



Working Group on Cross Sectorial Partnerships



Erasmus+ programme KA3 - Support for Policy Reform Civil Society Cooperation in the field of Youth

Cross-Sectorial Partnerships Working Group Paper

In the context of the statutory meeting of the Working Group on Cross-Sectorial Partnerships of the Erasmus+ programme KA3 - Support for Policy Reform Civil Society Cooperation in the field of Youth (616411-EPP-1-2020-1-DE-EPPKA3-CSC-YOUTH), led by YEPP EUROPE, members discussed cross-sectorial approaches in youth work, as well as EU policy initiatives in the areas affecting youth, and agreed on the next steps and deliverables.

The members of this Working Group represented the following organisations:



The objectives of the Working Group

- increase awareness of cross-sectorial partnership and collaboration between youth, civil society stakeholders and policy makers;
- map EU policy initiatives for the areas affecting youth;
- give recommendations for the best practice.

Expected results

- ✓ mapping of EU policy initiatives for areas affecting youth;
- ✓ strategies and recommendations for good practice.

1. Importance of cross-sectorial collaboration

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alliances of organizations that together have a role in solving a problem and achieving a shared goal. • Strengthens the quality of problem solving and decision making • Effective responses are coordinated, inclusive at all levels and built upon solidarity, shared principles, values, vision and goals 	<p><i>Independentsector.org</i></p> <p><i>EU Youth Strategy/Engage</i></p> <p><i>UN SDG Goal 17. Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development</i></p>
---	--

Other benefits:

- Collaboration is essential to create holistic approach to issues affecting youth.
- Together with stakeholders, sustainable change can be achieved.
- Sharing knowledge and experience is more effective.
- It is important to connect because it leads to greater sustainable input.
- In the field of youth, a lot of problems are cross sectorial and therefore needs a cross sectorial approach.

2. Examples of good practice

1. **YPAR, Ireland:** works with other sectors to inform practice and policy to create sustainable change in young people, especially those who are disadvantaged; challenge is to get the statutory agencies to cooperate with others.
2. **Fundatia Comunitara Bacau, Romania:** works directly with young people, and works with youth-oriented associations helping them with ways to fundraise and also as a link between NGOs and the authorities. A main goal is to involve in activities as many actors as possible.
3. **Centrifuge, Serbia:** cross sectorial cooperation is realized through the local youth office. The organisation is a bridge among stakeholders and facilitates the dialogue with local policy makers. However, the potential of this kind of cooperation is yet to be realized (no functioning website and not active on social media). Collaboration initiatives come from civil society organizations or schools.

4. **Elos Foundation/Shift Foundation, Netherlands:** works throughout Europe to create interconnectedness, because this is how ideas and creativity are generated to deal with social dysfunctions. The organisation uses a lot of play as a way to break down barriers because it is a great way for people, despite culture and language differences, to connect. There is a project wherein they work with youth who are not part of the “traditional education system” (dropped out of school, gap years, etc) to bring them together and conduct capacity building activities in order to engage with the neighborhoods they live in.
5. **YEPP local site in Antwerp, Belgium:** there was a lack of recreational facilities, green areas, and meeting places for young people and the community. There was one derelict area that the municipality gave permission to be used as a park and recreational area. The young people were the ones who took the main responsibility to make it into a nice meeting place (to clean, place benches, etc.) There was a small budget given, but it was not enough, so the local coordinator got in contact with businesses to fundraise. The company Timberland got involved, as the regional director was interested in the initiatives of the young people. It became part of their corporate social responsibility programme.

3. Mapping of EU policy initiatives for areas affecting youth

EU Youth Dialogue

- is a dialogue mechanism between young people and decision makers in the framework of the EU Youth Strategy.
- aims to address all young people, including those with fewer opportunities and those currently not involved and active.
- national working groups are in charge of consultations and activities with young people, youth organisations and policy makers.
- current priorities: Future of work and quality employment; Access to youth work and education and training of youth workers; Opportunities for rural youth.
- 18-month cycle. Last one: creation of 11 Youth Goals

European Youth Goals

- European Youth Goals are as cross-sectorial areas that affect young people’s lives.
- These already imply that there needs to be cross sectorial collaboration to achieve these goals.
- European Youth Goals were created by young people following the consultation process.
- More details on: www.youthconf.at/youthgoals/



**QUALITY
EMPLOYMENT
FOR ALL**



**QUALITY
LEARNING**



**SPACE AND
PARTICIPATION
FOR ALL**



**CONNECTING
EU WITH YOUTH**



**EQUALITY OF
ALL GENDERS**



**INCLUSIVE
SOCIETIES**



**SUSTAINABLE
GREEN EUROPE**



**YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS AND
EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES**



**INFORMATION AND
CONSTRUCTIVE
DIALOGUE**



**MENTAL HEALTH
AND WELLBEING**



**MOVING RURAL
YOUTH FORWARD**

Examples of Youth Goals:

6 MOVING RURAL YOUTH FORWARD

Create conditions which enable young people to fulfill their potential in rural areas.

