

# Youth Partnership

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



## Strengthening the potential of youth work in Eastern Europe

Background paper for the peer learning event

DRAFT – November 20, 2019

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## 1. Introduction

This background paper aims to help set the stage on the realities of youth work across the countries in Eastern Europe ahead of the peer learning event on youth work development. The authors have carried out desktop analysis and contacted representatives of youth sector in the region to put together the country picture. A section presents the results across the region by specific aspects of youth work development that the peer learning will be tackling. While a lot of research in the region is based on surveys and opinion polls among the youth population, relatively little analysis has happened on youth policy and even less is known and widely understood about the situation of youth work. Nevertheless, this area has become a more important focus of policies and initiatives largely due to Council of Europe and European Union youth policy priorities that feature more prominently youth work development. In this context, the background paper is a first attempt to build the puzzle on youth work by country and across the region with the aim to have it discussed, debated and completed during and after the regional peer learning event.

The country presentations aim to gather an understanding into how youth work is defined, recognised and supported. This relates to how the policies, strategies, programmes, welfare systems and allocation of resources are organized, which concepts are used, and in which context. The historical background and current national realities in the educational, cultural, socio-economic and political spheres should be considered alongside the regional and international trends that affect the development of youth work. A long list of variables makes comparison rather challenging. With this in mind, this paper highlights the common features of youth work in the region and of the models of youth work in the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, and Ukraine.

As youth work is an integral part of state youth policies across the region, its development depends greatly on the wider youth policy trends. Youth work is often equated with youth policy, complicating youth work analysis as a distinct process and policy sub-field.

The current stage in the development of youth work in Eastern Europe began after 1991, when the seven countries in question declared their independence from the Soviet Union. By 1991, each of them had had been part of the Soviet state for 70 years, and this legacy heavily weighed upon the first years of independence. In the Soviet Union, significant resources including governmental structures, mechanisms, and programmes for work with youth were in place, all aspects of policy planning and implementation were ideological and political. State youth policy was to follow very rigidly the official political and ideological line, which did not result in genuine civic involvement or responsiveness to youth interest. This legacy has influenced the development of youth work and youth participation for years to come. Without taking into account this historical heritage, it would be impossible to analyse contemporary youth work in Eastern Europe. The gradual process of youth policy's integration into the national legislative frameworks began in the early 90s. For example, in 1992, the newly independent Republic of Belarus enacted for the first time the Law of 'On the General Principles of State Youth Policy in the Republic of Belarus'<sup>1</sup>. Likewise, Supreme Soviet of the

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<sup>1</sup>On the General Principles of State Youth Policy in the Republic of Belarus <http://pravo.levonevsky.org/bazaby/zakon/zakb1381.htm>

Russian Federation adopted in 1993 the Resolution №5090-1 'On the Key Priorities for Youth Policy in the Russian Federation'<sup>2</sup>.

After gaining independence, all the countries under review entered a transition period and took divergent paths towards developing and implementing their national youth policies and youth work frameworks. Youth work practices were shaped by specific political, socio-economic and cultural contexts, and today we are witnessing a variation of models for the development of youth work. Some of these models reserve a strong role for the civil society when it comes to the provision of youth work (as in Moldova or Armenia), while in others the state maintains proactive involvement in youth work (Belarus, Russia).

As mentioned above, this background paper examines the realities of youth work in seven countries - the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, and Ukraine. The paper refers to a number of case studies and initiatives related to the development of youth work policy, and specifically to the services, infrastructures and educational and training choices for members of the youth policy workforce. The paper further provides an overview of the policy and legislation pertaining to youth work, summarise the current position in regard to the national structures and frameworks; in doing so, the paper relies on secondary sources, such as youth work country sheets produced by the EKCYF correspondents, published papers and book chapters related to youth work, available policy analyses and interviews with experts from the countries under review. This is followed by an assessment of the definitions of youth work, forms of national recognition and current national policy initiatives. The paper then proceeds with the examination of the funding arrangements for youth work and the analysis of youth work structures and actors in the countries concerned. Last but not least, the paper concludes by highlighting some of the main gaps that exist in the region in the area of youth work. It is not the paper's objective to paint a full and comprehensive picture of youth work in the region in every minute detail; instead, it aims to provide a roadmap for a follow-up discussion and a starting point for further research in this area.

## *2. Brief presentation of country realities on youth work*

### ***Armenia***

#### *Policy with a focus on the evidence base and research*

The regulatory framework for the activities of youth NGOs is largely favourable and the right to establish and join a civil society organisation is enshrined in the Constitution of Armenia (art. 45)<sup>3</sup>. The formation of the institutional structures for youth work is currently under way. A key turning

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<sup>2</sup>Country sheet on youth policy – Russia [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/d-ru/dv/d-ru\\_20110502\\_07\\_/d-ru\\_20110502\\_07\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/d-ru/dv/d-ru_20110502_07_/d-ru_20110502_07_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Constitution of Armenia <https://www.president.am/en/constitution-2015/>

point was the adoption of some key foundational documents and provisions governing the youth work system, notably:

- The notion of 'youth worker' was officially incorporated in the state youth policy in 2015: the State Youth Policy Strategy for 2015-2025 officially designated and declared the 'youth worker' as an 'actor' of state youth policy<sup>4</sup>;
- A dedicated Youth Worker Institute was set up in 2015 pursuant to the 'Regulation on the Youth Worker Institute' (hereinafter – Regulation)<sup>5</sup>, which puts forth the goals and objectives of the youth work, defines the scope of youth work activities, and specifies the role of youth worker training and continuing education.

While developing the Regulation, public authority representatives held discussions with other stakeholders (leaders of youth organizations, experts and researchers) and took into account their opinions on establishing the youth worker system.

In 2013, collaboration between UNDP and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia resulted in the establishment of a Youth Studies Institute. Research from the institute informed the development of several youth policy documents. However, the subsequent government restructuring caused many institutions to be closed or merged. This included the Youth Studies Institute, affiliated to the Youth Events Holding Centre SNCO (liquidated pursuant to a Governmental Decree dated 10 January 2019). Prior to the restructuring, the youth policy sector in Armenia was coordinated by the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, which was also responsible for youth policy development, implementation, regulation and for cooperation on youth policy matters. At present, youth policy is under the purview of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport with only one department in charge of youth policy.

Currently, youth work initiatives are being implemented by a variety of organizations. However, there is no established system of adequate and sufficient evidence support to youth policy development.

### *Recognition of youth work*

The quality of youth work is closely connected to how it is seen and recognised as a profession. Armenia is taking a number of concrete steps towards youth work recognition, as a function of a commitment towards greater investment in the youth work system. An important milestone in its progress towards the institutional development of youth work, and its recognition as a professional occupation, consistent with the international best practices, has been the enactment of a relevant Regulation.

Although no formal training programmes in youth work are being offered to date, there is a clear interest in their establishment. At present, youth workers come from a variety of backgrounds, of

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<sup>4</sup>Country sheet on youth work in Armenia

<sup>5</sup>Ibidem.

which social work, sociology, psychology, social policy, educational sciences and pedagogy are some of the most common. Within civil society, there are courses and seminars related to youth work but none of these training courses leads to an officially recognised qualification. There are no official quality standards for youth work set up by the state, but youth workers in Armenia are mainly guided by the EU and Council of Europe standards for youth work. Nevertheless, together with the recognition of youth work, the development of a quality assurance framework for youth work has been put on the policy agenda.

Currently, youth work is mainly implemented and recognised by the NGOs sector, but the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is discussing the ways to incorporate youth work into official employment policy.

### *Youth work funding*

Approximately 304 mln AMD (600 000 EUR) was allocated to youth policy and youth work from the state budget line ‘Youth policy programmes and events’ in 2018 and 2019<sup>6</sup>. Youth work is also being funded from other budget lines (e.g. education, culture, sport, etc.). Half of the budget appropriations for the youth sector is spent on youth worker training, support for NGO projects, and capacity building programmes run by NGOs.

Armenian civil society organisations also rely on funding from foreign donors, such as UNDP, UNICEF, USAID, the World Bank, the British Council, Save the Children International, the European Union, Eastern Partnership, Erasmus +, European Youth Foundation, UN structures, and other international organizations). However, there is no available data on the volume of financing and the directions of financial support provided to youth NGOs.

