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and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



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'Youth Policy Responses to the Contemporary Challenges Faced by Young People'

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Compendium of Youth Policy Responses



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Contributors

With special thanks to the following people who submitted examples of youth policy responses to the contemporary challenges facing young people:

Cinzia Albanesi, Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna, Italy; Roman Banari, Nondiscrimination Coalition – Republic of Moldova; Luca Bizzarri, Autonomous Province of Bolzano; Sulkhan Chargeisvili, Youth Social Rights Network; Chiara Criscuoli, Giovanisì – Regione Toscana; Elie Demerseman, YES Forum; Dilyana Deneva, European Network on Independent Living; Lorenzo Floresta, Forum Nazionale dei Giovani, Italy; Gloria Ghéquièrre, Children’s Rights Knowledge Centre (KeKi), Belgium; Francesca Gnech, Autonomous Province of Trento - Provincial Agency of family, parenting and youth policy; Matti Hakamäki, LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health; Alena Ignatovitch, National Institute for Higher Education – Belarus; Francesco Isetta, Agenzia Regionale per il Lavoro la Formazione e l’accreditamento – Regione Liguria; Mirela Lupu, Timis County Youth Foundation; Nino Mikhanashvili, International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Georgian Committee; Nicholas Morgan, European Youth Mental Health Ltd.; Mihaela Onofras, ALDA-European Association for Local Democracy; Anna Ostrikova, Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, State Institute for Family and Youth Policy; Andrei Popescu, Ministry of Youth and Sports – Romania; Anisa Proda, Albanian Disability Rights Foundation; Maria Roidi, Youth Social Rights Network; Evaldas Rupkus, IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany; Olena Sheremet, NGO - Youth Initiative of Cities; Zeynep Tuğçe Çiftçiabaşı Güç, Abdullah Gül University – Youth Factory: Youth Research and Implementation Centre; Katarina Vučković, The Institute for Youth Development KULT.

Introduction

The Symposium on 'Youth Policy Responses to the Contemporary Challenges Faced by Young People', was organised by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, within the framework of the Czech Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The symposium brought together 110 practitioners, researchers, policy makers, representatives of different European, national or local youth organisations, and young people from 37 countries – primarily from the signatory states of the European Cultural Convention.

In preparation for the symposium, participants were asked to submit examples of effective youth policy responses, that have had a material impact on the lives of young people within their context, in order to establish a compendium of youth policy practice for wider dissemination. Over 30 examples from 18 different countries, encompassing a wide range of initiatives, were submitted and a selection of these is presented in this compendium.

The examples encompass a wide range of policy initiatives. They include examples of actions undertaken at the local level, through to the international level; actions that have been led by youth NGOs to those led by national government ministries; actions undertaken with no budget, through to those that have required multimillion euros of investment. The examples highlight the interplay and relationship between youth policy, youth work practice and youth research.

Many of the policy responses were presented at the Symposium's Youth Policy Fair and discussed during the thematic working groups. The policy responses relate to the thematic areas addressed at the symposium:

1. Belonging
2. Agency and empowerment
3. Participation and expression
4. Volunteering
5. Learning and training
6. Working and creating

In addition, the examples submitted for the compendium also explicitly seek to address other thematic areas affecting young people, including physical and mental health, and inequality and discrimination affecting particular groups of young people.

The practice examples have been summarised and analysed in order to identify some of the key principles associated with effective youth policy initiatives. These key principles are presented for the benefit of those involved in influencing the policy context in which young people live – either through practice, research or policy. The responses involved approaches that demonstrated:

1. Leadership from public institutions and civil society
2. Effective use of knowledge, research, data and evidence
3. Commitment to promoting lifelong learning and professional development in the youth sector
4. Commitment to establishing an enabling legislative and policy environment
5. Recognition of the value of campaigning and advocacy

The policy responses are presented under these categories with an introductory summary of the key principles identified from the submissions. These policy responses have also been coded in line with the thematic areas addressed throughout the symposium.

Leadership from public institutions and civil society

The youth policy responses that illustrated effective leadership from elected officials and public institutions demonstrated the importance of:

- Working across ministerial lines and policy domains with a holistic perspective on the range of factors that impact on successful youth transitions.
- A positively framed commitment to youth empowerment rather than a deficit or problem orientated approach.
- Working across sectors to establish effective partnership between public authorities, civil society and the private sector.
- Developing and communicating an ambitious vision for young people and establishing a clear strategy to achieve this.
- Promoting dialogue between local, regional, national and international levels, utilising enforcement where necessary.
- Allocating significant resources and investment into youth services and programmes for young people.
- Establishing a programme of grants to NGOs to strengthen the role of civil society.
- Establishing opportunities for civil society, young people and public services to engage in dialogue.
- Meaningfully involving young people in decision-making, governance and programme development.
- Utilising expert knowledge to inform policy responses and decision-making.

