

Youth work in eastern Europe: Realities, perspectives and inspiring initiatives



Youth Partnership

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Youth work in eastern Europe: Realities, perspectives and inspiring initiatives

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Introduction

This publication explores the reality of youth work in the six countries of eastern Europe involved in the Eastern Partnership initiative, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.¹ The political and economic framework of the Partnership influences the guidance on developing youth policy and youth work at national and regional level. While studies on the situation of young people, their social inclusion and youth policy in these countries are available, and incorporate a regional perspective, none to date have looked at the realities of youth work. This publication covers the following aspects of youth work: definitions; implementation; financing; youth worker education; methods of youth work; infrastructure; and youth-work quality standards.

While a lot of research in the region is based on surveys and opinion polls among young people, there has been relatively little analysis of youth policy, and even less is known and widely understood about the situation of youth work. With youth work becoming a key focus in European youth policy co-operation, this publication is a first attempt to paint a picture of youth work by country and across the region. This introduction is followed by a description of the methodology and sources used (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, the cross-country analytical part of the publication, each topic analysed includes a short summary of current trends and, where relevant, a section on support factors that were developed by experts during a peer-learning event in Tbilisi in 2019. In addition, more than 20 inspiring initiatives at local, national and European level, illustrating the building blocks and the improving reality of youth work in these six countries, are presented. These initiatives show that important foundational elements of strong youth work ecosystems in eastern

1. While the study aimed to cover the Russian Federation as well, there was insufficient thematic information that could be included. A summary country presentation on youth work can be found on the country page in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy section of the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership website.

Europe are already in place; we hope they can be multiplied and inspire more youth policy and youth work development projects. A few examples of approaches from other countries are shared in the section on European and transnational standards and support. Chapter 4 consists of brief country profiles showing how youth work is defined, recognised and supported at national level. This publication does not aim to paint a comprehensive picture of youth work, but to provide information on youth work development at this moment in time and help clarify how the policies, strategies, programmes and allocation of resources are organised, which concepts are used, and in which context.

We hope this will inspire further policies, programmes and project initiatives to improve the quality of youth work, from an individual to systemic level. Enjoy the read and share your feedback with the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership.

Happy youth work!



Methodology and sources

The publication was prepared in two phases. During the first phase, the authors analysed all material available on the topic of youth work and conducted interviews with relevant stakeholders to gain a picture of the situation at country level. A background paper providing a cross-country analysis was presented and expanded upon at a peer-learning event on strengthening the potential of youth work in eastern Europe, held in November 2019, which was jointly organised by the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership and the Georgian Youth Agency in Tbilisi, Georgia. The cross-country analytical section in Chapter 3 presents the results across the region by themes agreed by stakeholders from the six countries in a preparatory process for the peer-learning event. More than 60 participants in the peer-learning event, representing a wide range of youth work stakeholders, explored the realities of youth work from the perspective of practice, policy and research and developed proposals for improving the quality of youth work in eastern Europe. These proposals are analysed in the regional context, identifying common trends and support factors.

The publication further provides an overview of the policy and legislation pertaining to youth work, summarising the realities of the national structures and legal frameworks. In doing so, it relies on secondary sources, such as youth work country sheets produced by the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy correspondents, published papers and book chapters related to youth work, available policy analyses and interviews with experts from the countries reviewed. The definitions of youth work, forms of national recognition and current national policy initiatives are assessed; the funding arrangements for youth work are examined, followed by an analysis of the youth work structures and actors in the countries concerned, education of youth workers, methods of youth work and European and transnational standards and support.

The work is based on the following sources:

- ▶ analysis of existing documents, including the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy country sheets on youth work and youth policy, studies on education and career pathways for youth workers and European Union (EU) Youth Wiki contributions;
- ▶ inputs provided at the Tbilisi peer-learning event held in November 2019, including interviews and written contributions;
- ▶ interviews with youth policy makers, youth workers, researchers and other relevant experts from the countries reviewed;
- ▶ a good-practice survey, with inspiring initiatives from the participants in the peer-learning event illustrating ways to improve the quality of youth work in eastern Europe.



Regional perspectives on youth work in eastern Europe

The current stage in the development of youth work in eastern Europe began after 1991, when the six countries in question declared their independence from the Soviet Union. By then, each country had been part of the Soviet Union for 70 years and this legacy heavily influenced the initial years of policy development. In the Soviet Union, significant resources – including government structures, mechanisms and programmes for work with youth – were in place. All aspects of policy planning and implementation were ideological and political. Soviet youth policy followed very rigidly the official political and ideological line of the state, which limited civic involvement and youth participation. This legacy has influenced the development of youth work and youth participation in the region for years to come. Without considering this historical heritage, it would be impossible to analyse contemporary youth work in eastern Europe. The gradual process of youth policy's integration into the national legislative frameworks began in the early 1990s.

After gaining independence, the six countries entered a transition period and took different paths towards developing and implementing their national youth policies and youth work frameworks. Youth work practices were shaped by specific political, socio-economic and cultural contexts, and today we are witnessing a variation of models for the development of youth work. Some of these models reserve a strong role for civil society in the provision of youth work (as in Armenia, Georgia and Moldova), while in others, the state remains proactively involved, including by supporting infrastructure in youth work (as in Azerbaijan, Belarus and, to some extent, in Ukraine).

Youth policy legislation and institutional structures

All national governments in the region developed youth policy responses at country level by developing relevant legislation (Table 1) and establishing institutions responsible for youth and youth policy (Table 2). Substantial differences exist between national youth policies and youth work-related legislation. Laws on youth exist in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, but not in Armenia. All six countries have high-level youth policy documents in place, such as a strategy or concept defining the main directions for developments in the youth field and youth policy. Moreover, youth policy is a dynamic policy field – the governments of all countries renew their national legislative documents relevant to youth policy on a regular basis. Furthermore, in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine youth policies are recognised as an important part of the government development agendas. All countries in the region have state programmes or action plans defining the main activities implemented in the youth field.

Table 1: Overview of legislation in the youth field²

Country	Law	Strategy/Concept	Action Plan/ Programme
Armenia		The Concept of State Youth Policy 2015-25	
Azerbaijan	Law on Youth Policy	Azerbaijani Youth Development Strategy for 2015-25	Youth of Azerbaijan in 2017-21 State Programme
Belarus	Law on Foundations of the State Youth Policy (adopted in 2016)	Strategy of youth policy development in the Republic of Belarus up to 2030 (draft), expected December 2019	Law Action Plan
Georgia	Law on State Support to Children and Youth Unions (22 June 1999) Law on the Protection of Underage Children from Harmful Influence (28 September 2001)	National Youth Policy Document (2014)	National Youth Policy Action Plan 2015-20

2. All the tables in this paper have been compiled by the authors on the basis of government documents, interviews with peer learning seminar and EKCYP correspondents in all six countries.

Country	Law	Strategy/Concept	Action Plan/ Programme
Moldova	Law on Youth (second version, adopted in 2016; the first one was adopted in 1999)	The National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020, the Education 2020 Strategy (third strategy in operation, previous ones were adopted in 2003 and 2009)	National Youth Action Plan 2020
Ukraine	Law on youth (draft) expected December 2019	The Strategy of Youth Policy in Ukraine 2030	Youth of Ukraine 2016-20 Programme

As new laws and strategies are gradually developed in all countries of the region, legal frameworks for youth policy and youth work grow in importance within public policy at large.

As Table 2 shows, all of the countries have central state structures responsible for youth policy. However, youth policy usually falls under the responsibility of a larger entity, connected to another policy area (e.g. education, sport, culture, science, research). In such instances, youth policy units and departments occupy a small part of the relevant structures and have significantly fewer resources than larger policy areas such as education, sport or culture.

