

## Youth Partnership

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



# COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH WORK IN CZECH REPUBLIC



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# 1. Context of youth work

## The historic origins and traditions of youth work

The communist putsch in 1948 had a very negative impact on youth work in Czechoslovakia. Youth and children organisations that were not set up under the patronage of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (for instance Junák, Sokol, Orel and others, e.g. church organisations), were gradually broken up, and members who resisted the ban or wished to continue their activities illegally were often sentenced to prison. The Czechoslovak Communist Party promoted the chief organisation the Czechoslovak Youth Union (Československý svaz mládeže – ČSM), the main aim of which was to exert an ideological influence on young people and promote the policies of the Communist Party. In 1949 a single children's Pioneer organisation was set up on the model of the Soviet Union within the ČSM. The banned groups, which had previously united thousands of children and young people, looked for a way to function under the aegis of organisations that were still allowed – for example, within Svazarm (Union for Co-operation with the Army). Organised free-time activities in this period were more or less standardised and were linked to schools or factories which guaranteed their ideological collaboration with the Communist Party. The Communist regime, well aware of the potential inherent in influencing the youngest generation, supported these organisations both financially and materially.

From 1953 Houses of Pioneers and Young People (Domy pionýrů a mládeže) began to spring up in Czechoslovakia. Pursuant to a resolution of the Communist authorities of the late 1960s, they had to be set up in all municipalities with a population of over 5 000. The task of these institutions was to organise free time for children and young people but obviously everything had to be done in accordance with the prevailing Communist ideology.

Under the influence of social changes and as a result of attempts to democratise the regime of the time, in 1968 the traditional associations of children and young people (e.g. Junák, Sokol, Orel) were restored, or there was a fundamental transformation of them (in the Pioneers, for example), or new types of such associations came into existence. There were, for example, young technicians' centres, young naturalists' centres and young ramblers' centres. The new model for children and young people was meant to be closer and more attractive to them with an aim to meet their needs in a more flexible way. This trend was forcibly interrupted by the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops led by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1968. With the onset of normalisation, the Czechoslovak Youth Union was replaced by the Union of Socialist Youth (Socialistický svaz mládeže – SSM) which was set up by the Communist Party. Its target group were young people aged between 15 and 35. Within it, young people could do things their way, e.g. in art groups, etc., but checks were made to ensure that the activity was in line with the Communist ideology. Although a number of such groupings managed to carry on their own activities for a certain time regardless of whether official Communist ideals were sustained, for most of them these activities were banned under threat of sanctions, which extended from police harassment to the risk of being removed from studies or work, and going as far as the threat of imprisonment.

The change of regime in November 1989 – ushered in by the “Velvet Revolution” – signified a complete change in the field of non-formal education and informal learning as well as in functioning of social organisations, including those working with children and young people. With the transition to democracy, organisations that had been banned during the normalisation period were reconstituted. This especially concerned organisations run on a scouting or woodcraft basis, or organisations originating from a Christian environment. The Union of Socialist Youth split into a number of independent entities, and its fission was accompanied by conflicts as the organisation’s property was privatised. With the logic of democratic development, following 1989 hundreds of new non-governmental non-profit-making organisations (NNOs) and private entities appeared, whose alternative programmes began to fill the space in the field of leisure time of children and young people.

With decentralisation of political power, there was also a gradual transformation of the houses of pioneers and youth. A regulation issued by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in 1992 established a standard name for these, “leisure time centres for children and young people”, which are currently an integral part of the official school system in the Czech Republic.

### **The context in which youth work happens in the country today, what is on the public policy agenda in general that may affect young people and youth policy**

There is a specific situation in the Czech Republic: **youth work based on so-called leisure-time-based education** is provided by the network of Leisure Time Centres (Střediska volného času, SVČ), school clubs (školní kluby, ŠK) and after-school childcare facilities (školní družina, ŠD). These facilities providing leisure-time-based education are not obligatory but they are registered in the formal educational system. They are set up by the state, regions or municipalities, and to a lesser extent by private entities. They are funded from public sources depending on the number of children in regular free-time activities. Individual participants in the learning activities (children and young people) also cover part of the financial cost of overheads.

Apart from leisure-time-based education seen as a form of youth work, **youth work based on non-formal education** is provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), whose umbrella organisation is called the Czech Council for Children and Youth (Česká rada dětí a mládeže, ČRDM), with 98 member organisations.

Alongside, in the Czech Republic there are about 1 500 non-governmental (**NGOs**) which are actively committed to providing free-time activities and learning opportunities for children and young people in which children and young people take part on voluntary basis. These include, for instance, sports, art activities, nature studies, rambling, technical activities, handicrafts and other areas. Youth workers working in NGOs are both professional employees and, mainly, volunteers who work with children and young people in their free time. Their qualifications are not in any way specifically governed by specific laws, nor regulations, besides the general ones, but at a number of organisations, primarily those which function across the country, their training is subject to the internal rules of the

organisation. This means that they often have to participate in a variety of courses for leaders or instructors. Their funding from the state budget is provided mainly through grant programmes from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, but also from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Culture or, depending on the objective of the activity, other ministries too. Organisations may also apply for grants from regional, municipal and local authorities.

In an attempt to compare the parameters of the Czech system with that of Western Europe, we may state that there is a certain difference in the system of funding, and in the amount of resources invested, as well as in the system of recruitment and training of employees working with children and young people in their free time. In the Czech Republic such work is actively sought by people who want to work with young people (the overwhelming majority because they themselves had this experience as children and adolescents), either as professionals or as volunteers.

### **Youth work and social work**

In the national context, youth work is covered by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports while social work is covered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues. Since 2015, the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has experienced a new situation when youth workers deal more and more with young people's needs for being provided with social services during youth work activities while social workers deal with a challenge to provide non-formal education to their clients. Moreover, youth workers urgently need social workers' experience of reaching out to excluded young people. In order to examine possibilities of a close co-operation between youth work and social work and facilitate recognition of results of both works, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic created in May 2015 the Expert Group reflecting interconnection between youth work and social work. The Expert Group is functioning under the Youth Chamber, a cross-sectoral advisory body of the minister responsible for youth.

## **2. Strategic and legislative framework of youth work**

### **National structures responsible for creating framework for youth work and its implementation**

The **Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports** of the Czech Republic takes responsibility for drafting, implementing and evaluating national youth policy which also covers general support to youth work. The Youth Department is responsible for cross-sectoral co-ordination of youth policy and youth work, submits national strategic documents and their mid-term and final evaluation reports for governmental approval.

**National Youth Strategy for 2014-2020** (<http://www.msmt.cz/file/33599/>)

The current strategic document on national youth policy “National Youth Strategy for 2014 - 2020” (Koncepce podpory mládeže na období 2014-2020) was adopted by the Government of the Czech Republic in May 2014, Decree no. 342 of 12 May 2014.

The Youth Strategy of the Czech Republic for the period 2014-2020 lays down strategic goals for national policies in relation to young people. It reflects the needs of the youth, especially in the areas of education and mobility, employment of young people and their entrepreneurship, culture and creativity, their participation, health and a healthy lifestyle, young people with fewer opportunities and volunteering. It also addresses environmental and global development problems, including young people’s access to rights and information. It does not specify or define “youth work” such as, but sets up strategic and operational goals in 13 thematic fields which are elaborated further into concrete measures which serve as guiding principles for youth work at national and local level.

The target group for strategy is young people under 30 years of age. Pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is defined in the Czech Republic as a person under the age of 18. Young people are defined as those between 18 and 26 years of age, with the understanding that under the law a person becomes an adult upon reaching 18 years of age. However, young people between 16 and 18 years are generally not considered children: they do not behave or consider themselves as such. Indeed, even certain legal norms give this age group certain rights and responsibilities, though they have yet to achieve full criminal liability. Therefore the primary target group for Strategy is youth between 13 and 30 years of age, in accordance with EU documents in the youth field. This is a definition of a social group, where the definition of 13-30 years of age is the sociological period of “youth”. The successful implementation of many of the strategic goals and operational goals of Strategy also requires a systematic approach to working with children falling below the lower age threshold of the primary target group.

### **Youth work defined by law**

There is no Youth Act in the Czech Republic.

### **Act no. 563/2004 Coll. of 24 September 2004 on pedagogical workers**

<http://www.msmt.cz/dokumenty-3/zakon-c-563-2004-sb-o-pedagogickych-pracovnicich-a-o-zmene?highlightWords=z%C3%A1kon+563%2F2004>

The Act gives standards for qualification, scope of professional work and in-service training of different pedagogical workers including so-called “leisure-time-based educators” who provide so-called leisure-time-based education, which is a specific part of non-formal education in the Czech Republic.

