

Youth Partnership

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



COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH WORK IN GEORGIA



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1. Context of youth work

Youth Work started to develop in Georgia on its own, with great enthusiasm from the side of non-governmental organisations working in the fields of non-formal education, human rights, participation, culture, education and youth policy. Most of the organisations were registered in the second half of the 1990s with basic European values, as after Georgia gained its independence the EU and international aspirations were no longer obstacles for young people.

It should be mentioned that despite successes reached on the basis of enthusiasm and total voluntarism of youth organisations, it does not allow the sustainable development of this sector. On the one hand there were no quality standards for youth work in Georgia, and, on the other hand, state financial support for youth work and youth NGOs was extremely minimal. It was also challenging for organisations to get involved in internationally funded long-term projects that strengthen organisational sustainability. Without having youth work standards it is hard to define what a youth worker is or what the requirements and competencies for this activity are; it is also unimaginable to talk about numbers of youth workers, as there are no statistics on this.

Currently, the Georgian Government's systemic vision of youth work is in the process of formation. There are a number of joint initiatives by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia and the NGO sector, which support youth empowerment on a grassroots and system level, such as the Youth Workers Certification programme, municipal youth policy development, and supporting youth engagement in decision-making processes by creating municipal youth councils. Today the number the youth organisations which are actively involved in youth work activities has increased.

In recent years, a total of two large-scale studies have been conducted to determine the needs, interests and tendencies of young people based on the State's Youth Policy document. One of them took place in 2013 (National Youth Survey – Analysis of the Situation and Needs of Youth in Georgia conducted by UNICEF) and the other in 2016 (Generation in Transition – Youth Study 2016 conducted by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung).

In 2010-2011, when the first draft of the National Youth Policy document was developed, a number of consultative meetings took place with youth, youth organisations and experts which resulted in determining aims, objectives, principles and strategic directions of Georgian youth policy.

Georgia's National Youth Policy document was reviewed in 2014 under the initiative of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia (MSY) and adopted by the Government of Georgia in the same year, followed by the adoption of the National Youth Policy Implementation Action Plan (2015-2020) in the following year. According to the Action Plan, the Government of Georgia took responsibility to ensure youth policy implementation. Youth work and non-formal education features among the priorities of the Action Plan.

2. Strategic and legislative framework of youth work

Youth work is within the remit of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, which is the main coordinating unit of this activity in the country. Based on the legislative framework, the Ministry develops and coordinates the implementation of the main directions of the country's youth and sports policy.

The State Youth Policy Document was adopted by the Government of Georgia on 2 April 2014 (decree N553). It is a conceptual document, which should serve as the basis for the activities implemented by the government towards youth and it should also ensure establishment of the relevant environment for the youth for their comprehensive development.

One of the main strategic directions of the youth policy is youth work development. According to the policy document youth work is educational activity with youth and for youth, which is implemented beyond formal education, family and work and promotes youth development and well-being, their active involvement and integration in public activities. Youth work creates a comfortable, safe and pleasant environment, where youth can reveal their potential, learn from each other and develop. The main focus of youth work is non-formal education. Youth work is organised by a youth worker who has participated in a youth worker training and certification programme and is able to effectively develop the international competences among youth.

Nowadays, there are number of governmental, non-governmental and international organisations or independent experts working in the field of youth work. However, the lack of a unified approach, vision and standards hinders the achievement of a visible effect, the efficient expansion of the process throughout the country and sustainable, strategic and methodical development of the youth sphere.

On the basis of the good practice and recommendations of the European Union, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, together with expert groups, developed a final draft of the Youth Work Key Competences Framework Document, which aims to identify the competences that young people need to develop as a result of youth work.

The Youth Work Key Competences Framework Document covers nine competences, of which five are directly linked to "indirect" or so-called "soft" skills development, which significantly helps people in employment according to the studies (Bath University/GHK Consulting 2011). In particular, according to the Youth Work Key Competences Framework Document, development of analytical, technological, informative and scientific competences and creative and critical thinking competences helps people gain information, analyse it, and make effective use of technological and scientific achievements.

Another important strategic document which is connected to the development of youth work in Georgia is the draft of a Youth Work Development Strategy, which covers all key aspects, such as basic theories about youth work and key interventions, which should be supported for enhancing youth empowerment in Georgia. In the document, youth work is split into two main directions:

- Spatial-methodological, which means youth work approaches according to the behavioural characteristics of young people:
 - centre-based youth work;
 - street youth work;
 - school youth work;
- Functional-purpose:
 - educational youth work;
 - hobby-education;

- special youth work;
- international youth work;
- recreational youth work.

The document has not been officially adopted by the Government, and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, together with the different governmental, non-governmental and expert groups, is working on the content of the document.