Despite the EU wide commitment to rural development and given the fact that by 2015 almost one third of the EU population were living in rural areas, prevailing differences exist between living in urban and in rural areas¹⁾. Therefore, it is important to ensure equality for young people in urban and rural settings.

- Ensure appropriate infrastructure in rural areas in order to provide equitable delivery of public services, data connectivity and housing opportunities for young people.
- Ensure that sustainable, high quality jobs, accessible to young people are created in rural areas.
- Ensure the decentralisation of different activities by, for and with young people in order to support their inclusion and to benefit local communities.
- Ensure that young people in rural areas are actively participating in decision-making processes.
- Ensure equal access to high quality education for young people in rural areas.
- Establish a positive image of rural areas.
- Ensure the protection of rural traditions.

¹⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_rural_areas_in_the_EU



7 QUALITY EMPLOYMENT FOR ALL

Guarantee an accessible labour market with opportunities that lead to quality jobs for all young people.

Young people are suffering from high youth unemployment, precarious and exploitative working conditions as well as discrimination in the labour market and the workplace. The lack of information and suitable skills for future employment are preventing young people to be fully integrated in the labour market. Thus measures need to be taken in order to ensure quality employment for all.

- Create quality jobs which guarantee fair working conditions, working rights and the right of living wage for all young people.
- Safeguard social protection and healthcare for all young workers.
- Guarantee fair treatment and equal opportunities for all young people in order to end discrimination in the labour market.
- Ensure equal opportunities for all young people to develop the necessary skills and gain practical experience in order to smoothen the transition from education to the labour market.
- Guarantee the recognition and validation of competencies acquired through internships, apprenticeships and other forms of work-based learning, as well as volunteering and non-formal education.
- Ensure involvement of young people and youth organisations as equal partners in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of employment policies at all levels.
- Ensure equal access to quality information and adequate support mechanisms to prepare young people for the changing labour market and future of work.

8 QUALITY LEARNING

Integrate and improve different forms of learning, equipping young people for the challenges of an ever-changing life in the 21st century.

Education remains a key for active citizenship, inclusive society and employability. That is why we need to enlarge our vision about education for the 21st century, focusing more on transferable skills, student-centered learning and non-formal education to achieve a truly equal and universal access to quality learning.

- Guarantee universal and equal access to quality education and life-long learning.
- Ensure that all young people have access to adequately funded non-formal education at all levels, that is recognised and validated.
- Promote open-mindedness and support the development of interpersonal and intercultural skills.
- Create and implement more personalised, participative, and cooperative learner-centered methods in every step of the education process.
- Guarantee that education equips all young people with life skills such as money management and health education including sexual and reproductive health
- Incorporate methods within formal and non-formal education settings that enable the learner to develop personal skills including critical and analytical thinking, creativity and learning.
- Ensure that young people have access to citizenship education to provide them with solid knowledge on political systems, democracy and human rights, attained also through community-based experiences in order to promote active civil participation.

4. Strategies and recommendations for good practice

Cross-sectoral collaboration in attaining European Youth Goals: case study from Serbia



Deeply embedded in the mission and vision of the association Centre for Social Innovations (CSI) Centrifuge is attaining social cohesion and putting forward activities and initiatives aimed at fostering inclusive societies with equal opportunities for all. Hence, even though we find all the European Youth Goals equally important, there are three which we can point

out as focal to our course of action: Inclusive Societies, Quality Learning and Quality employment for all.

Ultimately, inclusion is about the dignity and worth of every person, irrespective of their age, sex, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, disability, economic, or any other status. Inclusive societies aim at empowering and promoting the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, leaving no one behind. There is a strong link between low quality in work and social exclusion and poverty. This is often due to the strong impact of the previous labour market status - unemployment in particular as well as access to quality education. EU Inclusion strategy lists an array of labour market tools to promote inclusion such as making work pay policies, life-long learning or the positive management of company restructuring. Facilitating participation in employment for people who are distant from the labour market is also a major plank of the EU Inclusion Strategy, which covers many other policy fields such as housing, health care, and social protection systems. Actors from these fields are key to fulfilling these three interwoven Goals, along with local government, civil society organisations, employers' organisations, the business sector and education providing institutions all of which play a key role in the governance of the employment relationship, working conditions and strengthening social support and outreach of information to marginalised young people. All together, they represent interlocking parts in a multilevel system of governance that includes the European, national, sectoral, regional (provincial or local) and company levels, working together to fight against all kinds of discrimination and segregation and a fair access to the labour market. Given such a wide and complex agenda for promoting inclusion in the labour market and the society overall, there are important conditions and criteria that need to be put in place in order to make these partnerships successful. Essential to this process at EU level is the European social dialogue with European social partners. At national and local level, likewise, in order to make cross-sectoral collaboration fruitful in attaining these Goals, all the actors need to have common interest and be able to directly engage and have unmitigated communication. Possible pitfalls to the process could be the lack of knowledge about inclusive societies and accessible and effective remedies for the protection of human rights or not applying the same approach, i.e. the human-rights based approach to inclusion.

