

Youth Partnership

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



INFORMATION SHEET BETTER KNOWLEDGE OF YOUTH LATVIA



Updated by Gints Klasons 19/02/2016

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1. Promotion and support of youth research

In 2009 Youth Policy Guidelines for 2009 – 2018¹ (hereinafter – the Guidelines) were approved that primarily tackled gaps in youth research related to:

- (1) lack of ensured annual monitoring, research and statistics about youth in various aspects, in all public sphere that has an impact and refer to youth;
- (2) lack of network of researchers or institution that would facilitate research about youth in all national policy spheres, as well as collaboration of youth researchers.²

In the Guidelines regular monitoring, research and analysis is defined as one of the key tasks to facilitate cooperation and action harmonization in youth policy at national level, as well as raising awareness about youth. In the vision of youth policy development, a situation to be reached in year 2018 is described as following: “Youth policy implementation is based on studies and data analysis that help to choose the most appropriate policy means for solving problems. Data in the field are collected about youth and it is possible to evaluate youth development progress every year”³.

According to the goals and tasks of the Guidelines in 2009 Youth Policy National Programme for 2009-2013⁴ (hereinafter – the Programme) was approved, foreseeing regular monitoring and qualitative study of youth policy, including:

- (1) to ensure regular youth monitoring;
- (2) to carry out studies and to ensure research work coordination about significant youth policy aspects and about youth life quality;
- (3) to hold scientific conferences about development of youth policy research in Latvia;
- (4) to support the development of a youth research network in Latvia;
- (5) to elaborate youth policy implementation index;
- (6) to evaluate youth policy implementation in municipalities.

In the mid-term evaluation of the Youth Policy Guidelines for 2009-2018, carried out in 2013, it was concluded that the youth policy evaluation index included in the document has significant weaknesses. A large part of the indicators cannot be traced, as sources of base value are unknown or they are taken from large-scale ad hoc studies that cannot be repeated. Therefore, during the process of developing the new Youth Policy Guidelines for 2015-2020, the system of youth policy index has been remodelled. Accordingly, work on updating so far regularly conducted youth studies (based on the order of the Ministry of Education and Science) is carried out, identifying indicators essential to analysis and the intervals at which these should be collected. Besides, if previously the essential target group was young people, it is expected that further studies will be conducted also about youth

¹ Approved by the regulations No 246 of the Cabinet of the Ministers, 20.04.2009.

² Policy Guidelines for years 2009 – 2018 – <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=2994> (in Latvian)

³ Youth Policy Guidelines for years 2009 – 2018 – <http://polsis.mk.gov.lv/view.do?id=2994> (in Latvian)

⁴ Approved by the regulations No 589 of the Cabinet of the Ministers, 27.08.2009.

workers, thereby ensuring broader monitoring of youth work. It is expected that the new Youth Policy Guidelines for 2015-2020 will be approved in the first half of 2016, and, from the next year, a new system of regular monitoring of youth policy will be introduced, studying target groups of young people, as well as youth workers.

The state budget and various foreign financial instruments are used to finance studies on youth policy implementation and youth target group.

2. Legal basis for an evidence-based approach to youth policy

The Youth Law adopted by the Latvian Parliament on May 8th, 2008⁵ stipulates that public institutions implementing youth policy should evaluate the impact on youth of their relevant policy actions. According to the Youth Law, local governments developing an institutional system for work with youth have the right to establish youth councils whose tasks should include collecting and analysing information about local youth problems, needs and interests. Evaluation of youth interests, rights, needs and opportunities is one of the common principles of the youth policy (principle of observance of youth interests).

As it is mentioned above, regular youth monitoring, youth research and analysis are defined as one of the significant tasks also in the Guidelines and in the Programme (see Chapter 1).

3. Structures and actors that play a role in gaining a better knowledge of young people

3.1. Departments in universities gathering knowledge on youth

The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology under the University of Latvia is currently the only higher education institution that defines youth research work as one of the main social science research directions. The Institute specializes mainly in research themes that focus on youth identity, social exclusion and youth integration in society. The Institute's website is <http://www.fsi.lu.lv>.

3.2. Major public and semi-public bodies dealing with youth research, public companies included

Public institutions in Latvia do not carry out in-house research in the field of youth; they only sometimes collect statistical data and/ or carry out its secondary analysis. For primary information, research has been carried out within open tender procedures. Ministries (the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Welfare etc) and state institutions (the State Employment Agency, the Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, the Public Health Agency, State Police etc) have carried research work on youth in the framework of procurement procedures.

