

Youth Partnership

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



COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH WORK IN SERBIA



Last updated: March 2018

Author: Bojana Perovic and Jelena Stojanovic

The content of this document, commissioned by the EU-CoE youth partnership, is the sole responsibility of the author and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of either of the partner institutions, the European Union and the Council of Europe.

Contents

Aim of the exercise and guidance for completing.....	2
1. Context of youth work	3
2. Strategic and legislative framework of youth work.....	4
3. Recognition	5
4. Funding youth work	5
5. Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision.....	6
5.1 State structures/public authorities deciding on or providing youth work	6
5.2 National or local youth councils	7
5.3 Youth and youth work NGOs	7
5.4 Other relevant actors.....	7
6. Forms and examples of youth work in your country.....	7
7. Quality standards	10
8. Knowledge and data on youth work.....	12
9. European and International dimension of youth work in the country.....	14
10. Current debates and open questions/policies on youth work.....	15

Aim of the exercise and guidance for completing

The purpose of this exercise is to gather knowledge on youth work that can support youth work development and the implementation of the main policy initiatives related to it. The country sheet will provide information on youth work for decision makers, policy makers, implementers and practitioners as well as for the research and NGO communities. They are often the first source of information for thematic or cross-country analytical work. This analysis is then presented and discussed in symposia, seminars and supports European policy initiatives to develop youth work. It is hoped that over time this knowledge-gathering exercise will contribute to a monitoring process on youth work development.

When gathering information, the country correspondents can refer for definitions in the [Glossary on Youth](#) from the EKCYP website as well as to the [country histories](#) on youth work, to help clarify terms and contextualise the knowledge-gathering exercise in published research.

When completing the ten chapters of this country sheet, correspondents are encouraged to consult with youth sector stakeholders (including from policy, practice and research) to get as full a picture of youth work in their country as possible.

Finally, where numbers are provided, please include a proportionality reference so the readers can get a sense of the size (for example, as related to the total country budget or the number of young people benefitting as a % of the total youth population, etc.).

Context of youth work

In the contemporary history of the Republic of Serbia, youth work has undergone various forms and its meaning has changed significantly through the decades. Youth care as a means of social support existed even at the end of the 19th century. One of the milestones when the Serbian Scout Organisation was established, which remains one of the most important pillars of youth organising today. During the 20th century, in the Yugoslav Kingdom and Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), several small-scale organisations were formed and actively contributed to the interests of young people in different areas of social life (e.g. Youth Hostels Association of Yugoslavia, Youth Music of Serbia, Youth Researchers of Serbia, etc.).

As a political youth movement and youth wing of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, the Young Communist League of Yugoslavia (Savez komunističke omladine Jugoslavije, SKOJ) was active from 1919 to 1948. During and after the Second World War, anti-fascist and socialist ideology and influence became predominant in terms of youth policy and youth care. The most popular values promoted among youth were equality, solidarity, friendship, liberty, atheism, volunteerism, patriotism and collectivism. Youth Day was established and celebrated ceremoniously involving many children and young people all over the country (on 25 May, President Tito's birthday). The SKOJ became a part of a wider organisation of Yugoslav youth, the People's Youth of Yugoslavia, which became the League of Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia in 1974. Although it can often be heard that youth work is a novelty in our society, from this historical perspective, youth work was present in the SKOJ and the League of Socialist Youth as the forerunners of the first forms of youth work organisations. It is important to know that those forms of youth work were initiated, recognised and supported by state structures and promoted as a complementary part of youth education in addition to the formal one.

With the phase of disintegration of SFRY and transition from socialism to capitalism in the 1990s, youth work started transforming as a concept. In fact, for a more than decade, there was neither institutional, strategic nor legal framework regarding national youth policy, nor systemic support for youth activities. In the 1990s, students' protests were the most prominent aspect of youth activism, which culminated in 1992 with the massive students' demonstration as well as student rebellion against the regime in 1996-1997.