Table 2: Government institutions responsible for youth (line ministries)

Armenia	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Azerbaijan	Ministry of Youth and Sports
Belarus	Ministry of Education
Georgia	Youth Agency (under the Prime Minister's Office)
Moldova	Ministry of Education, Culture and Research
Ukraine	Ministry of Youth and Sports

Current trends

Youth policy governance structures in the region tend to be frequently reformed, making institutional change a near-permanent feature of the sector. Furthermore, in recent years there has been an increased interest among policy makers in separating policy making from delivery, implementation and funding. Such changes were made in Armenia through the creation of a dedicated youth events body (abolished in the 2019-20 round of reforms), in Georgia with the creation of the Youth Agency and in Ukraine

with the recent creation of the State Agency for Youth and Civil Society Development, created in January and closed in March 2020 (Ukrinform 2020). The legal framework for a national youth agency is also adopted but not yet implemented in Moldova.

Defining youth work

Only in two countries, Armenia and Moldova, has a definition of youth work and youth workers been provided in legal and policy documents (Table 3). The Armenian definition is a broad description of what youth work entails, and the Moldovan definition grounds youth work in a clear set of duties and responsibilities.

Owing to the lack of comprehensive legal definitions in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine, a wide range of applied definitions and understandings are used at national, regional and local level. Conflicting definitions, covering work with young people (activities of various kinds) and actual youth work (voluntary and participatory) coexist in both policy and practice. Lack of clear definitions means that youth policy makers must constantly negotiate what to prioritise and support.

Table 3: Definition of youth work

Country	Definition
Armenia	“Youth worker” is a person who carries out youth work (work with young people, groups of young people, or work which aims to address youth issues) to foster young people’s personal, social and educational growth, to develop their full potential and help them to fully establish themselves in society (Concept of State Youth Policy 2015-25).
Azerbaijan	No legal definition
Belarus	No legal definition
Georgia	No legal definition
Moldova	According to the Youth Law, “youth work” is defined as any action with and for young people, of a social, cultural, educational or civic nature, which is based on non-formal learning processes and the voluntary participation of young people, co-ordinated by a youth worker or a youth work specialist.
Ukraine	No legal definition

Current trends

Focus on youth work at European level in recent years has stimulated further initiatives in the countries where youth work has not yet been clearly defined. This is confirmed by stakeholders from Georgia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine, where a series of large-scale policy and educational activities target the field of youth work, as described in the further sections of this publication. These countries are also working on policy initiatives that might include definitions of youth work. This would be an important step towards clarifying the role of youth work in a participatory process involving youth workers and NGOs that carry out youth work.

Standard setting in youth work

Standard setting in youth work plays a crucial role not only for the recognition and establishment of the profession but also for developing the quality of youth work. Standard setting is an important tool for improving the quality of youth work because it helps:

- ▶ ensure recognition of youth work as a profession, and promote the value of youth work within society;
- ▶ change the perception that youth work is only a stepping stone towards getting a “real” job;
- ▶ avoid manipulation and tokenism;
- ▶ guarantee a minimum package of services offered by youth centres;
- ▶ personal and social impact assessment.

In this publication, standards refer to youth work delivery (code of ethics and quality standards), the professionalisation of youth work providers (educational and occupational standards of youth workers and validation), accreditation of organisations providing youth work and the recognition of skills gained by young people through non-formal youth work programmes.

Countries in the region apply different sets of standards, some of which are well established while others are still being developed. An overview is provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Standard setting in youth work in eastern Europe

Country	Code of ethics, quality standards	Professionalisation of youth workers
Armenia	Youth work quality assurance framework is under development.	Institutional development of youth work and its recognition as a profession has been put on the policy agenda with the enactment of the Regulation on the Youth Worker Institute.
Azerbaijan	Youth work quality assurance framework is under development.	In 2018 the subject “youth work” was included in the classification of subjects for a master’s degree in higher education; in September 2019 the programme was launched at six universities.
Belarus	Quality assurance for youth workers is determined by employment agreements between employers and youth workers and by local job regulations.	Existence of a relevant educational standard with a distinct list of professional skills. Existence of formal education programmes for university graduates, including a 2-year retraining course (“organisation of youth work”) leading to the professional qualification “specialist in youth work”.

Country	Code of ethics, quality standards	Professionalisation of youth workers
	Existence of an occupational standard with defined professional duties and requirements with regard to educational and training background.	A variety of non-formal education programmes and professional development courses for youth workers.
Georgia	A youth work quality assurance framework and certification criteria for youth workers are under development.	The Youth Agency aims to develop qualification courses for youth workers, to be launched in 2020. A Youth Work Key Skills Framework document has already been drawn up by the Ministry of Education.
Moldova	Youth work quality assurance framework is under development.	Only a youth work specialist (professional) can provide youth services. It is also specified that a youth work specialist is a person who has received special training in the field of youth work and who offers professional services to young people. The Law on Youth also defines youth workers acting on a voluntary basis, who may be youth leaders, representatives of a youth organisation, etc. In the formal educational system, no vocational training for youth workers is available. In the case of youth centres, a conceptual document, Programme Portfolio for Youth Centres, was drawn up by the Ministry in 2019. The document provides a general framework and innovative ideas, tools, models, methods and criteria for future youth work carried out by youth centres.
Ukraine	There is no formal recognition of youth work, which is recognised at the discretion of individual organisations and institutions.	The Ministry of Youth and Sports operates a large-scale national Youth Worker Programme in partnership with UNDP, providing training to youth workers since 2014.

Developing and implementing quality assurance standards varies across the countries, from national occupational and educational standards to the evaluation of youth organisations. Table 4 shows that quality standards are only partially established and that greater attention is needed to develop a more comprehensive set of standards, considering all realities across all the areas listed above. Quality standards should respond to the different realities in which youth work takes place, including paid or volunteer-led youth work, delivered by public authorities or other stakeholders, individual and organisational approaches.

Quality assurance in these countries is generally of a voluntary and optional nature. There are, for example, sociologists, teachers and social workers who perform youth work, but their educational background has not provided them with a specific set of skills for youth work. Although there are dedicated educational programmes for youth workers in Azerbaijan and Belarus, people do not necessarily take these courses in order to carry out youth work. The existence of quality assurance frameworks in certain countries of eastern Europe does not always entail mandatory compliance.

Quality assurance frameworks are more frequently organised as internal quality control within organisations, not yet supported by the documents at national level. In Belarus, quality assurance for youth workers is determined by employment agreements between employers and youth workers and by local job regulations. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova are currently developing quality assurance frameworks for youth work. In Ukraine the Youth Worker Programme issues certificates to its graduates, but recognition is at the discretion of individual organisations and institutions (UNDP Ukraine 2020).

Inspiring initiative from Ireland: Quality standards

Title: Endorsement of quality standards for education of youth workers

Organiser: Department of Education for Northern Ireland and the Youth Affairs Unit of the Department of Education and Science

This inspiring example comes from Ireland, where the North South Education and Training Standards Committee for Youth Work (NSETS) was established on a cross-border basis in 2006 by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland and the Youth Affairs Unit of the Department of Education and Science (now the Department of Children and Youth Affairs). NSETS works to ensure and promote quality standards in the education and training of youth workers through an endorsement process based on a rigorous assessment of all aspects of programme content and delivery.

NSETS professional endorsement represents a formal recognition by the youth work sector that programmes of study in youth work have met prescribed criteria and are fit for purpose.

A clear distinction is made between professional endorsement and academic validation. This “endorsement” signifies that specific education programmes have met the minimum standards and prescribed criteria as set out by the youth work sector through NSETS. This is not the same as academic validation, which is carried out by the appropriate higher education institutions and authorities.