Italy – Promoting Youth Independence in Regione Toscana

Symposium Themes

Participation and expression

Learning and training

Working and creating

Regione Toscana established a programme of youth policies called *Giovanisi* in 2011 with the aim of promoting autonomy for young people by improving opportunities for education and training, supporting youth transitions from school to work, and by facilitating entrepreneurial start-ups.

The programme which is for young people up to 40 years old, addresses seven key areas including internships, housing, civil service, entrepreneurship, employment, education and training. A further programme *Giovanisi+*, focuses on participation, culture, sport, and social activities. The programme has resulted in the allocation of more than €690 million from regional, national and European funding.

Giovanisi is managed and co-ordinated by a dedicated office based at the Presidency of the Region of Tuscany, which engages young people directly in the development of the programme and which works directly with regional authority departments to support implementation.

The *Giovanisi* initiative has an established branding and communication strategy, with a strong web and social media presence to ensure that young people are able to find out about the opportunities the programme offers. This has resulted in over 2.5 million people receiving information on the programme, over 13 million web-page visits and over 10,000 participants at *Giovanisi* events.



The programme of services and activities is delivered through a partnership of NGOs, local businesses, public services, schools and universities. Over 230,000 young people have benefited from opportunities such as internships, access to co-working spaces, and access to housing.

This policy response is characterised by a **youth participation in governance and programme development, cooperation and integration between regional and local government, a holistic approach** that considers a range of factors impacting on successful youth transitions, a **cross-sectoral partnership between multiple partners from civil society, government and private sectors, significant financial investment, and a strong communications strategy.**

Georgia – Improving Access to Education and Employment Opportunities for Disabled People

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Learning and training

Working and creating

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Georgian Committee (ICBL-GC) initiated a national level programme to address the lack of education and employment opportunities available for people with disabilities. The initiative involves cooperation between ICBL-GC, local vocational education and training providers, employers, and government ministries including the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Social Service Agency.

The cooperation, which is funded by the European Union, has engaged over 500 people and has resulted in 50 people being employed and 50 people being enrolled in vocational education and training. The programme will transition to a governmental institution to ensure continuity.

This policy response is characterised by a **value driven commitment to addressing inequality, a cross-sectoral partnership between multiple partners from civil society, government and private sectors, a practice and policy component,** that has achieved outcomes for young people, and clear **continuity planning** designed to influence responsible government institutions.

Belarus – Establishing a Youth Assistance System

Symposium Themes

Learning and training

Working and creating

Since 2011, the [National Institute for Higher Education in Belarus](#) has sought to achieve a systems change in the way in which employment and education services for young people work across the country. The work brought together government ministries, young people and front-line practitioners responsible for delivering education and employment support services.

The initiative has resulted in improved cooperation between government ministries on the issue of youth unemployment; the adoption of legislation at ministerial level to establish youth career guidance roles in a range of educational establishments; the introduction of employment service centres across Belarus; and a formal qualification and training programme for youth career guidance assistants.

This policy response is characterised by the adoption of an **inter-ministerial legislative framework, the reallocation of state resources to establish a new service for young people, and a training programme and qualification framework to promote skills development of youth practitioners.**

Italy – Co-Housing: I Change Status

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Volunteering

The [Autonomous Province of Trento](#) - Provincial Agency of Family, Parenting and Youth Policy has established a project called 'Co-Housing: Io Cambio Status' to address the need for access to affordable housing for young people and to support youth transitions to autonomy and independence.

Originally started in the city of Trento in 2013, the project now operates across the province. The initiative sees young people aged 18-29 who are not in employment, education or training, living in co-housing for a period of two years. Coaches and tutors support the young people into employment through training, job orientation and civic participation, in particular volunteering. The beneficiaries meet one third of the costs and local government meets the remaining costs. The pilot project resulted in every participant transitioning to independent living arrangements outside of their family home or previous care setting. Management and supervision of the programme is now undertaken by a research Foundation "Fondazione Demarchi", and the project is delivered through three coaches and a network of third sector organisations that provide the apartments and tutors.

This policy response is characterised by **state and civil society partnership**, a **practice and policy approach** that addresses a key challenge faced by young people, and **leadership from a government institution**.

United Kingdom – Future in Mind

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Participation and expression

Learning and training

Working and creating

In 2015, National Health Service (NHS) England launched the report 'Future in Mind' which detailed a series of recommendations that aimed to make it easier for children, young people, parents and carers to access help and support when needed, and to improve how children and young people's mental health services are organised, commissioned and provided.

The report, which was produced by the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Well-Being Task Force, sets out a national ambition to transform the design and delivery of local services for children and young people with mental health needs. The report focuses on promoting resilience, prevention and early interventions; improving access to effective support; care for the most vulnerable; accountability; and transparency and workforce development.