### *Youth work structures and actors (covering education and professional pathways)*

The lack of a formal system for training and/or retraining of youth workers is an important constraint on the effectiveness of state youth policy and of state youth programmes. The former Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia (now merged into the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport) piloted several training programmes for youth workers in 2016 and 2017. In 2019, two more youth worker training programmes were launched with international input as part of an initiative designed to facilitate the sharing of experience in training, retraining and advanced training of specialists in the field of youth work. Experience of cooperation with international partners shows that youth work constitutes to represent an area of interest for the Government, as evidenced by the submitted proposals and requests.

Youth work initiatives are carried out at the national and local levels in collaboration with some of the following partners:

- youth NGO's, foundations, and associations of legal entities;

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<sup>6</sup>Information provided by the PEYR.

- youth institutions affiliated to political parties;
- associations and organisations affiliated to educational institutions;
- youth clubs, groups and associations;
- institutions affiliated to Apostolic Church and religious organisations;
- projects funded by the government;
- projects funded by international organisations.

The following positive trends in youth work development in Armenia can be highlighted: format on of the institutional structures for youth work; favourable regulatory framework for the activities of NGOs; the EU and Council of Europe standards for youth work used by practitioners.

Areas warranting further development and consideration include: the closing of Youth Studies Institute due to government restructuring; the former Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs merged into the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport; the lack of a formal system for training and/or retraining of youth workers.

## **Azerbaijan**

### *Policy with a focus on the evidence base and research*

Azerbaijan started developing its youth policy together with other independent state institutions after it regained independence. A dedicated ministry was created in 1994<sup>7</sup>, but youth policy legal framework in Azerbaijan developed most rapidly over the last two decades. This process started with the law 'On youth policy' (2002, amended in 2019) and was followed up by 'Youth Development Strategy for 2015-2025' and the currently operational 'Youth of Azerbaijan in 2017-2021' State Programme<sup>8</sup>.

Legal documents list a number of government obligations with regards to youth work, notably 'provision of training and additional training of specialists in the field of youth policy, including the analysis, planning, organization and evaluation of work with young people, the organization of regular trainings for this purpose'<sup>9</sup>.

Evidence base for youth policy comes from annual reports from state organizations about implementation of the Strategy and State Programme and ad hoc research conducted by the ministry and international organisations, but there is no evidence of the research being considered in policy planning or implementation.

State-funded youth work is implemented by youth centres all across Azerbaijan. There are about 40 youth centres in the country, 12 of them are under the Ministry of Youth and Sport, and others are operated by local authorities and other organisations. Youth centres managed by the Ministry

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<sup>7</sup>Eastern Partnership Youth Analytic Report (2015), <https://library.euneighbours.eu/content/eastern-partnership-youth-policy-analytic-report>

<sup>8</sup>Youth of Azerbaijan in 2017-2021 <https://www.mys.gov.az/en/press/eventsdetails/6151/azrbaycan-gncliyi-2017-2021-ci-illrd-dovlt-programinin-icrasina-dair-muzakirlr-aparilib>

<sup>9</sup>Youth of Azerbaijan in 2017-2021, above.

function according plan of actions approved by the Ministry and they are funded from the state budget<sup>10</sup>.

### *Recognition of youth work*

There is definition of 'youth policy' in the above-quoted legal frameworks, but there is no legal definition of youth work.

Youth work is recognized as part of social work. In 2018 the specialty 'youth work' was included into classification of specialties for master's degree in higher education<sup>11</sup>.

There is no official recognition of youth work for the end user (young person) either. The current legislation recognises that 'youth work is creation of conditions for individual development of young people and organization of their leisure time'<sup>12</sup> without specific parameters or targets.

According to local youth work practitioners, state, non-state and international organizations work with youth centres, mostly within certain specific and targeted projects and thus give partial recognition to youth work but this is not structured or regulated in a systematic way.

### *Youth work funding*

The state budget for youth policy (including youth work) was 10 mln AZN (5,35 million EUR) and 7,3 mln AZN (3,9 mln AZN) in 2019.

There is no separate, dedicated local youth policy budget. Out of the above sums, 800000 AZN (428000 Euro) is provided for maintenance and activities of local (district) youth and sport departments.

There are no dedicated youth programmes within the state youth policy framework. The 12 youth centres which are under the Ministry have annual general budget of 1 million AZN (535 000 EUR). This sum is accommodated within state budget for youth policy.

### *Youth work structures and actors (covering education and professional pathways)*

There are no dedicated state youth work structures or institutions in Azerbaijan - youth work, as part of youth policy, is regulated by the Ministry of Youth and Sport. There are about 300 youth NGOs registered by Ministry of Justice<sup>13</sup>. There is special article on youth organizations in the 'Law on youth policy' (April 2019 amendment) – see box below.

Box 1 – Definition of youth organisations in Azerbaijan. Source: 'Law on youth policy' (2019)

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<sup>10</sup>Youth Policy in Azerbaijan, <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/eeca/eecapublications/eecamanual/eecamanualazerbaijan/ythpolicyazer/>

<sup>11</sup> Information provided by EKYP correspondent.

<sup>12</sup><https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/eeca/eecapublications/eecamanual/eecamanualazerbaijan/ythpolicyazer/>

<sup>13</sup>EaP Youth Analytical Report (2015).



9-1.1. Youth organizations are non-governmental organizations established for the purpose to identify and solve youth problems, protect their rights, meet their spiritual needs, etc., established according to the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan ‘On non-governmental organizations (public associations and foundations)’ by individuals from 16 to 35 year-old and (or) youth organizations pursuant to this Law.

9-1.2. Membership in youth organizations is terminated at the age of 35.

9-1.3. The terms and conditions of admission and termination of membership in youth organizations, as well as termination of their membership in connection with reaching the age limit established by Article 9-1.2 of this Law, shall be determined by the charter of the youth organization.

9-1.4. The requirements of Article 9-1.2 of this Law shall not apply to the founders of youth organizations established before the entry into force of this Law.

In September 2019, six Azerbaijani universities launched youth work degrees within a single youth work education programme. Universities involved in the programme include:

- The State Academy of Public Administration under the President of Azerbaijan,
- Baku State University,
- Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts,
- Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University,
- Azerbaijan University
- Ganja State University<sup>14</sup>.

The entire programme was developed with the aid of international experts and donors. UNICEF recommended a common curriculum based on best international practices and added specialised modules that were developed by the local specialists with guidance from UNICEF’s international experts, such as Modern Problems of Specialization, Challenges of Youth Work and Youth Policy, Professional Ethics in Youth Work, Youth Policy (international and national experience), Strategic Management in Youth Field, Leadership and Youth Mentoring, Networking in Youth Field and PR, Career Guidance for Young People, Monitoring of Youth Work Programmes, Research Methods, Social Policy and Social Issues, Youth Work and Youth Research, Informational Technologies and Innovation Management in Youth Sector, History and Methodology of Youth Work and Youth Work Management. The programme involves 43 students as of November 2019, and its first graduates are expected in 2020.

## **Belarus**

### *Policy with a focus on the evidence base and research*

Much youth policy legislation in Belarus is relatively recent, having been formulated over the last decades. Furthermore, the process of establishing the legal framework on youth policy and youth work is still on-going. In 2016, revisions were made to the Law of the Republic of Belarus ‘On the

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<sup>14</sup>UNICEF Azerbaijan – Adolescents <https://www.unicef.org/azerbaijan/what-we-do/adolescents>

Foundations of the State Youth Policy'<sup>15</sup>. With the view to supporting implementation of the state programme 'Education and Youth Policy in 2016-2020' an Action Plan was adopted<sup>16</sup>. The plan indicates the titles of activities, levels of implementation (national or local), timelines for each activity and sources of financing.

The 'Strategy of Youth Policy Development in the Republic of Belarus until 2030'<sup>17</sup> – currently at the drafting stage - envisages further development of the institutional structures for youth policy, including youth work. Specific measures include:

- Establishing a comprehensive organisational framework for youth work, by instituting the position of 'youth work specialist' in enterprises and entities with over 100 young employees below 31 years of age in rural areas and with more than 300 young employees in cities;
- Strengthening the training and professional development systems for specialists in youth work, leaders of youth and children's organisations;
- Strengthening the methodological framework for specialists in youth work, leaders of youth and children's organisations and other youth policy stakeholders.

