

Youth Partnership

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



COUNTRY SHEET ON YOUTH WORK in MONTENEGRO



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1. Context of youth work

In July 2016 the Parliament of Montenegro adopted the first Law on Youth, and that is when Montenegro, for the first time, had a law that ensured the implementation of joint policy in this area. However, in order to improve the planning and implementation of youth policy, by strengthening the institutional framework, empowering youth services in which young people can gain skills and knowledge that contribute to their personal and social development, the Parliament of Montenegro adopted **the new Law on Youth** on April 4th 2019 ("Official Gazette of Montenegro, No. 025/19" from 30.04.2019). In addition to the abovementioned, the current Law specifies methods of constituting youth advisory bodies, at both national and local level, and also the implementation of youth policy by non-governmental organizations, with a focus on their participation in the work of national and local advisory bodies.

Correspondingly, the Government of Montenegro, on proposal of the Ministry of Sports and Youth, adopted the Program on achieving public interest in the field of youth policy for 2020. The Program is a special document recognized within the Law on Youth, which as such serves to carry out the public interest in the field of youth policies.

Public interest in the field of youth policy is to:

- 1) create and improve youth policy;
- 2) establish institutional framework for implementing youth policy;
- 3) create and improve conditions for the work of youth services;
- 4) foster proactive participation of the youth in creation and implementation of youth policy at state and local levels;
- 5) educate the youth on mechanisms of their inclusion in active measures of employment;
- 6) foster inclusion of the youth in the creation of cultural content;
- 7) foster youth mobility;
- 8) foster inclusion of the youth in the informal education;
- 9) promote healthy lifestyles and volunteerism in youth;
- 10) encourage other fields of significance for youth development

For the purpose of defining priorities of public interest of the Program for 2020, the Ministry elaborated the Youth needs assessment (and will do so every year) before drafting the document for the following years.

In line with the first law, the Government of Montenegro adopted the National Youth Strategy 2017-2021 in September 2016. This clearly positioned youth as a matter of interest to Montenegro and through a holistic approach envisaged intersectoral and interdepartmental co-operation of youth policy actors. Youth Strategy 2017-2021 is a document that positions

young people not only as subjects of youth policy, but also as actors responsible for its planning, realisation, monitoring and evaluation.

Both the Law on Youth and the Youth Strategy define youth work. Namely, “Youth work represents activities that are implemented in cooperation with youth and for the youth with a goal of helping them reach independence and transition to adulthood, educational, personal and social development, in line with their needs and abilities, which are based on the methods of non-formal education”. Even though the definition of youth worker is not given in the Law, its explanation is covered by the National Youth Strategy (www.strategijazamlade.me). Yet unfortunately, youth work is not a recognized profession in Montenegro, that is, there is no occupational standard.

On the bright side, Forum MNE in co-operation with the Centre for Vocational Education (Ministry of Education) has completed the process of recognition of the vocation of Youth Activist (on a European level equal to Youth Leader) which will significantly contribute to the professionalization of youth work and enhance youth services at both national and local level. Additionally, it will provide an opportunity for young people who have no university education to be engaged in youth work in a responsible and professional manner. The vocation of Youth Activist was accredited by the Ministry of Education in March 2017, and since then, two generations have attended the programme for attaining vocation of Youth Activist. It consists of three trainings and three months of practice together with three exams, after which all the participants who successfully complete the programme are given the Youth Activist occupation certificate. Both times the programme was financed by the Ministry of Sports and Youth. More information regarding this matter is available upon request at: montenegro@forum-mne.com.

Besides the abovementioned, the standards of the youth activist occupation have also been adopted. Below are listed some of them:

- ensure quality in accordance with the standards in youth work;
- organise youth exchanges, festivals, events, campaigns, youth education camps, educational and entertainment programmes and leading info centres;
- devise and create project proposals in line with international recommendations and charters on the participation of young people in accordance with the needs of the communities in which they work;
- provide support initiatives for young people and children;
- detect, direct and use leadership potential in themselves and other young people and support participation in their communities.

Formerly, the Faculty of Philosophy (University of Montenegro) and NGO Forum MNE were working on establishing Master Studies in Community Youth Work, within the framework of the TEMPUS IV project, Introduction and Implementation of Academic Programme in Community Youth Work (CYW) through Enhancing Inter-regional Cooperation in the Countries of Western Balkans. The memorandum of understanding on the TEMPUS IV project was signed by the former Directorate for Youth and Sports (now Ministry of Sports and Youth) and the project was implemented by Forum MNE and the Faculty of Philosophy. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the whole documentation for MA studies was developed and sent to the university, the programme was not accredited and due to lack of interest from the university the project was finalised without the result.

