

# INSIGHTS INTO YOUTH KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS AND RESOURCES IN EUROPE



## Youth Partnership

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



EUROPEAN UNION

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

# INSIGHTS INTO YOUTH KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS AND RESOURCES IN EUROPE

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# Introduction

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**W**elcome to the fifth edition of the *Insights* series, focusing on knowledge networks and resources in Europe, by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth (hereinafter the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership).

There is a greater awareness of the importance of a knowledge and evidence-based approach in youth policy and practice in Europe, and an understanding that research must inform decision making and be used towards evaluation of policy and practice. In line with this, and consistent with its commitment to furthering youth research and developing links with policy and practice, the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership aims to support stronger dialogue among researchers, policy makers and practitioners at the local, national and European levels. Within this framework, since 2017, the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership has organised a series of reflections and developed proposals on youth research. This included a regional Youth Knowledge Forum on eastern Europe held in Chisinau in 2018 and another focusing on South-East Europe held in Novi Sad in 2019.

In 2020, a European Youth Knowledge Forum developed more resources and a set of recommendations for strengthening the support, role and quality standards for youth research in Europe, including through European and national youth knowledge networks.

This edition of *Insights* draws on two studies (Ignatovitch and Petkovic 2020, Roe and Stanojević 2020) the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership prepared for the Youth Knowledge Forum 2020,<sup>1</sup> as well as on other resources produced by them.<sup>2</sup> These complementary reports and publications can be a good additional source for readers of this edition of *Insights* when they initiate youth research support activities, including:

- ▶ youth research, youth policy and youth work essentials (Council of Europe and European Commission 2019a, 2019b, 2020);
- ▶ guidelines for engaging youth researchers (Șerban, Lonean and Moxon 2020);
- ▶ research and young people (video);<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Guide to knowledge translation (2021).

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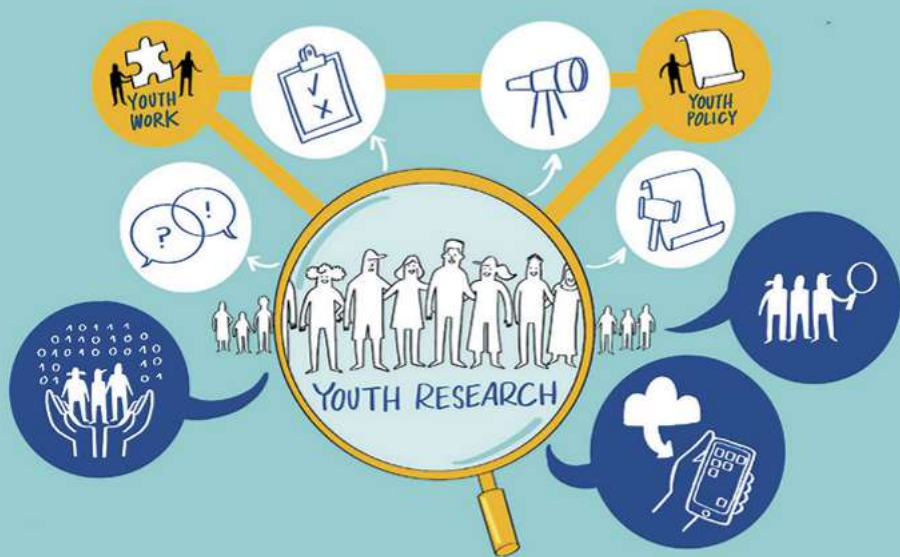
1. More information is available at: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/youth-knowledge-forum>, accessed 30 June 2021.

2. Available at: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership>, accessed 30 June 2021.

3. This video (Youth research and young people) by the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership, as well as others related to youth knowledge, can be found in the Youth knowledge break series at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaCdqs7tbv8&list=PLKNmrlD6g-JvYn\\_wP3aTQpnV\\_S4Gz40el&index=8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaCdqs7tbv8&list=PLKNmrlD6g-JvYn_wP3aTQpnV_S4Gz40el&index=8), accessed 30 June 2021.

This publication introduces readers to what is understood by youth research today, what youth knowledge networks are accessible at European and national levels and the resources they offer for knowledge-based youth policy and practice. Examples from different countries show the diversity of structures and approaches across Europe. Models of co-operation from policy makers, researchers and practitioners are introduced, including from young people and their organisations, and, finally, a few guidelines and approaches are shared at the end. Questions for reflection conclude each section to support the development of youth knowledge networks in various contexts.

Finally, we invite you to explore the additional resources highlighted in this publication, all of them available on the website of the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership. Let's contribute to the development of youth knowledge in Europe together.



## Chapter 1

# Youth research in the triangle of governance: what, why and how?

**Y**outh research, monitoring and data collection are the basis for a knowledge-based policy and a better insight into the situation of young people in Europe. This knowledge helps improve and develop youth policy and practice, with the ultimate goal of improving the lives of young people. Effective communication of research findings to policy makers, practitioners and other audiences is an important step in reaching this goal.<sup>4</sup>

Diverse research approaches explore the situation of young people and generate evidence that, in turn, informs youth policy development. For example, youth research can be based on knowledge collected through direct observation and human interaction, known as primary empirical research, or it can be based on the analysis of various texts, referred to as secondary research. When questions are asked about the effects of policy interventions, the outcomes are often called evaluation, monitoring or impact studies. Youth researchers can opt to engage in participatory research that aims to empower young people to take an active part in all phases of a research process (Council of Europe and European Commission 2019a). Watch the short video

4. For further information on the benefits of youth research for policy makers and practitioners see Šerban, Lonean and Moxon (2020).



“Young people and youth research” to understand the benefits of engaging them in research projects.<sup>5</sup>

Evidence can also be diverse. It may include mapping of the lived realities, needs and aspirations of young people, research and statistics, or empirical information coming from policy implementation. Youth policy is sometimes driven by ideology or current political interests, not considering the situation, needs or rights of young people.

