Youth Partnership

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

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Good practice examples on cooperation between youth policy, practice, research and young people

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Introduction

This paper explores good practice examples on cooperation between youth policy, practice, research and young people. It details current practice in Europe related to youth policy, research and practice. It highlights the various theoretical models of cooperation: linear, relationships and systems models. It also explores examples of these three models in practice taken from a survey of researchers and youth organisations in Europe disseminated through the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership.

Youth Partnership – improving the golden triangle

The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership activities are an excellent example of how researchers, policy makers, youth workers, and young people can connect in order to jointly find the best solutions for youth at the European level. Since its establishment, this programme aims to connect and coordinate the work of various actors at the European level, but also to offer support to the national, regional and local networks. Annual meetings of the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR), as well as joint meetings with the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) national correspondents represent unique opportunities for regular communication between researchers and youth policy makers.

The EU-Council of Europe youth partnership portal contains a database of current PEYR researchers, database of experts, as well as all EKCYP correspondents who use the portal to present their expertise on the national and international level. Activities include regular communication between researchers, policy makers, and youth workers, the most important being: the European Platform on Learning Mobility (EPLM) as an exchange and collaboration network that deals with different areas of learning mobility (non-formal, informal, formal). PEYR researchers attend EPLM annual meetings, whose research (such as the Handbook on Quality in Learning Mobility) contributes to the advancement of EPLM goals and practices.

Researchers are especially involved in shedding light on the history and current state of youth work in Europe. Together with EKCYP, this network contributes to the Youth Wiki with chapters on the non-programme countries. Part of the Knowledge Centre projects is the Expert Group on Researching Education and Career Paths of Youth Workers, the aim of which is to explore and improve the legal framework, education and training of youth workers, to ensure monitoring of the quality of work, to promote creating associations, and to enable the professionalisation of the practice. During 2018, 2019 and 2020, several initiatives were launched to improve the existing networks of the abovementioned actors.

In 2018, the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership launched a series of reflections on the state of youth research and knowledge in different countries at national, regional and European levels.

PEYR and EKCYP members met three times:

- In 2018 in Moldova at the [Seminar on Strengthening Investment in Youth Research in EECA](#), where the goal was to shed light on the state of youth research informing policy making, and on the improvement of youth work in EECA.
- In 2019, the gathering was organised in Serbia at the [Regional Youth Knowledge Forum on Youth Research in South-East Europe](#), where the focus was on the SEE region, as well as the need to work on the "knowledge translation" with the aim of ensuring productive cooperation between all relevant stakeholders.
- In 2020, an online event was organised: [Youth Knowledge Forum](#), where several activities of researchers were presented, who are working on improving the research aimed at informed policy making and improved performance of youth workers.

Several activities were specifically designed for these purposes. In the report [Being "The researchers" in a political participatory environment](#), the authors involved in the 6th and 7th cycle of EU Youth Dialogue presented the experiences of researchers who participated in a highly political process in order to recognise the role of researchers in this process. In addition to this study, in order to shed light on the various actors who collect, analyse and publish data and analyses on youth, a report was produced entitled [Mapping National Youth Knowledge Structures and Actors](#).

[Youth Knowledge Forum](#) 2020 aimed to examine the state of youth research in Europe on the local, regional and international level, to map the key actors in collecting and using youth-related data, to acknowledge the gaps in knowledge, to collect data on all relevant research and youth-related data sources, to analyse how research contributes to youth work, youth policy and youth organisations, to share good practice examples, as well as to anticipate which research and data sources will be relevant in the future.

Research, Policy and Practice

The question of the relationship between youth research, youth workers, and youth policy can be observed on two levels. The first level refers to the issue of resources and infrastructure available to all actors. The second level refers to the forms of cooperation that have been established between

these actors and that may have different relationships depending on the needs, as well as the institutional and organisational culture of all parties involved.

First, there are actors at different levels, from local to national and international. As we go from the local to the international level, the number of actors as well as the complexity increases. Thus, national and international associations and networks appear among practitioners. National, regional and EU institutions appear at the level of policy making. Researchers are most often connected at the national and international level through academic and research networks.