Further information: www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/nsets/#Terms-of-Reference

Inspiring initiative from Estonia: Value-based quality of youth work

Title: Collaboration of all national stakeholders on development of value-based quality of youth work

Organiser: Estonian Ministry of Education and Research

Quality in youth work and youth policy is a long-term focus in Estonia. Thus, the Estonian Youth Work Centre (EYWC), founded in 1999, is a national centre for youth work under the administrative authority of the Ministry of Education and Research (MER); its main objective is to develop and organise youth work in the framework of the national youth policy.

EYWC is financed by the state budget and co-operates with governmental and youth work agencies, local governments, youth associations and other institutions to develop youth policy and youth work, provide valuable advice and information and represent, promote and protect the interests and values of youth work.

In co-operation with the MER Youth Department, EYWC is responsible for achieving the goals of the Estonian Youth Work Development Plan 2014-20 and implementing the actions specified in the programme.

EYWC and the MER Youth Department also work towards improving the services provided to youth, adapting them to the needs of young people and to the goals and directions of youth policy, with a view to enhancing the quality and availability of services.

The activities of EYWC are as follows:

- ▶ implementing the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-20;
- ▶ performing functions arising from the Youth Work Act and other relevant laws;
- ▶ developing smart youth work;
- ▶ co-ordinating networking activities;
- ▶ awarding and recognising youth workers' professional qualifications;
- ▶ assessing the quality of youth work;
- ▶ monitoring young people's welfare;
- ▶ organising training courses on youth work;
- ▶ financing projects (e.g. open calls for open youth centres and "hobby schools");
- ▶ facilitating youth participation.

The youth workers' training system in Estonia has earned a reputation for the successful integration of teaching, research and methodological development, examples of which include:

- ▶ formal education of youth workers through bachelor's and master's programmes;
- ▶ informal training sessions, based on daily trainers' needs;
- ▶ development of trainers' tools (journals, textbooks and manuals, training reports, learning methods, web-based toolbox);
- ▶ development of knowledge about training (research on skills existing and needed, analysis of training quality);
- ▶ support for trainers (trainers' database, trainers' skills model, training of trainers and networking).

Further information: <https://entk.ee/en/>

Current trends

Quality assurance standards in youth work are currently on the policy-making agenda and are being developed in all six countries, which have a proven interest in setting quality standards for youth work delivery, professionalisation of youth work providers, accreditation of organisations providing youth work, and the recognition of skills gained by young people through non-formal youth work programmes.

Support factors

Each country has a number of important standard-setting elements that could be further developed to form a more coherent national youth work standards system. In order to boost and amplify standard setting in youth work in eastern Europe, the following can be considered to be supporting factors for standard setting in youth work:

- ▶ jointly defining, with all relevant stakeholders, profiles for youth workers with different levels of responsibility (senior youth workers, junior youth workers, youth camp leaders, etc.);
- ▶ creating a transparent mechanism for ensuring standards implementation;
- ▶ establishing standards on the quality of content and methodology of youth work (for example, youth workers should be familiar with, and apply, human rights-based approaches in their work) and setting ethical guidelines for youth work;
- ▶ introducing, and meeting, accessibility requirements (standards) for premises, facilities, spaces and general infrastructure where youth work is delivered, and ensuring inclusive environment, safety (physical and psychological) and security standards;
- ▶ providing diverse learning opportunities for youth workers (both formal and non-formal) and encouraging youth workers' mobility.

Financial support for youth work

Financial support for youth work comes from three main sources: state budgets, local government budgets and international donors (Table 5). All governments allocate certain funds for youth work. In Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, this is done mainly through dedicated “youth policy” budget lines. In Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine, this is mostly channelled through state youth programmes, covering youth policy and certain forms of youth work.

It should be noted, however, that across all these countries, the largest sums are committed to project-based activities rather than permanent youth work programmes and institutions. This limits the sustainability of youth work-related programmes and policies. The amount of funds allocated varies, but youth work practitioners, supported by research and evaluation documents, all confirm that needs exceed available resources. Furthermore, a number of important youth programmes and strategies announced at policy level lack appropriate funding for their implementation. Accessing, managing and reporting state funding is often bureaucratic, slow and

burdensome; this is particularly relevant for small and decentralised youth actions implemented by non-formal groups and non-governmental organisations (findings exchanged at the Tbilisi peer-learning event held in 2019).

Local authority funding for youth work depends greatly on the economic strength of the respective local government and the political will of the representatives. This leads to uneven distribution of resources within countries. Large economic disparities between rural and urban areas result in unequal access to youth work. None of the countries consolidate data on youth work spending by local authorities, but reported evidence from Georgia and Ukraine suggests that, in a few very lucky instances, some local authorities commit more funding to youth policy and youth work than national authorities (for example, Ukraine’s Youth Worker Programme).

Funding by foreign donors is mainly project-based and time-limited. Owing to the lack of financial support for youth organisations, youth work activities are mostly short-term project activities that stop when international donor funding comes to an end. This leads to a high turnover of volunteers and paid staff in the youth sector. With insecure employment conditions, the few paid youth workers ultimately leave the sector, in search of greater security. This factor greatly influences the quality development of youth work. The largest donors in the region are: the EU, the US Government (USAID), UN agencies (which often carry out EU-funded projects) and EU member state governments (e.g. Germany and Sweden, through both their respective development agencies and funds channelled via the UN system).

UN organisations play a particularly important role in providing expertise and financial assistance to youth policy (covering also areas such as volunteering) and youth work across all six countries. In Moldova, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation supports the Joint Fund for Development of Youth Centres, aimed at strengthening participation and civic engagement among young people. In Ukraine, UNDP provides support and funding to the government’s Youth Worker Programme. In Georgia, UNDP provides funding and expertise via its Governance Reform Programme to youth policy evaluation and management. In Belarus, UNDP implemented a long-term programme on the development of local volunteering, funded by the EU (UNDP Belarus 2020). In Azerbaijan, UNICEF provided technical expertise to set up the country’s first youth worker training programme in six universities. In Armenia, UNDP supported research into young people’s needs and priorities, informing the development of youth policy (UNDP Armenia 2020). While EU and Council of Europe funding is important for youth and youth work organisations, it does not have an impact on the whole sector.

Table 5: Financial resource allocation for youth policy and youth work in eastern Europe

Country	Funding sources and amounts
Armenia	Approximately 304 million Armenian dram (AMD) (€600 000) was allocated to youth policy and youth work from the state budget line “youth policy programmes and events” in 2018 and 2019.

Country	Funding sources and amounts
Azerbaijan	<p>The state budget for youth policy (including youth work) was 10 million Azerbaijani manat (AZN) (approx. €5.35 million) in 2018 and AZN 7.3 million (approx. €3.9 million) in 2019.</p> <p>There is no separate, dedicated local youth policy budget. Of the above sums, AZN 800 000 (€428 000) is provided for maintenance and activities of local (district) youth and sport departments.</p> <p>There are no dedicated youth work programmes within the state youth policy framework. The 12 youth centres managed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports have an annual general budget of AZN 1 million (€535 000). This sum comes under the state budget for youth policy.</p>
Belarus	<p>In accordance with the Law on Foundations of the State Youth Policy (Article 22), funding for the state youth policy (including youth work) comes from the national and/or local budgets.</p> <p>The state budget for youth policy (including youth work) was 30 565 430 Belarusian ruble (BYN) (approx. €1 274 000) in 2018 and BYN 33 315 411 (approx. €1 385 000) in 2019.</p>
Georgia	<p>As the youth policy system in Georgia is undergoing governance reform, it is difficult to provide specific figures for public funding of youth work.</p> <p>In the previous system, where the Ministry of Education covered youth policy and youth work matters, both the planning and implementation (programme/financial) burden of youth interventions came from the Ministry's annual budget. The budget of the Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education decreased over the last three years from 2 million to 500 000 Georgian lari (GEL) (i.e. from €600 000 to €150 000). In 2017, the project that specifically supported youth work was a "youth workers' certification project", with a budget of GEL 50 000 (€15 000).</p>
Moldova	<p>The state budget for youth affairs is approximately 20 000 000 Moldovan leu (MDL) (i.e. €1 million) per year and has not changed since 2018. However, this amount does not include programmes for youth that are implemented by ministries or related agencies other than the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research.</p> <p>The total budget allocated by second-level local public authorities (LPAs) amounted to approx. €600 000 in 2017, representing a slight increase over the 2016 level (+5%). In 2018, the budget allocation by second-level LPAs was approx. €1.5 million. The increase is related to the launch in 2017 of the National Programme for Youth Centre Development 2022; the youth centres were established by the LPA (22 local youth centres in 2019).</p> <p>The total amount allocated towards the annual grant programme for supporting and developing the youth NGO sector, financed from the state budget, is about 7 million Moldovan leu (MDL) (approx. €360 000).</p>