The task force undertook a process of consultation with young people, professionals and experts in order to identify ways in which child and adolescent mental health could be promoted and illness prevented. Across England, Local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG), who are responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for their local area, were tasked with establishing transformation plans, which detail how mental health services will be redesigned. All CCGs have now established local plans specifically in partnership with local partners including local government, schools and the voluntary sector.

This policy response is characterised by **an over-arching national ambition and framework**, established by **policy experts**, a **process of consultation and engagement with young people and practitioners**,



and a **mandatory requirement for local actors to develop and implement responses** that respond to the recommendations of the task force.

Italy – Culture and Creativity: Co-Living, Co-Working

Symposium Themes

Belonging

Agency and empowerment

Working and creating

In order to support innovation in the field of culture and creative industries the [Office for Youth Policy in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano](#) in South Tyrol has established a co-living and co-working initiative.

The initiative will see the restoration and regeneration of a state owned 3000 square metre building, which will be used to support young people to establish cultural and social projects.

This policy response is characterised by the **reallocation of state resources to benefit young people**, and a **commitment to youth empowerment** rather than a deficit or problem orientation approach.

Romania – Establishing a First Local Advisory Council on Youth Affairs

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Participation and expression

Timis County Youth Foundation (FITT) is an umbrella organisation for 35 youth NGOs in western Romania. FITT aims to empower young people and youth organisations to get involved in the community and make their voices heard.

In 2008 a small group of local NGOs collaborated to undertake a needs analysis of young people in Timisoara with the aim of creating a local youth strategy. The analysis highlighted a lack of youth participation in decision-making process, low levels of youth participation in several aspects of community life, and poor life quality outcomes for young people. Despite this work, the needs analysis and youth strategy was neither debated nor adopted by Timisoara City Council.

Following local elections in 2012, young people and a group of local NGOs met with the newly elected Mayor to propose the creation of a 'Local Advisory Council on Youth Affairs'. The aim of this proposal was to facilitate consultation on issues that affect young people's well-being. This proposal was subsequently accepted and adopted by Timisoara County Council.

The Local Advisory Council on Youth Affairs brings together all youth NGOs, structures, foundations and informal groups of young people in the area and is officially recognised by public authorities as a consultative body on youth issues. The Local Advisory Council on Youth Affairs can issue recommendations, can contribute to the development of youth policy and is consulted whenever the local authorities want to take a decisions related to youth.

Although the establishment of the Local Advisory Council on Youth Affairs was welcomed by FITT, there have been a number of issues in establishing effective working relationships with the local authority – in particular meetings have been arranged at times that don't correspond with the voluntary status of the youth sector. This has prevented the advisory council from monitoring and giving recommendations on youth policies or policies that have an impact on young people's lives. FITT is planning to restart the Local Advisory Council on Youth Affairs by involving the members in Timisoara's candidacy for European Youth Capital in 2020.

This policy response is characterised by **effective lobbying and advocacy by civil society**, and efforts to establish **dialogue between young people, civil society and public authorities**.

Finland – Finish School on the Move

Symposium Themes	The LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health in Finland aims to establish a culture of physical activity within school in Finland through the 'Schools on the Move' programme. The programme is a key priority for the Finish government and schools receive €7 million per annum from the Ministry of Education and Culture for implementation.
Belonging	
Agency and empowerment	
Participation and expression	
Learning and training	

The initiative aims to increase physical activity and decrease sedentary time amongst young people by implementing active learning methods, promoting active commuting and decreasing excessive sitting. The main goals are to promote healthier lifestyles, to improve learning, and to improve the atmosphere within schools.

The programme is organised by the Board of Education, regional state administrative agencies and various other organisations. The government is aiming to expand the Schools on the Move initiative across the country, to ensure that young people are able to participate in one hour of physical activity each day. Schools on the Move is coordinated and monitored centrally, however schools are given the autonomy to establish localised solutions that are appropriate to their context.

In addition, the programme seeks to achieve pedagogical reform and its main principles like (active learning) are written into the national core curriculum for basic education.

This policy response is characterised by **significant state investment**, and a **national framework that can be adapted locally**.

Knowledge, Research, Data and Evidence

Four of the examples illustrated the value and importance of those in the youth sector establishing and making effective use of knowledge, research, data and evidence to inform youth policy, including:

- Promoting access to, and use of, comparative data across different policy domains to identify issues affecting young people and to hold elected officials to account.
- Undertaking youth-led participatory research to inform policy dialogue at regional, national and international levels.
- Promoting the practical application of academic research with youth workers and policy makers.
- Utilising expert knowledge to inform policy responses and decision-making.