Actors and levels

Levels	Actors		
	Young people and Organisations	Institutions	Research
Local	Young people / Youth workers / NGOs /	Local stakeholders (Municipality, School, Police, etc.)	Researchers (wide range - individuals, researchers, academics, etc.)
National	Young people / Youth workers / NGOs / Associations	National stakeholders (Government, Ministry, special agencies, etc.)	Researchers, research networks, and research infrastructures
International	Young people / Youth workers / NGOs / Associations / International networks	International stakeholders (EU, CoE, EU-Council of Europe youth partnership)	Researchers, international research networks, international research infrastructures

The key actors among the research infrastructure identified so far in the youth field are:

a. *Youth researchers* (from different fields). In many countries, youth researchers collaborate through research projects, professional associations, and teaching activities. This cooperation can be more or less developed. If there is no institutionalised form of cooperation, the relationship with other actors (youth workers and policymakers) occurs occasionally and through individual arrangements. Research in these cases is most often guided by academic goals.

b. *Networks of researchers* with an institutional foothold, such as the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership at the European level, within certain countries or regions, there are networks of

researchers that involve regular communication, exchange, and joint cooperation on academic and policy-oriented projects.

c. **Scientific and research institutes** dealing with young people. The higher level of institutional and organisational support for research consists of research institutes that have young people as their subject of study. Some of them deal exclusively with young people, some deal with some special aspect of young people's lives (for example health), and in some countries departments dealing with young people stand out within larger institutes. The institutional framework of such institutes can be a separate legal entity, but it can also be a university. Given that there is a research infrastructure in one place, a sufficient number of researchers, regular communication and cooperation with other stakeholders is more certain.

d. **Civil society organisations** that collect data and conduct research on youth. For the needs of their projects or regular activities, civil society organisations often conduct research, collect and analyse data, with the aim of acquiring knowledge about youth behaviour, improving youth work, and drafting policy proposals.

e. **University departments** that train youth workers and youth researchers. Although not directly in the function of research, the existence of university programmes that educate future youth workers usually include the development of competencies for the use of available data, the development of research and analyses that are relevant to both youth work and policy recommendations.

f. **Statistical Offices.** Most often, the Statistical Offices collect and display basic youth-related indicators, which are used by institutions to monitor basic trends. In some countries, there is regular reporting on the situation of young people, in some periodical, while in others there is no reporting.

g. **Research departments of ministries, national parliaments research units, or special departments in charge of youth.** The ministry in charge of youth can have its own analytical and/or research department. It usually aims to monitor regular indicators, but also to work with other researchers to develop policy recommendations. However, other ministries within their research units could cover some of the aspects of youth (e.g. health, risk behaviour, education).

h. **Public and private companies**, as well as research agencies.

The relationships between these different infrastructures may have a greater or lesser degree of cooperation and integration and may vary from establishing cooperation only for a specific purpose, to carrying out consultations between key stakeholders occasionally, periodically, or even continuously.

The Relationship between Research and Practice - a Theoretical Approach

Today, linking research and practice has become one of the basic postulates of both policy-making and a new direction that is important for science (including social sciences). Although there are debates about how this knowledge should be linked in order to achieve the goal, there is no doubt that the policy should be "based on" or "informed by" the data that is collected and analysed in a methodologically correct way. This exchange process has been described in several publications, so the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches have been tested both theoretically and in practice.

An approach that has recently gained more attention is Knowledge to Action (KAT), which emerged as a process of synthesis of various theoretical and practical knowledge and was shaped by Graham et al. (2006).

This model is further elaborated by Best of Holmes (2010) suggesting that different forms of relationship between theory and practice, i.e. researchers, practitioners, and policymakers can be useful depending on the needs, goals, and resources available to actors. Thus he defines three interaction models:

1. Linear model
2. Relationship model, and
3. Systems model.

The first, **linear model,** represents a conventional approach to the relationship between knowledge and practice. It involves a one-way process in which researchers pose a problem, choose a method, and conduct research and analysis. The result is available to practitioners who can/should take it into account when implementing new interventions. But although this model is largely the subject of criticism (mainly because of its dominance), it can be useful in certain circumstances. When dissemination and results are enabled and easily accessible, when there is a good institutional structure that supports the process of knowledge application, and when there is a culture and support for practitioners to change their ways of working (Best, Holmes, 2010: 147).

For example, the research results of a *national panel of youth research*, which periodically provide significant insights into the educational, work, housing, family, and political transitions of young people, are an excellent source of knowledge that policymakers and practitioners can directly access and use to design policies and measures.