There were some efforts to establish an institutional mechanism for youth activities (Youth Sector within the Ministry of Education and Sports, from 2001 to 2004), but it was short-term and without comprehensive, systemic political support. That was the reason for the decisive reaction of the civil society organisation in the youth field, gathered within the Youth Coalition of Serbia (2003). Their mission was to run the public awareness campaign about the position of youth in the country and ask for the establishment of a government body that would be responsible for youth. Over a period of five years, the Youth Coalition of Serbia led the campaign to increase the youth turnout in elections, supported the local youth coalitions, conducted research, training and public advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns on the position of youth at the local and national levels. Additionally, the coalition co-ordinated the blockade of the government supported by 177 organisations with 1 240 activists who made around 16 000 telephone calls, and sent 4 000 faxes and 30 000 e-mails in one single day, with the question "Who is in charge of young people?". Soon after that campaign, in May 2007, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia was established. It was followed by the adoption of the first National Youth Strategy (2008) and the Law on Youth (2011). The role and importance of youth work started to become clearer and was systemically supported both at the national and local levels.

However, youth work as a profession, its meaning, purpose and contribution to society remain blurred for many citizens in Serbia, even youth. The main settings where young people could use the youth work services and meet the youth workers were civic society organisations that for a long time were the only places where youth work was practised. In 2008 the Ministry of Youth and Sports initiated the

opening of local youth offices (in 135 out of 170 municipalities), youth clubs (still not a typical form of youth organising or youth work) and trainings, seminars and workshops as the means of providing non-formal education. The youth worker as occupation/profession has not yet been recognised, but it is expected that in 2018 the National Classification of Occupation will be adopted including the youth worker as a specific profession and vocation.

The National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) was initiated in May 2008, a reaction of civil society organisations to the absence of a legitimate national association of professionals in the area of non-formal education that would influence policy development and quality assurance mechanisms for its implementation at the national and local levels. They recognised the need for quality assurance of youth work programmes, the need to standardise, professionalise and recognise youth work by youth, institutions which work with youth, the state and society as a whole.

Strategic and legislative framework of youth work

[The National Youth Strategy \(2015-2025\)](#) (hereinafter referred to as NYS) is the main public policy document in the field of youth in the Republic of Serbia. It represents a comprehensive document outlining the priority objectives which implementation should contribute to an active and equal participation of young people in various areas of social life. The NYS lays down the basic principles of action, directions of activity and expected results of the activities of all youth policy actors towards the improvement of social position of young people and the creation of conditions for full achievement of their rights and interests in all areas. Youth work is recognised in the context of non-formal education, where recognition of competences acquired through youth work is underlined as essential for young people. Especially, the NYS recognises that competences acquired in non-formal education through youth work are important for the employability of young people, because these competences are precisely those that are appreciated by hiring employers.

As one of the specific problems in the youth field, the NYS defines that youth work is not systemically identified, recognised and supported. Based on that, one of the specific goals is "Improved quality and availability of youth work and ensured recognition of youth work". This goal has been further developed within the [Action Plan for NYS implementation \(2015-2017\)](#). Since this action plan has expired, a new one is currently being prepared (March 2018).

The Republic of Serbia has adopted [The Law on Youth \(2011\)](#), which regulates measures and activities undertaken by the Republic of Serbia, autonomous area and local self-governments, aimed at improving the social status and position of youth and creating conditions for addressing young people's needs and interests in all areas of interest for young people. In Article 3, the Law defines meanings of individual terms, including youth work. Thus, youth work shall mean such youth activities organised by and for young people, based on non-formal education, carried out in young people's free time and undertaken with the aim of improving the conditions for personal and social development of young people, in accordance with their needs and abilities, in which young people voluntarily participate.

The definition that NAPOR uses is more detailed: "Youth work is planned educational curriculum, created with the purpose of providing support to young people in the process of independence, by helping youth in personal and social development to become active members of the society and participants in the decision-making process. The idea of youth work is to create a safe environment and opportunities for active participation of young people on a voluntary basis in the process of acquiring skills, competencies and knowledge."

Youth work: a) is complementary to formal education; b) is carried out by youth workers; c) conducts activities using non-formal education methods and information.

