the social exclusion of young people in your country, including issues of discrimination?

There aren't any researches on the national level dealing only with the social exclusion of young people, so there aren't any concise knowledge items on this issue solely. The most important researches on social inclusion are carried out by the governmental **Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit** such as Monitoring Social Inclusion in Serbia: Overview and status of social inclusion

⁹ List of all the ministries in the Government of the Republic of Serbia can be found at following website: http://www.srbija.gov.rs/?change_lang=en

¹⁰ <http://www.sio.vojvodina.gov.rs/>

on Serbia based on monitoring European and national standards - <http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Monitoring-Social-Inclusion-in-Serbia-Aug-2012-ENG-revizija.pdf>. On the official Units website - www.inkluzija.gov.rs – numerous researches important for this issue can be found.¹¹

There are, also, various researches conducted by the NGO's, international organizations, etc. For example, the report from 2011 "Social assistance and activation in Serbia: in search of inclusive policy options" carried out by the Center for Liberal-Democratic Studies (CLDS) for the Joint Programme Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration in Serbia financed by the MDG Achievement Fund, provides us with some valuable data and information which can be used in further social inclusion policy implementation.¹² Also there are researches conducted by the NGO's dealing with potentially socially excluded persons, such as: Center for Inclusive Society Development - www.crid.org.rs, Youth with Disabilities of Serbia - www.forum-osi.org, National organization of persons with disabilities of Serbia - <http://www.noois.rs/English>. There are also numerous useful publications of the Child Rights Center like "A place for me - children in foster care in Serbia" - <http://www.cpd.org.rs/en/home.html>.

3.2 Is there any longitudinal research focused on the cumulative nature of disadvantage (taking place across generations of the same family).

Not applicable.

3.3 Apart from national reports and surveys, are you aware of other research that is valuable for understanding the situation of young people (esp. those with fewer opportunities) in the current crisis?

Apart from the surveys carried out by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia (mentioned in 1.2) there aren't any exact indicators or data regarding the situation of young people in the current crisis. There are, however, researches regarding the overall situation of young people in Serbia, such as one research conducted in 2012 by the Institute for Sociological Researches within the Philosophy Faculty, University of Belgrade. This research provides us with the information concerning young people position in all spheres of social life in Serbia – unemployment, education, etc.¹³ Also, Institute for Psychology, Philosophy Faculty, University of Belgrade in cooperation with UNICEF Serbia carried out one study named "Study of factors contributing to the elementary and high school drop-outs".¹⁴

¹¹ See publications on: http://www.inkluzija.gov.rs/?page_id=2339&lang=en

¹² <http://rs.one.un.org/organizations/12/Social%20Assistance%20web%5B1%5D.pdf>

¹³ see on: <http://www.domomladine.org/assets/Uploads/Mladi-nasa-sadasnjost-1.pdf>

¹⁴ see on <http://www.unicef.rs/>

4. Examples of policy responses and practices

4.1 What are relevant initiatives/projects at regional/ national level promoting the social inclusion of young people?

Different kind of projects of the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit. For example: the project *Adult Life Entry Network – ALEN*, „Empowerment and Activation of Young People in Disadvantaged Situations” – was funded under the EU PROGRESS Program. The project started in October 2011 and finished in April 2013. The overall objective of the project was to provide a contribution to the development of innovative services for social inclusion and empowerment of young people in disadvantaged socio-economic conditions by developing and testing socially innovative approaches and learning from each other. Direct beneficiaries were young people in poor socio-economic conditions.

There is also an online course on social inclusion available from March 2011 to all interested people (www.inkluzijakurs.info). The course was prepared by the organization SeConS in coordination with the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit. The course should enable development of skills and competencies of different actors on social inclusion and thereby contribute to the successful adaptation of the institutional framework, policy and practical work in the field of poverty reduction and social inclusion standards of the EU.

Project *“Delivery of Improved Local Services – DILS”* was implemented through cooperation between Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labor and Social Policy on one side, and World Bank and EBRD on the other.¹⁵ This project was conducted until the end of 2012 and main goal of the project was to provide better, accessible, efficient and unbiased services for citizens regarding education, health and social welfare. Project was very successful, especially regarding inclusive education.

Beside this, the Ministry of Youth and Sport is financing different kind of projects of youth organizations and organizations for youth and their associations in accordance with the above mentioned goal number 4 of the National Youth Strategy.

3.2 Have young people and civil society organizations been given political and financial support to be involved in the policy making process on social inclusion?

The Government has established a **Youth Council** in 2014 as an advisory body, which is consisted of representatives of the governmental bodies dealing with youth issues, provincial governmental body in charge for youth affairs, youth associations, youth offices, joint representative of national councils of minorities, and renowned experts. There are 24 members and one third of the Youth Council memberships are the representatives of young people. Through the work of the Council structured dialogue between the young people and national, regional and local institutions will be developed and ensured.

Also, through provincial youth council and local youth council (110 were established so far) young people can participate in policy-making processes which are concerning youth issues.

¹⁵ see on: <http://www.dils.gov.rs/index.php?page=fmp&dilsLangMode=3> and <http://www.dils.gov.rs/mp/>

3.3 Have youth organisations and other civil society organisations been involved in the development of the policies related to social inclusion of young people.

Yes, through different projects of cooperation they are involved, but, they role is most important when it comes to developing strategic documents concerning youth issues. Most of the processes are very transparent and carried out through cooperation of all relevant stakeholders.