The second, **relationship model,** already establishes a dialogue between the actors. Here, the key is in the production of knowledge that does not belong only to researchers, but all interested actors participate in its creation, such as young people, youth workers, policymakers, researchers, and others. This model is a good choice when it is necessary to take into account the local context and knowledge, and when there are conditions (resources) for research and structures that enable two-way communication (Best, Holmes, 2010). The model implies that there is a recognised need for collaboration between researchers and practitioners in order to achieve a common goal and linkage mechanisms that enable collaboration (Vingilis et al., 2018). For example, joint effort of practitioners, researchers and policy makers to tackle the challenge that unemployed youth face in distant village areas. Their efforts will go in the direction of understanding the challenges (through co-creation of knowledge), policy measures and specific interventions.

The third, **system model**, implies the existence of all aspects of the previous ones, yet the actors are connected in a more or less solid and organised system. The basic assumptions of the system are that it is dynamic, adaptive, that within the system there are subsystems that harmonise with each other, and that a change in some part of the system affects other parts (Best, Holmes, 2010: 148). Graham and Tetroe (2010) propose a system model that connects two processes: knowledge creation and action circle. These two processes run simultaneously and imply a constant interaction between the production and use of knowledge. The example of such system is a set of activities organized around the Youth board established and maintained by all relevant stakeholders (policy makers, practitioners, and researchers). The mandate the board is usually to propose, create, implement, monitor and evaluate different programmes in the youth field.

Knowledge creation is formed in three phases:
1. testing/research,
2. knowledge synthesis,
3. creating products or various useful tools.

The first phase involves the creation of knowledge based on focused research, which in the social sciences can involve not only researchers but all relevant actors from the outset. This phase begins with setting relevant problems to be solved and they can be theory-driven or based on practical problems that need to be solved. In the first case, it is pure academic knowledge that can subsequently be used for practical purposes, but which was not primarily created for that purpose.

In the second case, this cycle begins with consultations between researchers, practitioners, and/or policymakers and other stakeholders with the aim of identifying problems, setting hypotheses and/or research questions, and creating methodologies and research. The results of this process are

published and a synthesis can emerge. For example, published interesting results of the effects of learning mobility on the development of competencies that can be part of academic articles and books or evaluation reports on learning mobility projects written by youth workers. Such research results, conclusions, and the theorems that emerge from them are the basis for the next phase, synthesis, in which all such knowledge is evaluated, compared, and connected with the goal of obtaining synthetic knowledge in a field. Thus, different research results on young people who were part of the learning mobility programme may show that there are strong or moderate effects, but also that there are no effects on the development of competencies at all.

At this stage, the results are evaluated (especially methodologies) and decisions made whether or not there is a connection between the two phenomena, what affects them (personal characteristics, organisational support or social and cultural context) and in which direction further research should take. If several research studies or evaluations show that young people who are part of learning mobility programmes develop language, organisational or social competences, then such programmes justify their existence. If, for example, it is observed that the effects are greater where there is adequate preparation, local support, and peer learning process, then it is justified to think in the direction of implementing such knowledge, i.e. creating certain tools that can strengthen the connection in a way deemed desirable. This third phase again goes beyond the knowledge and competencies of researchers and requires co-creation with practitioners who have a better sense of the applicability of certain tools.

Figure 1. Knowledge to action process
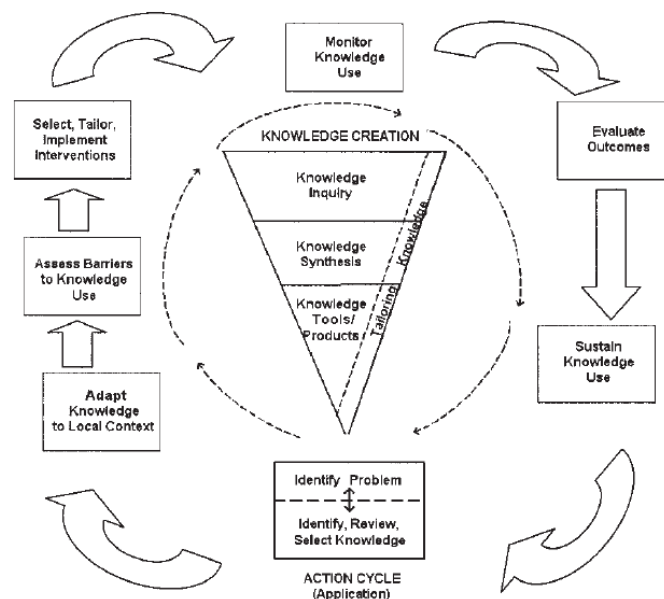
Source: Graham et al., 2006:19