Recognition

The National Association of Youth Workers (hereinafter referred to as NAPOR) is a union of Civil Society Organisations that embraces 68 member organisations delivering youth work in Serbia that lobby, advocate, and influence existing and initiate new policies. All the processes related to recognition of youth work at national level are done by and within NAPOR. The main areas relating to recognition are:

- development of three vocational standards in the area of professional non-formal education (1. Youth activist, 2. Youth work co-ordinator; 3. Specialist for youth work and policies) that are included in the National Vocational Qualification system (still to be officially published by the government);
- development of standards for NFE programmes in the youth field and a mechanism for its implementation ((re)accreditation process of youth work programmes based on eight standards) that ensures building necessary skills and life values of young people to take active participation in community development along with promotion of democratic principles;
- development of non-formal education curricula for two vocational standards in the area of professional youth work (1. Youth activist; and 2. Youth work co-ordinator) through which NFE providers gain standardised professional competences to be able to make a greater impact on youth empowerment;
- development of a mechanism for validation of previously attained competences for two vocational standards for NFE in the youth field;
- establishment of a pool of licensed organisation and trainers for delivery of multi-modular trainings for non-formal education vocational standards;
- establishment of a pool of mentors for validation of previously attained competences;
- creation of a tool for recognition of competences of young people gained through youth work programmes and NFE (Passport of Competences). The Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant actors from the public, private and civil society sectors co-operate in this process, developing the Passport and aiming to improve youth employability.

In addition to NAPOR's efforts, with the support of Ministry of Youth and Sports there have been several initiatives relating to the support of youth work by following European initiatives. From 1 January 2015 the Ekoloski Centar Radulovacki became the fourth accredited youth centre in Europe to receive the Council of Europe's quality label for youth centres. After revision of the status in 2017, the centre has been given the label for the next five years.

Moreover, the Ministry of Youth and Sports fully supported the application of Novi Sad, a city in Vojvodina (Northern autonomous Province in Serbia), for European Youth Capital, which Novi Sad won for 2019, with the goal of creating more opportunities for youth by youth, empowering them to become proactive initiators of positive change and introducing innovative ideas not only in Novi Sad, but also on a national and international level.

Funding youth work

Funds for the implementation of the NYS are provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, as well as in the budget of the autonomous provinces and local self-governments, including the contribution of EU IPA funds, participation of the private sector, youth activity associations and other national and international programmes and donors.

The main funder of the youth work activities is the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Youth and Sports. According to the Law on Youth (Article 20) the funds for supporting programmes and projects of public interest in the youth sector shall be provided in the budget of the Republic of Serbia. Youth work has been recognised as a public interest since the Law foresees funding social empowerment of young people, especially through encouraging volunteerism and youth work and capacity building of youth associations.

The majority of funds dedicated to youth policy are spent on financing programmes and projects of public interest in the youth sector. The funding or co-funding of those programmes and projects is carried out on the basis of public calls for proposals, managed by the ministry, which represents the regular mechanism for supporting youth associations and local self-governments (only those which have established a local youth office). Since the establishment of NAPOR in 2009, the ministry has been financially supporting its activities which have systemically contributed to the development and professionalism of youth work in Serbia. In 2017, the ministry supported NAPOR (a one-year project) with more than €54 166 (6.5 million Serbian dinars (RSD)) for standardisation of youth work through accreditation of organisations, professionalism of human resources through validation of previously acquired competences and trainings for youth leaders and sports workers.

When it comes to the municipalities, they do not have a legal obligation to assign certain amounts of money for youth issues. In line with the Law on Youth (Article 26), units of local self-government could allocate their budget funds for financing the needs and interests of young people, but it is up to local government to decide whether it should be done and set up the budget, respecting the right to autonomy of local self-government and its distinctive needs. As a neighbouring partner country of the Erasmus+ programme, Serbia can take part in certain actions, although preparatory measures for full participation in the programme have officially started.

So far, NAPOR has managed to receive funds for its programmes from European funding programmes (IPA funds), from USAID, through the USAID-SLDP programme and from the Erasmus+ programme. Additionally, youth work is supported through the programmes at the provincial and local levels that support youth work, which are implemented mainly by NAPOR member organisations. Moreover, the Ministry of Youth and Sports supports direct implementation of youth work programmes on a local level through funds relating to implementation of the National Youth Strategy.

Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision

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.

On the state level, the Ministry of Youth and Sports is providing support for youth work through an institutional framework (the Law on Youth) and through public calls for project funding through which NAPOR programmes and programmes of the local civic society organisations that practise youth work are supported.

Since 2014, Foundation Tempus has been responsible for implementing the education component of the extensive Erasmus+ Programme for education, youth and sport. Following the beginning of preparatory measures for Serbia's full participation in this programme in July 2016, Foundation Tempus also became responsible for the youth component of this programme, providing support to projects related to youth work and youth workers.