⁵ Youth Law – <http://www.likumi.lv/doc.php?id=175920> (in Latvian)

3.3. NGOs dealing with youth issues

According to the Youth Law, a youth organization is a society that is registered in the register of associations and foundations and in the list of youth organizations, which lists organizations that meet several criteria defined in the law.⁶ Up to now, 24 youth organizations⁷ that meet criteria have been registered officially in the register of youth organizations of Latvia. In their statutes, none of these youth organization defines research work as their main aim or task and, up to now, none of them has carried out any representative study on youth target group.

In addition, youth research is not the main aim of more than 16 031 non-governmental organizations registered in Latvia⁸. In 2014-2015, the Youth Council of Latvia, in cooperation with researcher Gints Klāsons carried out the study "Young People's Political Involvement in Latvia", implemented within the project "Implementation of the Structured Dialogue by Italy, Latvia and Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union". The project is implemented by the Youth Council of Latvia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and with financial support of the European Union Erasmus+ Programme. In recent years, this is the broadest study conducted by any NGO working in the youth field in Latvia.⁹

3.4. Private companies dealing with youth research

Taking into consideration that youth researches in Latvia have been organized under public procurement procedures, almost all private companies working in the field of research in Latvia have carried out some studies on youth during the last five years.

Excolo Latvia Ltd, Laboratory of Analytical and Strategic Study Ltd, TNS Latvia Ltd, Aptauju Agentura Ltd and research studio Factum Ltd carried out annual monitoring on youth policy implementation (years 2009-2015), based on the open call of the Ministry of Education and Science.

In 2013, Excolo Latvia Ltd carried out also the mid-term evaluation of the Youth Policy Guidelines for Year 2009-2018, and in 2014, it updated evaluation studies on implementing youth policy (monitoring studies and youth policy implementation index). Furthermore, at the

⁶ Criteria for registering the list of youth organizations: (1) one of the purposes of activity specified in the statutes of the association is youth work, the promotion of youth initiatives and participation in decision-making and social life;(2) the association carries out youth work and tasks of the association defined in the statutes correspond to at least three main tasks defined in the third part of the article 2.1. of the law; (3) at least two thirds of the members of the association are children and young people or also several associations, where in total at least two thirds of the members are children and young people; and (4) participation of young people is ensured in administrative institutions of the association, and the procedures for this participation are specified in the statutes of the respective association.

⁷ Latvijas Mazpulki, Jaunatne smaidam, Mums pieder pasaule, Creativus, the association of youth organisations IMKA Latvija, RED – Radošu Efektu Darbnīca, Latvian Scout and Guide Central Organisation, Youth Cooperation Network of Latgale, culture and education studio „Talantu pilsēta”, creative society for youth "Trepes", Latvian youth organisation „Tellus” etc. Full list of organizations can be found here: <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/nozares-politika/jaunatne/8049.html>

⁸ According to the data of the Register of Enterprises, there are 16 031 associations and foundations registered in Latvia up to December 2015.

⁹ More information about project: <http://ljp.lv/sanemts-atbalsts-projekta-struktureta-dialoga-istenosana-italijas-latvijas-un-luksemburgas-prezidenturas-eiropas-savienibas-padome-istenosana/> (in Latvian).

end of 2013, researchers of Excolo Latvia Ltd Gints Klāsons and Asoc.prof. Dr.sc.soc. Anda Laķe, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, elaborated a publication "Young People in Latvia: Activity, Mobility, Participation. 2008-2013", which compiles research data from studies on youth carried out in the last five years and provides an overview of youth research in Latvia.¹⁰

The Laboratory and Analytical and Strategic Study Ltd, carried out in 2015 a study on youth work quality in municipalities and elaborated also guidelines for development of youth work in municipalities that haven't done that yet.

The Laboratory and Analytical and Strategic Study Ltd elaborated a study on possibilities of voluntary work development in Latvia and its contribution to the national economy (year 2011), based on the open call of the Ministry of Education and Science. Another study on youth social and political activities was also carried in 2007, based on the open call of the Ministry of Children and Family Affairs.

The Institute of Sociological Researches Ltd carried out a study on youth training needs and interests in distant and less developed regions (year 2010), based on the call of the Ministry of Education and Science, as well as a study on habits and trends of usage of addictive substances among school children (year 2007), based on the call of the Public Health Agency.

The research centre SKDS carried out a study on youth attitude towards participation in youth organizations (year 2008), based on the call of the Ministry of Education and Science.