Co-operation among researchers, practitioners, policy makers, young people and their organisations leads to knowledge-based youth policy. These knowledge networks are crucial spaces for gathering, analysing and debating important research evidence about young people and developing youth-friendly policies. The existence of active and well-resourced youth knowledge networks is an indicator of strong youth policy and youth work structures in a country.



### Reflection points

- ▶ Have you been involved in youth research? If so, what methods were in place to collect the evidence and generate knowledge on youth that supports youth policy development in your context?
- ▶ Are you aware of any initiatives developed through co-operation among policy makers, researchers, practitioners and young people? If you have been involved in such networks, reflect about your experience in participating in such an initiative. If you are not aware of such initiatives, think about people or structures that could help create such knowledge networks. What should they look into and how could they support policy making and youth work practice in your context?

5. Available at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaCdqs7tbv8&list=PLKNmrID6g-JvYn\\_wp3aTQpnV\\_S4Gz40el&index=8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaCdqs7tbv8&list=PLKNmrID6g-JvYn_wp3aTQpnV_S4Gz40el&index=8), accessed 30 June 2021.



## Chapter 2

# Actors, structures and youth knowledge sources

### European youth knowledge networks

Youth knowledge (research) networks at European level play a significant role in supporting both individual experts and national research networks (Ignatovitch and Petkovic 2020). These networks contribute to:

- ▶ knowledge and evidence-based youth policy development across Europe;
- ▶ better understanding of the context of international and transnational youth work;
- ▶ establishing a dialogue between research, policy, practice and youth organisations.

Reliable evidence that supports better understanding of the processes and outcomes in the youth field is produced by transnational and European youth knowledge networks. These networks also support national research and knowledge networks. Some examples of these networks include:

- ▶ The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKYP)<sup>6</sup>
- ▶ The Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR)<sup>7</sup> and PEYR Advisory Group
- ▶ RAY – Research-based analysis and monitoring of European youth programmes<sup>8</sup>

6. See <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/knowledge/-ekyp>, accessed 1 July 2021.

7. See <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/peyr>, accessed 1 July 2021.

8. See [www.researchyouth.net/](http://www.researchyouth.net/), accessed 1 July 2021.

- ▶ ReferNet – The European network of expertise on national vocational education and training (VET)<sup>9</sup>
- ▶ EU Youth Wiki – Database on national youth policies in the EU youth co-operation<sup>10</sup>
- ▶ EURYDICE – Better knowledge for better education policies.<sup>11</sup>

## National youth knowledge networks

National knowledge networks play an important role in knowledge gathering, debate, transfer and dissemination in the youth field at national level. Such networks support the research community by creating and maintaining an inclusive, independent environment where information, knowledge, experience and skills are shaped and shared. National knowledge networks often facilitate co-operation between youth researchers, research institutes, higher education institutions and professionals working with young people at the national level. They are also platforms and spaces for debating research results concerning young people, as illustrated in the following examples.

- ▶ In France, the Institut national de la statistique et des études économique (INSEE) [National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies] provides statistics on youth while the Institut national de la jeunesse et de l'éducation populaire (INJEP)<sup>12</sup> [National Institute for Youth and Popular Education] serves as a national network for knowledge and research on youth linking all actors in the field conducting research on the needs, attitudes and challenges young people face.
- ▶ In Norway, Norwegian Social Research (NOVA)<sup>13</sup> at Oslo Metropolitan University is responsible for the national co-ordination of a cross-national data collection scheme and conducts multidisciplinary research on youth.
- ▶ In Finland, the Finnish Youth Research Society and Finnish Youth Research Network,<sup>14</sup> a community of researchers which works together with universities, research institutes and various professionals in the field of youth work and youth policy, is a significant producer and publisher of data related to young people, youth work and youth policy at both the national and international level.

## Other youth knowledge structures

Other structures and actors play a role in acknowledging, supporting and promoting evidence-based youth policy making, including:

- ▶ statistical offices;

9. See [www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/networks/refernet), accessed 1 July 2021.

10. See <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki>, accessed 1 July 2021.

11. See <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/>, accessed 1 July 2021.

12. See <https://injep.fr/>, accessed 1 July 2021.

13. See [www.oslomet.no/en/about/nova](http://www.oslomet.no/en/about/nova), accessed 1 July 2021.

14. See [www.youthresearch.fi/](http://www.youthresearch.fi/), accessed 1 July 2021.

- ▶ departments in universities;
- ▶ public and semi-public bodies;
- ▶ private companies and think tanks;
- ▶ non-governmental organisations (NGOs) gathering knowledge on youth.

National statistical authorities are significant providers of knowledge and statistics on youth in European countries. In many countries these official statistical authorities take the form of national statistical offices and bureaus, agencies or institutes. Regardless of the form of their organisation, the official statistical bodies play a pivotal role in gathering data and statistics on youth at the country level on a regular basis.

In Estonia, information on the general situation of young people can be obtained from the Statistics Estonia<sup>15</sup> website. As part of the youth monitoring system, a yearbook – Noorteseire (Youth Monitor) – has been published annually in Estonia since 2009. The yearbook contains two sections: a statistical overview of the youth population in the country and an in-depth analysis or study of a specific theme. Since 2019, there has been a “dashboard” (Juhtimislaud) containing data on young people that offers a significant amount of information at the local and national level. There are several registers and databases that contain information on young people and these are relevant for assessing the situation of youth in society and for policy making. These include the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), Social Services and Benefits Register (STAR), Register of Employment and Population Register.