The action cycle begins, as does the creation of knowledge itself, with the identification of the problem. Here, too, it is necessary to evaluate and revise existing knowledge, consult with key actors to identify key issues to be addressed, identify the need for change, identify change agents, or those who will initiate and bring about change, and clearly identify the target population of the change. In the second phase, it is necessary to adapt the knowledge to the local context, having in mind the social and cultural characteristics of the area, but also the specifics of the users. In the third phase, it is important to identify all potential constraints and support structures for the implementation of knowledge. The key phase includes selection, tailoring, and implementation of the intervention. At this stage, it is very important to choose the most optimal methods, tools, and forms of intervention in relation to the set goal. Researchers in collaboration with practitioners should connect the actors who will implement the programme in the most optimal way, anticipating all potential problems during the process.

At this stage, it is important to report on pilot testing and carry through the implementation based on the results. The next phase includes monitoring the use of knowledge, which accompanies the knowledge application evaluation plan, while a separate phase is dedicated to the evaluation of the implementation process and the evaluation of outcomes. The last phase of the process includes a dynamic process between the obtained results and existing knowledge and the adaptation of existing knowledge in light of new findings, as well as the process of dissemination of the results of the whole process (Graham, Tetroe, 2010: 211-215).

Operationalisation of relationships between actors

Having in mind the listed features of different models of the relationship between research, practice, and policy processes, when presenting examples of good practices, we will use the three models presented above. The examples highlighted are taken from a survey of researchers and youth organisations in Europe disseminated through the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership.

Linear model

A **linear mode**l is where researchers produce data and policy makers use it. One example of a linear model cited in the survey was Youth Wiki. Youth Wiki is an online platform run by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), who manage programmes on behalf of the European Commission that presents information on European countries' youth policies. The platform provides comparable information by country and by theme.

Themes covered by Youth Wiki include:

- Chapter 1: Youth Policy Governance

Information for Youth Wiki is provided and annually updated by National Correspondents, who are usually youth researchers designated by the governments of each participating country.

The main source of information for Youth Wiki are official documents originating from national top-level authorities in the youth field, i.e. the authorities with responsibility for youth policy in each country. Information also provided in Youth Wiki includes studies, surveys, analyses or assessments/evaluations conducted directly by public authorities or commissioned to research centres, experts and think-tanks.

Youth Wiki has also developed interactive maps to illustrate the main policies and programmes for young people across Europe. Interactive maps are based on information from each countries' pages and are accompanied by short comparative reviews on the main trends across these countries.

Another example of a **linear model** is the [RAY Network Fact Sheets](#). RAY stands for Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of European Youth Programmes. The main aim of the RAY Network is to produce reliable evidence to better understand processes and outcomes in youth work and non-formal education.

The Ray Network is an open and self-governed European research network. There are currently, 36 National Agencies of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action & European Solidarity Corps programmes and their research partners are involved. The key actors who are engaged with the RAY Network Fact Sheets are researchers, project participants, policy makers and decision-makers.

According to the RAY Network, 90% of project participants agree or strongly agree they learned something they intend to use in their youth work and 85% agree or strongly agree that they have learned more about how to actively involve young people in youth work as part of their involvement in the network.

The following fact sheets have been developed by the RAY Network:

- [The programme objectives of Erasmus+ Youth in Action](): RAY research shows that Erasmus+ Youth in Action is successful in achieving its objectives and contributes substantively to making the most of youth policy's potential.

- [Positive effects on key competences for lifelong learning](): RAY research shows that Erasmus+ Youth in Action is successful in strengthening the key competences for life-long learning of young people and giving them opportunities to thrive.

- [Positive effects on personal development and further pathways](): RAY research shows that Erasmus+ Youth in Action is successful in strengthening the development of young people and contributes to enabling young people to be architects of their own lives.

- [Positive effects on youth participation & active citizenship](): RAY research shows that Erasmus+ Youth in Action is successful in promoting active citizenship and strengthening the participation of young people.