3.5. Statistical offices that collect statistics on youth

The Central Statistical Bureau collects all official statistics on population in Latvia. Publications and data bases are available on the web site of the Central Statistical Bureau – <http://www.csb.gov.lv>. Unfortunately, youth as a separate target group is not displayed in statistical summaries. The Central Statistical Bureau publishes annual statistical yearbooks that include basic information on youth (latest available here: http://www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/nr_13_jauniesi_latvija_2014_14_00_lv.pdf in Latvian only). The Bureau also publishes annual publications *Children in Latvia* that gives in depth statistical information on children in Latvia and their quality of life (latest available here: http://www.csb.gov.lv/sites/default/files/nr_12_berni_latvija_2014_14_00_lv_en.pdf bilingual - in Latvian and English). Unfortunately, in these and other statistical data of Central Statistical Bureau, youth is most often defined in different age groups (mostly 15-24, sometimes also 18-24) than it is defined in the Youth Law of Latvia (13-25). Therefore, in Latvia it is difficult to carry out statistical data analysis of youth within its age group according to the definition of the law.

¹⁰ Publication is available: http://izm.izm.gov.lv/upload_file/2013/Jauniesi-Latvija_2008-2013.pdf (in Latvian)

3.6. Directory of national youth researchers

Although there are several researchers (both in academic, and private institutions) that specialize in youth research, though not always as their main and only specialty, there is no common online database developed to gather together information about these researchers.

3.7. National research networks on youth

In Latvia there is no research network that would facilitate research work in youth field or collaboration among youth researchers. One of the most significant reasons why there is no such network is the fact that work in youth research in Latvia is carried out via public procurement procedures and within projects of foreign financial instruments that most often are short term projects and researchers involved in these projects work in their weekday with studies in other fields.

3.8. Transnational research networks (involving more than one country) on youth with relevance for national networks

Until 2009, Latvia was represented in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYF), participating in its activities, including reports on youth policy implementation in Latvia and development and activities of youth research were elaborated.¹¹ In 2012, participation in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy is renewed (currently duties of youth policy researcher – expert is carried out by sociologist Gints Klāsons (till December of 2015)). In 2012, two reports (Better Knowledge of Youth; Youth and the World), as well as an informative report on youth policy in Latvia have been developed. While in 2013, the Information sheet on Social Inclusion of young people in Latvia was elaborated. At the end of 2014 all these reports were updated.

Until 2013, Latvia was represented also in the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR). The representative of Latvia in PEYR was researcher Ilze Trapenciere from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology (University of Latvia).

In the new Youth Policy Guidelines for 2015-2020, the Ministry of Education and Science defined membership of Latvian youth researchers in transnational research networks as one of activities of youth work for the coming years.

3.9. Knowledge networks supporting youth policy

In order to ensure coordination of youth policy, the Consultative Council of Youth (previously the Council of Youth Policy Coordination) was established, whose aim is to promote the development and implementation of coordinated youth policy in Latvia, as well as youth involvement in the decision-making process and social life¹². The Chairman of the Council is the Prime Minister. The Council is represented by delegated representatives of public

¹¹ More information is available: <http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/ekcyp/index>

¹² More information is available: <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/nozares-politika/jaunatne/lidzidaliba/7527.html>

administration and municipal institutions, as well as representatives of youth organisations making half of the composition of the Council.

4. Promotion and support to youth researchers and other actors who work towards a better knowledge of youth

Is there any measure (eg funding) undertaken for the:

- **facilitation of exchanges between researchers, policy makers and practitioners in the field of youth**

There is no support programme particularly within youth research for raising competence of researchers and for exchange of experience implemented yet.

- **support of mobility and skills improvement of youth researchers**

Researchers working in Latvia are active members in various research organizations and networks (the Latvian Sociological Association, the European Society of Opinion and Market Research etc) that give opportunity for exchange of experience, and define qualification and professional skills for researchers.

5. Publications and accessible data in the youth field/on youth

5.1. Data collections which provide updated statistics on youth

Statistical data particularly about youth target group (as it is defined in the Youth Law, namely, 13-25-year-old young people) is not summarized separately in Latvia, but data about young people is available from the databases on the website of the Central Statistical Bureau, as well as, in printed materials. At the same time, statistical data about young people are collected and analyzed within various studies related to youth issues.

5.2. Regular youth reports

Since 2009, yearly monitoring on youth life quality, involvement in voluntary work and in youth organization work, as well as access to topical information for young people has been carried out in Latvia. Monitoring reports allow in depth evaluation of results of youth policy implementation and desired improvements.