European Level – Our Life, Our Voice: Young People and Poverty

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Participation and expression

Volunteering

Learning and training

Working and creating

Between 2015 and 2017, the [YES Forum](#) – a network of 34 NGOs from 18 EU Member States – led an Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership with project partners from five EU countries: Italy (Zefiro Cooperativa), Finland (Musikcafé After Eight), the United-Kingdom (The Children’s Society), Romania (Fundatia Ruhama) and Germany (Internationaler Bund).

The [‘Our Life. Our Voice’](#) Erasmus+ project focussed on youth poverty, including financial obstacles faced by young people, youth unemployment, social exclusion, ethnic and gender-based discrimination, mental and physical health, educational difficulties, and housing conditions.

The project explored the experiences, attitudes, perceptions and solutions of disadvantaged youngsters across Europe through inclusive, interactive and participatory methods. The evidence gathered from the investigations of young people was then used to influence policy development at local, regional, national and Europe levels through the direct participation and expression of the young disadvantaged participants in various events, conferences, seminars and public.

The investigations led to country-specific reports, a European analysis on youth poverty and policy proposals on how to tackle youth poverty drafted by young people.

This policy response is characterised by **youth-led participatory research**, the production of **research outputs to inform policy dialogue** at regional, national and international levels.



European Level – YouthMetre

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Participation and expression

[YouthMetre](#) is an initiative coordinated by the European Association of Geographers and five partners including the University of Zaragoza, the European Association for Local Democracy, European Youth Press, ARS for Progress of People, and the Centro Studi e Iniziative Europeo.

YouthMetre provides accessible data via a digital dashboard. The data, which is collated from the European Union Eurostat, the Eurobarometer and other sources, is presented in the form of maps, graphs and datasets. The dashboard provides a comparative overview of outcomes for young people in different countries in key areas such as education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, culture and creativity, youth participation, and volunteering. The online platform also provides a mapping of good practice, which can be searched geographically or thematically.

Currently, the project is running an information and dissemination campaign in order to promote use of the tool to young people and policy makers at local, national and international events.



This policy response provides young people and policy makers with **access to comparative data to ensure public accountability** and **promotes knowledge exchange** through highlighting examples of effective practice.

European Level – Catch-EyoU

Symposium Themes

Belonging

Agency and empowerment

Participation and expression

[CATCH-EyoU](#) – ‘Constructing Active Citizenship with European Youth - Policies, Practices, Challenges and Solutions’ is a Horizon 2020 project, coordinated by the University of Bologna with a consortium of nine universities from eight countries across Europe.

Through an interdisciplinary approach, involving psychologists, political scientists, sociologists, and experts in media, communications and education, the project aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of youth realities in Europe; to bridge the gap between young Europeans and EU Institutions; and to enhance young people’s trust in EU Institutions and their engagement in EU issues.

The 36-month-long project started in September 2015 and will deliver a series of reports and recommendations across a range of work packages addressing themes such ‘youth in the media’, ‘policy makers perspectives’ on the EU and youth active citizenship’, ‘inequalities in youth active citizenship’ and ‘representation of the EU and EU citizenship in educational contexts’.

This policy response is characterised by **interdisciplinary research**, and the production of **research outputs to inform policy dialogue** at regional, national and international levels.

European Level – EUth: Tools and Tips for Mobile and Digital Youth Participation

Symposium Themes

Participation and expression

[EUth: Tools and Tips for Mobile and Digital Youth Participation](#) is a European level initiative involving eleven partners from eight European countries that is financed with support of the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme. The initiative is coordinated by the [International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany](#) (IJAB), which works on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the European Commission, member organisations, and other youth work associations.

EUth aims to increase young people’s trust in European institutions and youth participation in political decision-making through the development of an online, multilingual platform of e-participation resources and practice guidance for youth workers, researchers and policy makers. These resources are available in

13 languages through [OPIN – a European Toolbox for Youth e-Participation Projects](#), which will be officially launched at an Open Summit, held in Berlin in December 2017.

This policy response is characterised by **interdisciplinary research**, the production of **research outputs to inform youth work practice** at regional, national and international levels, and the promotion of **knowledge exchange and best practice** in youth e-participation.

Lifelong Learning and Professional Development

Four of the responses demonstrated the value and importance of on-going professional development and lifelong learning for those working in the youth sector, highlighting the importance of:

- Investing in the training and development of front-line practitioners, policy-makers and researchers.
- Establishing training programme and qualification framework to promote skills development of youth practitioners.
- Promoting the exchange of good practice at local, national and international levels.
- Involving young people, youth workers and youth organisations in policy dialogue to promote learning.

Ukraine – National Education Programme for Youth Workers: A Professional Approach to Youth Work

Symposium Themes

Participation and expression

Learning and training

Since 2014, the [Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine](#), the [State Institute for Family and Youth Policy](#), [UNDP Ukraine](#), and [UNICEF Ukraine](#) have worked in partnership with regional authorities, youth NGOs, youth centres, youth workers and youth practitioners to establish a national education programme for people working in the youth sector.