- [Erasmus+ Youth in Action: a crucial space for quality youth work](): RAY research shows that Erasmus+ Youth in Action is successful in fostering quality youth work and provides young people with opportunities they need to thrive.

- [Erasmus+ Youth in Action: an essential tool for the youth sector](): RAY research shows that Erasmus+ Youth in Action is successful in strengthening the youth sector and contributes to supporting youth networks, organisations and structures.

Finally, the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership [European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP)]() is another example of a **linear model**. The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) is an on-line database intended to provide the youth sector with a single access point to reliable knowledge and information about young people's situation across Europe. EKCYP aims at enhancing knowledge transfers between the fields of research, policy and practice through the collection and dissemination of information about youth policy, research and practice in Europe and beyond. EKCYP is linked with a network of national correspondents who are youth policy specialists responsible for collecting national data. The key feature of EKCYP are information on countries, youth policy topics, a library, good practices and a glossary.

EKCYP country information provides knowledge about youth policy and young people's situation in participating member states in the form of:

- Country sheets providing information about the structure and development of national youth policies in participating member states.

- Thematic information for each country about key youth policy topics as defined by the Council of Europe and European Union.

Youth policy topics provides knowledge on key themes of relevance to young people in Europe. These themes are identified as crucial to empowering young people and creating favourable conditions for them to develop their skills, work and play an active part in society. The information is provided in English, French and German. Most topics are dealt with in the form of a policy framework accompanied by related documents. In addition, material is provided in respect of each topic relating to activities organised within the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership.

The EKYCP library provides more detailed information about young people and a searchable database provides documents relating to research, policy and practice. The EKYCP database is an information pool that collects information about successful projects, initiatives, and organisations in the field of youth policy at local, regional, and national level. The good practice database provides an opportunity for administrations on different levels to share successful youth policy; practice and learn from the knowledge shared by their counterparts from all around the world.

Lastly, the EKCYP Glossary defines key terms relating to European youth policy and youth work. The list of topics and terms are updated regularly, in line with changes in youth policy and inputs from experts cooperating with the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership and EKCYP users.

Relationship model

A relationship model is where researchers and policy makers collaborate. An example **of a relationship model** identified in the survey was the [Finnish Youth Research Society](#).

The Finnish Youth Research Society is an NGO funded by the Ministry of Culture and Education in Finland as well as international providers of research funding, the Academy of Finland, foundations, organisations and municipalities, etc.
The Finnish Youth Research Society carries out research activities through the Finnish Youth Research Network which was established in 1999. The Finnish Youth Research Network produces multidisciplinary research data and participates in discussion in society, offering perspectives on practical work with young people in the fields of administration and politics.
Cooperation is carried out with universities, universities of applied sciences, research institutes, organisations, scientific societies and many other partners. The organisational model of the Finnish

Youth Research Society and the Finnish Youth Research Network as a scientific association is in many ways unique.

The structure of the Finnish Youth Research Society is considered to be 'a hybrid'. It provides 'youth politically sensitive youth research' meaning that although the research follows objectivity ideals of social sciences, the research topics are relevant to Finnish youth policy. This structure unites different youth researchers geographically and enables youth researchers working in different academic disciplines to come together.

The network structure means that Finnish Youth Research Society is able to respond to the changing scientific/societal conditions in a flexible manner. It also means that Finnish youth research is not a property of a certain university or a certain academic discipline.

Research conducted by the Finnish Youth Research Society includes:

- [Graffiti subculture - Gender, control and post-zero tolerance in Helsinki (2015–2019)](#)
- [A life of waiting - agency and social empowerment of asylum seekers arriving as minors in Finland in the 2010s](#)
- [Breaking down the barriers: Reasons for young people's educational choices and ways of reducing gender segregation in educational and occupational fields (2017–2019)](#)

Another example of a **relationship model** is the Luxembourg approach to evidence-based youth policy. The Youth Department of the [Ministry of Education, Children and Youth](#) is responsible for youth policy in Luxembourg. Since 2007, the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth has had a cooperation agreement on youth research with [The Centre for Childhood and Youth Research](#) in the University of Luxembourg. The Centre for Childhood and Youth Research (CCY) comprises 3 professorships and 25 researchers with expertise in sociology, educational sciences, pedagogy, psychology, economics, and methodology. This cooperation agreement involves continuous exchange between research and policy, e.g. through a steering group. There is also long-term funding and work plans in place between The University of Luxembourg and the Ministry of Children, Children and Youth.