In the United Kingdom, the Office for National Statistics<sup>16</sup> provides statistics on the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs), and both seasonally adjusted and not seasonally adjusted statistics on the educational and labour market status of young people (16-24). Similarly, the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency issues statistics on young people (16-24) not in education, employment or training as quarterly supplementary tables to the Labour Market Report. In Wales, statistics on the number of young people not in education, employment or training are compiled by the Welsh Government and published quarterly with an annual statistical report. StatsWales also produces statistics on the participation of adults and young people in education and the labour force, as well as the report “Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)”.

University departments that conduct studies on young people exist in most European countries and there is valuable research theory and practice in various areas on topics relevant to young people. Other countries are in the process of establishing university units with the aim of conducting youth research and contributing to data gathering on youth issues. For example, there have been two centres (the Centre for Sociological and Political Studies and the Educational and Scientific Centre for System Studies on Youth Issues) established at the Belarusian State University.

15. See [www.stat.ee/en](http://www.stat.ee/en), accessed 1 July 2021.

16. See [www.ons.gov.uk/](http://www.ons.gov.uk/), accessed 1 July 2021.

In Germany, a number of universities offer innovative and practical research and advice in the areas of socialisation in childhood and youth, migration and evaluation research, religious socialisation of children and adolescents, church youth work, spiritual counselling for children and adolescents, social history of education and pedagogical youth research.

In Luxembourg, the youth research domain at the University of Luxembourg plays an important role within the national network linking actors in the field of youth. The research projects have an academic and international orientation, and are strongly connected to the national context of youth policy and practice. The research group establishes and maintains a regular dialogue with policy and youth work.

In Sweden, departments at different universities are involved in various types of youth research focusing, for example, on critical interdisciplinary studies on children and young people,<sup>17</sup> the welfare of children, young people and families,<sup>18</sup> and child and youth services.<sup>19</sup>

In Portugal, the Permanent Youth Observatory,<sup>20</sup> part of the Institute for Social Sciences (ICS) of the University of Lisbon, produces scientific knowledge on young people and systematises validated data about the youth population in various aspects of social life, as well as monitoring public policies, programmes and civil society actions in the field of youth through independent studies, reports and assessments or through scientific research commissioned by political agents and institutions, or civic and non-governmental organisations.

In many European countries, there are government-funded or independent research institutes, and other public or semi-public bodies responsible for youth research. Some of these research institutes are specialised in child and youth research fostering a cross-sectoral approach (for example in Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway and Slovakia).

In Germany, the German Youth Institute<sup>21</sup> conducts research on the life situations of children, young people and families, advising government and local authorities, as well as providing key stimuli for practice.

In the Netherlands, one of the key tasks of the Netherlands Youth Institute<sup>22</sup> is to compile, verify and disseminate knowledge on child and youth matters, connecting scientific research to the practitioners' needs by "translating" scientific results into practical advice and support. There are also regional academic laboratories – (knowledge) infrastructures in which practice, research, policy and education

17. See <https://liu.se/organisation/liu/tema/temab>, accessed 1 July 2021.

18. See [www.umu.se/forskning/grupper/barn-unga-och-familjer-i-valfardssamhallet/](http://www.umu.se/forskning/grupper/barn-unga-och-familjer-i-valfardssamhallet/), accessed 1 July 2021.

19. See <https://lnu.se/forskning/sok-forskning/research-on-interventions-and-support-for-children-and-youth/> (in Swedish), accessed 1 July 2021.

20. See [www.opj.ics.ulisboa.pt/english/observator](http://www.opj.ics.ulisboa.pt/english/observator), accessed 1 July 2021.

21. See [www.dji.de/en/about-us.html](http://www.dji.de/en/about-us.html), accessed 1 July 2021.

22. See [www.nji.nl/en](http://www.nji.nl/en), accessed 1 July 2021.

work together on resolving youth issues. They act as developers of new evidence-based policies in the field of social, child and youth welfare in this country.

In Slovakia, IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute – is a state institution whose scope of activities includes knowledge-based implementation of state policy towards children and young people.

There are also private companies which provide information on young people. While in some countries (for example France, Germany, Sweden and the UK) private companies have been recognised as significant actors in the youth research field, in others (for example Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Poland and Serbia), there are private companies and think tanks occasionally conducting applied research targeting youth issues. These companies differ in their nature and fields of expertise. For instance, there are opinion or consultancy agencies, community interest companies, market research companies and advertising companies which carry out studies focused on analysing young consumers' behaviour, their preferences, habits and attitudes, as well as on media, IT, finance, education and health. Many private companies put a great deal of effort into exploring contemporary youth issues, and they advise companies, the scientific community and politics.

Youth research is carried out by private research institutes mainly dealing with social and economic studies targeting specific topics regarding young people's lives, such as, for example, in Bulgaria (the Institute for Social Research and Marketing). Youth research by private companies and think tanks focuses on youth employability trends, young people's perception of jobs, socio-economic trends, youth culture, education and forecasting, for example in Romania.<sup>23</sup>

Non-governmental organisations play a role in gathering thematic knowledge on young people in their countries. Some of them take the form of institutes and agencies, such as the Romanian Institute for Youth Development, the Belgrade Open School<sup>24</sup> in Serbia and the Institute for Youth Work,<sup>25</sup> National Youth Agency<sup>26</sup> and National Children's Bureau<sup>27</sup> in the United Kingdom.

Other knowledge providers are registered as associations, such as the National Association of Youth Workers in Serbia (NAPOR),<sup>28</sup> which conducts research on youth work, the FNAJ (Federação Nacional das Associações Juvenis)<sup>29</sup> in Portugal, and the Association Carpe Diem,<sup>30</sup> Association Impress<sup>31</sup> and Association Zamisli<sup>32</sup> in Croatia. In France, there are a number of associations focusing on statistics and knowledge concerning young people, for example the Comité pour les relations nationales et

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23. See [www2.deloitte.com/ro/ro/pages/about-deloitte/articles/deloitte-study-reveals-romania-young-talents-look-for-organizations-in-which-they-matter.htm](http://www2.deloitte.com/ro/ro/pages/about-deloitte/articles/deloitte-study-reveals-romania-young-talents-look-for-organizations-in-which-they-matter.htm), accessed 1 July 2021.