Country	Funding sources and amounts
Ukraine	<p>The distribution of budgetary costs is provided for in the allocation plan of the Youth of Ukraine 2016-20 Programme. The total budget planned for the period of the programme amounts to 501 286 680 Ukrainian hryvnia (UAH) (approx. €16.7 million).</p> <p>The total budget of the Youth Worker Programme is difficult to estimate, owing to the range of funding sources, including the Ministry of Youth and Sports, UNDP, UNICEF and USAID, as well as regional and local authorities, but can be estimated at around €770 000 between 2014 and 2020.</p>

Current trends

In funding terms, youth work became a victim of its own success in the region. As youth policy frameworks grow, and countries of the region develop successive strategies and implementation plans, policy growth outpaces financial and resource growth. This results in a number of youth work programmes and initiatives being underfunded and otherwise under-resourced. UN agencies are important actors in youth policy and in relation to youth work development in the six countries. This means that they have a significant say on the policy and implementation agenda. The adoption of European standards and frameworks depends largely on the capacity of national governments to translate them into national legislation, and there is a lack of expert support in this area.

Support factors

Considering the situation in youth policy development in eastern Europe, the following can be considered to be supporting factors for youth work funding:

- ▶ full resourcing of all youth laws and strategies, in line with the 2014 Baku Commitment to Youth Policies (Baku 2014);
- ▶ pooling and co-ordination of funding between local, national and international actors, allowing for synergies and avoiding multiplication of efforts where resources are scarce;
- ▶ using research, including monitoring and evaluation evidence to guide budgeting and financing of youth work to commit funds where they are most needed;
- ▶ tapping into the potential and resources of the voluntary sector, including local and international NGOs as well as non-formal and community groups, for low-cost local impact and greater local ownership of youth work programmes.

Inspiring initiative from Moldova: Developing a legal basis for a youth work funding ecosystem

Title: Developing a legal basis for a youth work funding ecosystem

Organiser: Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research

In Moldova, the Youth Department of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research started to look for different ways of developing a suitable legal basis for

youth work funding. The department worked with other stakeholders to elaborate, adjust, and modify policy papers, methodologies, recommendations, etc. A key step in this process was the adoption of budgetary regulations at local level, with different local beneficiaries including local public authorities (LPAs), youth centres, youth NGOs, local youth councils and youth workers. The main beneficiaries are young people from Moldova (aged 14-35), who are active, involved in voluntary activities, ambitious and who need their projects and initiatives to be supported. This initiative featured the budgetary classification of youth programmes, based on five components:

- ▶ development and promotion of youth work;
- ▶ maintenance of youth centres;
- ▶ strengthening youth representative structures;
- ▶ grants programme for youth initiatives;
- ▶ youth service delivery.

This approach allowed the Youth Department to build a whole “ecosystem” of mutually supporting institutions and groups, reinforcing the local outreach of youth work, and thereby making it a more important element of local policy making. For further information, see the presentation on the EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership website.

Investing in youth workers (education, learning and skills)

In eastern European countries youth work is carried out by both civil servants and civil society organisations (mostly NGOs). However, there are very few systemic measures to support and further develop youth work at national and local level. Constructive dialogue and co-operation between civil servants and civil society in the area of youth work does not occur regularly. In some contexts, they exist in parallel worlds. Youth workers call for the paternalistic approach to youth development to be reformed, and for the international practices of stimulating youth participation, civic education and non-formal learning to be adopted. Importantly, they also call for the education and training of youth workers in eastern European countries. An overview of education pathways for youth workers is provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Education pathways of youth workers in eastern Europe

Country	Education pathways for youth workers
Armenia	No formal training programmes in youth work are offered; consequently, youth workers come from a variety of backgrounds. Two state universities (Yerevan State University and Shirak State University) include the academic subject “youth work basics” in the curriculum for social workers. Within civil society, there are courses and seminars related to youth work, but none of these training courses leads to an officially recognised qualification.

Country	Education pathways for youth workers
Azerbaijan	In 2018 “youth work” was included in the list of subjects for the master’s degree in higher education; in September 2019 the programme was launched at six universities.
Belarus	A formal education programme for university graduates – including a 2-year retraining course “organisation of youth work” – leading to the professional qualification “youth work specialist”, was launched in 2008. NGOs provide a variety of non-formal education programmes and professional development courses for youth workers.
Georgia	The Youth Agency aims to develop qualification courses for youth workers, to be launched in 2020.
Moldova	The majority of youth workers and youth work specialists complete short programmes for youth workers provided by NGOs under a variety of projects; there is as yet no university degree in youth work in Moldova. Currently the process of training and professional development of youth work specialists is taking place under the Joint Fund for Development of Youth Centres implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and UNFPA Moldova.
Ukraine	The Ministry of Youth and Sports operates a large-scale national Youth Worker Programme in partnership with UNDP, providing training to youth workers since 2014.

In Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, ongoing legal and governance reforms led to a disruption of existing programmes and delays in preparing new initiatives in the field. In these countries the new structures, or those in the process of being set up, declare their interest and support for youth worker education but further steps are yet to be taken.

The picture regarding non-formal learning and development of youth worker skills is much more nuanced. In the absence of state provision and a clear legal definition of “youth work” and “youth workers”, many youth workers in eastern Europe design their own learning paths. There are opportunities to learn and develop skills in the six countries, provided by local actors (NGOs and local authorities) as well as international organisations and donors. Cross-border and online programmes such as massive open online courses (MOOCs), or the mobility programmes and international training activities supported by the Erasmus+ programme or the Council of Europe, are important opportunities for youth workers to increase their skills and design their own learning curricula. These cannot be considered systematic approaches but are strongly dependent on what is available or possible.

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

There is a marked difference in skills frameworks between countries with significant state support and infrastructure for youth work, notably Azerbaijan, Belarus, and to an extent Ukraine, on the one hand, and Armenia, Moldova and Georgia, on the other.

Current trends

Education pathways and structures for youth workers differ considerably among the six eastern European countries in terms of scope, formalisation and quality of education and learning for youth workers. While no formal training programmes in youth work are currently offered in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, there is a clear interest in setting them up. Furthermore, youth worker education has come on to the policy agenda. For example, the Regulation on the Youth Worker Institute in Armenia specifies the role of youth worker training and continuing education. In Moldova, the Law on Youth stresses the importance of youth workers' special training. In all six countries, the civil society sector, supported by international donors, is very active in providing non-formal education programmes for youth workers.