National or local youth councils

The National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (NAPOR), established in 2009, is one of the major actors in the professionalism of the non-governmental youth sector in Serbia. It is a vocational and representative union of 68 organisations whose mission is the creation and development of conditions for quality assurance and recognition of youth work with the aim of developing the potential of youth and youth workers, who contribute to the welfare of community and society. NAPOR's vision is that each young person has their own youth worker. NAPOR conducts training for youth workers and awards their certification, adding to the recognition of youth workers as professionals.

Regarding the recognition of non-formal learning and youth work in Serbia, NAPOR has – since 2009 – pioneered and secured several significant and impressive milestones:

1. the adoption of Guidelines for quality assurance of youth work;
2. the development of standards of qualifications in youth work on three levels: 1) youth leader; 2) co-ordinator of youth work; and 3) specialist for youth work;

<http://napor.net/images/pdf/kvalifikacije%20i%20klasifikacija%20or.pdf>

3. the development of mechanisms for the validation of acquired competences in relation to the above-mentioned qualifications;

4. the development of quality standards of youth work programmes and the mechanism for its implementation;

<http://napor.net/images/pdf/osiguranje%20kvaliteta%20programa%20omladinskog%20rada.pdf>

5. the development of curricula for youth work;

6. the creation of the Ethical Code of Youth Work and establishment of Council for Ethical Issues.

Youth and youth work NGOs

At the moment, NAPOR embraces 68 member organisations delivering youth work in Serbia. The topics they are covering are various, and the connection lies in continuous work with the groups of young people and provision of the safe environment for testing values and beliefs. The majority of youth work programmes are supported by project-based funds, which greatly influence the sustainability of the work and the struggle of the organisation to maintain continuity in its work with youth. NAPOR is making a catalogue of expertise of member organisations which will be done by the end of 2018, containing proposals for sustainability of youth work programmes at the national and local levels.

Other relevant actors

In 2008 the Ministry for Youth and Sports initiated creation of youth offices – bodies on the local level, within local municipalities, that deal with local youth policy. At the beginning, competences of youth workers were one part of the profile recommended for the co-ordinators of youth offices. This practice lasted until 2015 when at national level it was agreed that co-ordinators should not deliver direct youth work. The roles of the main actors on the local and national level are defined in the document: Glossary of Youth policy, available on the following link:

http://napor.net/images/vesti_2015/renik%20omladinske%20politike.pdf

Forms and examples of youth work in your country

How is youth work happening in your country, for example, is it youth centre-based, online youth work, detached or outreach youth work, open youth work, are NGOs or local authorities the main providers etc. Are there specific forms the state encourages or supports more and why?

Is there support for youth work targeting specifically young people with fewer opportunities? If yes, who supports it and who carries it out?

Please give three examples of successful youth work practices representative of youth work in your country?

There are various forms of youth work that are practised among youth organisations and organisations for youth, and they cover nine topics:

- Political awareness and active citizenship (participation of young people, human rights and equality, development of politics and education, social action, activism etc.)
- Health education (promotion of healthy lifestyles, relationships and sexuality, stress management, mental health, HIV/AIDS, first aid help, alcohol, smoking, etc.)
- Prevention of social exclusion (youth work intended for prevention of social exclusion, including education, training, and employment opportunities for marginalised groups and individuals. Social integration, transition to adulthood and the market are supported through this type of youth work)
 - Life skills (social education) (programmes are experiential-educational through individual, group work, projects or events that contain aspects of primary prevention or problem interventions. They are focused on the development of identity, values, management of emotions, leadership, teamwork, planning and decision making, communication, problem solving, initiatives and responsibilities, professional development and orientation, etc.)
- Intercultural and international awareness (professionally guided activities that enable young people from different countries, different ethnic origins and culture to expand cultural knowledge, build skills and competence, and develop tolerance and acceptance of diversity)
- Informing: Informing young people consists of co-ordinated services through services or centres. The aim is to support young people to make independent, informed decisions that will lead to the organisation of one's own life)
- Environmental protection (raising environmental awareness of young people, promoting life according to nature, etc.)
- Youth counselling: Focused on specific issues and problems of young people. It provides information and support based on professional counselling techniques and, if necessary, directs youth to other institutions
- Leisure-based youth work: Includes games, sports, cultural and artistic activities with the aim of developing physical, intellectual and other youth potentials. It provides socialisation and prevention, and has targeted educational character through a hidden curriculum. This type of youth work represents the first step to include young people in other types youth work

As explained above, youth work in Serbia is mainly practised within youth organisations and organisations for youth. There are only few youth centres in the country and many initiatives to create preconditions for establishment of youth centres and youth clubs all over the country. Apart from traditional, there are different forms of youth work that are practised among organisations. Through its action plan for the last two years, NAPOR prioritised online youth work and detached and outreach youth work as forms for which organisations received education, based on good practice from the national and European levels.