The Ministry of Education is the main actor at the central level in regard to youth work planning, support, delivery and monitoring. The evidence base for youth policy comes mostly from the formal sector. Pursuant to the Law 'On Foundations of the State Youth Policy' (Article 23), the Ministry of Education prepares annual national reports on the situation of young people in the Republic of Belarus. The reports present data on a wide range of issues, including youth worker policy, socio-economic support for young people, prevention of crimes among young people, youth participation in the socio-political life of the country, youth and children's NGOs, and systems of supplementary education of children and young people.

Starting from 2016, the National Institute for Higher Education (NIHE) has conducted research on the topic 'Professional and Competence Culture of a Youth Work Specialist'. It also issues the academic journals 'Modern youth and society' and 'Pedagogy of Co-authorship', where much of the research on youth-related issues and policies is published<sup>18</sup>. However, there is an overall shortage of systematic, comprehensive and structured research dedicated specifically to youth work.

### *Recognition of youth work*

The term 'youth work' is not present in the Belarusian legislation; however, there appears to be a comprehensive system for the recognition of youth work as a professional occupation, which is driven and supported by the state. Notable elements of this system include:

The legal framework institutionalising the professional occupation of 'Specialist in youth work';

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<sup>15</sup>Youth policy governance www. [https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262379/Belarus\\_YouthWiki+Chapter+1.pdf/de7f8648-a5cc-ee7e-1afe-b778823db7d1](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262379/Belarus_YouthWiki+Chapter+1.pdf/de7f8648-a5cc-ee7e-1afe-b778823db7d1)

<sup>16</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>17</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>18</sup>Country sheet on youth work in Belarus.

[https://youthworker.by/images/\\_library/Template\\_country\\_info\\_youth\\_work\\_BELARUS\\_2017.pdf](https://youthworker.by/images/_library/Template_country_info_youth_work_BELARUS_2017.pdf)

- Introduction of the position of 'Specialist in youth work' in large enterprises and entities (pursuant to the Resolution of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Belarus No. 42 of 30 March 2006 'On Amendments to Revision 1 and Amendments to Revision 27 of the Uniform Classification of Qualifications Job Positions'<sup>19</sup>);
- Existence of an occupational standard with defined professional duties and requirements with regard to educational and training background;
- Existence of a relevant educational standard with a distinct list of professional competences;
- Existence of formal education programmes for university graduates, including a 2-year retraining course 'Organisation of youth work', leading to the professional qualification of 'Specialist in youth work'<sup>20</sup>;
- A variety of non-formal education programmes and professional development courses for youth workers;
- Existence of a professional association of specialists in youth work as a national platform for professional youth workers.

The case of Belarus underscores the important role of a professional association of youth workers in bringing together the practitioners in the field when youth workers, elaborating and upholding shared values and ideas, self-organise to gain recognition. Another notable trend of youth work development in Belarus is strong governmental involvement in guiding the education and training of youth workers, which implies support but also the exercise of control over the content of youth worker education.

### *Youth work funding*

In accordance with the Law 'On Foundations of the State Youth Policy' (Article 22), funding for the state youth policy (including youth work) comes from the national and (or) local budgets. Furthermore, special funds may be established for financing activities in the sphere of youth policy in general, and youth work in particular.

Belarus has an established practice for allocating budget resources to youth public units based on the Republican Register of youth and children's associations. All 11 units on the Register are recipients of state financial support.

International funding for youth work is provided under programs of bilateral and multilateral cooperation (including under the auspices of the Union State of Russia and Belarus, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Eastern Partnership, UNESCO, UNFPA and Erasmus+).

### *Youth work structures and actors (covering education and professional pathways)*

The structures and actors for youth work in Belarus form a complex network and include, inter alia:

- The system of supplementary education for children and young people.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibidem.

- Multidisciplinary youth centres and clubs.
- Profit-oriented youth entertainment centres.
- Departments of youth affairs at educational institutions.
- Youth social services.
- Children and youth summer camps.
- Volunteering programmes and students' work teams.
- Youth NGOs.

Student self-governance bodies, student union committees, youth public associations, social and psychological services, are also relevant actors. As a part of their regular activity, some youth NGOs provide a range of training opportunities, such as certified training courses for summer camp counsellors, volunteer group, and youth leaders.

In the Republic of Belarus, there were 2,731 registered public associations as of January 1, 2018; this included 320 youth associations, including 26 children's organisations, 61 youth organizations with international and republican status and 259 organizations with local status<sup>21</sup>. However, there was no official statistics available on the exact number youth organizations that were active.

The Association of Youth Workers was established in 2016 ([www.youthworker.by](http://www.youthworker.by)) with the purpose of consolidating the professional community of youth workers, facilitating exchange and sharing of professional practices among its workers, fostering development of professional competences among its members, raising the prestige of youth work as a professional occupation and the social status of youth workers, protecting the rights and interests of its members.

Positive tendencies in the development of youth work in Belarus include: relatively recent legislation on youth policy in general and youth work in particular; a comprehensive system for the recognition of youth work as a profession, which is driven and supported by the state; sustainable financial support to state youth policy (including youth work) from the national and local budgets.

Areas warranting further development and consideration include: absence of a separate state body on youth affairs; no clear definition of a youth work in the legislative framework; strong governmental involvement in guiding the education and training of youth workers; unequal access of NGOs (only 11 youth organisations are recipients of state financial support) to state funding.

## **Georgia**

### *Policy with a focus on the evidence base and research*

The legal basis for the youth policy in Georgia developed substantially over the last three decades since Georgia regained its independence. The development of consolidated national youth policy in the Republic of Georgia started in 1994 with the creation of the first governmental structure

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<sup>21</sup>Country sheet on youth work in Belarus.

[https://youthworker.by/images/library/Template\\_country\\_info\\_youth\\_work\\_BELARUS\\_2017.pdf](https://youthworker.by/images/library/Template_country_info_youth_work_BELARUS_2017.pdf)

responsible for development of youth policy in Georgia - the Department of Youth Affairs. Although operating for only a short period of time, it initiated the creation of the first two youth laws still in force today:

- the Law Concerning State Support to Children and Youth Unions (22 June 1999)
- the Law on the Protection of Underage Children from Harmful Influence (28 September 2001)<sup>22</sup>.

Despite institutional developments, for the first two decades of independence, youth was not a policy priority. Further attempts to develop the legal basis of youth policy have failed, either due to lack of support or rapid reforms implemented after the 2003 Rose Revolution.

The situation changed with the establishment of the new Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia (MSY) in 2010. MSY started developing a comprehensive 'National Youth Policy Document' (NYP) in 2011, adopting the country's first NYP document in 2012<sup>23</sup>. A new 'National Youth Policy Document' was adopted in 2015 with the change of government and further reinforced through the adoption of the 'National Youth Policy Action Plan'<sup>24</sup>. The Plan brings together most important government programmes, projects and actions concerning young people, focusing on four priority areas:

- youth participation in public, economic, cultural and political life
- education, employment and professional growth
- promotion of a healthy lifestyles
- raising awareness of civil rights and obligations.

Evidence-based approaches underpinned both the 2012 and 2015 NYP document development, and are considered key principles of the 2015 NYP document, but the integration of research and evidence into policy implementation is very limited. The most recent comprehensive youth study conducted in Georgia - 'Generation in Transition: Youth Study 2016 – Georgia', was conducted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation<sup>25</sup>.

Despite relevant NYP clauses, there is no annual performance evaluation of the priorities and directions defined in the Youth Policy and no comprehensive NYP has been conducted to date by the government (with only partial evaluation conducted by UNICEF and UNDP in 2019). The former MSY (now Youth Agency) has a research and analytical unit that analyses current policy implementation using 52 indicators. The main six areas of evaluation are duration, geographical coverage, gender, sources of information (government body and research body) and the responsible line ministry.

### *Recognition of youth work*

Although youth work and youth work recognition are among key new priorities of the 2015 NYP document, youth work and youth workers are not legally defined or recognised in Georgia (as of November 2019).