### **The Government Regulation no. 74/2005 Coll. of 9 February 2005 on leisure-time-based education (Vyhláška č. 74/2005 Sb., o zájmovém vzdělávání)**

<http://www.msmt.cz/mladez/zajmove-vzdelavani-1>

The Regulation gives professional standards and qualification criteria for so-called “leisure-time-based educators” who provide so-called leisure-time-based education, which is a specific part of non-formal education in the Czech Republic. Leisure-time-based education is provided by leisure-time centres for children and youth (Střediska volného času, SVCČ), after-school clubs (školní kluby, ŠK) and after-school childcare facilities (školní družiny, ŠD). They are fully or partially financed from the state budget. Their establishers can be municipalities, unions of municipalities, regional governments, churches, other legal entities, and physical persons. Leisure time centres and after-school clubs cover with their activities all 14 regions in the Czech Republic. In 2017 there were 321 leisure time centres in the Czech Republic whose activities were attended by 296 248 participants, and 591 school clubs attended by 47 149 pupils. The Regulation allows specialised school facilities to provide school remedial activities as well as tutoring activities to children in order to prevent early school leaving. These facilities also serve as a platform for children and youth to enable them to enter a variety of local, national or international projects. There is a professional **Association of Leisure Time Centres’ Youth Workers and Youth Leaders** (Sdružení pracovníků Domů dětí a mládeže, SP DDM), which organises annual national meetings in co-operation with the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

[http://www.spddm.org/Index\\_aj.html](http://www.spddm.org/Index_aj.html)

### **NGOs sector**

Concerning the NGOs sector, Czech current legislation does not define children’s and youth NGOs. In the Czech context, members of children and youth NGOs are up to 26 years of age. Czech NGOs working with children and youth are covered by **Civic Code No. 89/2012 Coll.**, amended on 28 February 2017, which defines duties and obligations of not-for-profit non-governmental NGOs in general (<https://www.mesec.cz/zakony/obcansky-zakonik-2014/>).

### **Act of April 24, 2002 on Volunteer Service and on Amendment of Selected Laws (Act on Volunteer Service) 198/2002 Coll.**

<http://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/dobrovolnicka-sluzba-500539.aspx?q=Y2hudW09NA%3d%3d>

This Act guides conditions under which the government shall support volunteer service organised in keeping with this Act and performed by volunteers. The Act defines volunteer service which applies to the youth sector as:

- a) assisting the unemployed, persons dependent on welfare, the disabled, the elderly, ethnic minorities, immigrants, persons released from prison, drug addicts, victims of domestic violence, and **children, the youth**, and families in spending their free time;
- b) assisting in the process of implementing development programmes as well as in operations, projects, and programmes organised by international organisations and institutions, including **NGOs**.

A volunteer in the youth sector may be any physical person who is:

- a) over 15 years of age, should the activity in question be volunteer service performed in the territory of the Czech Republic;

b) over 18 years of age, should the activity in question be volunteer service performed abroad and should such person have volunteered, based on his/her capabilities, knowledge, and capacity, to perform volunteer service abroad.

### 3. Recognition

#### National recognition of youth work – formal recognition

##### **The National Register of Qualifications – Recognition and Validation of Learning Outcomes** (Národní soustava kvalifikací, NSK) <https://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/>

It is a publicly accessible register of recognised professional qualifications as well as their assessment standards. The NSK provides a collection of standards (<http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/>), allowing verification and recognition of abilities. Professional qualifications are awarded by authorised bodies which must be an agency of the Czech Government, either a ministry or the Czech National Bank according to the **Act 179/2006**. They are listed in the NSK in accordance with the relevant evaluation standards. Conditions for the granting of authorisation are governed by the Act 179/2006. A list of authorised bodies, including contact information, is included in the NSK web page ([www.narodnikvalifikace.cz](http://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz)) as well as each vocational qualification in the NSK, where authorisation has been granted. During examinations applicants must demonstrate all the competences listed in the qualifications standard according to the criteria in the assessment standard. Successful applicants receive the Vocational Qualification Certificate, which is a nationwide valid certificate that contains personal data of the applicant, authorised body data, the exam report and a list of verified and validated competences. The certificate and the exam report are stored as required by the law on archiving.

##### **Recognised professional qualifications in the youth field:**

Approved in 2014

- Co-ordinator of Volunteers <https://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/qualification-752>

Approved in 2015

- Youth leader of activities aiming at improving state of health of children and youth (hlavní vedoucí zotavovací akce dětí a mládeže) <https://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/qualification-749>
- Self-reliant youth leader for leisure-time-based activities (samostatný vedoucí volnočasových aktivit dětí a mládeže) <https://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/qualification-750>
- Youth leader for leisure-time-based activities for children and youth (vedoucí volnočasových aktivit dětí a mládeže) <https://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/qualification-751>

Approved in 2017

- Expert in the area of international co-operation with children and youth <https://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/qualification-1291>
- Guarantor of safety of children and youth in non-formal and leisure-time-based education (Garant bezpečnosti pro oblast práce s dětmi a mládeží v zájmovém a neformálním vzdělávání) <https://www.narodnikvalifikace.cz/en-us/qualification-1289>

## **National recognition of youth work – political recognition**

### **The title “NGO recognised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for providing quality youth work”**

The title is awarded within the sub-programme of Grant Schemes of the Youth Department for supporting youth work. It is awarded by the minister responsible for youth upon the decision of the Selection Committee. It is linked to the amendment to the “Governmental Rules for providing grants from the state budget to non-profit non-governmental organisations by central public bodies” (since 2014 this amendment enables the ministry to make an agreement on long-term co-operation with selected youth NGOs). Currently 13 NGOs are holders of this title for the period 2016-2020, four more for the period 2017-2020, plus the Czech National Council for Children and Youth as the main strategic partner for the ministry is granted the title on a long-term basis.

Youth NGOs awarded with the title have to meet 15 criteria (for instance: the NGO has to have existed for at least five years; has to have organisational units at least in three regions; has youth work covered in the status; has clearly defined its organisational structure and clearly described processes in the organisation; makes public its Yearly Reports including financial statistics; has elaborated a Strategic Development Plan to 2020 including description of learning perspective – objectives, methods and forms of youth work; no problems in the field of financial clearance; has no crime files; performs systematic PR towards the public; activities are provided not only to its own members but also to other target groups – it is open to everyone; supports volunteerism; is actively inclusive and open to vulnerable young people, disadvantaged young people and young people with fewer opportunities; provides regular training courses to youth leaders and youth workers which are accredited by educational institutions; has professional and sufficient staff for providing activities – at least 60% of educational staff has a certificate of attending accredited training courses).

Youth NGOs awarded with the title can sign an agreement on long-term co-operation with the Ministry, which brings the following benefits:

- guarantee of getting 90% of an annual financial support for long-term youth work projects;
  - decreasing administrative burden when applying for annual financial grants;
  - can use the logo of the title.

Regional seminars for target groups of potential holders of the title “NGO recognised by the Ministry for providing quality youth work” are organised.

Holders of the title are obliged to submit the complete annual Year Report to the Youth Department. The Youth Department submits audit controls on a random basis.

### **Quality Label for outstanding projects granted from Erasmus+ Programme: Youth**

This Quality Label is awarded in the Annual Valorisation Conference by the Deputy Minister acting as the National Authority for the implementation of the Erasmus+ Programme in the Czech Republic. The winning project based on outstanding youth work is selected by the Committee and presented by the beneficiaries in the plenary of the Conference.

## **National recognition of youth work – social recognition**

### **Memorandum on supporting the recognition of the results of non-formal education**

It is one of the final products of the ESF national project “Keys for life – Developing Key Competences in Leisure-Time-Based and Non-Formal Education” 2009-2013 ([www.kliceprozivot.cz](http://www.kliceprozivot.cz)). “Keys for life – Developing Key Competences in Leisure-Time and Non-Formal Education” also provided a set of minimum competence profiles for selected positions in youth NGOs as a baseline for recognition of particular qualifications, as well as educational programmes aimed at youth workers so that they could build these identified minimum competence profiles for their continuous work with children and youth. The identified minimum competence profiles facilitate the process of the transparency and validation of skills and the recognition of youth workers’ qualifications. The recognition of the value of non-formal education within the ESF project covered four different levels:

- recognition of social benefits of the work with children and youth;
- recognition of competencies gained in non-formal education by employers;
- formal validation of competencies gained in non-formal education by public authorities and educational institutions;
- self-evaluation of competencies gained in life-long learning.

The project provided methodological support for creating training programmes in the field of developing human resources in youth NGOs, youth clubs and leisure-time centres. Within the project, five expert meetings with employers, professional educators and other professionals were organised which focused on the recognition of the results of non-formal education. Moreover, a national conference (2011) for the same target group was organised during which **the Memorandum on supporting the recognition of the results of non-formal education** was signed by the representatives of the employers. In the meantime, the Memorandum (see above) was signed by more signatories.

Another national ESF Project K2 (2012–2015) as a follow-up (<http://znv.nidv.cz/k2>) contains a key activity based on the recognition of the results of non-formal education within which the “Personal Competency Portfolio” was further drafted and its scope enlarged by planning the personal development of youth workers. Four roundtables were organised for employers, public authorities, professional educators and youth workers.

ESF budget for Keys for Life: 185 million Czech koruny (CZK); follow-up: annually 4 million CZK from the budget of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. ESF budget for K2: 57 million CZK.

## **Involvement of the country in any European initiative or applying any national initiatives to support youth work**

### **Youthpass certificates**

Youthpass certificates are widely promoted by the National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme especially in the activities of youth field such as Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service, Mobility of Youth Workers, Transnational Co-operation Activities (TCA) and Structured Dialogue meetings. Participants of approved projects of Erasmus+: Youth in Action and of the Youth in Action programmes are informed about having the right to receive recognition for their participation and learning in the projects in the form of a Youthpass certificate. The National Agency also promotes Youthpass in their information campaigns for potential beneficiaries.