Support factors

The following can be considered to be supporting factors for youth worker education, learning and skills development:

- ▶ recognition of youth work as an occupation, vocation or profession;
- ▶ creating a formal validation system of non-formal learning in youth work;
- ▶ developing professional and educational standards with a distinct list of professional skills;
- ▶ developing systematic measures to support and further develop youth worker training programmes;
- ▶ building well-funded partnerships with institutions and donors for the development of youth workers' training systems.

Inspiring initiative from Ukraine: Youth Worker Programme

Title: Youth Worker Programme

Organiser: The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, in co-operation with UNDP Ukraine

In Ukraine, while no formal education pathways for youth workers exist, and there is no skills framework, the role of central government remains substantial, as it supports and partially implements a national Youth Worker Programme, in partnership with UNDP and other donors as well as regional and local authorities. The programme provides courses for youth workers and youth work specialists throughout regions of Ukraine.

The programme was launched in 2014 by UNDP Ukraine in co-operation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the State Institute for Family and Youth Policy. The Youth Worker Programme constitutes an important strategy to foster democratic transformations in Ukraine and is aimed at developing the skills of public servants and civil society representatives working with youth, to empower and equip young people with the necessary skills for engaging in community life and in policy making and decision making at local and national levels. The programme consists of training sessions, involving equal numbers of public servants and civil society representatives, aimed at facilitating dialogue and co-operation between the state authorities and NGOs.

At the time of the programme's launch, youth policy in Ukraine was over-regulated and administered by central state authorities. Under the decentralisation reform initiated in 2014, powers are being transferred from centralised management to local self-government bodies, replacing the principle of "work with youth" with that of "youth participation". Funding for youth work is determined by local self-government bodies. An urgent need for youth work professionals, methodologies and recommendations for the development of local infrastructure for youth has emerged. The Youth Worker Programme tackles most of the emerging challenges related to the roll-out of the decentralisation reform. The programme strives also to change the paternalistic approach to youth development by introducing the best international practices of youth engagement and non-formal learning in Ukraine.

Further information: <https://www.ua.undp.org/content/ukraine/en/home/press-center/articles/2014/12/05/new-youth-worker-for-new-ukraine.html> and <http://youth-worker.org.ua/about>.

Inspiring initiative from Armenia: Young Citizens of Armenia project

Title: Young Citizens of Armenia project

Organiser: KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation

The project aims to strengthen democracy in Armenia, highlighting the role of youth work and the participation of young people in that process.

The project has three main core objectives:

- ▶ to create, through free and open youth clubs, a neutral meeting platform for promoting the participation in civic and political life of young people with different backgrounds from different communities in Armenia;
- ▶ to enrich and improve the quality of youth work through the development of youth club leaders' educational and training skills;
- ▶ to increase young people's civic engagement.

Lessons learnt

- ▶ In relation to risk management and the turnover of the participants, the level of involvement the project requires should be better explained to youth club leaders to avoid drop-outs after the selection process. Also, club leaders should be supported in devoting more time to individual mentoring and reflection opportunities with youth.
- ▶ - A core group of participants should be created; in our case young people visiting youth clubs. This would increase the immediate impact of the project and inspire others to join different activities. In addition, the stable participation of some young people would facilitate the assessment of the impact of the project activities.
- ▶ The network of alumni should be re-enforced, for example by giving an online communication tool and the status of alumni to those former participants who want to be part of the network. The reinforcement of the alumni network would strengthen synergies with other projects and initiatives. Additionally, it

would facilitate the monitoring of the impact of civic commitment of former participants beyond the project.

- ▶ Youth initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of young people at local level and fostering their co-operation with other stakeholders may not always achieve their objectives on time. However, owing to their very nature, these initiatives are sooner or later implemented beyond the time limits of each project cycle.

Further information: <http://kasa.am/les-jeunes-pour-la-societe-manuel-pour-les-travailleurs-jeunesse-debutants> and <http://kasa.am/jeux-educatifs-concus-par-kasa/0>

Inspiring initiative from Azerbaijan: Master's degree in youth work

Title: National and international co-operation for ensuring quality in youth worker training – Master's degree in youth work

Organiser: Academy of Public Administration, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education and Youth Foundation, in co-operation with UNICEF

The aim of this initiative was to start a master's degree programme in "youth work management and youth policy". The programme was launched in 2019 with the support of experts from Tallinn University, the Academy of Public Administration, the Department of Youth Policy and Sport Issues, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Education, the Youth Foundation and UNICEF Azerbaijan. Currently, six universities in Azerbaijan offer master's degrees in youth work, all based on the same curriculum: the Academy of Public Administration, Baku State University, Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University, Azerbaijan University and Ganja State University (UNICEF Azerbaijan 2018).

The entire programme, which will result in some 66 youth workers and youth policy makers being trained, was developed with the aid of international experts and donors. UNICEF recommended a common curriculum based on best international practices and added specific modules developed by local specialists with guidance from UNICEF's international experts. These modules covered areas such as: challenges of youth work and youth policy; professional ethics in youth work; youth policy (international and national experience); strategic management in the youth field; leadership and youth mentoring; networking in the youth field and public relations; career guidance for young people; monitoring of youth work programmes; research methods; social policy and social issues; youth work and youth research; information technologies and innovation management in the youth sector; history and methodology of youth work and youth work management. As the programme is in its first year, with the initial graduates expected in 2020, it is not possible to evaluate its impact and sustainability.

Lessons learnt

With only 10 countries in the world offering master's degree programmes in youth work, the only way to get good results is through collaboration with other universities, based on knowledge sharing in the field. The master's programme's is new, and there is a long way to go.

Inspiring initiative from Belarus: “Organisation of youth work” course

Title: Retraining course “organisation of youth work”

Organiser: National Institute for Higher Education

In 2007, the Ministry of Education of Belarus recognised youth work as a distinct professional area by adding the specialty “organisation of youth work” to the list of official professional classifications, developing a relevant educational standard with a list of professional skills, and developing a formal education programme for university graduates, which includes a 2-year retraining course “organisation of youth work” leading to the professional qualification of “specialist in youth work”.

The job description of “youth worker” in the National Classification of Occupations specifies the following requirements: higher or special secondary education, with no requirement for work experience; retraining or advanced professional training in the sphere of youth work. Fundamental and practical knowledge of psychology, management, modelling techniques and design of youth processes is required.

The National Institute for Higher Education is the only institution implementing the retraining course “organisation of youth work”. More than 150 youth specialists have been trained so far, who currently work for youth organisations and for state and public bodies.

Lessons learnt

Training in this specialty goes beyond the training course itself. In our case, the Department of Youth Policy of the National Institute for Higher Education has become a platform for the emergence of a professional community. For example, we created the Association for Youth Workers, which along with our graduates and students includes leaders of public organisations, to provide a scientific and methodological foundation and develop a normative base for youth work.

Further information: <http://nihe.bsu.by/index.php/ru/mol-pol-perep>

Inspiring initiative from Ireland: Formal youth worker training

Title: Alternative successful model of formal youth worker training programmes

Organiser: Maynooth University

At Maynooth University, professional youth work education and training programmes are aimed at enabling the learner to acquire the knowledge, skills and competence to work under supervision in a youth work context and/or to progress to further higher education and training. Bachelor’s and master’s programmes in social science (community and youth work) are available.

The curriculum focuses on the following key aspects:

- ▶ in the process of professional training, academic excellence and practical competence have equal value;
- ▶ social science is the foundation of the programme (disciplines of sociology, psychology, management, etc. form the core of the curriculum);

- ▶ underpinned by an explicit focus on equality and human rights;
- ▶ theory, policy and practice of youth work are integrated within learning;
- ▶ supervised fieldwork placement (14 weeks full-time) in each year of the programme.

Further information: <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/applied-social-studies>

Methods and types of youth work

As seen above, youth work remains loosely defined and is not subject to strict regulations in eastern Europe. This translates into a great diversity of methods and types of delivery of youth work at all levels.