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<sup>22</sup>Fras, M., Georgia – Youth policy governance (2017)[https://pip-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262379/Georgia\\_YouthWiki\\_Chapter1.pdf/f5d88c02-988b-f2c9-81ae-2348db50361f](https://pip-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262379/Georgia_YouthWiki_Chapter1.pdf/f5d88c02-988b-f2c9-81ae-2348db50361f)

<sup>23</sup>Georgia – Youth policy factsheet <https://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/georgia/>

<sup>24</sup>Georgia Youth Policy Monitor, <http://youth.gov.ge/?lang=en>

<sup>25</sup>FES Caucasus, <http://www.fes-caucasus.org/news-list/e/generation-in-transition-youth-study-2016-georgia/>

Partial attempts at strengthening recognition have taken part in 2016-2018 but have been suspended due to the on-going youth policy governance reform (see below). The-then Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia, with the support of World Vision Georgia, Helping Hand Georgia and Georgia's Youth Workers Association implemented a 'Youth Workers Certification Programme'. During this 2017-2018 project, 20 practitioner youth workers developed their competences, use developed competence into the practice at schools and youth centres and evaluate and analyse the learning and development process<sup>26</sup>.

The Youth Agency of Georgia, integrating the Ministry of Education's Youth Department as well as the National Children and Youth Centre and Fund, is currently working on the creation of National Professional Standards and Certification Criteria for Youth Workers. Within the same project, the Agency aims to develop qualifications courses for youth workers, to be launched in 2020. A 'Youth Work Key Competences Framework Document' based on EU good practice in youth work competence development has already been elaborated by the Ministry of Education and awaits official endorsement by the new Agency.

### *Youth work funding*

As the youth policy system in Georgia is undergoing a governance reform, it is difficult to provide specific figures for youth work public funding.

In the previous system, where the Ministry of Education covered youth policy and youth work matters, both the planning and implementation (programme/financial) burden of youth interventions came from the ministry's annual budget. The Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education's budget has decreased over the last 3 years from 2 million to 500 000 GEL (Georgian lari; that's from 600 000 EUR to 150 000 EUR). In 2017, the project that specifically supported youth work was the 'youth workers' certification project', mentioned above, with a budget of 50 000 GEL<sup>27</sup>.

Local authorities in Georgia have substantial youth budgets, far exceeding Ministry budgets for youth policy – e.g. the Tbilisi Municipality spent 7,3 million GEL on youth in 2018 alone<sup>28</sup>.

Furthermore, international donors spend substantial funds on youth work projects and programmes in Georgia. A single Erasmus+ KA2 Eastern Partnership Youth Window grant can amount to almost 300 000 EUR, and smaller KA1 projects implemented in Georgia can reach budgets of up to 50 000 EUR.

### *Youth work structures and actors (covering education and professional pathways)*

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<sup>26</sup>სახალგაზრდულ მუშაკთა სერტიფიკაციის პროგრამა (Youth Worker Certification Programme) <http://www.youthworkers.ge/post.php?id=12>

<sup>27</sup>Information provided by the Youth Agency of Georgia.

<sup>28</sup>Fras, M., Youth policy governance assessment, UNDP Georgia (unpublished).

As the Youth Agency of Georgia has just been created (August 2019) and remains to set up its formal structures, there are no central/government youth work structures. The Agency's new management declared that youth work will remain a key priority of their future activities and that relevant institutions will be set up.

There are no formal education and professional pathways at national or regional level in Georgia, only a number civil society and donor-funded initiatives.

In 2017-2018, World Vision Georgia together with the former Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia supported local municipalities in establishing and effective functioning of youth councils. A youth council was defined as a group of elected community leaders who voluntarily join the group. Youth councils are supported through the Participatory Budgeting Model (PBM). The project cooperated with 'School Youth Networks for Sustainable and Effective Solutions' (SYNCS) project funded by the European Commission. Through youth-led advocacy, communities with youth council enjoy more accountable and responsive local governments and municipal budgets that address the distinct needs of communities as youth have defined them<sup>29</sup>.

Youth Workers Association of Georgia, established in 2018, is a membership based organization uniting practitioner youth workers. The aim of the Association is to contribute to the quality development and recognition processes of youth work and youth workers in Georgia. Objectives of the Association include raising awareness and popularizing youth work on governmental and civic levels, advocating for recognition and professionalisation of youth work on Georgian level, supporting the youth work development processes and creation and adoption of code of ethics of youth workers, creating an educational platform for developing the competencies of youth workers and supporting the coordination of youth workers on local, national and international levels.

The Association works within the three strategic directions for the 2019-2022 time period:

- Supporting the development of youth work in Georgia (including competent development of youth workers and raising awareness about youth work, its role and functions)
- International Cooperation (including building partnerships with youth worker organizations on international level and international educational activities about youth work and youth workers' competence development)
- Networking and membership (including development of the membership structure and supporting the members in development of their competences)<sup>30</sup>.

## **Moldova**

### *Policy with a particular focus on evidence base and research*

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<sup>29</sup>Information provided by the Youth Agency of Georgia.

<sup>30</sup> Youth Worker Association of Georgia, <http://www.youthworkers.ge/post>

Moldova has recently substantially reformed its youth policy and integrated European practices in its legal framework. The legal framework of the national youth policy is comprised mainly of the 'Law on Youth' adopted in 2016, the 'National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020', supported by the 'National Youth Action Plan 2020' and the 'Education 2020 Strategy'<sup>31</sup>.

According to the 'Law on Youth', the youth sector is defined as all the areas in which the development and implementation of youth policies and youth activities take place. It highlights important areas for the development of young people, such as economic opportunities, youth participation and all-rounded personal development, health, youth services, youth activities and youth programs. It redefines the roles of different governmental and non-governmental stakeholders and details the expected contribution of these parties. The most important provisions included in the Law relate to the definition of young people, considered now as people between 14 and 35 years of age, and the establishment of the National Agency for the Development of Youth Programmes and Activities as an implementing body for youth programs. The Agency was expected to start its activity within 12 months of the enactment of the provision. However its establishment was postponed until 2020. This delay has had significant implications for the effectiveness of the Law on Youth.

The 'National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020' aims to develop and strengthen the youth sector by contributing to the creation of an adequate environment to ensure the evolution of every young person, including those who have fewer opportunities. Its main objectives are: to encourage the participation of young people, to provide quality youth services, to ensure economic opportunities for young people and to strengthen the youth sector. According to the 'National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020', the responsible Ministry is to report to the government, by 31 March of each year, on the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan.

Youth work is clearly defined by the 'Law on Youth' as any action with and for young people, of a social, cultural, educational or civic nature, which is based on non-formal learning processes and voluntary participation of young people, and is coordinated by a youth worker or a youth work specialist.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research is the main actor at the central level, in regard to youth work planning, support and delivery. Following the Government Reform in 2017 and the merger of Ministry of Education with the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports, the youth dedicated branch became 'the youth direction'<sup>32</sup>. According to the 'Law on Youth', both central and local authorities are involved in the planning, support and delivery of youth work. However, despite being assigned a leading role in the development of the youth sector, and its clear definition, the local public authorities (hereinafter – LPAs) are severely constrained by the absence of the local public administration reform, and the lack of methodological and technical assistance, and of the necessary resources and capacities for LPAs, that such reform is expected to provide.

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<sup>31</sup>Youth policy governance: Moldova www. [https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262379/MOLDOVA\\_Youth+Wiki+Chapter+1\\_final.pdf/2781ad3b-80ac-5a48-ca83-9ee41a14c2b1](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262379/MOLDOVA_Youth+Wiki+Chapter+1_final.pdf/2781ad3b-80ac-5a48-ca83-9ee41a14c2b1)

<sup>32</sup> Information provided by [National Youth Council of Moldova](#).



The evidence base for youth policy mostly comes from civil society actors benefiting from the financial support of international organisations (UN agencies, World Bank and others). Additionally, the government contracts think tanks to evaluate the sectoral strategy. It also ensures the availability of data from the National Bureau of Statistics Platform.

The Governmental Commission for Youth Policies, headed by the Prime Minister and following the Council of Europe's principle of co-management, is the official youth policy coordination body<sup>33</sup>. However, the Commission stopped functioning in 2016. Furthermore, The National Agency for the Development of Youth Programmes and Activities – tasked with the implementation of the youth policy - has not been established to date. Following the advocacy campaigns of NYCM, in August 2019, the new Government has included in its 2019-2020 agenda the creation of the Agency and the renewal of the Governmental Commission.

### *Recognition of youth work*

The Law on Youth makes a clear distinction between the notions of 'youth worker' and 'youth work specialist'. According to it, a youth worker is a person who supports young people in their personal, social and educational development and their integration into society, mainly by implementing specific activities in the area of youth work. A youth worker performs different types of activities with young people in the community or with youth groups without necessarily following a planned and systematic activity, and can be a youth leader, a volunteer, a person from a youth organization or any other organization.