### **Annual national competition “Village of the Year”**

Villages have been invited to submit their application to the competition annually since 1995. The aim of the competition is to encourage village inhabitants to actively participate in their village development as well as to promote development programmes for modernisation of villages and draw the wider public's attention to how important villages are for society. The Ministry of Regional Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Union of Towns and Villages of the Czech Republic and the Alliance of Rural Areas Development of the Czech Republic are inviting parties that publish annually open calls and award a prize. In the first round, 14 regions of the Czech Republic select their winner village, which proceeds to the national round, where three villages are awarded the prize. The criteria cover strategic documents, community life, activities of citizens, entrepreneurship, housing, competencies of citizens, underground utilities, public space development, countryside development, IT instruments and development plans. Successful villages prove also that they maintain traditions and support participation of people including young people and children in decision-making processes. Special attention is paid to the life of young people in villages including the quality of youth work provided.

## **4. Funding youth work**

### **The national grant schemes from the state budget including the budgetary allocation specifically for youth work**

#### **Grant Schemes of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports:**

- **Investment Grant Scheme for youth NGOs**

This grant scheme supports reconstruction and modernisation of buildings and equipment for youth work which are in the ownership of the NGOs.

Budgetary allocation: annually about 27 million CZK

- **Grant Scheme for supporting Youth and Children NGOs**

A grant scheme which supports systematic youth work provided by youth NGOs (whose status covers YOUTH WORK) and aims to meet the goals of the National Youth Strategy 2014-2020. It is divided into four sub-programmes:

1. **Programme for trans-regional and national youth NGOs awarded the title “NGO recognised by the Ministry for providing quality youth work”** (The awarded title is valid till 2020. Provided annual grants support a regular whole-year youth work with organised and non-organised children and young people as well as sustainable capacity building of national NGOs that prove long-term quality youth work)
2. **Programme for umbrella youth NGOs** (Provided annual grants support umbrella youth NGOs at national and regional level that represent and protect interests of their member organisations)
3. **Programme for youth NGOs with branch NGOs** (defined by the law) that do not reach the standards for applying for a grant in Programme n. 1 (Provided annual grants support a regular whole-year youth work with organised and non-organised young people and children)
4. **Programme for youth NGOs without branch NGOs** (Provided annual grants support a regular whole-year youth work with organised and non-organised young people and children provided by smaller organisations)

The Grant Scheme has its own methodology for evaluators and applicants which takes into consideration:

- aims of the grant scheme;
- description of the sub-programmes;
- time schedule (open calls with deadlines, formal evaluation of the application forms, meetings of the Selection Committee, submitting the results of the Committee for official approval of the minister, publishing the official results on the ministerial web, deadline for financial clearance and submitting the Yearly Report, controlling and monitoring activities of the ministry);
- profile of eligible applicants;
- how to submit the application forms (on-line and hard copies, attachments);
- eligible costs of provided grants (ministry covers at maximum 70%, the projects can be co-financed from local, district or regional budgets, from EU funds or other financial resources);
- controlling mechanisms (through annual reports of the successful applicants which have to be part of the financial clearance; Youth Department conducts preliminary, running and following controls in accordance with the Methodology of Controlling Activities);
- financial clearance;
- structure of the application form including the budget of the project (the budget can be modified during conducting the project upon the request of the NGO).

Other information:

- A special part of the methodology is devoted to fulfilling conditions for getting a financial grant for organising summer camps and colonies (the main youth leaders of this type of activity have to undergo an obligatory specialised certified training – details are covered in an attachment to the Methodology).

- The submitted projects are assessed (formally) and evaluated by two assessors who go through the applications and give a score for the selection committee as a basis to decide upon the grant. If their scores differ in a significant way, the third assessor is involved. The assessors also assess whether the projects fulfil the strategic and operational goals of the National Youth Strategy.
- The Selection Committee appointed by the Deputy Minister responsible for youth upon the nomination of Youth Department decides about providing grants.
- The assessors and members of the Committee are trained.
- The ministry provides annual information sessions and trainings for the target group (applicants).
- Documentation is done online including attached files as well as by archiving hard copies of the application forms, financial clearance and yearly reports.

Budgetary allocation: annually about 180 million CZK.

- **Grant Scheme supporting certified Youth Information Centres**

Certified Youth Information Centres get certification from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in accordance with the methodology of certification and the Concept Paper on Youth Information Centres Development. The criteria for certification are: providing quality and verified information about and for young people free of charge, providing access to information for all target groups of young people, respecting the European Charter on Youth Information, having their own web page, keeping standard opening and closing hours. The employees have to be qualified for providing information and had to undergo the training for providers of information for and about young people. The grants awarded can be used for staffing and material provision.

Budgetary allocation: annually about 6.5 million CZK.

- **Development and Grant Scheme supporting participation of children and young people in knowledge-based and skills-based competitions**

Financial support is given to organisers of knowledge-based and skill-based competitions at local, regional and national level as well as to ensure participation of Czech teams in international competitions. Successful participants in international competitions are presented with their diploma by the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports in an annual ceremony.

Budgetary allocation: annually about 37 million CZK.

- **Development Grant Scheme assessing primary-school pupils' and secondary-school students' results in district, regional and national rounds of knowledge and skill-based competitions (Excellence of Primary and Secondary Schools)**

This grant scheme supports teachers who prepared pupils and students for their successful participation in knowledge-based and skills-based competitions at local, regional, national and international level. Providing financial support is based on the national register in which results from the local, regional, national and international competitions are recorded.

Budgetary allocation: annually about 25 million CZK.

- **Grant Scheme supporting development of full potential of pupils and students in primary and secondary schools**

This Grant Scheme supports organisers (schools, universities, research institutions, employers, NGOs, Youth Centres) that offer innovative short-term and long-term activities aimed at supporting development of full potential of primary-school pupils and secondary-school students. It encourages teachers and youth workers to identify talented individuals and support their talent. It is the grant programme that enables the link between formal education and non-formal education activities.

Budgetary allocation: annually about 15 million CZK.

- **Grant Scheme supporting fulfilling the strategic and operational goals of the National Youth Strategy 2014-2020 at regional level**

Regions launch their own open calls in accordance with the thematic priority set by the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Budgetary allocation: annually about 7 million CZK.

- **Grant Scheme for supporting Czech–German co-operation in the field of children and Youth**

It is the grant programme that enables the link between formal education and non-formal education activities in the field of Czech–German co-operation. Activities based on volunteerism, intercultural dialogue, participation and structured dialogue, youth exchanges etc. are supported in financial terms. Grants are awarded also for training teachers and youth workers.

Budgetary allocation: annually about 6 million CZK.

All supported organisations and institutions are obliged to submit the complete annual Year Report to the Youth Department. The Youth Department conducts audit controls on a random basis.

## **National grant schemes from the state budget for a wider target group through which youth work can also be supported:**

The funding requests of youth NGOs may be fielded by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Culture or, depending on the objective of the activity, other ministries too. These ministerial grant schemes apply to more general target groups, part of which are also young people (for instance grant schemes for “young” entrepreneurs or “young” farmers who are supported up to the age of 40) – there are no statistics about the percentage of beneficiaries who cover supported young people or youth workers between 15 and 26 who represent the target group of the national youth policy.

## **ESF Operational Programme Research, Development and Education**

Since 2018, youth workers/leaders and leisure-time-based pedagogues/educators can raise the quality of their youth work thanks to the ESF **Operational Programme Research, Development and Education** in the following **open calls**:

### **1. Capacity-building for school development II.**

#### **Supported activities:**

- Linking formal education to non-formal education – development of key competencies (financial allocation: 230 000 000 CZK). This activity supports creating partnerships between schools and providers of non-formal education and aims to meet goals of the National Youth Strategy 2014-2020.
- Supporting youth workers and teachers in formal and non-formal education (financial allocation: 15 000 000 CZK). This activity supports creating programmes which link formal education to non-formal education, networking and exchanging examples of good practice and also aims to meet goals of the National Youth Strategy 2014-2020.
- Competencies for democratic culture (financial allocation: 162 000 000 CZK). This activity supports creating and piloting programmes which promote development of competencies for democratic culture, namely an active involvement of children and young people into decision-making processes.
- Implementation of Regional Action Plans (financial allocation: 1 750 000 000 CZK). Supported activities cover the concrete activities which had been set up in the Regional Action Plans in respective regions especially in the field of linking formal education to non-formal education. Priority is given to innovation of technologies, entrepreneurship and initiatives of pupils and students in a form of networking and sharing examples of good practice.
- Local Development Action Plans (financial allocation: 3 000 000 000 CZK). Financial support is provided for the implementation of activities covered by the Local Action Plans (MAP I) which aim to link formal education to non-formal education, linking youth work and social work, facilitating structured dialogue with children and young people and supporting school parliaments. Youth workers and leisure-time-based educators will be supported in forms of

networking, receiving supervision and mentoring, building co-operation and partnerships as well as creating and piloting educational programmes.