In the revised Curricula for education of youth leaders and youth workers (2014), each module of multi-modular education begins with online learning. In order to equip trainers for delivering modules, NAPOR organised Training for the use of online methods in the education of youth workers (2015). Since then, several organisations have started practising online learning through youth work. To

support this, through the Erasmus+ project NAPOR began working on digital/online youth work, aiming to foster the usage of online tools in non-formal education in order to improve the quality of programmes for education of youth leaders and youth workers available.

Moreover, together with its member organisation Educational Centre Sombor, NAPOR created Guidelines and recommendations for street youth work (2017). The guidelines are intended for practitioners of youth work who want to improve and practise methodology of street youth work that has not been developed or applied sufficiently in Serbia. Based on these guidelines, several trainings for youth workers were organised (for more information please visit: <http://sec.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Smernice-i-preporuke-za-omladinski-rad-na-terenu.pdf>).

Examples of youth work practice

1. Centre for youth work (CZOR) Novi Sad, in co-operation with JAZAS Novi Sad, has since 2016 carried out youth work activities through a mobile youth club. The mobile youth club is a specially designed van equipped with various requisites for the implementation of youth work programmes, going to local communities in Vojvodina and reaching the youth. Due to ongoing migrant/refugee crises, the programme first targeted refugee children/young people in refugee camps in Serbia by providing developmental leisure-time social activities. CZOR worked in parallel with the refugee and domicile population organising joint leisure-time activities from which both of the groups could learn about each other's culture and increase understanding of each other's background, fostering empathy and solidarity. Through practice, it has been shown that the mobile youth club is multifunctional for multiple reasons, achieving multiple results, and the main one is reaching young people with fewer opportunities.
2. Educational Centre Leskovac has since 2003 (the year parliamentary work in schools was defined by the national "Law on basics of primary and secondary education") been implementing the development youth work programme with youth leaders engaged as members of secondary school parliaments in Leskovac. Besides leadership skills, by providing space for testing the values and beliefs through youth work activities, the youth work programme creates an environment for parliamentarians to improve their competences for active participation in society. The programme supports young people to learn to live together accepting differences and different cultures and to promote equality. This is particularly important because students' parliaments represent organisations that are open to all students.
3. The vision of ŽMIG, Pančevo is that each person is entitled to a safe environment, a dignified life and support for personal growth and development. In this regard, its work focuses on the development of a culture of peace and non-violence, respecting the feminist values and principles of social inclusion and youth work. The support service for young people they developed in the local community refers to support for inclusion of young people from vulnerable groups, primarily to young people with intellectual disabilities. The key elements of the programme are the following: a) Including young people from marginalised groups and youth from the general population, which encourages interaction, learning and accepting diversity; b) Sending messages to experts and the general public on the principles of non-discrimination on which the service is based and the possibility of developing inclusive support services; c) Further developing communication channels to support inclusion for young people with intellectual disabilities.

Quality standards

The National quality assurance framework is developed by NAPOR and consists of:

1. accreditation of organisations delivering youth work;
2. professionalism of human resources (through multi-modular training and validation);
3. ethics in youth work;
4. passport of competences/recognition of competences gained by young people through youth work programmes.

1. Accreditation of organisations delivering youth work

In order to define quality in youth work, NAPOR developed a set of eight standards that each youth work programme should fulfil. According to quality standards in youth work, a mechanism for their implementation has been created. The mechanism is based on the goodwill of member organisations to participate in the accreditation process during which the fulfilment of each standard is checked. It includes self-assessment and assessment of accreditors – persons with experience in youth work and advanced supervision skills.