A youth work specialist is a person who has received special training in the field of youth work and who offers professional services to young people. The specialist is engaged in planned, systematic and professional activity in relation to the young person or a group of young people within an institutionalized service for young people.

It derives from the Law on Youth that only a youth specialist can provide youth services, defined as a set of measures and institutionalized activities, carried out to meet the needs of young people or young families. The term 'youth specialist' is normally used with regard to employees of youth centres or persons responsible for youth activities at LPAs.

### *Youth work funding*

The state budget for youth affairs is approximately 1 million EUR per year and has not changed in the last two years. However, this amount does not include programmes for youth that are implemented by the Ministries or related agencies other than the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibidem.

Every year the National Youth Council of Moldova produces a report on allocations from the local budgets towards youth policy. The total budget allocated by second-level LPAs amounted to approx. 600000 EUR in 2017, representing a slight increase over the 2016 level (+5%). It is notable from these reports that the amount allocated by the LPAs to youth activities is very uneven across the regions.

In terms of financing, there is a dedicated national grant program supporting youth work in Moldova. The Grant Programme for 2019 organized by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research aims to support and develop the youth sector in the Republic of Moldova. The total amount allocated towards the grant programme for youth organizations, financed from the state budget, is about 7 million MDL (360 000 EUR).

### *Youth work structures and actors (covering education and professional pathways)*

A more conducive environment for the development of youth organisations is currently under development. The 'Youth Strategy 2014-2020' places significant emphasis on the development of support systems for young people, including through youth centres or health centres, and on strengthening the youth sector through consolidation and inter-ministerial cooperation.

Youth centres provide a variety of services to target youth groups. With the involvement of young people, these centres carry out educational and methodical activities; cultural activities and service provision, including training and access to information; civic participation, and human rights advocacy and social reintegration; skills training and professional integration; entrepreneurship development; volunteering; promotion of healthy lifestyle; and prevention of human trafficking and domestic violence.

Although there is no official network or platform that could indicate the exact number of active youth organisations, the number of NGOs is high. Moreover, the National Youth Council of Moldova (CNTM) which is an umbrella structure of 61 youth organisations, operates nationwide. At the local level, there is a National Network of Local Youth Councils (NNLYC), which is a youth non-governmental organisation consisting of youth councils at the district / municipal level and holding a representative position to the Central Public Authorities, the republican and international non-governmental structures.

In terms of education, the majority of youth workers and youth specialists complete short programs for youth workers provided by NGOs under a variety of projects. Hence, youth workers usually learn by doing (as project coordinators, volunteers or trainers), there is no education degree related to youth work at the university level in Moldova so far. Youth specialists are also not always qualified in youth work and youth work is just a part-time job in addition to their main activity. Moldova does not have an occupational standard that would define the responsibilities and profile of a youth specialist or universities with dedicated professional programmes in youth work.

Positive tendencies in youth work developments in Moldova are as follows: synchronization and harmonization of youth policy with European standards and practices; youth work is clearly defined

in legislation where civic nature of that work and non-formal learning emphasized; a dedicated financial national grant programme supporting youth work.

Areas warranting further development and consideration include: absence of educational and occupational standards for youth workers; absence of a youth work quality assurance framework.

## ***Russian Federation***

Due to absence of research from the Russian Federation either in EKCYP or in PEYR, and because of the limited number of texts on this topic, this paper does not present a comprehensive picture of youth work in Russia, but offers snapshots of the situation based on available research material.

### *Policy with a particular focus on the evidence base and research*

The situation of youth work in the Russian Federation is heavily shaped by its complex political and societal context. One important point to be taken into account is the federated structure of the country, which results in the diversity of youth work models across the regions (or 'subjects of the federation').

At the federal level, the responsibilities in the field of youth policy are assigned to federal executive bodies. State youth policy is inter-ministerial; it is covered by the mandates of several ministries, dealing with areas such as education, science, culture, social matters, employment, health and seeking to coordinate their work. Still, the main governmental structure responsible for youth policy implementation is the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation along with the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs. Public bodies on youth affairs exist in many regions. However, they are usually merged with departments of culture or sports. As the responsibility for youth policy is divided between the central and local authorities, development and delivery of youth work happen at different levels across the country. Notable differences in status and structure exist among the executive authorities of the subjects of the Russian Federation in charge of the state youth policy. In 2016, 22 subjects of the Federation had dedicated youth policy agencies. Moreover, 63 subjects of the Russian Federation had youth affairs bodies not affiliated to any departmental structure<sup>34</sup>. Because youth policies are being implemented by a variety of institutions, there is a need for an implementation framework and for harmonized federal and local strategic planning.

In terms of legislation, there is no federal or national law on youth policy; however, 78 federal subjects of Russia had regional youth laws as of 01.01.2017<sup>35</sup>. Several legal instruments exist at the federal level that target specific aspects of youth policy, including the Strategy the 'Foundations of State Youth Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025' and its Action plan, the

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<sup>34</sup>Молодежная политика: парламентское измерение (Youth policy: parliamentary dimension)  
<http://duma.gov.ru/media/files/oQ5re4ABbAAA8IpAEDtjwyGpQADXJlpJ.pdf>

<sup>35</sup>Ibidem.

national and federal programmes on youth entrepreneurship, on young scientists, on youth employment and on youth education.

National authorities responsible for youth policy provide annual reports to the Government as a part of their regular mandate. The Ministry of Education and Science of Russia and the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs of the Government of the Russian Federation submit annual reports on youth policy issues. Likewise, the local authorities and municipalities with units responsible for working with young people and youth NGOs are required to submit annual youth policy reports to the Federal Agency on Youth Affairs. Research on youth affairs is also conducted on an irregular basis by a variety of actors, such as Sberbank, one of Russia's major banks, and by individual scholars or research groups.

Nevertheless, there is no assessment of the impact of such research on youth policy development, and no distinct connection between evidence and policy formulation can be documented. It is not clear how the research and reports serve the purpose of adjusting youth policy, strategies, plans and programmes according to youth needs.

### *Recognition of youth work*

As far as the legal definition of youth work is concerned, such definition is provided in the strategy the 'Foundations of the State Youth Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025'<sup>36</sup>. In 2003, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation recognized youth work as a distinct area of formal education and training, by including the specialty 'Organization of work with young people' in the list of official classification.

### *Youth work funding*

Youth work is financed at the federal, local, municipal levels. Many youth work activities are funded from different budget lines. Additionally, dedicated local programmes exist to support youth work, such as 'Youth of the Chuvash Republic: 2011-2020' in the Autonomous Republic of Chuvashia; 'Youth' in Kaliningrad Region; and 'Affordable housing for young people' in Saint Petersburg<sup>37</sup>.

### *Youth work structures and actors (covering education and professional pathways)*

According to data from the Federal State Statistics Service as of 01.01.2017, the infrastructure for youth work in Russia was comprised of 259 regional state structures employing 7,771 people. Its composition varies from one region to another, but normally includes different types of youth centers and mechanisms of support (including financial) to local youth NGOs. In 2017, there were 220 779 registered youth NGOs across Russia<sup>38</sup>. However, there is no reliable data on the number of active NGOs among them.

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<sup>36</sup>Молодежь Чувашской Республики:2011-2020 (Youth of the Chuvash Republic: 2011-2020) [http:// www.obrazov.cap.ru](http://www.obrazov.cap.ru)

<sup>37</sup>Программа молодежи -доступное жилье (affordable housing for young people) [http:// www.gorcenter.spb.ru](http://www.gorcenter.spb.ru)

<sup>38</sup> Federal State Statistics Service [http:// www.gks.ru](http://www.gks.ru)

Youth organisations mainly offer various opportunities for young people, including information services, volunteering opportunities, international projects, initiatives aimed at improving their quality of life.

There are also several types of national and local youth councils, notably:

- The National Youth Council and local youth councils in some subjects of the Russian Federation.
- Youth advisory councils established by the state institutions. On some occasions, members of these councils may be approached by governmental authorities for advice on matters pertaining to youth policy development. Examples include the Youth Council under the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh), regional public chambers on youth affairs, youth parliaments, bodies of students' self-government, student councils, etc.