### **Other funding opportunities at National Level:**

Youth NGOs may also make use of grant appeals to regional administrations, municipal and local authorities, and apply to various endowment bodies and other entities. A significant proportion of the funding for NGOs, however, comes from their membership fees, and also, in the case of larger bodies, from European projects.

### **Erasmus+ Programme**

Apart from the grant schemes provided and administered by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Erasmus+ Programme is the most effective financial tool for supporting youth work in the Czech Republic. Not only the youth work covering youth activities in a variety of thematic fields and training of youth leaders and youth workers is supported in financial terms through the Erasmus+ Programme, but also national events which have a significant impact on youth work in the country are supported from the TCA budget: in March 2017 the National Youth Conference for youth workers was organised whose one workshop was devoted to building bridges between youth work and social work. As a follow up, in September 2017 an expert meeting on linking youth work to social work was organised in co-operation with the Erasmus+ National Agency.

The Erasmus+ National Agency has entered a research project on competence development and capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders involved in training/support activities in Erasmus+: Youth in Action. This project also explores the effects of Erasmus+: Youth in Action on the organisations involved. The project involves 17 National Agencies of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme and their researchers. The aim of this project is to explore evidence for the benefits of international co-operation in the youth field in Erasmus+: Youth in Action, especially with respect to its contribution to quality development of youth work training and the work of youth workers, organisations in the youth field and National Agencies of Erasmus+: Youth in Action. This evidence should contribute to the visibility and recognition of international co-operation in the youth field.

<http://www.researchyouth.eu/competence-development-and->

## 5. Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision

### State structures/public authorities deciding on or providing youth work

#### Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

<http://www.msmt.cz/mladez/odbor-pro-mladez>

The Youth Department together with the Sports Department are part of Section Number 5 in the Ministry which has its own Deputy Minister responsible for youth and sports. The Youth Department consists of two units:

1. Unit of Youth Policy (six civil servants)
2. Unit of Non-formal and Leisure-Time-Based Education (six civil servants)

Apart from the 11 civil servants working in two units, there are also the director and his secretary in the Youth Department (altogether 13 civil servants). The Youth Department is responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating youth policy and youth work in the country.

Planning, supporting and delivering youth work is covered in the National Youth Strategy 2014-2020 (Koncepce podpory mládeže na období 2014-2020), which was adopted by the Government of the Czech Republic in May 2014, Decree no. 342 of 12 May 2014 (<http://www.msmt.cz/file/33599/>). The National Youth Strategy works with the terms pillars, horizontal priorities, strategic goals, operational goals and measures.

**Pillars** determine the set principles upon which the expected impact of the strategy on young people is based (1. Facilitating the transition of young people into independent individuals responsible for their own lives, their family, community and society; 2. A focus on realistic needs and opportunities of young people; 3. Promoting young people's potential for societal development). **Horizontal priorities** take into account the priority areas of intervention across all strategic and operational goals (1. Equal opportunities; 2. Inter-ministerial and cross-sectoral approach; 3. Support for non-formal education and leisure-time-based education) and quality youth work; 4. Involving young people in the decision-making process and participation; 5. Intergenerational solidarity). **Strategic goals** refer to a defined idea of how the Youth Strategy should contribute to specific areas of youth policy in the long term, until 2020 (they cover 13 thematic areas related to youth). **Operational goals** break down this vision in terms of the short-term, mid-term and long-term fulfilment of the strategic goals. **Measures** define specific steps taken mainly through youth work in order to achieve the desired operational goals.

#### Youth Chamber (<http://www.msmt.cz/mladez/komora-mladeze-2>)

This is an inter-ministerial advisory body to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports responsible for the youth field in the Czech Republic, which holds a management role in meeting the objectives of youth policy and youth work. 22 members of the Chamber are representatives of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Health, the

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of the Environment, representatives of the National Institute of Children and Youth, representatives of the Czech Council for Children and Youth, representatives of leisure-time centres, employer representatives, representatives of the Association of Youth Centres' Workers, representatives of religious societies, representatives of municipal authorities and experts in the field of promotion and protection of youth. Candidates for membership in the Chamber are nominated by the institutions and organisations represented in the Chamber of Youth, and they are approved by the Deputy Minister responsible for youth. They meet twice year. Terms of reference provide space for establishing ad hoc or permanent expert groups that are at the Youth Chamber's disposal if specific issues relating to youth policy or youth work have to be explored. Since 2015 there has been **the expert group on linking youth work to social work**.

### **Council for Leisure-Time-Based Education**

<http://www.msmt.cz/mladez/rada-pro-zajmove-vzdelavani-2>

This was established in 2002 and serves as the advisory body of the Deputy Minister responsible for youth in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Its main mission is to monitor and evaluate activities of the national network of leisure-time centres for children and youth (Střediska volného času, SVČ), after-school clubs (školní kluby, ŠK) and after-school childcare facilities (školní družiny, ŠD) in terms of providing children and young people with a wide choice of quality leisure-time activities based on non-formal and leisure-time-based education. The Council makes proposals for setting up an efficient and systematic approach to developing and expanding leisure-time-based education provided by leisure-time centres for children and youth (Střediska volného času, SVČ), after-school clubs (školní kluby, ŠK) and after-school childcare facilities (školní družiny, ŠD), ensuring equal access of all age groups to the above-mentioned school facilities and preventing social exclusion through a variety of leisure-time and educational activities designed for children and young people. It also assesses the legal framework and makes proposals for amendments to respective regulations and acts covering leisure-time-based education.

### **National Youth Information Centre (NICM) <http://www.nicm.cz/en>**

The main aim of the National Youth Information Centre (NICM) is to gather all necessary information for and about young people and provide consultancy and services for children and youth as well as to secure visibility of the NICM within the Youth Information System. It has to be done in compliance with the objectives of the **Youth Information System Development Framework** (adopted in 2008, <http://www.msmt.cz/file/34070/>), the National Youth Strategy 2014-2020 and the European Youth Information Charter. In 2006 the NICM launched a new philosophy in the area of raising awareness of young people, the main idea of which is “to be for young people a lighthouse in the ocean of information and to help young people to seek for and find the right way in their lives”. The NICM also offers methodological support to public and non-governmental organisations relating to establishing and managing local and regional Youth Information Centres (ICMs). It organises seminars for the staff of

ICMs from all over the Czech Republic and enables newly established ICMs to undergo one-day job-shadowing events in the NICM in Prague. The objectives of the NICM are:

1. to gather, sort out and store relevant information from the given areas which had been set up in compliance with the objectives of the national youth policy mainly in the thematic field “an access of children and young people to information” as well as reflecting “the European Youth Information Charter” which is binding for the members of the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency – ERYICA;
2. to distribute information within the Youth Information System and to develop information and counselling services in the broadest scope possible;
3. to permanently raise awareness of young people on a variety of issues important for them;
4. to provide a methodological support to regional ICMs in the Czech Republic and to help them improve the quality of their work.

Activities of the NICM are primarily concentrated on sorting out and delivering relevant information to children and youth. A derived target group is created by schools and educational institutions, parents, teachers, children and youth workers and organisations and institutions ensuring free-time activities for children and youth. Another specific target group of the NICM are Youth Information Centres in the Czech Republic and their staff. The NICM deals with: 1. Data processing and its subsequent distribution to all regions, 2. Information and counselling activities, 3. Individual counselling, 4. Methodological and professional support of ICMs in the Czech Republic, 5. Co-operation with other organisations and institutions, 6. Membership of international organisations, 7. Uploading information to the international portal – Infomobil, 8. Public relations. Areas of the unified classification of information covered by the NICM are as follows: 1. Education in the Czech Republic/Education abroad, 2. Work in the Czech Republic / Work abroad, 3. Travelling in the Czech Republic / Travelling abroad, 4. Leisure time, 5. Health and well being, 6. Ecology and sustainable development, 7. Socio-pathological phenomena, 8. Social groups and movements, 9. Citizens and society, 10. Youth in the EU.

### **Co-ordinating Council of Providers of Youth Information (KRPIM)**

<http://www.nicm.cz/oblasti/pro-pracovniky-s-mladezi/informacni-system-pro-mladez/kr>

This is an official advisory body of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports regarding the national system of providing information for and about young people. Its members are appointed by the Deputy Minister responsible for youth. This body deals with development of youth information policy and youth information systems in the Czech Republic. KRPIM meets twice a year and is chaired by the director of the Youth Department (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports). In its meetings KRPIM decides about approving the submitted proposals for awarding the certification to Youth Information Centres (YICs) that fulfil given criteria while the Deputy Minister takes the final decision on awarding the certification.

The main goals of the certification processes are:

- make youth information system more effective
- increase quality of services provided in regional and local YICs

- promote management quality in certified YICs.

### **Leisure-time centres for children and youth (Střediska volného času), after-school clubs (školní kluby) and after-school childcare facilities (školní družiny)**

Leisure-time-based education is provided by leisure-time centres for children and youth (Střediska volného času, SVČ), after-school clubs (školní kluby, ŠK) and after-school childcare facilities (školní družiny, ŠD). They are fully or partially financed from the state budget. Their establishers can be municipalities, unions of municipalities, regional governments, churches, other legal entities, and physical persons. Leisure-time centres and after-school clubs cover all 14 regions in the Czech Republic with their activities. In 2017 there were 321 leisure-time centres in the Czech Republic whose activities are attended by 296 248 participants; and 591 school clubs attended by 47 149 pupils. The Regulation allows specialised school facilities to provide school remedial activities as well as tutoring activities to children in order to prevent early school leaving. These facilities also serve as a platform for children and youth to enable them to enter a variety of local, national or international projects. There is a professional **Association of Leisure Time Centres' Youth Workers and Youth Leaders** (Sdružení pracovníků Domů dětí a mládeže, SP DDM), which organises annual national meetings in co-operation with the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and discusses the provision of leisure-time-based education as well as the challenges leisure-time-based educators face in their work.