24. See [www.bos.rs/](http://www.bos.rs/), accessed 1 July 2021.

25. See [iyw.org.uk](http://iyw.org.uk), accessed 1 July 2021.

26. See [nya.org.uk](http://nya.org.uk), accessed 1 July 2021.

27. See [ncb.org.uk](http://ncb.org.uk), accessed 1 July 2021.

28. See [www.napor.net/sajt/index.php/sr-yu/dokumenta/istrazivanja-i-studije-u-izdanju-napora](http://www.napor.net/sajt/index.php/sr-yu/dokumenta/istrazivanja-i-studije-u-izdanju-napora), (in Serbian) accessed 1 July 2021.

29. See [www.fnaj.pt/](http://www.fnaj.pt/).

30. See <https://carpediem.hr/>, accessed 1 July 2021.

31. See <https://udruga-impress.hr/o-nama/>, accessed 1 July 2021.

32. See <https://zamisli.hr/>, accessed 1 July 2021.

internationales des associations de jeunesse et d'éducation populaire (Cnajep),<sup>33</sup> the Comité régional des associations de jeunesse et d'éducation Populaire (CRAJEP) and L'Union Nationale des Missions Locales (UNML).<sup>34</sup>

Foundations are also prominent knowledge providers in the field of youth at national and local level, for example the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Bulgaria,<sup>35</sup> also operating in all countries of South-East Europe<sup>36</sup> and eastern Europe,<sup>37</sup> or the Young Initiative of the Youth Foundation<sup>38</sup> in Timisoara, Romania.



### Reflection points

- ▶ Are you aware of any youth research actor or structure working both in Europe and your country/region/community?
- ▶ Have you had any experience of collaborating with any youth research actor or structure? If so, please briefly describe your experience and reflect with your peers on your main insights.

33. See [www.cnajep.asso.fr/](http://www.cnajep.asso.fr/), accessed 1 July 2021.

34. See [www.unml.info/](http://www.unml.info/), accessed 1 July 2021.

35. See [www.fes-bulgaria.org/](http://www.fes-bulgaria.org/), accessed 1 July 2021.

36. Relevant studies are available at: [www.fes-soe.org/features/youth-studies/](http://www.fes-soe.org/features/youth-studies/), accessed 1 July 2021.

37. See <http://fes-dee.org>, accessed 1 July 2021.

38. See <https://fitt.ro/>, (in Romanian) accessed 1 July 2021.



## Chapter 3

# EU–Council of Europe youth partnership: think tank and knowledge supporter for the youth sector

**T**he goal of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth<sup>39</sup> (EU–Council of Europe youth partnership) is to foster synergies between the priorities and programmes of the two partner institutions in the youth field. The partnership offers a platform for their co-operation and has a function as a “think tank” and a laboratory: gathering and producing knowledge, translating it for effective use in youth policy and practice, developing and testing new approaches, and studying traditional themes and innovative trends.

In its work, the youth partnership relies on networks of experts and researchers, including the correspondents of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCY) and the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR).

39. See <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/about-us>, accessed 1 July 2021.



The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy is an online database intended to provide the youth sector with a single access point for reliable knowledge and information about young people's situations across Europe. EKCYP aims to enhance 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 nominated by government representatives in the Council of Europe's European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ). Their profiles range from youth policy specialists to researchers and public servants and their contribution focuses on keeping an up-to-date country page on youth policy, youth work and youth research, as well as providing national data for thematic surveys. The key features of EKCYP are information on countries' youth policies and youth policy topics, a library of relevant documents, examples of good practice and a glossary defining key terms.

Established in 2010, the Pool of European Youth Researchers is a unique initiative at the European level and it represents a contribution of both the Council of Europe and the European Commission to evidence-based policy making in the field of youth. The PEYR network consists of researchers and experts from across Europe with a wide range of expertise in different policy and research areas connected to youth. The PEYR Advisory Group (PEYR AG) was established in 2021 with the aim to support the work of PEYR and the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership, by contributing to the think tank function and improving the quality of youth research in Europe.

The EU–Council of Europe youth partnership produces and disseminates knowledge on young people, youth policy and youth work through:

- ▶ *Youth knowledge* books and the results of studies
- ▶ thematic training kits (T-Kits)
- ▶ the *Coyote* online magazine
- ▶ the *Perspectives on youth* publications
- ▶ thematic handbooks, reviews and *Insights*
- ▶ Essentials of youth work, policy and research
- ▶ a glossary on youth.

The youth partnership activities are carried out within the youth sector governance triangle, by bringing together policy, practice and research, young people and their organisations and a variety of actors from the field of youth. The partnership's think tank function aims to develop evidence for policy at European and national level in Europe, to support reflections on ongoing and emerging themes related to young people's lives and to contribute to strengthening the community of youth work practice in Europe.