Youth work targets all young people aged 14 - 30 who are permanent residents of Russia or Russian nationals residing abroad (citizens of Russia and 'compatriots'). In practice, youth policy typically addresses specific groups of young people, such as:

- young people with socio-economic problems;
- young people with psychical disabilities;
- young people with deviant or delinquent behavior;
- young people leaving institutionalized care (orphanages);
- unemployed youth;
- young families;
- 'talented youth' (high achievers in the educational system).

In terms of formal education, 42 universities provide degree-level courses in the specialty 'Organisation of Youth Work', introduced in 2003 as an experimental interdisciplinary programme. The aim was to train competent professionals in youth work for youth organizations and for state and public bodies.

The Russian Federation has a wide variety of training courses and internship opportunities for youth workers that include retraining courses for non-specialists and professional development courses for specialists offered by universities and certified vocational training organisations.

There are also non-formal education opportunities for youth workers in Russia. However, there is still no formal validation system of non-formal learning in youth work. In terms of provision, non-formal education and training offerings can be classified into three groups: programmes provided by state-supported bodies or institutions; programmes provided by the voluntary youth sector; programmes provided under various European projects.

Thus, among the most vivid positive youth work development trends in Russia we can highlight: recognition of youth work as a profession; provision formal education and training to youth workers. Still there is no federal law on youth policy; there is also a lack of monitoring research on youth work development.

## Ukraine

### *Policy with a focus on the evidence base and research*

Despite the lack of a comprehensive national youth strategy in Ukraine, youth policy is covered by ample government documents and frameworks relevant to youth. The main strategic issues are covered by three documents: The Strategy of Development of National Youth Policy till 2020 (2013)<sup>39</sup>, The Roadmap for Reform: Youth Policy in Ukraine (2015)<sup>40</sup> and the Concept of the State Target Social Programme 'Youth of Ukraine' 2016-2020 (2016)<sup>41</sup>.

Two new documents - the Strategy of Youth Policy in Ukraine 2030 and new Draft Law on Youth were developed in 2019 and remain to be adopted. It is expected that after the adoption of the Law on Youth (expected in December 2019), the system of youth policy in Ukraine will be significantly changed (information provided in this paper is relevant up to October 2019). The Draft Law on Youth (2019 version) includes provisions on both youth work and youth policy implementation, defined as activities carried out by the youth or together with the youth and focused on its comprehensive development.

As the Ministry of Youth and Sports has been merged with the Ministry of Culture in September 2019, further governance changes are to be expected in 2020. Assessment and changes in the implementation of youth policy are reflected in the Annual State Reports on Situation of Youth to the President of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and the Cabinet of Ministers on youth<sup>42</sup>. State reports are elaborated on the order Ministry of Youth and Sports. For the preparation of the report, data from central and local executive authorities, ministries, State Statistical Service research institutions and the results of sociological research are used. The State Institute of Youth and Family Policy is organisation under the now-former Ministry of Youth and Sport and its mandate is to carry out ongoing research and draft State Reports<sup>43</sup>. The Ministry allocates financial resources for preparation of the Report.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine is responsible for the research, monitoring and evaluation. On-going youth research is provided by [the State Institute of Family and Youth Policies](#) (agency in structure of the Ministry). The [annual youth research](#) traditions have started in 2014 and is conducted by involvement of research companies via open tender. The research covers area of demographic characteristics, values, family, employment, education, health, migration moods, political engagement, citizenship participation, volunteering and identity. The results of research are presented in the [Annual state report on youth](#). Nevertheless, there is no evidence that research data influences policy development.

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<sup>39</sup>Strategy of Development of National Youth Policy till 2020 (2013)

<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/532/2013>

<sup>40</sup>Roadmap for Reform: Youth Policy in Ukraine (2015)<https://rm.coe.int/16806b940b>

<sup>41</sup>Concept of the State Target Social Programme 'Youth of Ukraine' 2016-2020 (2016)

<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1018-2015-%D1%80#n9>

<sup>42</sup>Annual State Reports on Situation of Youth <http://dsmsu.gov.ua/index/ua/category/202>

<sup>43</sup>State Institute of Youth and Family Policy <https://dismp.gov.ua/>

### *Recognition of youth work*

Ukrainian legislation does not define definition youth work/youth worker, but the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (formerly MSY) operates a large-scale national Youth Worker Programme in partnership with UNDP, providing training to youth workers (see below) since 2014<sup>44</sup>.

The Youth Worker Programme issues certificates to its graduates but its recognition is at the discretion of individual organisations and institutions.

There is no formal recognition of youth work in Ukraine. At the present, youth work is commonly understood as the activity of youth centres, public organizations and government agencies working with youth. The Draft Law on Youth (2019) contains a section on the organization of youth work in Ukraine but remains to be adopted.

### *Youth work funding*

Funding of youth policy is provided by the state, local budgets and other sources. Since 2015 the Ministry of Youth and Sport cooperates with international donors, mainly with UN agencies in co-funding measures and activities. The budget necessary for implementation youth policy is defined on an annual basis when drafting respective annual budgets with regard to their actual capacity. The financing of youth policy programme implementation is channelled through the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Activities are arranged around the general directions outlined above.

The distribution of budgetary costs is set up in allocation plan of 'Youth of Ukraine' 2016-2020 Programme. The total budget planned for the period of the Programme amounts to 501 300 UAH (approximately 16,7mln EUR).

The total budget of the YWP programme is difficult to estimate due to a range of independent funding sources including the Ministry, UNDP, UNICEF and USAID as well as regional and local authorities. Current estimates and projections put government expenses at around 120 000 EUR between 2014 and 2022, and UNDP's expenses at 650 000EUR in the same period – a total of around 770 000 EUR. It has to be noted that local authorities provide substantial funding and resources but it cannot be measured in precise terms as data is not aggregated at regional and national level.

### *Youth work structures and actors (covering education and professional pathways)*

In the absence of state structures regulating and managing youth work, civil society organisations and local authorities remain most relevant actors in the field. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, there were 5450 officially registered youth NGOs in (7.8% of all NGOs). According to the Institute of Sociology of National Academy of Science of Ukraine, during the past 20 years not

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<sup>44</sup>Youth Worker Programme <http://youth-worker.org.ua/about/>

more than 2% of the population aged 18 years and older were members of the ‘student associations, youth organizations’ (as was mentioned above, GfK Ukraine poll conducted in 2015 showed 2% of members of youth organizations among respondents aged 14-34)<sup>45</sup>.

As mentioned above, there is a single national youth worker training programme, launched in 2014 by UNDP Ukraine in cooperation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine and State Institute for Family and Youth Policy launched. The Youth Worker Programme (YWP) is aimed at developing capacities for public servants and the civil society representatives, working with youth, to empower and equip young people with necessary skills how to engage into lives of their communities, as well as policy- and decision-making at local and national levels.

At the time of the Programme’s launch in 2014, youth policy in Ukraine was overregulated and administered by central state authorities. Kick-off of the decentralization reform in 2014 has been transferring the powers from the centralized management to the local self-government bodies, replacing the hitherto ‘work with youth’ principle with ‘youth participation’. The new challenge emerged since no clear definition of ‘youth work’ was available in legal documentation of the newly created amalgamated communities. Youth issues remained at the disposal of the local self-governments for its further development. Funding for youth work is determined by the local self-government bodies in realms of decentralization. An urgent need for youth work professionals, methodologies and recommendations for the development of local infrastructure for youth has emerged.

The Youth Worker Programme tackles most of the newly emerged challenges, related to the roll-out of the decentralization reform. The Programme strives also to change the paternalistic approach to youth development by introducing the best international practices of youth engagement and non-formal learning in Ukraine.

Target groups of the Youth Worker Programme are public servants and leaders and activists from youth NGOs, who work with youth on a daily basis. The format of the programme is the series of educational training sessions, aimed at increasing the professional competence of youth workers. Training is organized in the format ‘50 % of public servants and 50% of the civil society representatives’ of joint learning sessions, aimed at facilitating dialogue and cooperation between the state authorities and NGOs.