[http://www.spddm.org/Index\\_aj.html](http://www.spddm.org/Index_aj.html)

### **National Institute for Further Education, NIDV (<http://www.nidv.cz/en/>)**

National Institute for Further Education (NIDV) arranges and offers courses, seminars, meetings, lectures and other activities relating to in-service training of pedagogical staff. It is a service organisation of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, whose operational and labour costs are directly covered from the state budget.

The NIDV enjoys an advantage over other institutions of a similar specialisation of being an organisation with a nation-wide scope and having branch offices in all 14 regions of the Czech Republic.

Educational programmes provided by the NIDV are funded from the state budget, namely by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports as well as from the European Social Fund. The benefit of these study programmes lies in the fact that they are available to teachers and leisure-time-based educators at minimal cost or are provided free of charge.

### **Erasmus+ National Agency (Centre For International Co-operation in Education)**

<http://www.dzs.cz/en/>

The Centre for International Co-operation in Education (DZS) is a semi-budgetary organisation, established by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech

Republic. Its aim is to perform tasks relating to ensuring educational and other relations with foreign countries under the instructions of the ministry. DZS is responsible for a number of international programmes and carries out activities promoting education, training and mobility. DZS services are aimed at individuals, students, teachers, directors of all types of schools and other professionals, and organisations and companies involved in education and local authorities and, last but not least, also the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. DZS serves as the National Agency of the Erasmus+ Programme, which is one of the most effective financial tools for supporting youth work in the Czech Republic. Not only the youth work covering youth activities in a variety of thematic fields and training of youth leaders and youth workers is supported in financial terms through the Erasmus+ Programme, but also national events which have a significant impact on youth work in the country are supported from the TCA budget: in March 2017 the National Youth Conference for youth workers was organised, where one workshop was devoted to building bridges between youth work and social work. As a follow up, in September 2017 an expert meeting on linking youth work to social work was organised in co-operation with the Erasmus+ National Agency.

The Erasmus+ National Agency has entered a research project on competence development and capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders involved in training/support activities in Erasmus+: Youth in Action. This project also explores the effects of Erasmus+: Youth in Action on the organisations involved. The project involves 17 National Agencies of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme and their researchers. The aim of this project is to explore evidence for the benefits of international co-operation in the youth field in Erasmus+: Youth in Action, especially with respect to its contribution to quality development of youth work training and the work of youth workers, organisations in the youth field and National Agencies of Erasmus+: Youth in Action. This evidence should contribute to the visibility and recognition of international co-operation in the youth field.

<http://www.researchyouth.eu/competence-development-and->

### **National and regional youth councils** (<http://en.crdm.cz/>)

In 1998 the Czech Council for Children and Youth (ČRDM) was set up, which in 2017 links 98 member organisations working with children and young people, most of which are national associations of children and young people representing around 200 000 individual members. The ČRDM members range from very small associations to big ones, including **ten regional youth councils**. The ČRDM's mission is to support good conditions for a good life quality of children and young people, and the development of their full potential. Besides daily work (advocacy of youth interests, lobbying within institutions, administration, etc.) there are several key areas or projects which are prioritised:

- Co-operation with European Youth Forum: since 2012 the ČRDM is a member of this European-wide umbrella organisation of national youth councils and international organisations. The ČRDM is involved in activities of the European Youth Forum, such as participation in seminars, projects presentations, meetings as well as promoting networking especially with newly founded national youth councils in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

- Bilateral Czech–Israeli youth exchanges: each year since 2012 eight young Czechs and eight young Israelis visit the other country for a week, during which they learn about the culture, people and history of the country as well as about youth work in different organisations and youth movements.
- Structured dialogue with young people: the ČRDM takes the leading role in the National Working Group on Structured Dialogue.
- YouthWiki: the ČRDM is the hosting organisation of the national YouthWiki correspondent.

### **Youth and youth work NGOs**

Apart from the Czech Council for Children and Youth, in the Czech Republic there are about 1 500 non-governmental **non-for-profit organisations (NGOs)** which are actively committed to providing free-time activities and learning opportunities for children and young people in which children and young people take part on a voluntary basis. These include, for instance, sports, art activities, nature studies, rambling, technical activities, handicrafts and other areas. Youth workers working in NNOs are both professional employees and, mainly, volunteers who work with children and young people in their free time. Their qualifications are not in any way specifically governed by specific laws or regulations, besides the general ones (Civic Code No. 89/2012 Coll.), but at a number of organisations, primarily those which function across the country, their training is subject to the internal rules of the organisation. This means that they often have to participate in a variety of courses for leaders or instructors. Funding from the state budget is provided mainly through grant programmes from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, but also from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Culture or, depending on the objective of the activity, other ministries too. Organisations may also apply for grants from regional, municipal and local authorities and from private and supranational foundations.

## 6. Forms and examples of youth work in the country

### National context – how is youth work happening in the country

Youth work in the Czech Republic is understood as “actions directed towards young people regarding activities where they can take part voluntarily and which are designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning as well as through so-called leisure-time-based education”. Such youth work does not make young people only beneficiaries. On the contrary, young people are seen and met as central stakeholders and creators in the design and implementation of youth work. Youth work providers are encouraged to make youth work actively inclusive in order to reach out to all groups of young people.

Youth work in the Czech Republic takes place in many **different forms** (youth centre activities, youth projects, outreach/detached youth work, informal youth group activities, youth camps, providing youth information, youth participation, youth organisation activities, youth movements and campaigns, organised digital and online activities etc.), in **different settings** (youth clubs, leisure-time centres, clubhouses of youth NGOs, schools, churches, streetwork environment, museums, libraries, youth work in the open air etc.) and is **carried out by different entities** (NGOs, municipalities, research institutions, leisure-time-based educators, professional youth workers, volunteers, non-organised young people, etc.).

It is also important to **make clear the borders between youth work and other** activities directed towards young people, such as grass-roots sport or cultural activities which are in the national context seen as tools within youth work. Concerning youth work and social work, there is a strong border between them: youth work is covered by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports while social work is covered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues.

### Support for youth work targeting specifically young people with fewer opportunities

In the national context, since 2015 the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has experienced a new situation when youth workers deal more and more with young people's needs for being provided with social services during youth work activities while social workers deal with a challenge to provide non-formal education to their clients. Moreover, youth workers urgently need social workers' experience for reaching out to young people with fewer opportunities. In order to examine the possibilities of a close co-operation between youth work and social work and facilitate reaching out of young people with fewer opportunities, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic created in May 2015 **the Expert Group reflecting interconnection between youth work and social work**. The Expert Group functions under the Youth Chamber, which is a cross-sectoral advisory body of the minister responsible for youth. The expert group consists of representatives of different youth work and social work networks, especially the Czech Streetwork Association; policy makers from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Agency for Social Inclusion under the Office of Government; youth work and social work practitioners and others, and aims to facilitate

social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities through youth work which is supported by social work.

The expert group has defined the profile of target groups providing and receiving youth work and social work as well as facilities which provide youth work and social work. It has mapped legislation, statistics, training opportunities, validation of competencies as well as resources of financial support concerning both youth work and social work. In 2016 the expert group proposed a list of challenges which should be discussed at national level. As a result, in March 2017 **the National Conference on Youth** was organised, which provided a national platform for a workshop called **Building Bridges Between Youth Work and Social Work**. Afterwards, as a follow-up, in September 2017 an expert meeting was organised in Ivancice which focused on identifying financial resources and resulted into concrete steps leading youth workers to hiring social pedagogues in respective youth work settings (through the ESF unit costs) as well as co-operating with Departments of Social and Legal Protection of Children which are functioning under local municipalities. In 2018 **the National Conference for/about Social Pedagogues** will be organised by the Agency for Social Inclusion under the Office of Government in co-operation with the Youth Department (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports).

Since 2018, youth workers/leaders and leisure-time-based pedagogues/educators can raise the quality of their youth work towards children and young people with fewer opportunities thanks to the ESF **Operational Programme Research, Development and Education** in the following **open calls**:

- **Unit Costs** (financial allocation: 500 000 000 CZK)  
This is a simplified open call for leisure-time-based educators in terms of their capacity building and professional development. This call will enable leisure-time centres to hire a social pedagogue or a school assistant (leisure-time centres, so-called Strediska volneho casu, are part of the educational system of the Czech Republic).
- **Inclusive Education for Socially Excluded Localities** (financial allocation: 250 000 000 CZK)  
This open call is for a wider target group including leisure-time-based educators working in leisure-time centres who can apply for study visits in the EU Member States focused on time-proven processes aimed at facilitating the social inclusion of children and young people with fewer opportunities. Supported activities will enable vulnerable children and young people who are in danger of an early school drop-out to benefit from tutoring in non-formal education settings.