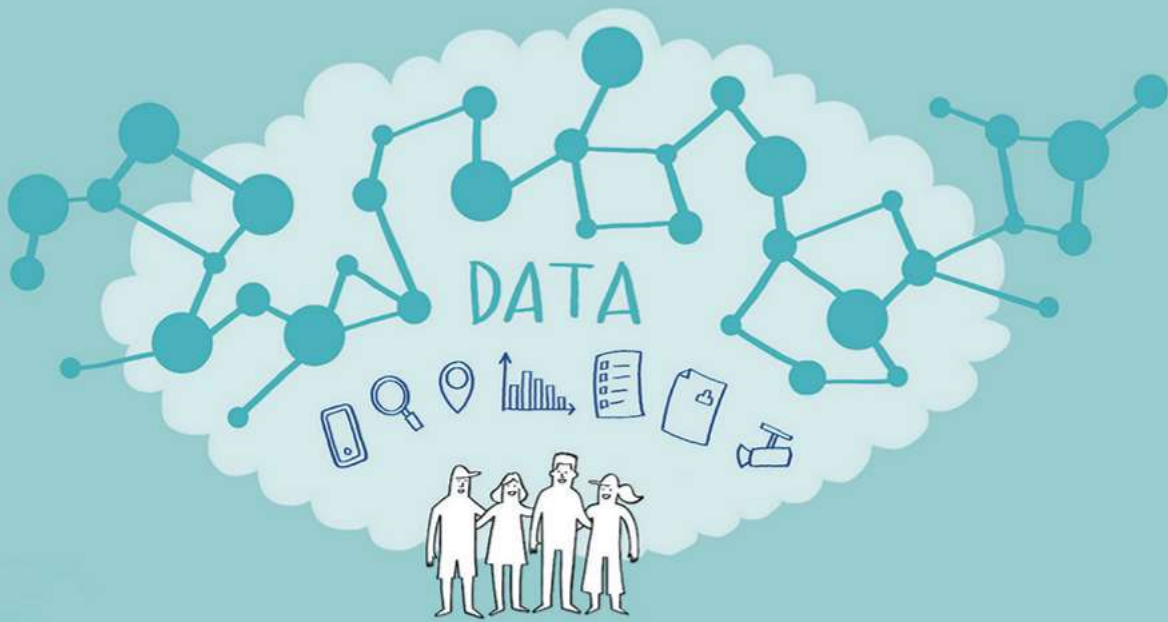
Project and research results are communicated through publications, illustrations and infographics, videos and animated videos, the podcast series "Under 30", and online via its website and social media channels. Some of the essential publications and educational material have been translated into several languages. The partnership adapts each of these communication approaches to ensure a wide outreach to young people and youth sector stakeholders.



### Reflection points

- ▶ Have you had any experience of collaborating with the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership? How has it supported your work?
- ▶ Consider how could the EU–Council of Europe youth partnership better support youth sector initiatives in your country, your local context or in your organisation?





## Chapter 4

# Resources produced by youth knowledge networks and actors

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**K**nowledge networks and actors produce a variety of resources that serve different purposes and three are of particular importance:

1. supporting research into the situation of young people in Europe by providing comprehensive and updated statistics on youth and by gathering sector-specific data that reflect young people's needs and realities;
2. building quantitative and qualitative knowledge about young people's lives, realities, needs and aspirations;
3. informing youth policy and youth work development based on knowledge.

Statistics, reports and research results play an important role in the recognition and visibility of youth research at the country level.

Specialised age-sensitive statistics are collected by semi-public and/or private actors (for example agencies, institutes, centres, etc.) in various European countries. Some of these data are collected to inform a specific youth policy and youth work development.

In Belgium (Flemish Community) the Youth Research Platform (JOP) was founded in 2003 by the Flemish Government in response to the identification of several problems and shortcomings in the state of Flemish youth research. The Flemish Government has been mapping the youth (work) policy of local governments in a “cijferboek” (Database).

In Estonia, the Estonian Youth Work Centre has collected and made available various academic and applied research reports on young people and youth work on its website. Annual reports of the Youth Monitor and Youth Field Development Plan have been compiled by the Ministry of Education and Research in co-operation with the Estonian Youth Work Centre. A periodical general overview of the situation of children and young people at the national level is issued by Statistics Estonia.

In Finland, “Finnish youth work statistics” is a portal hosted by the Ministry of Culture and Education offering statistical data on youth work. As well as the annual Youth Barometer, published by the State Youth Council in co-operation with the Finnish Youth Research Society, a survey of children and young people’s leisure activities has been carried out every three years since 2009 and one on the living conditions of young people has been conducted every second year since 2001 in co-operation between the Ministry of Culture and Education, the Finnish Youth Research Network, the National Institute for Health and Welfare and the State Youth Council. Regular and long-term support for such research ensures a large database for comparable analysis over a long period of time.

In Iceland, the Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA), works closely with governmental and non-governmental organisations and provides expert and logistical support for youth research and intervention projects in Iceland and abroad. The research output of ICSRA has been published in peer-reviewed journals, covering a wide spectrum of important health and social issues concerning adolescents.

In Latvia, statistical databases are freely available on the website of the Central Statistical Bureau (in Latvian and in English), providing information about social, economic, environmental and other issues. Although youth statistics are not grouped as a separate category on the database, by selecting data by age parameters it is possible to obtain varied information about youth target groups.

In Lithuania, specific data on young people not in employment, education or training are collected quarterly by regional youth co-ordinators in municipalities and reported to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour. A specific youth guarantee implementation monitoring system and data collection framework are co-ordinated by the Lithuanian Labour Exchange.

In Montenegro, the Statistical Office of Montenegro (MONSTAT) issues annual reports in accordance with the youth policy indicators. These are based on a comprehensive framework of 52 indicators developed within the Youth Strategy 2017-2021 to monitor the situation of young people. They are intended to be gradually aligned with EU and UN standards and indicators.

Evidence-based youth policy development at country level happens through regular assessment of the situation and needs of young people at various levels of governance in many European countries (for example Albania, Belarus, Belgium (Flemish Community), Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, Moldova, Norway, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey, UK (Wales), Ukraine). Some national youth strategies or programmes envisage regular youth reports to be published annually (for example Belarus, Norway, Ukraine) or every two to five years (Luxembourg) by public authorities responsible for youth policy. These reports should inform the development of evidence-based youth policy, increase its effectiveness and ensure its sustainability. They often feed the policy development and reform processes, provide continuous monitoring of changes and trends regarding youth issues and reflect a cross-sectoral nature of youth policy (for example Belarus, Bulgaria, Sweden).