Currently, the Youth Worker Programme consists of the three levels of training. Basic one is composed of the modules on the youth policy, youth work in local community, and personal competencies of youth worker. Specialized training is open for the graduates of the basic one. Themes of the specialized training are developed upon the request from the participants. Currently, the ‘Project Management in Youth Work’, ‘Civic Education for Youth Workers’, ‘Inclusion in Youth Centres’, ‘Volunteer Management’, ‘Healthy Lifestyle for Youth’ modules are included in the specialized training courses. Training for Trainers is targeting the youth workers with experience in education and youth work, who are able to conduct training for their peers across Ukraine<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Youth policy in Ukraine, <https://bjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/ukraine>

<sup>46</sup> Youth Worker Programme <http://youth-worker.org.ua/about/>



As a result of active joint advocacy efforts of Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine and UNDP, YWP is included in the Action Plan for Implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement and Concept of Youth Development Strategy 2016-2020, is defined as one of the priorities of the State Programme 'Youth of Ukraine 2016-2020', and is recognized at the state level by Governmental Decree № 4334 'On the Realization of the Youth Worker Programme'.

Since start of the Programme, more than 2400 youth workers from 24 regions of Ukraine have been equipped with innovative tools how to engage young people into civic life, policy- and decision-making at local level, which is essential in view of the roll-out of decentralization reform.

### 3. Presentation and analysis of some aspects across the region

*This part of the paper provides a regional perspective and identifies key commonalities and differences in youth policy most pertinent to youth work and youth workers.*

*Table 1: Overview of the legal frameworks in the youth field*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Law</b>	<b>Strategy/Concept</b>	<b>Action plan/ Programme</b>
Armenia		The Concept of State Youth Policy 2015-2025 of the Republic of Armenia	
Azerbaijan	The law 'On youth policy'	Azerbaijani Youth Development Strategy for 2015-2025	State Programme 'Youth of Azerbaijan in 2017-2021'
Belarus	Law of the Republic of Belarus 'On the Foundations of the State Youth Policy' (adopted in 2016).	'Strategy of Youth Policy Development in the Republic of Belarus up until 2030' (draft) - expected Dec 2019	Law Action Plan
Georgia	The Law Concerning State Support to Children and Youth Unions (22 June 1999); the Law on the Protection of Underage Children from Harmful Influence (28 September 2001).	National Youth Policy Document (2014)	National Youth Policy Action Plan 2015-2020
Moldova	The Law on Youth (adopted in 2016).	The National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020, the Education 2020 Strategy	National Youth Action Plan 2020

Russian Federation	-	Strategy the 'Foundations of State Youth Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025'	Strategy Action Plan
Ukraine	Law on Youth (draft) – expected Dec 2019	The Strategy of Youth Policy in Ukraine 2030	'Youth of Ukraine' 2016-2020 Programme

### *Youth policy legislation and institutional structures*

In order to address youth challenges, the governments need to develop adequate policy responses. Respective countries of the region developed relevant legislation (as presented in Table 1 below) and established governmental authorities (as presented in Table 2) responsible for youth. Still youth policy and youth work related legislation is not evenly developed in the region. Laws on youth exist in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The Youth Law doesn't exist in Armenia and Russia, but the policy area is regulated by the Youth Strategy in Russia and by the Youth Concept in Armenia. In most countries in the region there is either a Strategy or Concept or Document that defines the main directions for developments in the youth field. Moreover, the governments of all countries renewed some of the national legislative documents and in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine youth policies in the Balkans are recognised as an important part of the strategic state development agendas. In all countries in the region there are state programmes or action plans that define the main activities implemented in the youth field.

Thus, legal framework for youth policy and youth work is becoming increasingly powerful and relevant.

As could be noticed from table 2, all of the countries have state structures responsible for youth policy. However, youth policy usually falls under the purview of a larger department (e.g. education, sport, culture, science, research).

*Table 2: Responsible Government Structures*

Armenia	The Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Azerbaijan	The Ministry of Youth and Sport
Belarus	The Ministry of Education
Georgia	Youth Agency (under the PMO)
Moldova	The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research
Russia	The Ministry of Education and Science
Ukraine	The Ministry of Youth and Sports

## *Financial support for youth work*

Across the countries, the *financial support for youth work* mainly comes from the following sources: state budget lines, local governments and international donors (as presented in Table 3).

The national governments allocate certain funds for youth work (mainly through the budget line ‘youth policy’ as in Azerbaijan, Armenia or through the relevant state programmes as in Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine), however, the most common form of financing and the largest funds from the state budget go to project-based activities. The amount of funds allocated vary from one country to another, but youth practitioners state that the youth work sector needs exceed available resources in most cases. Moreover, youth workers claim the procedures for budget money transfer, projects selection and implementation, reports presentation are often bureaucratic, slow and burdensome.

As for the funding provided by the local authorities, it depends greatly on the economic strength of the region and political will of the local authorities’ representatives, which, in turn, leads to uneven spread of recourses within the country and, consequently, differences in youth work development in the urban and rural areas.

Funding from foreign donors is mainly project-based and limited in time. Due to such inadequately developed financial support for youth organisations, youth work activities are mostly short-term project activities and stop when international donors stop financing them. This leads to staff turnover in the youth sector, unpredictability in youth workers employment and affects high-quality youth work development.

Accordingly, sufficient funding is essential for sustainable beneficial changes in the field of youth and for the development of youth work.

*Table 3: Financial Resources Allocation*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Armenia	Approximately 304 mln AMD (600 000 EUR) was allocated to youth policy and youth work from the state budget line ‘Youth policy programmes and events’ in 2018 and 2019.
Azerbaijan	The state budget for youth policy (including youth work) was 10 mln AZN (Azerbaijani manat; approx. 5,35 million EUR) and 7,3 mln AZN (approx. 3,9 mln AZN) in 2019. There is no separate, dedicated local youth policy budget. Out of the above sums 800.000 AZN (428.000 Euro) is provided for maintenance and activities of local (district) youth and sport departments. There are no dedicated youth programmes within the state youth policy framework. The 12 youth centres which are under the Ministry have annual general budget of 1 million AZN (535 000 EUR). This sum is accommodated within state budget for youth policy.

Belarus	<p>In accordance with the Law ‘On Foundations of the State Youth Policy’ (Article 22), funding for the state youth policy (including youth work) comes from the national and (or) local budgets.</p> <p>The state budget for youth policy (including youth work) in 2018 was 30 565 430,8 BLR (which was about 1 274 000 EUR); in 2019 - 33 315 411,4 BLR (which is about 1 385 000 EUR).</p>
Georgia	<p>As the youth policy system in Georgia is undergoing a governance reform, it is difficult to provide specific figures for youth work public funding. In the previous system, where the Ministry of Education covered youth policy and youth work matters, both the planning and implementation (programme/financial) burden of youth interventions came from the ministry’s annual budget. The Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education’s budget has decreased over the last 3 years from 2 million to 500 000 GEL (from 600 000 EUR to 150 000 EUR). In 2017, the project that specifically supported youth work is a ‘youth workers’ certification project’, mentioned above, with a budget of 50 000 GEL (15 000 EUR).</p>
Moldova	<p>The state budget for youth affairs is approximately 1 million EUR per year and has not changed in the last two years. However, this amount does not include programmes for youth that are implemented by the Ministries or related agencies other than the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research.</p> <p>The total budget allocated by second-level LPAs amounted to approx. 600,000 EUR in 2017, representing a slight increase over the 2016 level (+5%). The total amount allocated towards the Grant Program for youth organizations, financed from the state budget, is about 7 million MDL (360 000 EUR)</p>
Russian Federation	<p>Youth work is financed at the federal, local, municipal levels. Many youth work activities are funded from different budget lines. Additionally, dedicated local programmes exist to support youth work, such as ‘Youth of the Chuvash Republic: 2011–2020’ in the Autonomous Republic of Chuvashia; ‘Youth’ in Kaliningrad Region; and ‘Affordable housing for young people’ in Saint Petersburg.</p>
Ukraine	<p>The distribution of budgetary costs is set up in allocation plan of ‘Youth of Ukraine’ 2016–2020 Programme. The total budget planned for the period of the Programme amounts to 501 286 680 UAH (16,7 mln EUR).</p> <p>The total budget of the YWP programme is difficult to estimate due to a range of independent funding sources including the Ministry, UNDP, UNICEF and USAID as well as regional and local authorities, but can be estimated at around 770 000 EUR between 2014 and 2020.</p>

### *Defining youth work*

It is notable from table 4 that the *definitions of the notion of youth work* differ in the countries researched. Only in some of the reviewed countries (e.g. Armenia, Moldova, Russia) youth work (youth worker) is defined by certain political documents. Due to the lack of standardization in Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Ukraine in defining youth work, there are various understandings of what youth work actually is and there's not always a clear distinction between the work done with young people and actual youth work. In other cases the definitions of youth work range from descriptions of what is entailed in youth work and the role of the youth worker (e.g. in Armenia), to being grounded in a clear set of duties or responsibilities.