### **Examples of successful youth work practices representative of youth work in the country**

1. **Actively Inclusive Youth Work in leisure-time centre ULITA** (= “Shell” in English)  
<https://www.ulita.cz/>

The leisure-time centre ULITA makes constant efforts to develop the full potential of any single child and young person through leisure-time-based activities in a non-formal education setting. Their systematic approach to an actively inclusive youth work is based on three pillars:

- a) Capacity building of youth workers and leisure-time-based educators. (The centre provides training opportunities for its staff and external partners, provides them with methodological help based on their own Concept Paper on Actively Inclusive Youth Work and has created a new working position for their own youth work advisor. Materials for children and young people with fewer opportunities are created.)
- b) Communication with the target group including recording respective knowledge and data. (The centre conducts an active as well as regular communication with parents and teachers of their target groups aimed at promoting inclusion aspects of provided youth work. The parents are informed about a possibility to make use of a pedagogical assistant during provided youth work. Youth workers and leisure-time-based educators keep files of each participant in their activities where they record involvement of the participants in provided activities, gained competencies and personal needs to be reflected.)
- c) An effective linking of youth work to social work (The centre has established a specialised unit called BEZTÍŽE, “Weightlessness” in English, that has made three social services registered and thus can provide social work as well. The Unit has become a member of the Czech Streetwork Association and specialises in preventing pathological phenomena and providing social work apart from youth work. The Centre organises activities in which clients of BEZTÍŽE and participants of ULITA meet regularly in common events and benefit from such an interaction. Social workers, social pedagogues, leisure-time-based educators and the advisor work together in very close co-operation and discuss on a daily basis developing the full potential of each individual who visits the centre regularly or occasionally. The Unit offers traineeship and job-shadowing opportunities to national and international colleagues.)

## **2. CLICK WITH SCHOOL – school inclusion of vulnerable groups of young migrants** (<http://www.meta-ops.cz/en/>)

This project is implemented by META – Association of Opportunities of Young Migrants. META o.p.s. is a non-profit organisation that has supported the integration of foreigners in the education and labour market since 2004.

The project offers free services to young migrants who are struggling in their integration processes to enter the Czech educational system and labour market. Youth work provided in a non-formal education setting is based on social counselling and tutoring. Moreover, Czech language courses and a one-year preparatory course for entering secondary schools are provided. The target group of the project are all young migrants, who need to find a solution for their educational and professional situation with an emphasis on the most vulnerable group in access to education: young migrants from 14 to 18 years of age. After graduating from an elementary school (mostly in the country of their origin), young migrants and refugees do not have an opportunity to learn the Czech language. Lack of knowledge of Czech makes it impossible for these adolescents to enter secondary schools in the Czech Republic, which excludes them from secondary and further education. In this project parents of young migrants are also supported through free counselling services and free Czech

language courses in order to help them understand the Czech educational system and to be able to communicate and actively participate in their children's education.

### 3. Nation-wide Exchange of Experience (<http://www.cvvz.cz/co-je-to-cvvz>)

“Nation-wide Mutual Exchange of Experience” is a non-profit registered organisation that organises an annual four-day national display of a variety of youth work forms designed and delivered by different providers. The event takes place annually in different towns, usually in November, and serves also as a meeting platform for youth work providers, their inspiration, sharing experience and networking. Youth work beneficiaries are also invited and provided with a variety of opportunities to enjoy different forms of youth work. The programme is based on different workshops, debates, lectures, hand-made activities etc. and the participants themselves create their own “attendance calendar” which most suits their expectations and needs. A lot of space is given to learning by doing activities. A tea room provides a quiet environment for those who prefer discussions in a calm atmosphere.

#### **Examples of digital/online youth work:**

##### **Face2Art (<http://www.face2art.cz/index.php/o-projektu>)**

The Face2Art Project implemented by an NGO, HUDEBNÍ MLÁDEŽ (Jeunesses Musicales) Czech Republic, gives young people from 13 to 23 years of age an opportunity to present themselves as artists with their own pieces of art as well as to gain new artistic experience. They can enhance their artistic skills at:

- producing/making art
- perceiving/analysing art
- reflecting upon arts/culture (production as well as perception) in seven art disciplines.

The platform for presentation is a virtual gallery where the pieces of art are exhibited and “fans” can vote for them in the contest. Each discipline has a patron (a well-known artist) who comments on the best entries in the contest and becomes a personal mentor to the best participants. The online part is balanced with an offline part – young people participating in the project are invited to take part in several workshops and meetings and thus meet the online community face-to-face.

Strength of the project: There is a tendency that young people of a certain age are eager to express their personality in an original, innovative way. They often use art as a means of expressing themselves and seeking feedback and exchange of views with their peer community. They like to show pieces of art in social networks in order to get acknowledgment and reflection on their artistic performance. This kind of project supports the participants express better on social media. In the project, the participants can enjoy a safe online environment with pre-set rules and receive feedback and professional mentoring from which they can learn a lot. Another strength of this approach to online youth work is a two-level interconnection between working with young people online and offline.

## 7. Quality standards

### **The title “NGO recognised by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for providing quality youth work”**

The title is awarded within the sub-programme of Grant Schemes of Youth Department for supporting youth work. It is awarded by the minister responsible for youth upon the decision of the Selection Committee. It is linked to the amendment to the “Governmental Rules for providing grants from the state budget to non-profit non-governmental organisations by the central public bodies” (since 2014 this amendment enables the ministry to make an agreement on long-term co-operation with selected youth NGOs). Currently 13 NGOs are holders of this title for the period 2016-2020, four more for the period 2017-2020, plus the Czech National Council for Children and Youth as the main strategic partner for the ministry is granted the title on a long-term basis.

Youth NGOs awarded the title have to meet **15 criteria** (for instance: the NGO has to have existed for at least five years; has to have organisational units at least in three regions; has youth work covered in the status; has clearly defined its organisational structure and clearly described processes in the organisation; makes public their Yearly Reports including financial statistics; has drafted a Strategic Development Plan to 2020, including description of learning perspective – objectives, methods and forms of youth work; no problems in the field of financial clearance; has no crime files; performs systematic PR towards the public; activities are provided not only to its own members but also to other target groups – it is open to everyone; supports volunteerism; is actively inclusive and open to vulnerable young people, disadvantaged young people and young people with fewer opportunities; provides regular training courses to youth leaders and youth workers which are accredited by educational institutions; has professional and sufficient staff for providing activities – at least 60% of educational staff has a certificate of attending accredited training courses).

Youth NGOs awarded the title can sign an agreement on long-term co-operation with the ministry which brings the following benefits:

- guarantee of getting 90% of an annual financial support for long-term youth work projects
  - decreasing administrative burden when applying for annual financial grants
  - can use the logo of the title.

Regional seminars for target groups of potential holders of the title “NGO recognised by the Ministry for providing quality youth work” are organised.

Holders of the title are obliged to submit their complete annual Year Report to the Youth Department. The Youth Department submits audit controls on a random basis.

### **Certification of Youth Information Centres (YICs)**

The main goals of the certification are:

- make youth information system more effective
- increase quality of services provided in YICs

- promote management quality in involved YICs.

The application for certification can be submitted by youth NGOs whose terms of reference explicitly state providing youth information, or by youth centres or schools which state in their official foundation charters providing youth information, or as the case may be by other organisations (e.g. cultural centres, libraries, travel agencies etc.) which state providing youth information services in their relevant official documents. Since 2017 only YICs which are able to reach directly at least two elementary and two secondary schools in their town/region can apply for certification. Applicants have to prove that they have been serving as a YIC at least one year before the application is submitted.

The process of certification includes filling in an Evaluation Questionnaire which is a checklist for the selection committee that assesses the application form and conducts an on-the-spot audit followed by a structured interview. All obligatory standard criteria in accordance with the **National Quality Standards Code** have to be fulfilled, and meeting additional facultative quality standards is required for granting the certification to the applicants. Successful candidates who meet the certification criteria and keep long-term standardisation requirements are certified and awarded a quality label. Certified YICs receive financial support through the Grant Scheme Programme. The methodological material for the certified Youth Information Centres has been drafted ([http://www.nicm.cz/files/metodika\\_certifikace\\_icm\\_2017.pdf](http://www.nicm.cz/files/metodika_certifikace_icm_2017.pdf)).

Moreover, National project K2 – Quality and Competitiveness in Non-formal Education conducted from 1 April 2009 to 28 February 2013 ([www.ka2.cz](http://www.ka2.cz)) developed the **National competency-based framework for youth workers in youth information centres** with a set of **minimum competence profiles** for selected positions in Youth Information Centres, namely for managers and regular youth workers. The identified minimum competence profiles facilitate the process of transparency and validation of skills as well as the recognition of youth workers' qualifications.