In Belgium (Flemish Community) and Luxembourg, there are periodical reports on children and young people published at the national level and issued by public or semi-public institutions addressing different sectoral or thematic areas.

- ▶ The Youth Monitor (JOP-monitor) is a periodical scientific report providing statistical data on youth gathered by the Youth Research Platform in Belgium (Flemish Community) since 2012. It is one of the instruments that address issues related to youth and children's rights policy, according to the government legislation on a renewed Flemish policy on youth and children's rights. Alongside these general surveys, JOP city monitors have been administered in several cities in Flanders. These surveys bring more insight into the specificity of growing up and living in contemporary urban environments in Flanders.
- ▶ In Luxembourg, the national report on education is a scientific report that deals with an important issue for young people. According to the law, a report on the quality of the educational system has to be prepared every five years. For example, the 2018 national report on education deals with two specific topics: educational pathways and multilingualism.

Some countries do not foresee regular national youth reports but research and knowledge gathering are carried out in various contexts. In Malta, for example, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh<sup>40</sup> (Malta's national youth agency) has co-ordinated research and youth policy. At national level, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh produces some youth research reports, such as: "Mirrors and windows: Maltese young people's perception of themselves, their families, communities and society", "Leisure trends among young people in Malta" and "The participation of Maltese young people in the voluntary sector".

There are publications and journals (e-journals) dealing with youth issues at national and regional level, whereas specialised national journals and reviews on youth research are very rare. For instance, in Estonia, an overview of academic research on young people can be obtained from the Estonian Research Information System portal and the Youth Monitor portal. In Latvia, regularly published e-journals on youth issues are available on the website of the Ministry of Education and Science in Latvian and in English.

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40. See <https://youth.gov.mt>, accessed 1 July 2021.

Access to statistics, reports and research results is provided through IT information dissemination tools, including internet portals, online publications and online databases. Most organisations and actors playing a role in knowledge gathering on youth at country level use their official websites to disseminate research results.

Specialised web portals and online databases target various audiences (researchers, policy makers, youth workers, youth organisations) and serve different purposes, for example to disseminate information among youth sector stakeholders, but also to support teaching, learning and development of youth policy and practice.

In Finland, The Finnish Social Science Data Archive (FSD) provides access to a wide range of digital research data for learning, teaching and research purposes. The youth data covers such topics as information society, consumption, participation, health and sports, and working life. The school health promotion study is an online database/tool that feeds into both national and local youth policy making, enabling one to get information on local results and trends.

In Luxembourg, the Digital Documentation and Research Centre – Youth (DDRC) is a national knowledge base for youth issues. It is a prototype for research documentation in the Integrative Research Unit on Social and Individual Development (INSIDE) at the University of Luxembourg. On its website, the DDRC provides information on the processes and results of the research projects of the Youth Research Group as well as up-to-date access to presentations and public relations documents. Additionally, the DDRC operates a growing database of grey literature related to youth research, youth politics and youth work in Luxembourg.

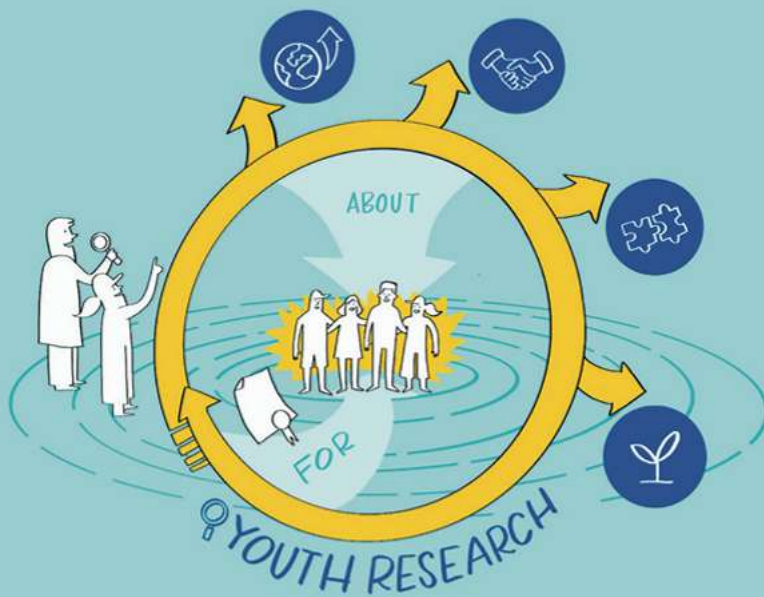
In the Netherlands the national Youth Monitor (Landelijke Jeugdmonitor) is a digital database with publications and figures about children and young people from birth to 25 years. It provides coherent information on youth and informs policy makers, researchers and others about the situation of young people in the following areas: health and welfare, youth and family, education, work, security and justice.

In Sweden, the Swedish Agency for Youth and Civil Society (formerly the National Board for Youth Affairs) has developed a web portal for statistics on young people's living conditions at both national and local level.



### Reflection points

- ▶ What types of knowledge resources on youth are you aware of in your country or context? Do you have any experience of using youth research resources for supporting youth policy and practice?
- ▶ Reflect on what would be useful to develop or improve in terms of knowledge resources in your context.



## Chapter 5

# European and country-specific youth indicators

**T**he data supporting the development of various resources mentioned earlier are collected by using a variety of European indicators and databases. The EU dashboard of youth indicators<sup>41</sup> and the Eurostat youth database<sup>42</sup> are the most frequently mentioned resources.