A Youth Report on the situation of young people is produced every five years by the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth and presented to the parliament. This report is defined by law and is evidenced based. The University of Luxembourg is responsible for the preparation of this report. The Youth Report is a scientific report written by researchers as opposed to an administrative report prepared by government departments. Data used to compile the Youth Report includes secondary data and government statistics as well as survey data and qualitative data

from young people and experts produced by the University of Luxembourg. The aim of including survey and qualitative research data gathered by the University of Luxembourg is to include the subjective opinions of young people on the situation of youth rather than just government statistics. The Youth Report also identifies the main challenges for youth policy.

The Youth Report delivers important evidence for the development of the [Youth Pact](). The Youth Pact defines the main policy themes of the national youth policy in Luxembourg. Following the presentation of the Youth Report to parliament, the Youth Pact is drafted by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth. This is followed by consultations with key policy and youth representative stakeholders, e.g. interdepartmental committee on youth, Higher Youth Council, National Youth Council and the Youth Parliament. Recommendations from these consultations feed into the Youth Pact before it is published.

Systems Model

A **systems model** is where researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders collaborate. An example of a system model highlighted in the survey was [EU Youth Dialogue](). Youth Dialogue is an instrument to ensure the opinion of young people is taken into account in youth policies of the European Union. Youth Dialogue is organised in 18 month cycles and follows the EU Presidency trios. Each cycle focuses on a different thematic priority which is set by the Council of Youth Ministers.

The aim of EU Youth Dialogue is to involve young people and youth organisations, policy and decision makers, experts, researchers and other relevant civil society actors in a continuous joint reflection and consultation on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the field of youth.

EU Youth Dialogue builds on the achievements of past dialogue processes, with the aim of including more decision-makers and young people, especially those with fewer opportunities in decision-making processes and in the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy.

The EU Youth Dialogue objectives are to:
- encourage the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe in line with article 165 TFEU;
- promote equal participation between young women and men;
- include diverse voices and to ensure openness to all young people to contribute to policy - shaping;
- bring about positive change in youth policy at local, regional, national and European level;

- strengthen young peoples' citizenship competencies and sense of belonging to the society and the European Union.

Since 2018, researchers from the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership - Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) have supported the EU Youth Dialogue process. Research support provided by PEYR researchers include:

- Involvement in the preparatory process for the EU Youth Dialogue
- Support in designing the overall methodological approach for the EU Youth Dialogue to ensure it is evidence-based
- Development of consultation questions for the EU Youth Dialogue
- Development of a toolkit with methods and approaches for the EU Youth Dialogue consultation process based on good practices
- Participation in EU Youth Conferences, from which inputs and content are incorporated into the EU Youth Dialogue process.

Key stakeholders cooperating on the EU Youth Dialogue process include:

- Researchers from the Pool of European Youth Researchers
- Trio of EU Presidencies
- EU Youth Dialogue National Working Groups
- European Youth Forum

Another example of a **systems model** is [Hub na nÓg](#) (Youth Hub) in Ireland. Hub na nÓg is a national centre of excellence and coordination on giving children and young people a voice in decision-making in Ireland. This model has the added feature of having a sustainable institution involved in the process.

Hub na nÓg was established by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in Ireland to support implementation of the Irish [National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making](#) (2015 - 2020). The Hub regularly works with Government Departments and State agencies to collaborate in conducting consultations, surveys and dialogues with children and young people on a wide range of policy, practice and legislative initiatives.
Hub na nÓg and their Participation Support Team works with the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in leading on the planning and conducting of these consultations and dialogues with children and young people.
The Hub also established a panel of youth researchers who received training on best practice in child and youth participation in decision-making. The Hub regularly works in collaboration with youth researchers who help design, facilitate, analyse the findings of research consultations and provide

recommendations. These findings and recommendations are then used by government departments and state agencies to change/influence policies, practices and legislation.