2. Strategic and legislative framework of youth work

As mentioned in section 1, even though youth work is not yet recognized profession in Montenegro, both Law on Youth and Youth Strategy define youth work as activities that are organized with youth and for youth, and are based on non-formal education, in accordance with their needs and possibilities. Even though the definition of youth worker is not given in the Law, its explanation is covered by the National Youth Strategy 2017-2021: “Youth work is being implemented within extracurricular activities, within youth clubs, centres, institutions, schools, etc., and contributes to the development of young people into aware, responsible and active members of society, who contribute to the development of the community, show initiative and respect diversity. In close collaboration with the families and other professionals, youth work assists in efforts invested in decreasing youth unemployment, dropping out of school, social exclusion and structured leisure time. In order to fill the gap in the system of support to the development of young people and their transition to adulthood, it is highly important to recognize and professionalize youth work itself”

(www.strategijazamlade.me).

“The role of youth work is to provide support to young people during a specific development period of becoming autonomous and their transition to adulthood, as well as to assist their personal and social development, contribute to fulfilment of their potentials, so that young people’s voice could be heard, that they can make an influence and have their place within communities/society. Starting to live on their own has become extremely difficult for young people and they are quite often forced to start their families in multigenerational and quite frequently inadequate residential communities. Young people should be provided with direct support from institutions of the system through concrete and evenly available measures and incentives, which would enable them to start living independently and autonomously” (www.strategijazamlade.me).

3. Recognition

See sections 1. and 2.

4. Funding youth work

From 2012 until 2017 youth work projects were only funded through the annual National Lottery Fund (centralised model of financing). However, by adopting the Law on Youth in July 2016, and a by-law “Rule book on the manner, procedure and criteria for the allocation of funds to youth organisations and control over the implementation of programs and projects” (adopted in April 2017), the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth (now Ministry of Sports and Youth) was finally enabled to financially support the activities for youth which are being implemented by the NGOs in Montenegro. Within the Open Call in 2017, the Ministry of Sports/Directorate for Youth financed 36 youth projects to the total amount of 170 000€ for the implementation of the Youth Strategy (Action Plan 2017). A great number of projects were linked to youth work activities. This was great progress in financing youth work itself, comparing to previous years.

On the bright side, for the year 2018 and 2019 the Government of Montenegro/Ministry of Sports and Youth have allocated more than 700 000€ for youth projects, which is the tripled amount comparing to the year 2017. Through the open calls for the youth organizations/NGOs that implement youth policy approximately 150 projects for young people were supported, where over 20 000 young people were directly involved within the projects. Note: After adopting the Law on Youth (2019), the NGOs are being financed according to the Law on amendments to the Law on non-governmental organizations (“Official Gazette of Montenegro, No 037/17” from 14.06.2017).

Also, since 2014 the Directorate for Youth and Sports (now Ministry of Sports and Youth) has started opening youth services (youth clubs/centres). According to the Law on Youth “youth service is a space designed for the needs of youth with a purpose of implementing youth activities”. It is also a place where NGOs practise youth work-related activities and the place where young people can improve their social skills, non-formal education, leisure time, culture and get information about various topics. Hence, Ministry of Sports and Youth has done an intense work to provide tangible services to young people and therefore opened dozens of youth clubs in municipalities throughout Montenegro, as well as the Youth Centre in Podgorica. In the upcoming period, the intention is to open youth services in every municipality in Montenegro, but also to support the work of the existing ones. As stated by the Law on Youth, the Ministry or the municipality, within their competencies and abilities, shall ensure conditions for work of youth services, and provide the necessary space. Thus, the sustainability of youth services and better implementation of youth policy itself, are being ensured; which was not the case with the previous law.

International sources for youth work activities are of high importance as well. From the beginning, the Ministry of Sports and Youth is nurturing a good cooperation with the international organizations. During the past years a number of joint projects with international partners have been implemented. Some of them are listed below:

-In order to improve the position of young people, the Ministry of Sports and Youth in partnership with the United Nations System in Montenegro, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, as well as many other institutions, organisations and

youth are implementing a joint UN programme for youth empowerment called “Kreativacija” (Creactivation). Within the framework of this programme, the **Youth Innovation Laboratory “Kreaktivator”** was established. The laboratory offers programmes through which young people are supported to create and implement solutions to the problems they face in everyday life. In this way, young people develop their skills in communication, leadership, team work, financial literacy, and through their experience of contributing to their communities, they have the opportunity to look at their potential and develop self-confidence and responsibility, which are certainly the skills they will use in seeking employment, but also in work itself. Laboratory programmes are based on modern work methods such as human centred design/design thinking. More information at: www.kreaktivator.me.

-Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) is an independently functioning institutional mechanism, founded by the Western Balkans 6 participants (WB 6): Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region through youth exchange programs. Since the establishment of RYCO in 2016, there have been three public calls for proposals aimed at contributing to the reconciliation process in the Western Balkans region. Each year, different priority areas are funded, from intercultural dialogue, active participation, social inclusion, regional cooperation, mobility, exchanges, etc. So far, over 2 million € have been allocated for the projects implemented by the civil society organizations and high schools. More at www.rycowb.org , and upon request to Local Branch Office of RYCO (edin.koljenovic@rycowb.org)

- Furthermore, the partner in many activities in the field of youth policy and creating better conditions for young people in Montenegro has been the OSCE Mission to Montenegro. It has been a partner in the projects in the field of human rights protection, drafting legislation, strategic planning, local governments’ capacity building, strengthening cooperation within the region of Western Balkans, encouraging youth mobility, strengthening activism and youth participation in the decision-making process, and nonetheless youth work.

Also, very important international funding sources for youth work are Erasmus+ and the European Youth Foundation, thus numerous NGOs in Montenegro use those sources to apply for the funds.

5. Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision

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

The Law on Youth states that youth policy is implemented by:

- the Government of Montenegro;
- state administration body in charge of youth policy
- state administration bodies and other administrative bodies in charge of certain fields of significance for the youth,
- municipalities, the Capital City, the Royal City and municipality within the Capital City;
- non-governmental organizations that implement youth policy
- and other legal entities.

At national level, the most important institution in the domain of youth policy is the Ministry of Sports and Youth (Directorate for Youth). It performs the tasks related to:

- improvement and implementation of the national policy, strategy and action plans and programmes for youth;
- co-operation with youth organisations and associations regarding organisation of international youth manifestations and events in Montenegro;
- assistance and co-operation with youth organisations and associations and their promotion;
- enabling youth organisations and associations from Montenegro to participate at international youth manifestations;
- stimulation and achievement of international co-operation regarding youth;
- stimulation of development of youth policy and work.

Other state bodies that participate in the creation and implementation of youth policy at national level are the ministries, directorates, agencies and other institutions. Bodies competent for specific areas of youth policy are obliged to co-operate in the implementation of youth policy and appoint the contact person for youth. Therefore, in 2017, the Ministry of Sports and Youth established a Coordination Inter-sectorial Body for monitoring the implementation of the National Youth Strategy, whose members are representatives of all ministries that are recognized as actors who implement activities for youth. They regularly report on the activities of their ministries related to the Action Plan of the Youth Strategy, suggest possible inter-sectorial projects and give recommendations on the strategic documents in the field of youth.

Structures dealing with youth within the local self-governments are secretariats, local youth offices and local councils for youth. According to the Law on Youth, all local self-governances are obliged to submit to the Ministry of Sports and Youth the local youth action plans which contain measures and activities of youth policy at the local level based on the youth needs in their local community. In addition to this, they have to submit annual reports on implementation of the local action plan as well.

5.2 National or local youth councils

There is a legal framework for establishment of the national and local councils for Youth in Montenegro. According to the Law on Youth (Article 16) “For the purpose of fostering development of youth policy, the Ministry (Ministry of Sports and Youth) shall establish the Council for Youth, an expert and advisory body”. However, the process of establishing the abovementioned body is still in progress in Montenegro.

The Law stipulates that National Council for Youth shall have a president and eight members. The president and three members are proposed by the Ministry, and state administration bodies in charge of labour affairs and education affairs shall propose a member each. They shall be appointed for a period of four years. One member of the Council for Youth is a representative of legal persons who govern youth services, and is elected for a period of one year via a public call published by the Ministry. Representative association of NGOs that implement youth policy¹ shall propose two members of the Council for Youth, of which at least one is a young person, and they will be appointed for the period of one year. If a Representative association of NGOs that implement youth policy has not been established, two members of the Council for Youth, of which at least one is a young person, shall be proposed by the NGOs that implement youth policy, for the period of one year. Members of the Council for Youth that are proposed by the NGOs that implement youth policy are persons who have the support of the majority of those NGOs, and they shall be selected via a public call published by the Ministry. Correspondingly, further conditions, manner and procedure of selection of members of the Youth Council that are proposed by the representative association of NGOs that implement youth policy and member of the Council who is a representative of legal entities that govern youth services shall be prescribed by the Ministry via bylaws.