The revised dashboard of EU youth indicators (2019-2021) consists of two main sections: the situation-dashboard and the policy-dashboard. The first section aims to support research on the situation of young people in Europe (youth research) and contains 73 revised and newly developed contextual and situation indicators grouped around three core areas of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 (engage – connect – empower). The second part of the revised dashboard combines the 109 newly developed quantitative and qualitative policy indicators, tailored to the needs of member states and sectors concerned, to help monitor the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027) and its 13 instruments. This section is designed as a monitoring tool with the aim to support youth policy research. The outcomes of the work of this expert group have been presented to the EU Council Youth Working Party and will be published in the format of the “Proposal for an updated dashboard of EU Youth indicators”.

41. For more information on the dashboard of EU Youth Indicators, visit <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth/data/eu-dashboard>, accessed 1 July 2021.

42. See <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/youth/data/database>, accessed 1 July 2021.



Specific youth indicators are designed in some countries to measure and describe the situation of young people at country level.

In Estonia, country-specific youth indicators were set up in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020.<sup>43</sup>

In Germany, the Federal Statistical Office applies certain age groups when addressing certain issues (for example adolescents under 20 and youth under 25 years of age in areas of education and unemployment, and 18-24-year-olds without a degree in the sustainable development and education domains).

In Ukraine, 11 national youth policy indicators have been developed by a group of experts under the Ministry of Youth and Sports, based on the main priorities of the State Target Social Programme “Youth of Ukraine” for 2016-2020.<sup>44</sup> They refer to the following policy domains:

- ▶ demographic indices;
- ▶ education;
- ▶ employment;
- ▶ financial situation;
- ▶ health;
- ▶ HIV/Aids prevention;
- ▶ legal offences among youth;
- ▶ youth mobility;
- ▶ access to information and communication technologies;
- ▶ civic activity and youth engagement;
- ▶ youth policy implementation.

In Sweden, the web portal for youth policy indicators<sup>45</sup> presents up-to-date official statistics on young people’s situations. Around 60 indicators are grouped under six themes: education and learning, physical and mental health, economic and social vulnerability, influence and representation, work and housing, and culture and leisure.



### Reflection points

- ▶ Do you have any experience in using the dashboard of EU youth indicators? If so, what are the main advantages and disadvantages of using it, in your opinion?
- ▶ Could you provide any examples of youth indicators developed and used in your local/national context to measure the situation of young people?

43. See [www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/nak\\_eng.pdf](http://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/nak_eng.pdf), accessed 1 July 2021.

44. See <https://ukraine.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/THE%20STATE%20OF%20YOUTH%20IN%20UKRAINE%20report.pdf>, accessed 1 July 2021.

45. See [Ung idag](#) (in Swedish), accessed 1 July 2021.



## Chapter 6

# Knowledge networks and models of co-operation among youth policy makers, researchers, practitioners and young people

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**T**here are different models of co-operation between researchers, practitioners and policy makers depending on the needs, goals and resources available to these actors (Roe and Stanojević 2020). However, this division could be slightly artificial taking into account the ways in which the stakeholders communicate and co-operate in practice.

1. A linear model is where researchers produce data and policy makers and practitioners use it. This means that researchers define a problem, choose a method, and conduct research and analysis, while policy makers and practitioners can/should take research results into account while developing and implementing new interventions. This approach can be useful when dissemination mechanisms are easily accessible or when there is a good institutional structure that supports the practitioners to change their ways of working by application of knowledge.

“EU Youth Wiki”<sup>46</sup> is one example of a linear model of an online platform presenting information on European countries’ youth policies with the aim to support evidence-based European co-operation in the field of youth. Youth Wiki is run by the European Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and provides comparable information by country and by policy fields, including youth policy governance, education and training, voluntary activities, health and well-being, employment and entrepreneurship, creativity and culture, social inclusion, participation, youth work, and youth and the world. It allows the exchange of information and innovative approaches, and can substantiate peer learning activities. Youth Wiki interactive maps<sup>47</sup> offer comparative reviews on the main trends across participating countries in the areas of voluntary activities, participation, social inclusion, education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, and youth work.

2. A relationship model is where researchers and policy makers collaborate. This means that the production of evidence does not belong only to researchers since the knowledge is co-created. This model is useful when it is necessary to take into account the local context and when there are conditions (resources) for research and structures that enable two-way communication, for example, a joint effort of researchers and policy makers to tackle the challenge that unemployed youth face in rural areas, where they need to understand the challenges, policy measures and specific interventions.

The Finnish Youth Research Society<sup>48</sup> is an example of a relationship model, as a non-profit organisation aiming to develop youth research and to provide information and expertise on matters relating to young people (studies, perspectives, interpretations and political stands). The Finnish Youth Research Society is funded by the Ministry of Culture and Education in Finland, as well as by international providers of research funding, the Academy of Finland, foundations, organisations and municipalities, among others.

The Finnish Youth Research Society carries out research activities through the Finnish Youth Research Network. Its research activities are based on multidisciplinary and ethical approaches and a combination of basic academic research and applied research that is relevant in terms of youth policy. This set-up broadens the conventional understanding of the scopes of expertise and the roles of researchers. This research network produces multidisciplinary research data and participates in public discussions, offering perspectives on practical work with young people in the fields of administration and politics.

3. A system model is where researchers, policy makers and other stakeholders collaborate. It implies constant interaction between the production and use of knowledge, two processes that run simultaneously. An example of such a system is a set of activities organised around a youth board established and

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46. See <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki>, accessed 1 July 2021.

47. See <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/comparative-overviews>, accessed 1 July 2021.

48. See [www.youthresearch.fi/](http://www.youthresearch.fi/), accessed 1 July 2021.

maintained by all relevant stakeholders (policy makers, practitioners and researchers). The mandate of the board is usually to propose, create, implement, monitor and evaluate different programmes in the youth field.