Accreditation implemented by NAPOR has a solely developmental function as it helps organisations to assess their practice in youth work and continuously work on its improvement. Therefore, the organisations that go through the process get the certificate of Accredited organisation for implementation and promotion of quality standards in youth work, by which NAPOR guarantees their openness and readiness to constantly work on promotion of their youth work programmes. Accreditation is valid for three years and is followed by a reaccreditation process. Since 2015, NAPOR General Assembly has made the decision that accreditation is one of the mandatory conditions for full membership of NAPOR.

NAPOR accreditation is recognised by member organisations, which suggested and decided on this mechanism, as well as by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which supports the process of quality assurance in youth work in different ways. NAPOR works continuously on promotion of quality assurance in youth work through the accreditation process among organisations which implement youth work, as well as among the wider public and donors.

2. Professionalism of human resources (through multi-modular training and validation)

In order to have quality youth work programmes, competent youth workers are needed to implement them. Therefore, NAPOR created a curriculum for the education of youth workers, which contains a training programme for two vocational levels (Youth Leader and Youth Worker) and a mechanism for validation of previously attained competences in youth work. The validation process is intended for persons who implement youth work in practice and continuously work on self-improvement, but have no comprehensive formal or non-formal education in youth work. For those practitioners, it is possible to prove the competences that they gained through experience and different training courses in front of a board of experts, in order to gain a certificate at one of two vocational levels. There were 68 candidates in total who got certificates.

For those who don't have enough experience for validation, a training programme is created. It consists of several thematic modules and practice in youth work. Thematic modules, with defined learning outputs, cover competences defined in the Vocational Standard and contain a theoretical basis of

youth work that is acquired through online learning, as well as practical skills, attitudes and values, which are developed and practised through direct work of trainers with a group of participants. Practice in youth work, as a part of the training, is a continuous programme of youth work with a group of young people, which each participant implements in their local community and their organisation. Implementation of the curriculum can be co-ordinated by NAPOR, or any of the member organisations. In both cases NAPOR issues certificates for all the participants who fulfil a set of competences needed for the vocational level they are trained for. The NAPOR certificate is recognised by member organisations, as well as by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. There are in total 49 candidates that pass through the process.

Recently, there is a possibility to be accredited by the Government Agency for improvement of education (Zavod za unapredjivanje obrazovanja i vaspitanja – ZUOV). NAPOR is taking the necessary steps to get this accreditation which will give the possibility to issue certificates that are publicly recognised.

Moreover, NAPOR developed the mechanism for validation of previously gained competences for youth workers and youth leaders that was implemented in 2012. At the moment, there is a process at governmental level for creating a validation system on the national level, including an accreditation mechanism for providers (such as NAPOR). The process is expected to be finished by 2019.

3. Ethics in youth work

In order to ensure that youth work practice is ethical, NAPOR has developed a Code of Ethics in Youth Work and has formed a Council for Ethical Issues. The Code of Ethics is a document which defines ethical and professional principles of work and each organisation and each youth worker is bound to respect them.

The Council for Ethical Issues is an independent body in NAPOR which takes care that the Code of Ethics is respected and promoted. It has a mandate to react in cases of violation of the Code of Ethics, through recommendations to member organisations, or opinions that they send to organisations which are not members of NAPOR. The Council for Ethical Issues continuously works on promotion of ethics in youth work, among youth workers, young people and their parents, in order to ensure ethical practice in youth work in Serbia.

4. Passport of competences/recognition of competences gained by young people through youth work programmes

After being proved by research in 2013 that through youth work young people gain transferable competences that employers value, NAPOR decided to start the process of creating a tool that would facilitate recognition of these competences. Creation of the Tool for recognition of competences of young people gained through youth work programmes (Passport of Competences) is implemented in co-operation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other relevant actors from the public, private and civil sector who contribute to the development of the Passport and mechanism for improvement of youth employability through an inter-sectoral consortium. The main purposes of this tool are: recognition of transferable skills (competences) that young people gain through youth work programmes by employers, in order to foster youth employability; more efficient planning of professional and personal improvement of young people; and recognition of the impact of youth work on the development of young people.

The Passport of Competences enables self-assessment of competences through an online platform, as well as assessment by youth workers. A programme of training of youth workers who would offer mentorship and supervision to young people and assess their competences was developed. During 2015/16, pilot testing of the passport was implemented by 200 young people who went through the

process of assessment of gained competences through the online tool, and then used these results on experimental interviews with employers. According to the recommendations of young people, youth workers and employers who participated in pilot testing, further improvement of the passport is planned.