The programme, which is financed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, UNDP and UNICEF, was initiated following a Council of Europe National Review on Youth Policy in Ukraine, which identified that there were no systematic measures to support and further develop youth work on national and local levels. The programme, aims to promote constructive dialogue and cooperation between civil servants who work with youth and civil society, and to challenge and reform a paternalistic approach to youth development in Ukraine.

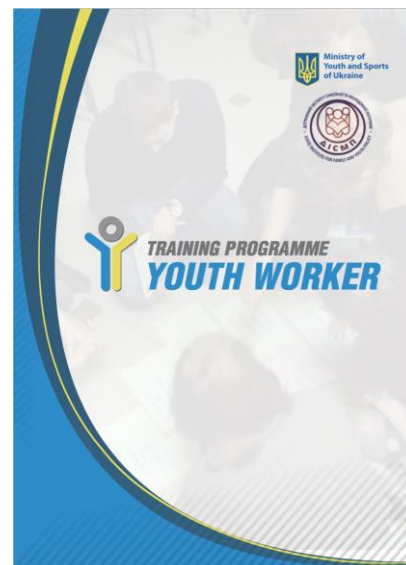
Three different training courses, from introductory level through to a training of trainers course have been designed in partnership with from a working group under the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine. The working group consists of representatives of the programme partners, youth NGOs, youth centres, and the team of trainers. The programme aims to:

- Improve the knowledge and competence of youth leaders and youth sector professionals to develop and implement evidence-based local and regional youth policies.
- Create a database of youth sector professionals and examples of best practice of local and regional youth policies.
- Foster effective dialogue between public authorities and civil society organisations for youth development in Ukraine.
- Inform institutions working with youth on national and international best practice in the development and implementation of youth policies and programmes.

Over 500 people have completed certified programmes from across Ukraine, teams of youth work trainers have been established in each region of the country, and 200 youth workers have been trained through an online platform. In addition, training materials, an online learning course and library of resource for youth workers have been set up.

The programme has helped promote official recognition of the terms youth work and youth worker, and has become an integral part of an initiative called the '[Reanimation Package of Reforms](#)'; through which the country's largest coalition of NGOs and expert groups are seeking to facilitate and implement reforms across key areas of public policy. In addition, the programme is identified as a priority within the 'State Target Social Programme - Youth of Ukraine 2016-2020'.

By 2019, the programme aims to have provided introductory training to all civil servants and leaders of youth NGOs, with approximately 30%, progressing to advanced training, and 10% progressing to the training of trainers course. The programme will become a mandatory requirement for those wanting to become professionally accredited youth workers in Ukraine.



This policy response is characterised by the development of **training programme and qualification framework to promote skills development of youth practitioners, investment in the training and professional development of youth practitioners and youth sector professionals, a commitment to partnership and dialogue between government institutions, international agencies and civil society at local and national levels, and a commitment to financial investment from national, regional and international actors.**

Italy – [#WeProjectOurFuture](#) [#ProgettiamociilFuturo](#)

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Learning and training

The Regional Agency for Labour and Education Accreditation – [Regione Liguria](#) worked with a group of experts from the Ministry of Education, the Regional Chamber of Commerce and the University of Genoa to establish an initiative to support vocational education, training and employment transitions for young people.

The initiative was part of a wider, regional political agenda to support the development of effective career guidance and vocational education and training for young people.

The project involved developing a toolkit and training programme for teachers in order to support them to incorporate careers education and vocational pathways into the school curriculum. The teachers were supported to deliver non-formal careers education and work-place visits to over 500 young people. The toolkit will be distributed across the region and a series of teacher training courses will be delivered to ensure continuity.

This policy response is characterised by an approach that focuses on the **training and development of front-line practitioners.**

Belgium – A Critical Reflection Tool on Youth Participation for Policy Makers

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Participation and expression

The [Children's Rights Knowledge Centre](#) (Kenniscentrum Kinderrechten - KeKi) is a non-profit organisation that operates on the intersection between children's rights research, policy and practice in Flanders and abroad.

KeKi's activities aim to contribute to a better understanding of children's rights in a variety of professional contexts. KeKi encourages researchers, policy makers and professionals to integrate and contextualise children's rights in their work, and to take a reflective approach to incorporating a rights-based approach in their day-to-day context.

Since 2015, KeKi has been working to establish a reflection tool for policymakers that encourages and guides them to identify, evaluate and address assumptions that lead to young people being excluded from decision-making processes. The Youth Division of the Flemish Government commissioned the work and the tool is now being tested in local policy contexts. The tool consists of a scientifically substantiated manual and a list of self-critical, reflective questions that help policymakers to evaluate how well they involve children and young people in decision-making processes.