Currently, in Georgia, there is no legislation on specific youth issues, youth work being among them. At theThe Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia has developed a draft Law on Youth Work Support. The document is still under discussion with different government units and has not been officially adopted yet.

3. Recognition

As already mentioned above, the State's systemic vision towards youth work is still in the process of formation and therefore the establishment of the Youth Work Institute is one of the most important and interesting challenges for the development of youth work in the country.

“Youth worker” as a profession and the results of its activities is not recognised by state legislation. However, the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia with its partners is working on the creation of National Professional Standards and Certification Criteria for Youth Workers; and to develop qualifications courses for youth workers.

In this regard, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, with the support of World Vision Georgia, Helping Hand Georgia and Georgia's Youth Workers Association is implementing the “Youth Workers Certification Programme”.

In recent years, under the initiative of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia and with the active involvement of invited experts in the field of Youth Policy, the Youth Work Support draft Law was prepared. Except for the mentioned draft law, Georgia does not have any kind of legislation about youth work definition or youth in general.

Most of the youth organisations work in the field of international youth work. One of the very popular international services among youth NGOs is European Voluntary Service (EVS), which gave a number of young people the chance to work abroad and develop competences in the youth field. Over the years, Georgia has been actively involved in the Youth in Action Programme and with the current ERASMUS + Programme.

All documents relating to youth policy and youth work were developed using EU and Council of Europe Recommendations and with the consultation of European experts.

Georgia, as one of the countries of the Eastern Partnership, is actively participating in the Erasmus + Programmes. Each year the number of Georgian young people, youth workers, youth organisations and state agencies that are benefiting from Erasmus + Programmes is increasing.

The European Commission's programme has an ERASMUS + office in Georgia, which co-operates with the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs of Georgia. The Erasmus + National Office in Georgia (NEO) promotes

the role of the European Commission and of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and the relevant national services involved in the implementation of the Erasmus + Programme.

In addition to European programmes, a number of youth NGO organisations implement global programmes. These are the Georgian representations and offices of international networks, umbrellas and large organisations.

As mentioned above, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia is actively sharing European experience in the field of youth work. Recently, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia participated in the EU4Youth new initiative Erasmus + Capacity Building in the field of Youth, Eastern Partnership Youth Window and applied for the project "Supporting the Development of Youth Policy on Municipal Level in Georgia".

The proposal aims to build sustainable capacities for inclusive youth participation at local level in Georgia via piloting a capacity-building programme for municipal youth workers, young people and youth workers working in CSOs in six Georgian municipalities alongside the strategic framework for youth policy development in Georgia.

4. Funding youth work

In the current conditions, both the planning and implementation (programme/financial) burden of youth interventions comes from the central government, specifically from the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs.

The Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs has a budget of 500 000 Georgian lari (GEL). The project that specifically supports youth work is a "youth workers' certification project", mentioned above, that aims to develop youth workers' certification process and standards. For 2017, the budget for this project is 50 000 GEL.

The programme is a pilot and aims to see how youth work is working in schools and youth centres. The recommendations and instructions after the implementation of the programme will promote the establishment of the youth worker institute and its further development.

Major activities and methodologies of the programme

Phase I – Preparation:

- identification of the interested parties and delivering information about the project;
- collaboration of the youth worker professional standards and developing draft version of youth workers' competence framework;
- development of draft version of youth worker certification process.

Phase II – Programme implementation:

- development of an educational course for basic youth workers;
- selection of pilot group of youth workers and organising tests;
- elaboration of the youth activities effectiveness measurement tool;
- selection of the target schools and youth centres and conduction of basic research by using the youth activities effectiveness measurement tool;
- basic qualification training programme for youth workers.

Phase III – Evaluation:

- final research of results (endline);
- evaluation of educational programmes;

- presentation of the project results to the interested parties on national and international levels – open conference;

Phase IV – Development of recommendation package:

- revision of Youth Work Key Competences Framework and Standards;
- revision of Youth Worker certification rules;
- final formulation of the programme and making recommendations.

Phase V – Final stage:

- planning next steps;
- project final reporting and closing

5. Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision

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

Which government levels are involved in planning, supporting and delivering youth work? If there are separate agencies, please mention them here. Please include numbers of people or entities where data is available.

Youth work is one of the main working fields of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, which is the main co-ordinating unit of this activity in the country which develops and coordinates the implementation main directions of the country's youth and sports policies.

5.2 National or local youth councils

World Vision Georgia together with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia supports the Telavi and Baghdati municipalities in effective functioning of youth councils. A youth council is a group of elected community leaders who voluntarily join the group. Youth councils are supported through the Participatory Budgeting Model (PBM). PBM is a local advocacy approach that helps 18 to 29-year-old youngsters to be empowered in demanding their rights and also to contribute to improved transparency and accountability in the community. This is a joint initiative within the "School Youth Networks for Sustainable and Effective Solutions" (SYNCS) project funded by the European Commission.