Knowledge and data on youth work

In Serbia, there is no research system that follows the development of youth work coming from the state level. Since it was established, NAPOR has conducted several areas of research which are listed above. However, there is a lack of a continuous and systematic approach regarding evidence-based youth work research. Evidence-based data are crucial foundations and preconditions for recognition among relevant stakeholders and the wider public. Recently, the Ministry of Youth and Sports initiated a process of connecting researchers and research institutes within the youth sector in order to overcome some of the listed challenges.

Studies and researches by NAPOR:

- ✓ Cross-section of the situation of youth work in Serbia (2010) – The aim of the research was to gain an insight into the general state of youth work in Serbia, in relation to the adequacy of human resources, the structure of users and sources of funding for youth work programmes (<http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/presek-stanja-omladinskog-rada-u-srbiji-2010.pdf>).
- ✓ Presentation of practical policies: Services for young people at the local level in Serbia (2012) – The quality assurance of services for young people at the local level is one of the key issues on the way to the quality implementation of the National Youth Strategy (NSM) and the Law on Youth (ZoM) at the local level. The subject of this analysis is to present existing services for young people offered at the local level and to look at examples of good practice, based on which proposals for the development of a unified youth services system have been developed. The problem we are examining with this document is the fact that the work of the providers is not co-ordinated, nor are the activities of some of them (Youth Office, CSOs) integrated into a wider system of service provision in local communities (<http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/Usluge-za-mlade-na-lokalnom-nivou-u-Srbiji.pdf>).
- ✓ Impact of non-formal education in youth work on competence acquisition for better employability of young people (2014) – This survey conducted from November 2013 to February 2014 within the project "With the Good Tool Skills are Crafts" should help in the creation of a future mechanism that will recognise the competences acquired through participation in non-formal education programmes of youth work, which affect the employability of young people. The research was carried out by the National Association of Practitioners of Youth Work (NAPOR) with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, the USAID Sustainable Local Development Project and the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Team of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (<http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/istraivanje-uticaj-nfo-u-or-na-zapoljivost-mladih.pdf>).
- ✓ Mapping Study on EU practices in recognition of competences gained through non-formal learning in youth work for the employability of young people (2014) – The study is based on recommendations, studies, research and documentation related to non-formal education in youth work, its recognition and impact on youth employability, as well as analysis of existing mechanisms at EU and individual level. The study should contribute to gaining greater legitimacy of this topic when advocating among relevant actors at the national level, a better overview of existing mechanisms and policies at the EU level and ensuring harmonisation of processes that will later

contribute greater mobility of young people and recognition of competences for their employability (<http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/mapping-study.pdf>).

- ✓ National Report, Serbia: "Needs for new services that stimulate the employability and role of youth work" (2015) – Through intensive dialogue with stakeholders at the national and regional level, qualitative and desk research was conducted on the attitudes of relevant stakeholders on the employability of marginalised young people (<http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/Potrebe-za-novim-uslugama-zaposljivosti-i-uloga-omladinskog-rada.pdf>).
- ✓ Researching educational needs of practitioners of youth work (2017) – With this exploratory research, we tried to answer several questions concerning the need to improve the specific competences of practitioners of youth work from the member organisations of NAPOR, as well as suitable ways to acquire these competences. As a basis for the creation of a research and measurement instrument, the standard of occupation for the first two levels in youth work was taken – a youth leader and a youth worker (<http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/Istrazivanje-final.pdf>).

Relevant publications on youth work by NAPOR:

- ✓ Glossary of Youth Policy (2015) – The dictionary was created in 2014 and 2015 by a working group that, in addition to the representatives of NAPOR, consisted of representatives of the Serbian National Youth Council, the National Association of Youth Offices and the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The dictionary contains definitions of close to 150 concepts as well as actors in the field of youth politics, their roles and positions. The dictionary contributes in particular to arranging relations between civil sector actors and the line ministry in the area of youth work and youth policy (<http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/recnik-omladinske-politike-2015.pdf>).
- ✓ "Ethics – from poster to practice", Handbook for Understanding and Implementation of the Code of Ethics in the Practice of Youth Work (2017) – The handbook is planned to raise the awareness of youth workers about the importance of establishing a professional relationship with young people. Analysing previous processes it became clear that there is no common understanding of certain aspects of the Code of Ethics. What is lacking is a clear operationalisation of the code that will lead to equalisation of practice and creating a safe environment for the growth and development of young people (http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/prirucnik_o_etici_u_omladinskom_radu.pdf).
- ✓ Youth Work Pathways – Pateki vo mladinskata rabota (2017) – The brochure was created as part of the Youth Workers United project, which was implemented by the Youth Cultural Centre Bitola, where NAPOR was a partner in charge of supporting the capacity building of practitioners of youth work and creating a document that is the basis for professionalism of youth work in Macedonia (vocational standards and curriculum for training). The publication provides a brief overview of the state of youth work in the surrounding countries, as well as at the European level, and the second part presents the practice of youth work in Macedonia (http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/youth_work_pathways-eng.pdf).
- ✓ Youth Work – One story with 40 titles (2018) – At the beginning of 2018, NAPOR conducted a campaign on the importance of youth work with the aim of recognising youth work as a factor in the development of social changes. The campaign is implemented at the national level and includes 40 interviews with the beneficiaries of the youth work programme and youth workers (http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/KampanjaOR2018/Publikacija-omladinski_rad_jedna_prica_sa_40_naslova.pdf).

European and International dimension of youth work in the country

The Ministry of Youth and Sports and NAPOR are closely following developments at the European level regarding youth work, starting from recommendations at the Symposium "Recognition of NFE in the youth field" (Strasbourg, November 2011). In South-East Europe, as a direct follow up of the "Strasbourg process", a similar symposium was held in Tirana in October 2012. (At the symposium, NAPOR participated as a best practice case of quality assurance mechanism for NFE for youth.) The European youth strategy (2010-2018) was a framework for creating a National Youth Strategy (2015-2020). A recommendation given by the Council of Europe (2017) influenced priorities proposed in the Action Plan for National Youth Strategy 2018-2020 (to be adopted in 2018).

Since 2014 Serbia has been invited to take part in the European conferences relating to structured dialogue. Representatives of the ministry, the Serbian National Youth Council and NAPOR are taking an active role in identifying recommendations for youth work and introducing it at the national level. Moreover, by taking part in relevant conferences and conventions on youth work, there is a continuous attempt to be in line with relevant documents from the European level, and creating the environment for its implementation at the national level. In 2017, Serbia submitted a comprehensive report to be an integral part of the EU Youth Report 2018, summarising the results in the youth field, especially relating to youth work.

As regards co-operation with the Council of Europe, the representative of the Ministry of Youth and Sports actively participates in the annual meetings of the European Steering Committee for Youth and the Joint Council on Youth. In 2017 Serbia supported adoption of the Recommendation to the Council of Europe member states on youth work adopted by the Committee of Ministers and remains committed to its implementation.

Since 2014, Foundation Tempus has been responsible for implementing the education component of the extensive Erasmus+ Programme for education, youth and sport. Since July 2016, Foundation Tempus also became responsible for the youth component of this programme, actively promoting possibilities for youth workers for education and exchange of experience. Prior to Tempus, the group "Let's ..." has been accredited by the SALTO Resource Centre for Southeast Europe as Contact Point for Serbia since 2005, providing support to organisations/institutions that wanted to get involved in international projects. Many organisations delivering youth work from Serbia took part in different international activities, through which quality of practice and competences of youth workers were improved.

Current debates and open questions/policies on youth work

At the moment, there is a process of revision of the Law on Youth in Serbia. NAPOR has a representative in the working group that lobbies to include definitions of youth worker and youth leader within the Law. The main obstacle lies in the fact that the National Qualification Framework has not yet been adopted (it is expected in 2018), but the youth worker as an occupation will be officially recognised in the document. Since 2011, the documents were several times submitted by NAPOR to the working group appointed by the government, aiming to define the occupation of youth worker in three levels: three vocational standards in the area of professional youth work (Youth Leader, Youth Worker and Specialist for Youth Work and Policy development).

Formal recognition of occupation is a crucial foundation and precondition for initiating further steps in recognition of youth work by relevant stakeholders, developing education for youth workers within the formal education system, opening doors for youth worker employment within relevant institutions (schools, social services centres, police, cultural centres, etc.). NAPOR will, with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, initiate all above-mentioned processes once the National Qualification Framework document is approved by the Serbian National Assembly.