This policy response is characterised by an approach that **integrates academic research and theory into a practical toolkit to evaluate and increase youth participation in policy-making processes.**

Romania – YouthNET

Symposium Themes

Participation and expression

Learning and training

In order to increase youth participation in decision-making processes, the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#) in Romania established a national training programme for 120 youth workers from civil society and regional representatives from the Ministry of Youth. The training, which led to a recognised youth work certificate, covered a range of youth work practice including, youth participation, active methods of engaging young people and experiential learning.

Following the training course, the participants delivered 121 consultation and training events for over 30,000 young people across Romania. These consultation and training activities informed the development of a country report on youth, were used to establish the priorities for the youth agenda for the Romanian EU, and informed young people, youth workers, and youth organisations about the follow up and the recommendations resulting from the Slovak Youth Summit.



This policy response is characterised by **investment in the training and professional development of youth practitioners**, and a commitment to **engage and consult young people, youth workers and youth organisations in the development of research and policy dialogue.**

Creating an Enabling Legislative Environment

Four of the responses highlighted the importance of influencing the legislative and policy environment, by:

- Establishing a comprehensive legal framework designed to create a favourable environment for young people, including the involvement of young people and youth NGOs.
- Establishing youth policies, and mainstreaming youth across key areas of public policy.
- Actively involving young people and youth NGOs in policy development through dialogue and co-production.
- Gaining commitment from public authorities to establish and resource a local youth strategy.
- Utilising international standards, frameworks, and best practice to influence local policy makers and practitioners.

Republic of Moldova – Youth Laws and Youth Strategy

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Participation and expression

Volunteering

Learning and training

The [Government of the Republic of Moldova](#) has established a National Strategy on the Development of the Youth Sector, a National Employment Strategy 2017-2021, a series of laws related to youth, volunteering and employment, regional grants programmes for NGOs, and regional youth councils to create an enabling environment for youth.

Strategies

Adopted in 2014, the National Strategy on Development of the Youth Sector aims to develop, enhance and recognise youth as a stakeholder in the development of the country. The strategy has four priorities including youth participation, services for youth, economic opportunities for youth and strengthening the capacity of the youth sector.

On December 28 2016, the Government of the Republic of Moldova approved the National Employment Strategy for 2017-2021, which aims to increase the level of formal employment. The strategy has four priorities, which include creating the opportunities for formal, non-discriminatory and productive employment; developing human capital for increased opportunities for employment; improving governance of the labour market; and maximising the potential of migration for sustainable development.

Laws

In 2016, the Moldovan Parliament adopted Law No. 215 on Youth to promote the interests of young people in public policies. Young people are defined as those aged 14 to 35 years of age. The law requires public authorities to involve young people and youth organisations in the development of youth policies and provides for the recognition of informal youth organisations and associations such as youth organisations of political parties, student senates, and youth councils.

Law No. 121 on Volunteering, adopted in 2010, regulates the conditions for volunteers engaged in activity of community benefit. Law No 121 on Equality legislates to prevent and combat discrimination and ensure equality in political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres of life, irrespective of race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion or belief, sex, age, disability, opinion, political affiliation or any other similar criteria. A draft law on the promotion of employment (2017) provides for active employment measures including subsidised employment schemes for vulnerable people, the creation and

adaptation of jobs for people with disabilities, trainees and work-placed learning, self-employment and local initiatives to support job creation in rural areas.

Grants Programme

The Ministry of Youth and Sport of Moldova delivers an annual grants programme to support and develop the youth NGO sector to deliver youth initiatives, programmes and projects that can contribute to the delivery of the National Strategy on Development of the Youth Sector, in particular in the areas of youth participation, youth services, economic opportunities for youth and strengthening the youth sector.

Regional Youth Councils

Ten regional youth councils have been established across Moldova. These youth councils work in collaboration with local public administration and non-governmental organisations to advocate for young people.

This policy response is characterised by a **comprehensive legal and strategic framework designed to create a favourable environment for youth services**, and a **programme of grants to NGOs to strengthen the role of civil society**.

Romania – Youth Laws and Youth Strategy

Symposium Themes

Belonging

Agency and empowerment

Participation and expression

In January 2016, the Romanian [Ministry of Youth and Sport](#) launched a public consultation process to update the Youth Law of Romania. The consultation process involved the engagement with the Consultative Youth Council of the Ministry and eight regional consultation meetings.

Over 400 young people and youth workers and more than 200 youth organisations and associations participated in the consultation, which was based [Open Space](#) methodology. A series of modifications were proposed to the Youth Law and between April and November 2016, the proposals were negotiated with 11 other Ministries before being approved by the Romanian Government in December 2016.

The main changes proposed aimed to simplify the legal framework, update the law to reflect the needs of new generations of young people, increase the role of youth centres in local communities, and to establish consultation mechanisms between local and national authorities and the youth sector. The first chamber of the Romanian Parliament decided to return the proposal to the Ministry and they are currently under revision.