Through youth-led advocacy, communities enjoy more accountable and responsive local governments and municipal budgets that address the distinct needs of communities as youth have defined them.

Together with the international organisation World Vision Georgia, The Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs supports the municipal youth policy development process throughout Georgia. Telavi Municipality developed the first initiative. The guideline is being developed and will be shared with all other municipalities. The document and guideline have been created within the "School Youth Networks for Sustainable and Effective Solutions" (SYNCS) project funded by the European Commission.

5.3 Youth and youth work NGOs

There are more than 190 NGOs working on youth issues.

5.4 Other relevant actors

6. Quality standards

On the basis of the good practice and recommendations of the European Union, the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, together with expert groups, developed the Youth Work Key Competences Framework Document, which aims to identify the competences that young people need to develop as a result of youth work.

The Youth Work Key Competences Framework Document covers nine competences, among which five are directly linked to the “indirect” so-called “soft” skills development, which significantly helps people in employment according to the studies (Bath University/GHK Consulting 2011). In particular, according to the Youth Work Key Competences Framework Document development of analytical, Technological, informative and scientific competences and creative and critical thinking competences helps people gain information, analyse it, and effectively use technological and scientific achievements.

7. Knowledge and data on youth work

No study on youth work has ever been conducted in Georgia. Currently, the most important issue is official recognition of youth work and the results of its activities in Georgia.

The Study of Youth Work topic has never been conducted in Georgia, but two important studies have taken place in recent years in the country; these are:

- National Research on Conditions of Youth and Adolescents in Georgia” – it was conducted in co-ordination with the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, UNICEF and National Statistics Office of Georgia, The research is supporting the definition of main needs and problems of young people, as well as the development of knowledge and evidence-based youth policy. Field and face-to-face research among the young people aged from 14 to 29 and administration data analysis have been done in the framework of the survey according to the youth policy document priorities of Georgia. The survey was conducted in October-November 2013 and published in 2014.
- The other research was in 2016 (Generation in Transition – Youth Study 2016 conducted by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung).

8. European and International dimension of youth work in the country

Fifteen years ago, on 27 April 1999, Georgia joined the Council of Europe as its 41st member state and declared its commitment to respect agreed standards in the areas of human rights, the rule of law and democracy. Since 1999, Georgia has signed and ratified 69 Council of Europe Conventions.

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia (MSY) takes an active part in the meetings of the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ). Since 2010, the representative of the MSY is the member of CDEJ as the representative of Georgia and since 2014, the same person became a member of the CDEJ Bureau.

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia has already sent the draft. The main priorities of the Action Plan for 2016-2017 of the Council of Europe in the youth field are non-formal education and the youth campaign “No Hate Speech Movement”.

On 27 June 2014 Georgia signed the Association Agreement between the European Union (EU) and Georgia and on 17 July 2014 the document was ratified by the Parliament of Georgia. The Association

Agreement is a comprehensive political document with the potential to lead qualitatively new and higher levels of co-operation between Georgia and the EU in many important sectors featuring specific articles on education, training and youth. According to the agreement, Title VI, article 360:

The Parties agree to co-operate in the field of youth to:

reinforce co-operation and exchanges in the field of youth policy and non-formal education for young people and youth workers;

support young people and youth workers' mobility as a means to promote intercultural dialogue and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences outside the formal educational systems, including through volunteering;

promote co-operation between youth organisations.

9. Current debates and open questions/policies on youth work

The State Youth Policy implementation is based on sectoral (co-operation between governmental, non-governmental and private sectors) and inter-agency (co-operation of central and local authorities) dialogue. For the development of youth policy, an intergovernmental co-ordination council was established on 17 May 2013 on the basis of Governmental Decree No. 112. Members of the co-ordination council are all members of the government (ministries), and according to the statute of the council the following agencies can participate in the meetings of the council: Committee of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Parliament of Georgia; Public Defender's Office of Georgia; UNICEF Georgia; UNFPA Georgia. The council meets at least quarterly. The council is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia.

The main aims of the co-ordination council are:

promotion of implementation of main directions of youth policy;

co-ordination of effective implementation of functions of different line ministries;

monitoring of implementation of youth policy;

periodic revision of the action plan;

drafting recommendations for improvement of legislation in the field of youth;

planning of relevant interventions;

invitation of the council, drafting the agenda etc.

Up to now, the co-ordination council has:

reviewed and adopted the State Youth Policy Document;

reviewed and adopted the State Youth Policy Development Action Plan 2015-2020.