The competences of the Council for Youth are to give proposals for improvement of youth policy; give suggestions in the procedure of the Strategy implementation; delegate its member for participation in the procedure of elaboration of a law in the field that is of importance for the youth; monitor the position of the youth and suggest measures for its improvement; give opinion on other matters of importance for the youth etc.

¹ The Representative association of NGOs that implement youth is an alliance that consists of several and 30 at least NGOs that implement youth policy, from at least six municipalities, of which coastal, central and northern municipalities are represented by two members, as determined by the law that governs regional development.

Local Council for Youth

For the purpose of fostering and improving youth policy, strengthening cooperation and improving position of the youth at the local level, the municipality may establish a local council for youth, as an expert and advisory body.

Local council for youth shall consist of representatives of municipality bodies in charge of youth policy and NGOs that implement youth policy. The representative of NGOs that implement youth policy is a person that has the support of the majority of NGOs and is selected via a public call.

5.3 Youth and youth work NGOs

Non-governmental organization may implement youth policy according to the Law on Youth if in its statute it cites activities of youth policy as one of the objectives or fields of its function. NGOs can also establish the Association of NGOs or organizations that implement youth policy. The Law specifies that the Representative association is an alliance that consists of several and 30 at least NGOs that implement youth policy, from at least six municipalities, of which coastal, central and northern municipalities are represented by two members, as determined by the law that governs regional development.

The Ministry defines the representativeness of the association for a period of one year by issuing a certificate of representativeness.

However, the civil sector in the area of working with youth is much broader than what can be seen, therefore it is difficult to give the precise number of youth and youth work NGOs in Montenegro. Still, a great number of the NGOs in general implement youth work activities (some of them are: Forum MNE, PRIMA, ADP ZID, Centar za omladinsku edukaciju, CAZAS, Juventas, Centar za mlade-Proactive, Da zaživi selo, Udruženje mladih sa hendikepom Crne Gore, Aktivna zona, Inicijativa mladih za ljudska prava, Mladiinfo Montenegro, Crnogorski omladinski forum, Građanski kreativni centar, Unija mladih srednjoškolaca, Novi horizont, youth clubs/centres, and many others).

5.4 Other relevant actors

-International organizations (EU office to Montenegro, OSCE Mission to Montenegro, UN System, etc),

-international foundations (The European Youth Foundation, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Robert Schuman Foundation, the Robert Bosch Foundation, etc),

-Regional Youth Cooperation Office,

-European Youth Card Association, etc.

6. Forms and examples of youth work in your country

Youth work in Montenegro is youth center-based, detached or outreach youth work, open youth work, etc. The main providers of youth work in Montenegro are NGOs with financial support from the Government and local authorities.

Within the several open calls for NGOs since 2017, the Ministry of Sports and Youth has allocated more than 800 000 € to projects for young people. A great number of projects were linked to youth work activities.

Also, Youth services (youth clubs and youth centers) are one of the key infrastructural mechanisms for practicing youth work and improving youth participation, their networking and the development of life skills and non-formal education. In the upcoming period, the intention is to open youth services in every municipality in Montenegro, and also to support the work of the existing ones, thus enabling, inter alia, less complicated performing of youth work.

7. Quality standards

Having in mind the fact that youth work is not a recognized profession in Montenegro, that is, there is no occupational standard, it is hard to set competence frameworks or quality standards guiding youth workers and youth work activities. As for now, it is up to youth workers themselves to practice youth work professionally and responsibly.

8. Knowledge and data on youth work

Unfortunately, not many studies or research on youth work have been done in Montenegro. In 2007, Forum MNE conducted a study “Omladinski rad u Crnoj Gori” (Youth Work in Montenegro): <http://bit.ly/2pQMq6m> .

Considering the fact that no recent studies have been conducted, there are no data available.

European and international dimension of youth work in the country

As mentioned earlier, youth work is not a recognised profession in Montenegro, that is, there is no occupational standard, thus, there are no formal national recommendations, besides the definition and brief explanation of youth work within the Law on Youth and National Youth Strategy 2017-2021. However, the Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work, and relevant EU Council Conclusions are available to NGOs in Montenegro, and those whose scope of work is mainly related to youth work implement them.

Current debates and open questions/policies on youth work

Currently, there remains the open question of acknowledging youth work profession in Montenegro. Hopefully, in the near future, this obstacle will be overcome.