This policy response is characterised by **efforts to ensure the views of young people and youth NGO's inform an effective legal framework for youth**.

Bosnia and Herzegovina – Establishing a Youth Policy

Symposium Themes

Participation and expression

The [Institute for Youth Development KULT](#) is a civil society organisation in Sarajevo that works to create and advocate for strategic solutions to the challenges facing young people, and to strengthen the capacity of civil society associations and public authorities. The [Youth Communication Centre](#) (YCC) in Banja Luka is a non-profit organisation that operates at a local and regional level with the aim of promoting the values of civil society.

Following provisions in three Youth Laws covering the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Srpska and the District of Boko, efforts are underway to develop youth policies that address the socio-economic challenges facing youth and to strengthen youth structures. Each entity is at a different stage in the development of its youth policy.

KULT and the YCC are cooperating with the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports, the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports in the Republic of Srpska, and other government ministries to establish entity level youth policies by providing technical and advisory assistance. Both organisations have worked to ensure that youth engagement and youth participation are integral to the policy development process.

As a result, young people, youth councils, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders have had an opportunity to directly contribute to the development of the policy documents, and government officials have engaged in dialogue with young people and youth representatives.

This policy response is characterised by **youth and civil society participation in policy development**.

Romania – Local Youth Strategy of Timisoara

Symposium Themes

Participation and expression

Timis County Youth Foundation (FITT) is an umbrella organisation for 35 youth NGOs in western Romania. FITT aims to empower young people and youth organisations to get involved in the community and make their voices heard.

In 2013, the [Intercultural Institute of Timisoara](#), Timis County Youth Foundation and Timisoara Municipality started the process of developing a local youth strategy. The initiative was triggered by the establishment of the Local Advisory Council on Youth Affairs, which brings together youth NGOs, structures, foundations, informal groups of young people as well with representatives of the municipality.

In order to develop the strategy, a youth focussed needs analysis was undertaken, meetings were held with non-governmental organisations, informal groups, youth workers, public institutions and experts, and youth consultation exercises were undertaken.

Timisoara City Council finalised and adopted the local youth strategy as the city's vision for young people for the period 2014 and 2020. The local youth strategy includes strategic objectives and measures for labour and professional development; formal and non-formal education; participation, social inclusion; health and social security; culture; sports; and environment and sustainable development. To sustain the implementation of the strategy, the local authorities established a local youth fund in line with the objectives of the youth strategy.

Youth NGOs incorporate the strategy in their work, and as a result of the collaboration between stakeholders, the City Hall and City Council are more open to young people and their initiatives. Timis County Youth Foundation is currently developing a methodology to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the youth strategy.

This policy response is characterised by **dialogue and co-production between young people, civil society and public authorities**, and **commitment from public authorities to establish and resource a local youth strategy**.

Campaigning and Advocacy

Five of the policy responses submitted highlighted the role that campaigning and advocacy can play in influencing the youth policy context. These examples demonstrated the importance of:

- Local, national and international frameworks that can mobilise civil society and youth NGOs.
- Financial support from international agencies and public institutions to enable youth NGOs to engage young people.
- Young people and youth NGOs seeking to influence political priorities.

Greece – Youth at the Centre: Utilising Enter!

Symposium Themes

Participation and expression

The [Youth Social Rights Network](#) (YSRN) worked with the municipality of Neapolis-Sikies, using Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 – ‘Access of Young People from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods to Social Rights’, to influence local councillors, public officials and youth workers.

As a result of the work the municipality formally adopted the recommendation in 2015. In addition, local councillors, public officials, youth workers and young people took part in Erasmus+ funded international exchanges and study sessions; undertook training sessions on youth work and youth policy; attended international seminars on the ‘Enter! Recommendation’; and participated in round table discussions and other local actions.

The initiative resulted in the development of a strategy and action plan to implement the ‘Enter! Recommendation’ in Neapolis-Sikies.

This policy response is characterised by the use of **international standards, frameworks and best practice to influence local policy makers and practitioners**, an approach focussed on **learning and participation of local actors** to enthuse, excite and encourage a sense of ownership amongst policy makers at a local level.

Romania – No Hate: A Romanian Tale

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Participation and expression

Learning and training

The [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#) in Romania launched an open call and selection process to establish a National Committee to coordinate a countrywide No Hate Speech Campaign. A budget of €25,000 was provided by the ministry to support the committee’s work.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports organised a weeklong ‘No Hate Non-formal Laboratory’ for 90 youth workers from youth and student NGOs. The participants were trained in the use of 12 non-formal and participatory learning methods including the [Living Library](#) approach, Forum Theatre and the Norm Critical Approach. The training aimed to enhance the ability of participants to work with young people on campaign issues.

In October 2016, the participants of the laboratory training organised 16 actions throughout the country, including flash mobs and debates, which focussed on themes to promote the No Hate Campaign.