Several modes of delivery of youth work services by the youth sector are common across the region, including the more traditional and established methods such as out-of-school education and extracurricular activities for pupils and students, as well as open youth work. A large proportion of young people are not in education, training or employment (NEET) and many outreach youth work programmes target young people in rural or remote areas. Few organisations are able to invest in developing specific methods for youth work. Youth workers who benefit from international mobility usually bring back to their organisations new ideas and methods. For example, digital youth work is starting to be implemented by some organisations in eastern Europe, but it is not as widely practised as in the rest of Europe.

One of the most common features of youth work in eastern Europe is its attachment to education – often formal education – and links with state and public services in this domain. “Hobby schools” and other extracurricular activities for pupils and students, largely inherited from the Soviet educational system, are complementary to formal education. This is sometimes seen as youth work, other times as part of extracurricular learning, but does not represent all aspects of youth work. Two countries – Ukraine and Belarus – implement such activities at central level as part of official youth policy, and have dedicated central government units for this service. In Ukraine, the Ministry of Education has a directorate of pre-school, after-school and inclusive education overseeing such activities across all regions of Ukraine (see <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/tag/pozashkilna-osvita>). The directorate oversees and jointly organises a range of activities including non-formal education and competitions such as the iTalent project (see <https://italent.org.ua>). In Belarus, this approach is classified as “supplementary education and formative work” and is also supervised by a dedicated unit at the Ministry of Education (see <https://edu.gov.by/sistema-obrazovaniya/upravlenie-raboty/molodezhi>).

In the other four countries reviewed, some structures inherited from the pre-1991 state infrastructure are still in place but are now managed and delivered at local and regional level. Such structures are often supported through local public funding and are offered through local youth activity centres, “palaces of youth” and “houses of culture”, often transformed from former Soviet institutions tasked with similar activities (e.g. the Youth Palace in Chisinau and “inspiring initiative from Ukraine” below).

On the other hand, there is a very vibrant voluntary and civil society scene, active in delivering youth work, usually through open youth work approaches, often in an unstructured and spontaneous way in a variety of settings, including NGO offices, youth centres, youth clubs and in third-party spaces such as universities or public institutions. All six countries have NGO-run open youth centres.

Non-formal education is gaining recognition as a novel and useful approach to youth work. All countries have made significant efforts to increase the visibility of, and recognise, non-formal initiatives involving young people, including through volunteering and voluntary sector initiatives.

Many voluntary sector initiatives are funded by organisations delivering services, international donors and private funders. International mobility programmes, using non-formal youth work methods, remain very popular in eastern Europe. The EU Erasmus+ programme youth initiatives benefit a substantial number of young people participating in international youth exchanges. In the period 2014-17, some 16 000 young people from eastern Europe (Eastern Partnership countries) participated in youth exchanges, 2 200 young people from eastern Europe took part in the European Voluntary Service (EVS) programme and 11 000 youth workers participated in youth worker mobility initiatives. (see <https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/erasmus-plus/factsheets/regional/erasmusplus-regional-easternpartnership2017.pdf>).

A number of countries have unique modes of youth work delivery and apply their own, country-specific methods. For example, in Belarus there are youth work specialists in companies and workplaces and in Ukraine youth work activities are delivered by librarians in local public libraries. In Georgia, a youth camp programme delivers “patriotic education” to young people, while in Armenia, non-governmental youth organisations have successfully introduced open youth work methods at local level.

Current trends

As the reality of youth work differs, few trends can be observed transnationally. The one thing that is becoming increasingly clear is that youth work methods and types of youth work delivery have to catch up with other services, and with changes in young people’s lifestyles, including changes in their educational and leisure-time practices. Old methods and styles of youth work delivery are less suited to changing practices, and new methods must be introduced to adapt to new realities, including non-formal approaches and digital youth work.

Support factors

The following factors and issues can be considered to be supporting factors for youth work methods and types:

- ▶ peer knowledge exchange, both at national level (between sectors and types of youth work providers) and international (between countries and projects offering good practice in youth work), with a particular focus on youth work;
- ▶ cross-sectoral approaches, allowing for synergies and sharing methods and types of youth work between organisations;

- ▶ enabling youth work legislation, defining the role and place of youth work and status of youth workers and the methods that they can apply in their daily work;
- ▶ enabling civil society legislation, allowing for voluntary and civil society organisations to develop and implement youth work projects and programmes.

Inspiring initiative from Armenia: Open youth centre

Title: Open youth centre in Armenia: from dream to reality

Organiser: Gyumri Youth Initiative Centre (YIC) NGO

The “Gyumri Youth House” open youth centre is the first youth centre in Armenia to work with methodology based on principles of open youth work. It was established in May 2018 by the Gyumri Youth Initiative Centre (YIC) NGO, one of the few Armenian organisations experienced in professional youth work, as a pilot project to apply an integrated, empowering and innovative approach to youth work in Armenia. The NGO believes that professional work with young people, together with the provision of free social services in a remote neighbourhood of Gyumri, has the potential to bridge the existing gap and offer personal development and non-formal learning possibilities in a safe and youth-friendly environment.

The Youth House was established with the financial support of the EU and is located in municipality-owned premises provided to the Youth Initiative Centre pro-bono for a 10-year period. The first year of the youth centre’s operation was also funded by online and in-person donations from over 50 individuals and institutions.

The aim of the Youth House is to enhance civic activity and wellbeing amongst the youth in Armenia, particularly in Gyumri, through modelling and promoting innovative approaches to youth work and youth participation. The youth centre offers young people from Gyumri aged 13 to 18 a wide range of services, including competence building for life and for increased competitiveness in the job market, individual or group counselling, and non-formal and informal education, all of which help young people enhance their self-esteem, achieve more control over their lives and improve their chances of gaining employment in the future. It is also a safe space for young people to express themselves, spend leisure time and meet and communicate with peers.

The centre provides services to 600 young people annually. The centre also serves as a platform for thematic discussions, seminars, training sessions and collaboration among civil society organisations, schools, childcare centres, social services, police, municipalities and other institutions, supporting the provision of a wide range of accessible and quality services for young people.

The NGO intends to open and operate the second open youth centre - the “Spitak Youth House” in late 2020, with co-financing from Spitak Municipality and UNICEF Armenia.

Lessons learnt

Having operated for over a year now, some of the main lessons learnt from the experience of the “Gyumri Youth House” open youth centre are as follows:

- ▶ ensure the real participation of young people (for youth, with youth and by youth) at all levels and in all activities;
- ▶ prepare youth workers – the education system or available youth work training might not fully address your needs;
- ▶ be open to “safe experiments”;
- ▶ provide coaching for youth workers (a well-defined code of conduct is essential, and no topic is taboo; base the work on existing and proven quality standards, while adapting international experience to local reality);
- ▶ use evidence – collect, analyse and use data (be open to interpret the data without judgment, and apply it for positive change);
- ▶ co-operate with municipal and national government – it is not just a project but a service you give to the community (if the service is necessary and of good quality, the authorities should be asked to start taking financial responsibility for it);
- ▶ aim at policy level change – create an exemplary product that has potential to be upscaled;
- ▶ communicate – internal and external communication, visibility and feedback are essential (policies, systems and/or guidelines for communication and visibility should also be developed).

Further information: <https://www.facebook.com/youthhousegyumri> and www.instagram.com/youthhousegyumri

Inspiring initiative from Moldova: U-Report

Title: U-Report

Organiser: National Youth Council of Moldova

U-Report is a messaging and polls tool aimed at amplifying the voices and views of young people regarding the issues that affect their lives. The results of the polls can be used by decision makers to adapt national or local policies to the real needs of young people.