An example of a system model is the EU Youth Dialogue,<sup>49</sup> an instrument of the EU Youth Strategy ensuring that the opinion of young people is taken into account in youth policy development across the European Union. EU 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 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;
- ▶ promote equal participation between young women and men;
- ▶ include diverse voices and 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 competences and sense of belonging to 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 includes:

- ▶ 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 practice;
- ▶ participation in EU youth conferences, from which inputs and content are incorporated into the EU Youth Dialogue process.

Key stakeholders co-operating on the EU Youth Dialogue process include:

- ▶ researchers from PEYR;
- ▶ the trio of EU Presidencies;
- ▶ EU Youth Dialogue national working groups;
- ▶ the European Youth Forum.

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49. See [https://europa.eu/youth/get-involved/eu%20youth%20dialogue/what-eu-youth-dialogue\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/get-involved/eu%20youth%20dialogue/what-eu-youth-dialogue_en), accessed 1 July 2021.

The EU–Council of Europe youth partnership aims to apply a system model in its work by engaging a wide range of actors from the youth field in its youth research, policy and youth work activities.



### Reflection points

- ▶ Are there any examples of co-operation among youth researchers, policy makers and practitioners in your context? If so, can you identify the main type of relationship among these actors?
- ▶ What are the main strengths and challenges related to co-operation among youth researchers, policy makers and practitioners in your context?
- ▶ Are young people involved in knowledge gathering and dissemination in your context?



## Chapter 7

# Guidelines for co-operation on youth knowledge

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**B**uilding long-term relationships and partnerships with the research community are a guarantee of developing programmes and policies that are effective, easy to measure and monitor, and tailored to youth needs, interests and realities. Creating and supporting research and knowledge networks at the national level could therefore be the aim of every national authority/ministry.

In this process, it is essential to keep in mind the factors that facilitate knowledge gathering, dissemination and translation among different actors, including:

- ▶ competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of researchers, policy makers and practitioners, including awareness of the value of continuous collaboration;
- ▶ continuous dialogue and communication among researchers, policy makers, practitioners and the knowledge users;
- ▶ commitment of policy makers to resource, support and improve practice and research;
- ▶ matching the evidence and the needs of the knowledge users;
- ▶ knowledge users' skills, responsiveness and ability to understand the research results;
- ▶ knowledge translation and transfer to interested parties (dissemination of research findings in a user-friendly way), by applying tools and activities to help them receive, assimilate and put research results into practice to generate impact.

On the other hand, the factors that hinder effective evidence-based policy making include limited access to good quality and relevant research, and releasing the results at times that do not match those required by decision-making processes (“bad timing”). Lack of transparency in commissioning, applying or using research results, lack of participation, debate and ownership of the research results or misuse of research findings for political gain are also hindering factors which ultimately weaken policy initiatives.

There are several elements to keep in mind when engaging with the researchers during consultations and research projects:

- ▶ a common understanding of the research scope and methodology needs to be ensured;
- ▶ researchers often need support, especially for data collection; unplanned and unexpected issues can arise during research, so flexibility is needed;
- ▶ feedback is a key element to ensure the quality of research outputs;
- ▶ research does not end with a report, because how the research output is communicated and used is fundamental to achieve the initial aim of the research.

The following principles play a key role in establishing co-operation between actors and structures involved in knowledge gathering, dissemination and translation:

- ▶ establishing and promoting relationships and processes between actors that are open, transparent, democratic and allow for dialogue;
- ▶ understanding and commitment of each actor to common goals;
- ▶ respecting and understanding of the opportunities and boundaries each actor brings to the process;
- ▶ developing research recommendations that are evidence-based, relevant and practical/realistic;
- ▶ ongoing monitoring and evaluation of co-operation between research, policy and practice;
- ▶ participation and inclusion of all actors in the process.

The following are examples of mechanisms for establishing and boosting co-operation among youth policy, practice and research in the field of youth:

- ▶ The development of a database of knowledge providers (youth researchers, practitioners, etc.) is recommended at a European, national, regional and local level. After preliminary mapping of the main actors and structures in the youth sector, it is useful to create a platform with all knowledge providers and their profiles. This database should be public and accessible to all actors in the youth sector.
- ▶ The establishment of panels of researchers at the national level is another mechanism to foster co-operation among youth policy, practice and research in the field of youth. Panels can be comprised of researchers from different backgrounds, such as universities, research departments in government ministries, other public institutions and independent youth researchers. Research panels are often established by government departments responsible for youth policy or other public institutions. They are based on a selection process and

have a mandate of three to five years. Researchers are invited by the contracting authority to tender to conduct research in the field of youth. Research panels provide opportunities for researchers to meet on a regular basis and to participate in training on good practice in youth research, policy and practice. Membership of research panels is free and usually publicly funded.

Implementation of these mechanisms increases the sustainability of knowledge networks and makes them part of the wider infrastructure (for example the ministry in charge of youth, university, institute, youth association, a youth or other non-formal organisation) that provides a focal point where youth research, practice and youth policies meet.



### Reflection points

- ▶ How could you apply these guidelines in your context?
- ▶ Do you have any other suggestions for establishing co-operation among youth knowledge structures?
- ▶ What other elements could be added to the guidelines above?





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As part of its objective to facilitate and support the dialogue between youth policy, youth work practice and youth research, the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership has developed a series of guidelines and tools for actors in this field. This publication introduces the readers to what is understood by youth research today, what youth knowledge networks are available at European and national levels and the resources they offer for knowledge-based youth policy and practice.

Examples from different countries show the diversity of structures and approaches across Europe. Models of co-operation among policy makers, researchers, practitioners and young people, as well as their organisations, are introduced and guidelines and approaches are shared at the end. Questions for reflection conclude each section to support the development of youth knowledge networks in various contexts.

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