The national campaign resulted in further actions including a forum entitled ‘Young Roma People Against Hate Speech’ – an online No Hate campaign supported by the Romanian government and 17 government ministries that reached over half a million people; an international training ‘Educators for Combating Hate

Speech Online’ event for 30 youth workers, trainers and youth leaders from Romania, Moldova and Ukraine; and the translation of the Council of Europe Manual for Combating Hate Speech Online – Bookmarks – into Romanian.

According to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the campaign proved to be successful due to the mutual interest and support of the theme from both government institutions and civil society. In addition, despite a change in government and leadership at the ministry, the campaign has been maintained as a key priority.

This policy response is characterised by **leadership and resource from a government ministry**, a framework that **mobilised the energy of civil society and engaged them as key partners**, and a **campaigning approach that influenced political and ministerial priorities**, despite changes in leadership.



Ukraine – Human Libraries: Building connections with Donbas

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Participation and expression

NGO ‘Youth Initiative of Cities’ is student led initiative in the Donetsk region of Ukraine that aims to promote youth rights, to support the development of youth, and to implement community projects across the country.

Over 1.7 million people have been displaced from their homes as a result of the occupation of Eastern Ukraine. As a result, communities across the country were struggling to care for and integrate internationally displaced people (IDPs) and tensions have emerged between IDPs and their host communities.

In partnership with the British Council, USAID, Caritas, Power of Future, the “Human Library in Kharkiv” and other partners, the NGO ‘Youth Initiative of Cities’ organised 20 Human/[Living Library](#) actions in six cities in Ukraine, which involved over 500 participants.

Visitors to Human Library were given the opportunity to speak to a diverse group of IDPs of varying age, sex, life experience, geographic location, and cultural background. The communication and networking events revealed new information about life of IDPs, and encouraged host communities to be more supportive of IDPs and to actively assist them to integrate. As a result, this activity contributed to efforts to strengthen community cohesion and resilience in conflict-affected communities.



This policy response is characterised by **youth social action**, **financial support from international agencies to mobilise civil society**, and a **commitment to addressing prejudice**.

Albania – Improving Employment Opportunities for Young People with Disabilities

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

Learning and training

Working and creating

Since 2010, the Albanian Disability Rights Foundation (ADRF) has worked to systematically address the lack of employment for young people with disabilities in Albania through work with young people, businesses and government.

With support of USAID, ADRF has run a coaching and mentoring programme to support young people with disabilities to make transitions into the labour market and to enrol on vocational courses. ADRF employs young people with disabilities to deliver the coaching. The initiative has supported 500 young people, of whom 130 have gained employment or internships in the private or NGO sector.

The legislative environment for ADRF's work was improved significantly in 2015 when the Albanian Ministry of Social Welfare adopted two decisions of the Council of Ministers, which along with a programme of financial assistance, aimed to encourage businesses to make adaptations to work places and recruit disabled people.

In response, ADRF has delivered information sessions and disability awareness training to businesses that are aiming to recruit people with disabilities or who have employed people through their coaching and mentoring programme. In addition, ADRF has been involved in delivering media campaigns and advocacy work to change attitudes towards disabled people amongst employers.

This policy response is characterised by, a **cross-sectoral partnership between multiple partners from civil society, government and private sectors**, a **commitment to addressing inequality and prejudice**, **financial support from international agencies to enable civil society actors and leadership and resource from a government ministry**.

European Level – Empowering Young Disabled People

Symposium Themes

Agency and empowerment

The [European Network on Independent Living](#) (ENIL) is a Europe-wide network of disabled people, with members throughout Europe that advocates and lobbies for the rights of disabled people.

Since 2012, ENIL has worked in partnership with the Council of Europe to organise a series of study sessions that aim to promote awareness, knowledge and access to social rights amongst young disabled people, and to mobilise and empower young disabled people to lobby and advocate for disabled people's rights at a local, national and European level – particularly within the structures of the Council of Europe and European Parliament. The Council of Europe has provided financial assistance and in-kind support to enable the initiative to take place.

The study sessions, which initially targeted young disabled people but later involved mixed ability groups, aimed to support young people to become leaders of the Independent Living Movement; to understand and counter multiple discrimination; to explore sexuality and relationships; to create inclusive and empowering spaces for all; and to lead and promote intercultural understanding amongst mixed ability groups.

In addition to the direct benefits on participants, the initiative has resulted in the production of a [training manual](#) – Young People with Disabilities as Future Leaders of the Independent Living Movement; videos

for the campaign 'Think Different, Think Equal'; and a short film 'The Last Taboo' on attitudes to sex, sexuality, relationships and disability.

This policy response is characterised by a **value driven commitment to addressing inequality through youth empowerment, advocacy and campaigning**, and a **partnership between civil society and an international institution**.