[http://www.nicm.cz/files/priloha\\_8\\_-\\_minimalni\\_kompetenci\\_profil\\_pracovnika\\_icm\\_1.pdf](http://www.nicm.cz/files/priloha_8_-_minimalni_kompetenci_profil_pracovnika_icm_1.pdf)

[http://www.nicm.cz/files/priloha\\_9\\_-\\_minimalni\\_kompetencni\\_profil\\_manazera\\_icm\\_1.pdf](http://www.nicm.cz/files/priloha_9_-_minimalni_kompetencni_profil_manazera_icm_1.pdf)

### **Youth work quality self-assessment tools for youth NGOs and youth centres, OLINA**

**Form of youth work where the tool applies:** youth centres and youth organisations (self-assessment tool)

**Short description of the tool:**

The OLINA tool is one of the final products of the ESF national project “Keys for life – Developing Key Competences in Leisure-Time and Non-Formal Education”. It is an online system for the management of youth work quality systems for youth non-formal education settings (leisure-time centres, youth clubs, youth NGOs) and serves as a tool for introducing the principles of PDCA (plan-do-check-apply) to leisure-time centres, youth clubs and youth NGOs. The OLINA tool is based on three modules: 1. Self-evaluation, 2. competence-building, and 3. training. The OLINA tool is usable for the self-evaluation of competencies of

youth leaders and afterwards for the development of their competencies in e-learning programmes. At the same time the ongoing evaluating processes in the non-formal settings can be assessed. The ESF national project “Keys for life” has created and piloted training programmes aimed at raising the quality of youth work. These training programmes reinforce the skills and competencies of youth leaders and workers for setting objectives and their continuous evaluation.

**Tool initiated by:** National Institute for Children and Youth.

**Tool handled by:** National Institute of Further Education (<http://olina.nidv.cz>).

**Object/Theme:** Youth work quality self-assessment tools for youth NGOs and youth centres.

**Short description of main objectives/aim:**

- To facilitate the establishment and maintenance of youth work quality systems.
- To improve the youth work quality on the level of the management system of youth NGOs and youth centres as well as the competencies of youth workers and youth leaders.
- To increase the efficiency and quality of provided activities.
- To get feedback about the level of youth work quality and be able to continuously improve it in reaction to new challenges and the rapidly changing needs of young people.

**Method:**

A set of youth work quality self-assessment tools for youth NGOs and youth clubs integrated in an interactive online platform which offers three modules:

1. **Assessing Module:** facilitates youth work quality self-assessment of youth NGOs and youth centres, provides a set of self-assessment tools usable for different types of youth work settings which enables the users in an interactive form to carry out the self-assessment and compare the results of the self-assessment periodically. The system provides its users with an opportunity to undergo a process analysis with defining main, supportive and controlling processes. As the next step it is offering CAF or modified Internal Audit as tools for finishing the phase of assessment of different processes and ongoing activities. In addition, users can benefit from consultations and methodological support provided by experts from the National Institute of Further Education.
2. **Competence Module:** facilitates self-assessment of 30 key competencies crucial for youth work at the level of youth workers and youth leaders (two tests providing a feedback to the individual user about the level of his/her key competences relating to youth work quality. In addition, a multi-source external assessment tool enables the user to be assessed by his/her supervisors, colleagues, external partners, young people etc. and improve his/her personal and professional development. The methodology on developing 15 soft competencies is provided).
3. **E-learning Module:** provides eight innovative e-learning training programmes aimed at developing and improving eight selected key competencies for youth leaders (effective communication and presentation; planning; project management; problem solving; human resources management; strategic management; leadership; fundraising). The performance resulting from the training courses is recorded in the users' personal profiles and enables the users to further improve their performance if desired.

**What resources does it take to run the tool:**

ESF budget for the Individual National Project “Keys for Life – Developing Key Competences in Leisure-Time and Non-Formal Education”: 185 million CZK; follow-up: annually 4 million CZK from the budget of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

**How it is documented:** Online automatically in all three modules.

**Handling/use of gathered knowledge/results:**

It is possible to work with the results further at any time (for instance, to compare the results achieved in different periods throughout the year when using the tools repeatedly; to measure the progress made in the field of the youth work quality system in youth NGOs and youth centres as well as key competences of youth leaders). The online application tool enables leaders and managers of the target groups to document the development of their quality youth work competencies and create their own **Personal Competency Portfolio** based on self-evaluation. In addition, the tool enables the users on the level of youth NGOs and youth clubs to elaborate their own Remedial Action Plan and document progress made in closing the weaknesses and observations.

**Strength of the tool:**

Enables an equal access of all youth workers and youth leaders to the tool. The usage is free of charge and is adaptable to different needs of the users. User-friendly approaches.

**Weaknesses of the tool:**

A strong motivation of youth leaders and youth workers to devote their free time to use the tool continuously is required (a large number of youth workers and youth leaders are volunteers and devote a huge amount of their free time to youth work).

## 8. Knowledge and data on youth work

There is no significant research, neither a system of continuous documentation specifically on youth work in the Czech Republic. Public authorities have not initiated, nor managed any study of youth work over the last five years. The same applies to national research structures researching youth work.

In 2017 the Erasmus+ National Agency has entered a **research project on competence development and capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders involved in training/support activities in Erasmus+: Youth in Action**. This project also explores the effects of Erasmus+: Youth in Action on the organisations involved. Seventeen National Agencies of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme and their researchers are involved. The aim of this project is to explore evidence for the benefits of international co-operation in the youth field in Erasmus+: Youth in Action, especially with respect to its contribution to quality development of youth work training and work of youth workers, organisations in the youth field and National Agencies of Erasmus+: Youth in Action. This evidence should contribute to the visibility and recognition of international co-operation in the youth field.

<http://www.researchyouth.eu/competence-development-and->

### **National context regarding data collection and data protection:**

In 2017 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which is responsible for supporting and developing quality youth work, started the planning phase in order to ensure compliance with **the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** by 25 May 2018. The GDPR was designed to harmonise data privacy laws across Europe, to protect and empower all EU citizens' data privacy and to reshape the way organisations across the region approach data privacy.

### **Available sources of information on youth work in the country:**

There are **data collected by the Czech Council of Children and Youth** that are not accessible to the public due to the fact that they are primarily collected because of providing insurance to youth workers and volunteers.

### **Information gathered from the Grant Scheme for supporting Youth and Children NGOs (through application forms, yearly reports of the applicants and conducting controls):**

- Statistics about NGOs (high level of trust): number of full-time and part-time staff, member/branch organisations, youth leaders, youth workers, volunteers; number of internal and external meetings, trainings, external partners; annual budget).
- Statistics about children and young people the NGOs work with (number of participants in the activities; target groups of participants – organised or non-organised young people, young people with fewer opportunities, minorities, handicapped ...).
- Quality of the strategic development plan of provided youth work (attractiveness of activities, responses to different needs and interests of children and young people, actively inclusive youth work, young people's participation in designing, developing and evaluating plan of activities).
- Learning perspective of youth work: is non-formal and informal learning integrated into activities?
- In the longer-term perspective the gathered knowledge/results are also used to assess how youth NGOs contribute to fulfilling the goals of the National Youth Strategy 2014-2020.

## **9. European and International dimension of youth work in the country**

### **International dimension to youth work policy in the country:**

- 1. Implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work:**

The systematic approach to the development of youth work quality system in the Czech Republic has been revised based on Implementation of the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work.

## **2. Expert groups of the European Commission on contribution of youth work to address specific issues of the situation of young people:**

The Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports had its representatives in all the expert groups which were set up by the European Commission under the European Union Work Plans for Youth for 2014-2015 and 2016-2018 on youth work to address specific issues of the situation of young people:

- Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems in the EU Member States (2013-2014)
- Expert Group on the Contribution of Youth Work to Address the Challenges Young People Are Facing, in Particular the Transition from Education to Employment (2014-2015)
- Expert Group on the Contribution of Youth Work to Preventing Marginalisation and Violent Radicalisation of Young People (2015-2016)
- Expert Group on Risks, Opportunities and Implications of Digitalisation for Youth, Youth Work and Youth Policy (2016-2017)
- Expert Group on Youth Work for Young Migrants and Refugees (2017-2018)

Participation in these expert groups enabled the Youth Department policy makers to come together with their counterparts from different ministries, to establish closer connections and thus essentially strengthen the cross-sectoral co-operation concerning youth work development and monitoring.

### **International youth work opportunities for young people and for youth workers:**

#### **1. Erasmus+ Programme: youth**

Erasmus+ Programme is one of the most effective financial tools for supporting youth work in the Czech Republic. Not only youth work covering youth activities in a variety of thematic fields and training of youth leaders and youth workers is supported in financial terms through the Erasmus+ Programme, but also national events which have a significant impact on youth work in the country are supported from the TCA budget: in March 2017 the National Youth Conference for youth workers was organised, where one workshop was devoted to building bridges between youth work and social work. As a follow-up, in September 2017 an expert meeting on linking youth work to social work was organised in co-operation with the Erasmus+ National Agency.