Examples of research conducted through Hub na nÓg include:

- *Consultations with Children and Young People on Teacher Supply* (2020) on behalf of the Teaching Council, the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
- *Consultations with Young People engaged in Garda (Police) Youth Diversion Projects* (2018) on behalf of the Irish Youth Justice Service and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
- *Consultations with Children and Young People on Adoption Regulations (2018)* on behalf of The Adoption Authority of Ireland and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.
- *Consultations with Young People concerning Harmful Internet Communications including Cyber Bullying* (2016) on behalf of The Law Reform Commission and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs
- *Consultations with Young People on the Development of the National Youth Strategy* (2015) on behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Guidelines for cooperation between research, policy and practice

From reviewing the literature and examples of good practice, the following factors are important in cooperation between research, policy and practice:

- Competent researchers, policy makers and practitioners
- The relationship between actors, e.g. positive interpersonal relationships, mutual respect, trust, soft skills
- Co-creation between researchers, policy makers and practitioners
- Processes that are transparent, democratic and allow for dialogue
- Open communication between actors
- Valuing and commitment to cooperation from all actors
- Understanding and commitment to common goals
- Understanding of opportunities and boundaries each actor brings to the process
- Committed policy makers to resource, support and improve practice
- Research recommendations that are evidence-based, practical and possible to implement
- Knowledge transfer, e.g. dissemination of research findings in a user-friendly way
  Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of cooperation between research, policy and practice

Proposed mechanisms:

The following mechanisms are good practice in cooperation between youth policy, practice and research:

- Development of a database of researchers

Creating a national, regional, and local database of youth researchers. After preliminary mapping of who is who in the youth sector, it is very useful to create a platform with all researchers with their research experience, fields of expertise, research methodology, level of work (local, national, international), experience in practical work with young people, and experience in creating practical policies. This database should be public and accessible to all actors in the youth sector. A good example on European level is the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership resources database, including EKCYP correspondents, PEYR researchers and other youth field experts.

- Establishment of panels of researchers

The establishment of a panel of researchers at the national level is another mechanism of good practice between youth policy, practice and research. Panels can be comprised of researchers from different backgrounds such as universities, research departments in government ministries and public institutions and independent youth researchers. Research panels usually have an application process for which researchers must qualify first. Research panels usually have a mandate of 3 – 5 years. Researchers are then part of a panel who are invited to tender to conduct research in the field of youth by the contracting organisation. Research panels are often established by government departments responsible for youth policy or other public institutions. Research panels provide an opportunity for researchers to meet on a regular basis, e.g. annual meetings. Research panels can also provide opportunities for researchers to participate in training on good practice in youth policy, practice and research. Membership of research panels is free and usually publicly funded.

The scheme of the system model is shown in the graph below:
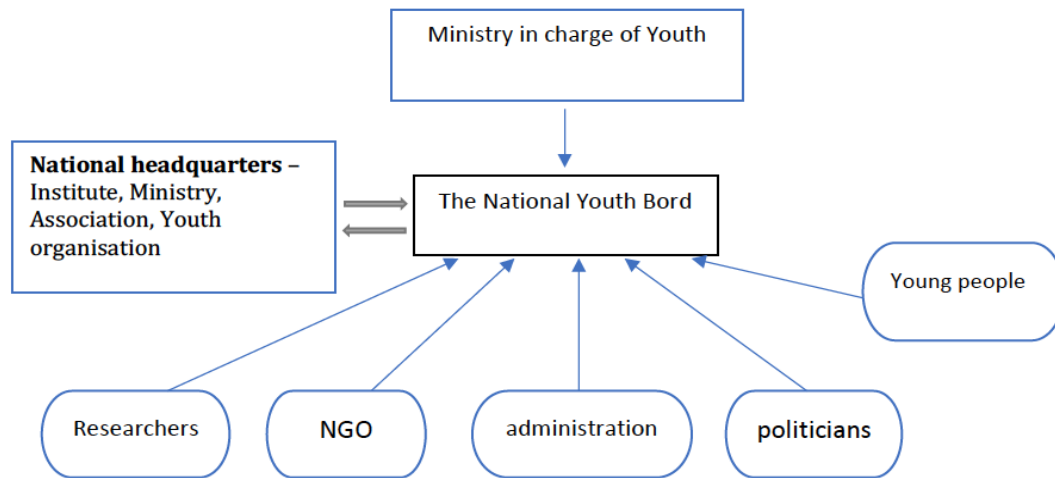
One of the two options can be implemented: 1. to make this body institutionally part of the ministry in charge of youth, 2. to be part of some of the existing institutional infrastructures (university, institute, youth association, a youth or other non-formal organisation) that is interested in being a focal point where youth research, practice and youth policies meet.

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