Lessons learnt

- ▶ be ready to explain to young people how useful the initiative can be;
- ▶ be patient – many might not be interested;
- ▶ draw up simple but very effective polls and keep going.

Further information: <http://moldova.ureport.in>

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

Youth infrastructure, including youth work services at local and regional level, is closely linked to the youth work methods described in Chapter 3.6. As with education and learning policies, central governments play an important role in youth infrastructure, notably in terms of funding and legal provision.

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

Youth work services also remain largely unregulated across most eastern European countries, and the provision of services differs greatly in terms of quality, scope and even rationale. The most regulated sector and infrastructure domain is out-of-school education (see Chapter 3.6); other important types of youth work services include local youth centres run by both state and private/civil society organisations, and innovative NGO initiatives offering youth services on a permanent and ad hoc basis.

In countries with strong state support for youth policy, including Azerbaijan and Belarus, substantial financial and infrastructure support is in place for youth work and youth services. This also means that these services are delivered mostly by the state.

Local and regional authorities are key providers of youth services, especially in larger countries such as Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Belarus, where they bear the brunt of service provision and where budgets far exceed those of central authorities. In smaller countries such as Georgia, Armenia and Moldova, local and regional authorities suffer from resource deficiencies and commit very little funding to youth infrastructure, with the exception of capital cities that operate much higher budgets across all policy domains.

Youth work services in all countries reviewed depend on existing infrastructure, including youth centres and “culture centres” run by the state, or are affected by the lack thereof, whereby the old youth work services have weakened or collapsed and have not been replaced. This system is particularly visible in urban areas in Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova. Azerbaijan operates a country-wide network of youth centres built during the independence period, combining educational, sports and youth functions, and funded by the central budget. In Georgia and Armenia, there are no state-run youth centres but a number of initiatives operate using old and existing youth infrastructure.

In some instances, NGO-run youth services are among the largest youth work and youth service providers in their community. Examples of these services and NGOs include:

- ▶ the International Scout Centre Rustavi, Georgia (see <http://iscr.ge>);
- ▶ the Lutsk City Youth Centre, Ukraine;
- ▶ the Youth Initiative Centre Gyumri, Armenia;

- ▶ the Bridge to the Future Youth Union, Ganja, Azerbaijan (see <https://orgs.tigweb.org/bridge-to-the-future-youth-union>)
- ▶ the Faclia Child and Youth Community Association, Ungheni, Moldova (see www.keep.eu/partner/14547/faclia-child-and-youth-community-association).

European organisations such as the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) (see <https://www.eryica.org/>) and Eurodesk (the information platform on learning mobility in the EU) (see <https://eurodesk.eu/>) are key actors that build capacity and knowledge about quality information services to young people. The European Confederation of Youth Clubs (ECYC) is a network of youth clubs and centres across Europe that support high quality open youth work services.

Current trends

Youth infrastructure across eastern Europe is changing rapidly, reflecting the diversification of youth work methods. The voluntary and civil society sector, funded by international donors, steps in to either build or maintain infrastructure, while the state and local authority sectors try to keep up the pace by investing in new, more youth-friendly facilities.

Support factors

The following can be considered to be supporting factors for youth infrastructure:

- ▶ proper resourcing and guidance for use of youth infrastructure, in line with needs and policy goals;
- ▶ in situations of resource scarcity, pooling of resources to allow for a more efficient and shared use of infrastructure;
- ▶ connection to and learning from well established European and international networks;
- ▶ effective youth participation in the management of resources, ensuring a close match between youth needs and how the infrastructure is commissioned and used.

Inspiring initiative from Moldova: Joint Fund for Development of Youth Centres

Title: Joint Fund for Development of Youth Centres, aimed at strengthening participation and civic engagement among young people in the Republic of Moldova, set up by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and UNFPA.

Organiser: UNFPA Moldova

The Joint Fund's main interventions are structured on three levels. The first is the policy level. Youth policies are improved and respond to the needs of young people at national and local level and facilitate the practical application of the new curriculum of civic education. The new Youth Strategy is developed considering the results and conclusions of the assessment of the 2020 *National Strategy for Youth Sector Development* (NSYSD).

The second level is the institutional level. Youth centres have skilled human resources in youth work, and their programmes and premises are accessible, safe and youth-friendly, including for the most vulnerable. Youth centres have developed volunteer and outreach programmes and engaged scholars and young people in the social and democratic life of the community.

The third is the population level. Girls and boys, jointly supported by youth centres and schools, participate and become civically engaged at local level by applying the knowledge gained through the “education for society” subject. Youth centres, teachers, local public authorities (LPAs), community organisations, parents and other key local stakeholders collaborate to provide students and young people with participation opportunities.

As a result of the initiative, Moldova has a functional network of youth centres with safe youth-friendly spaces, providing opportunities for personal development, participation, information, leisure and socialisation. Young people participate and become civically engaged at local and national level, thus contributing to the development of the communities and the country as a whole.

Lessons learnt

- ▶ ensure financial sustainability of the established youth centres and LPA ownership, and invest in ongoing professional development of youth workers;
- ▶ promote positive youth centre practices and models and engage LPAs to be champions in this regard.

Further information: <https://moldova.unfpa.org/en/news/new-project-launched-moldova-will-foster-civic-activism-among-young-people> and <https://www.facebook.com/reteauacentrelordetineret>

Inspiring initiative from Ukraine: Lutsk City Youth Centre

Title: Lutsk City Youth Centre

Organiser: Lutsk City Youth Centre/Lutsk City Council

The Lutsk City Youth Centres (LCYC) is an initiative of Lutsk City Council.

In 2019, the youth centre hosted more than 20 events organised by, or with, young people. There was a volunteer camp, youth parties in networking format, study visits with young people from other cities, training sessions and more. In the history of the youth centre, a very valuable component is that the local youth joined in its creation, repair and refinement.

In the summer, LCYC hosted an all-Ukrainian volunteer camp with 60 young people from all regions of Ukraine. The camp lasted two weeks. Half of the costs for the implementation of this camp were allocated from the state budget of Ukraine, with the support of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. During this time LCYC managed to involve the tourism department of Lutsk City Council, travel agencies, restaurants, small and medium-sized businesses and the mass media in the development of the centre. The purpose of LCYC is to provide young people

with free space and a platform for leisure, and opportunities for growth and development, and to facilitate the implementation of youth initiatives through LCYC and local authorities.

Lessons learnt

During the creation of LCYC, many situations arose that are discussed in training sessions on “how not to do things”. One of the first challenges was the lack of sufficient human resources to carry out a quality information campaign. It is therefore recommended that capabilities are properly evaluated and goals divided into several smaller tasks. Another story from our experience is that several members of the team did not communicate with each other before the start of the event, and when the participants arrived, they found that the necessary materials had been mislaid. This showed the importance of admitting mistakes, communicating on time and retransmitting information. Another important recommendation to bear in mind is that construction and repair work can take a year or more. This is a normal process, as there are many legal and bureaucratic processes which in turn take several months. In addition, it is necessary to involve design consultants and people with technical education during construction and repair work.

Further information: www.facebook.com/LutskCYC and www.youtube.com/watch?v=OlkXdj3moic

European and transnational standards and support

European and transnational co-operation in the field of youth has resulted in an impressive body of knowledge, policy standards and support mechanisms. The new Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy 2030 and the EU Youth Strategy for 2019-27 (“Engage, connect, empower”) both feature youth work among their priorities. Under the previous strategies, the Council of Europe adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 on youth work, while the EU published studies and policy guidance for quality development in youth work. A number of EU Council Conclusions also highlighted the value of, and need for, further investment in youth work development (for example in relation to the social inclusion of young people, smart and digital youth work and youth work to combat violent radicalisation). The research project of mapping education and career pathways for youth workers has identified countries with strong practice architectures for youth worker education such as Finland, Estonia, Malta and Ireland. The experience of these countries has already been an important source of youth work development in bilateral co-operation with countries from eastern Europe.