In Serbia there is no systemic or institutional approach to this issue at national level. Virtually all the initiatives launched in the direction of providing a solution to this issue come from the civil society sector. An example of a cross-sectoral partnership forged with the intent of working on the above mentioned Goals in Serbia is the project Strong Youth - social inclusion and economic sustainability of young people at risk. It is a programme of economic empowerment aimed at enhancing the employability of youth with socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds and encourage their participation in civil society.

This project was realised in cooperation with the Hermann Gmeiner Foundation and local partners (NALED, City Centre for Social Work Belgrade, Centre for Protection of Infants, Children and Youth Belgrade, Centre for Family Accommodation and Adoption in Belgrade, the Republic Institute for Social Protection) and with the support from German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Within this project, the Career Centre "Strong Youth" was opened in Belgrade, whose main role is to provide support in increasing the employability of young people aged 16 to 30 from the city of Belgrade, who had or have the status of children without parental care or are involved in support programs for families at risk implemented by SOS Children's Villages. The services of the Centre are unique in the sense that they are focused not only on employment, but also on individual psycho-social counselling and empowerment in order to retain employment, which is necessary due to the lack of life skills and self-confidence that characterize this target group. In accordance with the individual development plan, which is developed by young people with their counsellors, young people have at their disposal: vocational training to increase employability, foreign

language courses, computer courses, driving training, practice or training with employers, a computer classroom and space for young people (intended for gathering, socializing, creative workshops, etc.) Young people interested in entrepreneurship attend training to start their own business, after which they can get a grant from the Centre to start their own business and purchase equipment, as well as support in the realization of work.

An analysis of the position of young people at risk was also conducted within the project which includes recommendations for improving their social and economic inclusion. The analysis contains an overview of existing support measures within the Employment and Social Protection System for young people leaving the social protection system, challenges in implementing support measures, frameworks for monitoring young people after leaving protection, analysis of factors influencing sustainable socio-economic inclusion and recommendations for improvement measures affecting the position of these young people.

An overview of recommendations reveals three areas:

1. Improving the normative framework

- Define a unified methodology and establish a system for monitoring young people leaving or those who have left the social protection system;
- Improve the responsibility of professionals in all situations when children and young people for whom they are professionally responsible are not covered by compulsory education and improve the system of control over respecting children's right to education in institutions and foster families. This can be solved by introducing new provisions regarding the liability of professionals in case of violation of children's rights to education;
- Make a Protocol on Cooperation and make mandatory the cooperation of the centres for social work and the National Employment Service in the process of acquiring independence of young people leaving the protection system.

2. Further development of social protection services and specific support programmes

- Consider the possibility of establishing a special social protection service or introducing a special program focused on supporting young people leaving the protection system in the process of attaining social and economic independence;
- Consider the possibility of regularly organizing meetings companies that have socially responsible business programs (scholarships, internships, trainings, affirmative action for employment, etc.) and young people from foster homes and foster families.
- Develop social entrepreneurship programs for young people at risk, especially for young people with disabilities who are in the protection system or who are leaving it.

3. Improving the monitoring and evaluation system

- The obligation of the local Centres for Social Work, which refers to the planning and implementation of the emancipation plan for young people leaving protection, should be consistently implemented, trainings in this area should be implemented and the system of control of compliance with prescribed professional procedures in this area should be improved;
- Create indicators in the National Employment Action Plan that would enable the "grading" of vulnerability of hard-to-employ persons and priority groups and thus provide additional incentives to multiple and particularly vulnerable groups in the labour market;

- Improve the monitoring of active employment policy measures in the National Employment Service so that the effects of measures on employment status can be monitored, which is currently not possible. This can be done by introducing a plan for monitoring active employment measures that will be aligned with the duration of each active measure. This will ensure a better understanding of the effects of the measures and enable their further improvement.

All of these recommendations require cross-sectoral collaboration efforts of various institutions and bodies such as: Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs and the National Employment Service, centres for social work, homes for children and youth and centres for foster care and adoption, civil society organizations, the business sector.