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YOUTH RESEARCH: THE ESSENTIALS

1st draft by Alena Ignatovic, Marina Galstyan, Sladjana Petkovic

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Bibliography

INTRODUCTION

- Gives a general overview of the manual,
- Presents the outline of the publication,
- Introduces the target audience, aim and objectives,
- Provides the readers with the questions that help to anticipate the content of “The Essentials”.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Answers two basic questions:

- *What is youth research?*
(defines it as a field of social science investigating ‘youth’ as a specific phase in a life course (the subject), mentions its relations and to other disciplines).
- *Why do we need it?*
(to understand social change, to support youth policy development through an evidence based approach).

TARGET GROUP, ACTORS AND METHODOLOGY

Provides and elaborates the definition of “youth”:

- Historical studies show that the category of youth was recognised only from the eighteenth century, at the passage from preindustrial to industrial society, and in particular with the advent of modernisation.
- Initially, young people were seen as raising mostly problems. However, contemporary definitions of youth are more open and contextualised, looking at each young person as a unique individual.

TARGET GROUP, ACTORS AND METHODOLOGY, cont.

The theoretical background

- The theoretical background of youth work and youth research lies in Freud's theory of psychosocial development, Bowlby's work on attachment theory, Ericson's views of psychosocial development, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of development, and theories about risks and resilience from the field of development psychopathology.

Actors

- The metaphor of the 'magical triangle' is used to indicate the synergy among actors involved in generating and utilising different forms of knowledge on youth: it refers to cooperation among researchers, policy makers and practitioners, particularly youth workers.
- Youth research studies the social and cultural identity and practice of young people using cross-sectoral, participatory and cross-disciplinary approaches.

KEY THEMATIC AREAS

- Provides an overview of contemporary key challenges young people face.
- Outlines key thematic areas for youth research to provide evidence, study, and support youth policy measures to respond to these challenges.

COMMUNICATING YOUTH RESEARCH

Considers the following questions:

- How to communicate youth research results to different stakeholders.
- What techniques can be used in order to communicate and disseminate these results (including graphs, infographics, videos, multimedia, hard/soft copy reports, feedback loops and mechanisms, digital media, plain language, synthesis, analytical papers, policy briefs) both to non-specialised groups (e.g. general public) and professionals (e.g., decision makers).
- How youth research results are stored (journals, databases).
- How young people can be consulted/included in designing user friendly messaging.

EUROPEAN LEVEL: POLICY CONTEXT AND RELEVANCE

Outlines the policy and legal framework for recognition of knowledge (evidence) based approach to policy making in the field of youth:

- The Council of Europe
- The European Union
- The EU-CoE youth partnership

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF YOUTH POLICY AND PRACTICE

- Monitoring and evaluation are the means of assessing the implementation of the goals, objectives and strategies of youth policy
- Governments usually spend significant resources in order to develop the national youth strategy. The national youth strategy should foresee how its implementation will be monitored and when and how a midterm evaluation and a final evaluation will take place.
- It is now strongly recommended that M&E be conducted with a mix of methods so that results obtained can be better assessed. This process is known as **triangulation**. If the findings from the different methods are similar, or reinforce one another, then users can have greater confidence in the findings than if they are based on only one method.

ETHICS

- Provides the definition of ethics and explains its implication in practice (research process).
- Provides examples of the common ethical issues.

CHALLENGES AND OPEN QUESTIONS

- Major methodological challenges concerning the definition of youth - the concept of “youth” is under theoretical and practical discussions.
- The need for comparable and reliable information within and between European countries - due to increasing convergence of youth policies in Europe as the result of the processes of social, economic and political integration.
- The development of viable methodologies for comparative youth studies and youth policy evaluation is a necessary dimension within youth research.
- Given the very different political and cultural traditions across Europe, most youth researchers remains located at the national or local level - it is essential to invite (the younger generation of) youth researchers to take part in dialogue at a European level (Central, Eastern and Southern Europe).

THANK YOU!!

Q&A?!

Sladjana PETKOVIC, PEYR

Email: petkovic.sladjana@gmail.com

@sladjapetkovic