#### **2. Visegrad Group (V4) and Eastern Partnership (EaP) co-operation in the youth field:**

Co-operation between V4 and EaP countries in the field of youth has been implemented within the official programmes of the respective V4 country taking the presidency of the Visegrad Group since 2011 (it is a one-year rotating presidency which starts on 1 July and

finishes on 30 June of the subsequent year). The co-operation was initiated by the Slovak Presidency (SK V4 PRES; 1. 7. 2010 – 30. 6. 2011) when a CDEJ (= European Steering Committee for Youth of the Council of Europe) member from Georgia – based on personal relations – was invited as an observer to an annual V4 meeting in Bratislava in May 2011. Afterwards, the Georgian Minister of Youth and Sport invited the directors of V4 ministerial youth departments to Tbilisi in July 2011 to discuss the co-operation between V4 and EaP countries in the field of youth. As a result, under the Czech V4 PRES (1. 7. 2011 – 30. 6. 2012) the representatives of EaP countries were invited to join the annual V4 meeting in Prague in May 2012. During this meeting the participants agreed on developing co-operation between V4 and EaP countries in the field of youth on three levels: among 1. ministries responsible for youth, 2. Youth in Action national agencies, and 3. national youth councils. One of the final products of such co-operation was a training seminar in Georgia organised by the Czech Youth in Action National Agency in 2013 aimed at creating partnerships between V4 and EaP countries which resulted in four successful projects being granted through the Eastern Partnership Window of the Youth in Action Programme.

Under the succeeding Polish V4 PRES (1. 7. 2012 – 30. 6. 2013) in Sulejowek, Poland, in April 2013 **the Comparative Study of the Situation of Youth in the Countries of the Visegrad Group**, which covered participation and decision making, volunteerism, non-formal education as well as employment and entrepreneurship was introduced (Ewa Krzaklewska; Council of Europe 2013). The V4 and EaP participants evaluated the results of the co-operation in a youth policy development.

In the annual V4 and EaP annual meeting under the Hungarian V4 PRES (1. 7. 2013 – 30. 6. 2014) in Visegrad in March 2014 the V4 and Georgian participants evaluated the results of the co-operation. It was for the first time when an idea of signing the Memorandum of Co-operation between V4 and EaP Countries in the Field of Youth was heard. Slovakia and Georgia took responsibility for drafting the text of the Memorandum.

Under the Slovak V4 PRES (1. 7. 2014 – 30. 6. 2015) the **Memorandum of Co-operation between the Ministries of the Countries of the Visegrad Group Responsible for Youth and the Ministries of the Countries of the Eastern Partnership to the European Union Responsible for Youth in the Youth Field** was signed in Bratislava on 22 June 2015. The Czech Republic supported the Slovak V4 PRES by organising a thematic working seminar for V4 and EaP countries on volunteerism of young people in Prague in September 2014 in a close co-operation with SALTO EECA and the Czech Erasmus+ National Agency (Centre for International Co-operation in Education).

The Czech V4 PRES (1. 7. 2015 – 30. 6. 2016) organised the **Youth Policy and Youth Work: Working Seminar on Co-operation between Visegrad Group, Romania and Eastern Partnership Countries** in October 2015, which resulted in a joint action plan of co-operation between Visegrad Group and Eastern Partnership countries in the youth field. The priority of the Czech V4 PRES in the youth field was to enable Romania to join the co-operation between V4 and EaP countries in the field of youth as an equal partner in so-called V4+ format on request of the Romanian Deputy Minister responsible for youth. This is why a Romanian delegation took an active part in this seminar. Moreover, an annual V4 and EaP meeting prioritising social inclusion of vulnerable young people was organised in June 2016.

The Polish V4 PRES (1. 7. 2016 – 30. 6. 2017) organised a seminar “Young People for Human Rights” in February 2017 which prioritised the theme of the No Hate Speech Movement.

All the annual and thematic V4 and EaP events were supported by the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, and SALTO Eastern Europe and Caucasus Resource Centre.

**3. ENYC (European Network of Youth Centres for International and Intercultural Learning) <http://eycn.org/>**

This is a voluntary association of youth centres and institutions established in 2003. The network has nowadays 16 members in 13 European countries. Its main goal is to exchange methods, ideas and examples of good practice of how to promote awareness and encourage the development of Europe’s diverse cultural identities in the area of non-formal learning and leisure-time-based education. The network ensures and strengthens international co-operation among national youth centres and offers them the possibility to develop and implement common international projects.

The National Institute of Further Education, a service organisation of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, is an ENYC member and serves as an important contact point for youth workers in the Czech Republic who are willing to participate in international activities or who search for partners, innovative approaches, methods and activities in the field of children and youth work. ENYC offers well organised programmes and activities for young people and youth workers and enables them to be mobile within Europe (youth exchanges, EVS).

## **10. Current debates and open questions/policies on youth work**

### **Cross-sectoral co-operation with the Agency for Social Inclusion (the Office of the Government) and the Czech Streetwork Association**

#### **Linking youth work to social work**

In order to examine possibilities of a close co-operation between youth work and social work and facilitate recognition of results of both works, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic created in May 2015 the Expert Group reflecting interconnection between youth work and social work. The Expert Group functions under the Youth Chamber, a cross-sectoral advisory body of the minister responsible for youth. The expert group consists of representatives of different youth work and social work networks especially the Czech Streetwork Association; policy makers from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Agency for Social Inclusion under the Office of Government, youth work and social work practitioners and others, and aims at facilitating social inclusion of disadvantaged young people who do not benefit from youth work .

In the national context, youth work is covered by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports while social work is covered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Issues. Since 2015, the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has experienced a new situation when youth workers deal more and more with young people's social needs while doing youth work while social workers deal with a challenge to provide non-formal education to their clients. Moreover, youth work urgently needs social workers' experience for reaching out to excluded young people.

The expert group has defined the profile of target groups providing and receiving youth work and social work as well as facilities which provide youth work and social work. It has mapped legislation, statistics, training opportunities, validation of competencies as well as resources of financial support concerning both youth work and social work. In 2016 the expert group proposed a list of challenges which should be discussed at national level. As a result, in March 2017 the National Conference on Youth was organised which provided a national platform for a workshop called "Building Bridges Between Youth Work and Social Work". Afterwards, as a follow-up, in September 2017 an expert meeting was organised which focused on identifying financial resources and resulted in concrete steps leading youth workers to hire social pedagogues in respective youth work settings (through the ESF unit costs) as well as co-operating with Departments of Social and Legal Protection of Children which are functioning under local municipalities. In 2018 the National Conference for / about Social Pedagogues will be organised by the Agency for Social Inclusion under the Office of Government in co-operation with Youth Department (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports).

## **Open questions, debates and priorities around youth work development in the country**

### **Digital youth work**

Digital youth work development is currently the priority for capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders in the country. It is important to support youth organisations and leisure-time centres in developing digital youth work practices in their local context. Such support aims to create project ideas and new partnerships for digital youth work development using the national network of youth information centres in order to promote concepts of digital presence of youth workers, equal interaction with young people online and participation of young people in digital youth work as well as to understand different realities of digital youth work in the country and in Europe.

The national network of certified youth information centres got an assignment from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to prioritise building up digital competencies of youth workers / leaders as well as leisure-time-based educators in their submitted projects within the Grant Scheme for Youth Information Centres in 2018.

Supported activities include:

- creating video-programmes which promote digital youth work;

- providing youth information centres with game consoles of virtual reality and sharing them within the national network of youth information centres with an aim to get young people familiar with new and so far not widely accessible digital technologies;
- creating training opportunities on digital and media literacy for youth workers in youth information centres including educational materials usable also for schools;
- developing the project “Digital citizenship”, which would cover issues such as digital identity cards, digitalisation of public services, digital elections etc.;
- organising roundtable discussions on digital competencies in youth work in regions;
- issuing Inspiromat “Competencies for the 21st century” devoted to digitalisation of youth work (the National Youth Information Centre is the issuing body).

### **Helping children and young people to reach their full potential in developing talents**

There is a strong belief that any single child as well as any single young person embodies a particular gift or talent. In many cases, talents may be hidden or not developed enough to reach its high potential. As a consequence, society is losing talented and gifted individuals who will never develop their full potential and will never contribute to their full potential or wish back to society. There are no doubts that youth work can play an important role in identifying and supporting gifts and talents, both hidden and emerging, in each child and young person.

The Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has developed a holistic systematic approach in identifying, developing and supporting talents in any single child and young person based on linking formal education to non-formal education as well as on creating and sustaining the remarkable community of teachers, youth workers, youth leaders, researchers, psychologists, policy makers and other specialists who serve as a platform for giving support and visibility to young talents.

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has approved the **Concept Paper on Supporting development of talents and taking care of talented individuals for the period 2014-2020**, which describes creating, functioning and offering activities by different stakeholders within the systematic approach to development of gifts and talents of children and young persons in formal education and non-formal education settings including counselling services, involvement of Science Academies, companies, business organisations etc. The Concept Paper puts emphasis on training and professional development of teachers, psychologists and youth workers in terms of strengthening their abilities for identifying, supporting and developing talents of children and young people. Since 2014, **the regional networks for supporting talents** have been functioning in all 14 regions of the Czech Republic and have been gradually expanding the scope of their activities in a long-term perspective and in a sustainable manner based on an interdisciplinary approach. These regional networks are an initiator and participant in various partnerships and platforms. The Ministry and its Youth Department play an important co-ordinating role in this systematic approach by administering the Grant Scheme on Supporting Talents and establishing the Ministerial Working Group on Supporting Talents as well as the Cross-sectoral Working Group on Supporting Talents, which meet twice a year.

Currently, discussions on identifying and supporting high-potential talents and gifts are going on especially in the context of nation-wide debates about inclusion of such highly talented individuals into the school community and society.