*Table 4: Definition of youth work*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Armenia	Youth worker is a person who carries out youth work (work with young people, groups of young people, or work which aims to address youth issues) to foster young people's personal, social and educational growth, to develop their full potential and help them to fully establish themselves in society ('Concept of State Youth Policy 2015-2025')
Azerbaijan	-
Belarus	-
Georgia	-
Moldova	According to 'Youth Law', youth work is defined as any action with and for young people, of a social, cultural, educational or civic nature, which is based on non-formal learning processes and voluntary participation of young people, coordinated by a youth worker or a youth work specialist
Russian Federation	Youth work is a 'professional activity, aimed at solving complex tasks for the implementation of youth policy in the areas of labor, law, politics, science and education, culture and sport, communication, healthcare, interaction of state organizations with public institutions, youth and children's public associations, as well as with employers' (Strategy the 'Foundations of State Youth Policy of the Russian Federation for the period up to 2025')
Ukraine	-

### *Standard-setting in youth work*

Standard-setting for youth work plays a crucial role not only for the recognition and establishment of the profession but mainly for the quality of the delivered work. By standards we mean the standards of youth work delivering (code of ethics and quality standards), the professionalisation of youth work providers (educational, occupational standards of a youth worker and its validation), the accreditation of organisations providing youth work and the recognition of competences gained by young people through non-formal youth work programmes. Developing and implementing quality

assurance standards vary across the countries from national occupational and educational standards to evaluation of youth organisations.

However, it is notable that setting quality standards is still an issue in all the countries of the region. Another important point is that the existence of quality assurance in a particular country does not always mean that it is compulsory to comply with it (there are, for example, sociologists, teachers, social workers, etc. who perform youth work, but their formal education has not provided them with an adequate set of competences in the field of youth work). For example, although there are dedicated educational programmes for youth workers in Azerbaijan, Belarus, and the Russian Federation, it's not necessary to take the course in order to work with youth. Still, each country has some strong elements that could be further developed and built into a more coherent national youth work standards setting system.

Exploring the regulation of youth work in terms of quality assurance and competency requirements for youth workers in the countries of the region we have arrived at the following conclusions mentioned below.

In the countries the quality assurance framework has not been supported by the documents at the national level yet; it is mainly organised as internal quality control techniques within the organisations delivering youth work. In Belarus, quality assurance for youth workers is determined by employment agreements between employers and youth workers as well as by local job regulations documents. In Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova the quality assurance frameworks for youth work are currently being developed.

### *Investing in youth workers (education, learning and competences)*

Educational pathways and structures for youth work and youth worker education developed organically and vast differences remain between and even within Eastern European countries in terms of scope, formalisation and quality of education and learning for youth workers.

There is a marked difference in competence frameworks, notably between countries with significant state support and infrastructure for youth work, notably Belarus and the Russian Federation, and to an extent Ukraine, and others. In the Russian Federation, there is an educational standard for bachelor's and master's degree programmes in the Organisation of Youth Work (approved by the Ministry of Education and Science), defining how specialists in youth work should gain a degree in this field. In addition, a professional standard for youth workers is being discussed. In Belarus, a part-time diploma course for 'specialists in youth work' is in operation. Both Belarus and Russian Federation have competence frameworks for 'youth workers' and 'youth work specialists' integrated into their educational legislation.

In Ukraine, whilst no formal educational pathways for youth workers exist, and there is no competence framework to be applied, the role of central government remains substantial, as it supports and partially implements a national 'Youth Worker Programme', in partnership with UNDP

and other donors as well as regional and local authorities, providing short courses for youth workers and youth work specialists throughout regions of Ukraine.

In Azerbaijan, UNICEF assisted in the launch of a youth worker education programme at six state universities, with support and accreditation from state institutions, but as it is in its first year of operation it is not possible to evaluate its impact and sustainability.

In a number of countries on-going reforms of legal and governance systems led to a disruption of existing programmes and delays in preparing new initiatives in the field. The new or currently forming structures declare their interest and support for youth worker education but on-going discussions and consultative processes need to be concluded for further steps to be taken in several countries including Armenia, Georgia and Moldova.

Youth worker learning and competences is a much more diverse environment. In the absence of state provision and clear legal definition of 'youth work' and 'youth workers', many youth workers in Eastern Europe take it upon themselves. There are numerous learning and competence development opportunities in all countries under examination, provided by local actors (NGOs and local authorities) as well as international organisations and donors. Cross-border and online programmes such as MOOCs or mobility programmes (Erasmus+) provide ample opportunity for youth workers to increase their competences and design their own learning curricula.

The absence of quality assurance frameworks for youth work leaves learning and competence development in the hands of youth work providers and youth workers themselves. In Azerbaijan and Georgia, the national quality assurance frameworks for youth work are currently being developed by the ministries in charge of youth policy.

### *Methods and types of youth work*

As youth work remains largely unregulated across all Eastern European countries covered by this paper, there is a great diversity of methods and modes of delivery.

There are several modes of delivery of youth work services by the youth sector, including the more traditional and established methods such as out-of-school education and extra-curricular activities for pupils and students of formal educational structures and programmes. Those are often supported through public funding at local and regional level and organised in a geographical manner as local youth activity centres, 'palaces of youth' and 'houses of culture', often transformed from former Soviet institutions tasked with similar activities.

On the other hand, there is plenty of voluntary and civil society activity in delivering youth work, usually through open youth work approaches, often in an unstructured and spontaneous way in a variety of settings, including NGO offices, youth centres, youth clubs and in third-party spaces such as universities or public institutions. Many voluntary sector initiatives are funded by the organisations delivering services, donors and private funders. International mobility programmes remain hugely popular in Eastern Europe and initiatives conducted through programmes such as the

EU Erasmus+ Youth benefit substantial numbers of young people participating in international youth exchanges.

Finally, a number of Eastern Europe countries develop dedicated spaces for youth work provision including integrated youth centres combining non-formal activities, professional and vocational guidance, support for youth initiatives and provide spaces for young people's ideas and actions.

A number of countries have unique modes of youth work delivery – e.g. in Belarus, youth work specialists in companies and workplaces, and in Ukraine, youth work activities delivered by librarians in local public libraries.

### *Youth infrastructures (youth work services at local and regional level - youth clubs and youth centres with a strong non-formal education component)*

As it is the case with education and learning, the role of the government – in this case, both central and local - looms large, notably with regards to funding and legal provision for youth infrastructures.

Youth work services remain largely unregulated across most Eastern European countries and thus provision of services differs greatly in terms of quality, scope and even rationale.

In the absence of a legal definition of youth work, local actors shape the everyday reality of youth work services and provide them in accordance with needs, interests, local conditions and support available, often considering and influenced by political developments in all the countries in question.

A number of countries rely on systems developed during the pre-independence period, including youth centres and 'culture centres' run by the state.

Non-formal education gains recognition throughout the region as a novel and useful approach to youth work, and although still remains less recognised than formal education at large, all countries have made significant strides in providing more visibility and credit to non-formal initiatives of young people and with young people, including through volunteering and youth work.

In countries with strong state support for youth policy and high prioritisation of youth on the national policy agenda, including Azerbaijan, Belarus and the Russian Federation, substantial financial and infrastructure support is in place for youth work and youth services.

Local and regional authorities are key providers of youth services especially in larger and federal states, where they bear the brunt of service provision and where budgets far exceed those of central authorities.

In smaller countries with a more centralised youth policy system, central and state funding and support to youth infrastructure is crucial and can make up a large majority of youth infrastructure provision.



There is a sustained interest across all countries and stakeholders in developing youth centres as dedicated spaces providing youth work services to youth. Substantial differences emerge at the level of support for the centres and their operation (see methods and types of youth work below).

Standard-setting in youth work is an on-going issue in the region, thus *monitoring and evaluation* of youth work quality is not compulsory due to the absence of the youth work quality frameworks. Still in some cases evaluation is linked to the funding of youth work, implying that organisations providing youth work have to deliver reports and evaluations of their work to the municipality's administration or international donors to justify further funding. Annual reporting to the government by national authorities responsible for youth policy is also a general pattern across the countries. Nevertheless, there is no clear evaluation on how the reports influence youth policy in general and youth work in particular.