The conclusion of the 2013 mid-term evaluation of the Youth Policy Guidelines for Years 2009-2018 indicated that the monitoring system of youth policy included in the document is incomplete. In 2014 the Ministry of Education and Science initiated updating of monitoring researches undertaken so far, with the aim of developing the methodology and tools for further monitoring studies. A monitoring study was done in 2015 in accordance with the updated methodology.

5.3. Journals and reviews on youth research

No journal or review on youth issues is published in paper in Latvia, but e-journals of youth issues are published by the Ministry of Education and Science three times a year¹³. E-journals cover up to date information for youth at national and regional level, and give review about youth events, activities and projects.

5.4. According to publications and recent data collections: what are priority themes in the field of youth research in your country

Main research themes in youth field in recent years have been:

- quality of life of young people
- young people social and political involvement activities
- young people inclusion in society
- employment of young people

6. IT dissemination of knowledge in the youth field

6.1. Web-Portals and online databases on a better understanding of youth

Web site of the Ministry of Education and Science

In Latvian – <http://www.izm.gov.lv/lv/jaunatne>

In English – <http://www.izm.gov.lv/en/youth>.

Information about youth policy and other related information, as well as, statistical data and researches on different youth issues is published on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science. Regularly published e-journals on youth issues are available on the website.

Portal of youth issues

In Latvian – <http://www.jaunatneslietas.lv/>

In English – <http://www.jaunatneslietas.lv/en/>

In Russian – <http://www.jaunatneslietas.lv/ru/>.

Promotion of the Integration Support System for Third - country Young Nationals - this is the name of the project, which have been realized during 2012 by the Ministry of Education and Science within framework of the European Third - country Nationals' Integration Fund Programme of 2012 (Contract No. IF/2010/1.3./01). Within the framework of the project, the youth policy portal www.jaunatneslietas.lv has been developed, which currently gathers not only the most recent information about youth policy and youth

¹³ E-journals are available: <http://izm.izm.gov.lv/nozares-politika/jaunatne/7569.html>

opportunities, but has also become an interactive online support and information resource to the young third-country nationals in English and Russian.

The portal serves as a guide, where wide ranging information on youth policy is available, besides information and links to access necessary and interested information on different themes, such as youth employment possibilities, education, involvement, culture, sport, etc. is also available in the portal. Additionally, there is a youth organizations database and youth affairs coordinators database that includes contact information.

Data base of researches and publications available on the website of the State Chancellery

In Latvian – <http://petijumi.mk.gov.lv>.

The database of researches and publications collects all studies, publications and methodologies of public institutions starting from 2000. Besides, a list of perspective studies, publications and methodologies planned for the two years ahead is also available in the database.

Data bases of the Central Statistical Bureau

In Latvian – <http://www.csb.gov.lv/dati/statistikas-datubazes-28270.html>

In English – <http://www.csb.gov.lv/en/dati/statistics-database-30501.html>

Statistical databases about social, economical, environment and other issues are freely available on the website of the Central Statistical Bureau. Although youth statistics are not grouped as a separate category of the database, by selecting data by age parameters, it is possible to obtain varied information about youth target group.

6.2. Other

For information and communication, the Ministry of Education and Science uses social network accounts:

https://twitter.com/IZM_Jaunatne

<https://www.facebook.com/jaunatneslietas>.

7. Good practice related to fostering a better knowledge of youth

Monitoring of youth policy implementation

Annual monitoring of youth policy implementation and youth life quality can be considered as one of the most significant good practice examples for better understanding and knowledge about youth in Latvia. Since 2009, the annual monitoring has been carried in Latvia in the autumn. The aim of the monitoring is to collect data about results of youth policy implementation, identifying youth activity in voluntary work, in work of youth organizations and youth initiative groups, in social life and physical activities, identifying information sources from which young people receive information important for them, as well as, the information they would like to receive, and to read about possibilities for spending their leisure time according to their wishes. Such measures and their dynamic analysis allow to react operatively and to correct work with youth at national and regional level.

Regular communication and consultations among policy makers and young people

Different activities for ensuring communication and consultations among policy makers and young people are carried out regularly in Latvia. Similar to other member states of the European Union, in Latvia structured dialogue also take place, putting forward issues by young people at national or European level. Furthermore, Coffee with Politicians is organized regularly – adapted communication method by the NGO NEXT for non-formal dialogue among young people and policy makers, as well as to involve youth in decision making process, in expressing their opinion and in development of community (events take place at municipal level, as well).