The Council of Europe manages the Quality Label for Youth Centres, which translates the standards it has developed through its two European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest. The Erasmus+ strategic partnership “Europe Goes Local” has developed a European Charter on Local Youth Work and supports the development of quality youth work at local level. These are important sources of developing quality youth work in eastern Europe that provide convincing arguments to build support for youth work among local governments and in society at large. The peer-learning event in Tbilisi was an opportunity to share some of these inspiring initiatives and they are also included here.

Inspiring initiative from the Council of Europe: Quality Label for Youth Centres

Title: Quality Label for Youth Centres

Organiser: Council of Europe

The Council of Europe developed a project “Quality Label for Youth Centres” to promote the Council of Europe’s European Youth Centres as standard-setting instruments and examples of good practice for youth policy.

This project consists of three main elements:

- ▶ a Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Centres, to be awarded to youth centres that meet a set of quality criteria;
- ▶ an annual meeting of a European Platform of Youth Centres to ensure networking among centres recognised with the label and those aspiring to its acquisition;
- ▶ an annual training course for educational staff of youth centres.

A qualitative assessment is carried out before the Quality Label for Youth Centres can be awarded. The criteria are designed to give youth centres the impetus to improve their offer to young people and the youth sector.

Five basic eligibility criteria need to be met to prove that the youth centre fulfils the standards:

- ▶ it serves the youth sector and young people;
- ▶ it promotes international co-operation within the youth sector;
- ▶ it has a clear mandate from public authorities;
- ▶ it has in-house educational staff working to support its activities;
- ▶ it has both working and accommodation facilities on one campus.

Further information: www.coe.int/en/web/youth/quality-label-for-youth-centres

Inspiring initiative from the European Youth Forum: European Youth Capital

Title: European Youth Capital

Organiser: European Youth Forum

The initiative was designed to empower young people, boost youth participation and strengthen European identity. Each year, a new European city is given the chance to showcase its innovative ideas, projects and activities that aim to raise up young voices and bring a new youth perspective to all aspects of city life.

Thus, the European Youth Capital initiative aims to support both young people and the city to open up these possibilities and lead the way for other European municipalities to follow. Cities awarded the European Youth Capital title decide on a different focus for their year as Youth Capital, depending on the needs of young people: creating youth participation structures, supporting youth employment and entrepreneurship, social inclusion of marginalised young people, etc.

The European Youth Capital title encourages cities to rethink how they engage and work with their young people. Some of the most visible and long-lasting results of the title are new spaces for young people and youth organisations, newly established youth centres and youth participation structures as well as new local youth policies and strategies. The title has been significantly contributing to increasing the quality of youth work delivered by youth organisations at local level. Setting standards in designating European Youth Capitals becomes a tool for improvement of youth work quality at national level.

Lessons learnt

The most important thing is to understand what the needs of local young people are and what issues they face, and to tailor the European Youth Capital programme to this. It is an opportunity to also develop local youth work as a part of the European Youth Capital award that really corresponds to the needs of young people. This, however, can only be done through a strong partnership with local youth organisations and municipality representatives. It can be challenging to involve as many young people as possible from diverse backgrounds, but is very rewarding in the end. It also builds trust between young people, youth organisations and municipality representatives. Finally, it requires big political support and will to invest in young people from municipal officials. Before applying for the title, the municipality has to be very clear on what it is willing to invest in this initiative, and also clearly communicate it to young people and youth organisations. Managing expectations is very important and requires a lot of effort.

Further information: https://www.youthforum.org/sites/default/files/publication-pdfs/EYC_ten_years_report.pdf

Inspiring initiative from the EU Erasmus+ national agencies: “Europe Goes Local”

Title: Europe Goes Local

Organisers: EU Erasmus+ national agencies

The core aim of the project is to raise the quality of local youth work through enhanced co-operation among various stakeholders active at the municipal level. The strategic partnership currently involves about 200 members (municipal departments responsible for youth, local NGOs, umbrella organisations and network experts) who represent around 120 municipalities in the participating countries.

The overall aims of the Europe Goes Local strategic partnership include the following:

- ▶ support the recognition, practice and quality development of youth work as part of municipal youth policy;
- ▶ strengthen the European and international dimension of youth work at the municipal level;
- ▶ develop strategies and measures for national agencies of the Erasmus+ programme to support youth work;

- ▶ contribute to the development of youth work as part of European co-operation in the youth field.

As a result of consultations at the 3rd European Event of the Europe Goes Local network, a European Charter on Local Youth Work was launched in 2019. All national working groups played an active role in shaping the text of the Charter, to build a common tool based on a broad consensus of the youth sector all over Europe. The Charter targets all the actors involved in local youth work and transforms policy documents into concrete guidelines regarding what is needed to establish and maintain quality in local youth work. The content of the Charter covers core guiding principles, youth work policy, the organisation and practice of youth work needs, youth workers' needs and the quality development of local youth work.

Lessons learnt

It is crucial to start work with an assessment of the current state of affairs and a needs analysis. It is also crucial to consider that flexibility and planning are important in a large network.

Further information: www.europegoeslocal.eu.



Youth work realities – country profiles

Armenia

Policy with a focus on youth work, evidence base and research

The regulatory framework for the activities of youth NGOs is largely favourable and the right to establish and join a civil society organisation is enshrined in Article 45 of the Constitution (Constitution of Armenia 2015). The institutional structures for youth work are in the process of being set up. A key turning point was the adoption of key documents and provisions governing the youth work system, including those described below.

- ▶ The notion of “youth worker” was officially incorporated in state youth policy in 2015: the State Youth Policy Strategy for 2015-25 officially designated and declared the “youth worker” as an “actor” of state youth policy (EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership 2020).
- ▶ A dedicated Youth Worker Institute was set up in 2015 pursuant to the Regulation on the Youth Worker Institute (ibid.); the Regulation states the goals and objectives of youth work, defines the scope of youth work activities and specifies the role of youth worker training and continuing education.

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

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

Currently, youth work initiatives are being implemented by a variety of organisations. However, there is no established system to support youth policy development.

Recognition of youth work

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

Although no formal training programmes in youth work are offered to date, there is a clear interest in setting them up. At present, youth workers come from a variety of backgrounds, including social work, sociology, psychology, social policy, educational sciences and pedagogy. Two state universities (Yerevan State University and Shirak State University) have included the academic subject "youth work basics" in the curriculum for social workers.

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

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

Youth work funding

Approximately AMD 304 million (€600 000) was allocated to youth policy and youth work from the state budget line "youth policy programmes and events" in 2018 and 2019. Youth work is also being funded from other budget lines (e.g. education, culture and sport). Half of the budget appropriations for the youth sector are spent on

youth worker training, support for NGO projects, and capacity-building programmes run by NGOs. Municipalities also have resources allocated to support youth events and/or youth organisations.

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

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

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

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

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

In 2019 a grassroots-level initiative was launched on setting up an association of youth workers (a professional union of individuals). In addition, a network of youth organisations, Youth Organisations Union (YOU), was founded in 2018 and has a current membership of over 10 youth work organisations.

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

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

Azerbaijan

Policy with a focus on youth work, evidence base and research

Azerbaijan started developing its youth policy, along with other independent state institutions, after it regained independence. A dedicated ministry – the Ministry of Youth and Sports – was created in 1994 (EYPAR 2015), but the legal framework for youth policy in Azerbaijan developed most rapidly over the last two decades. This process started with the Law on Youth Policy (2002, amended in 2019) and was followed up by the Youth Development Strategy for 2015-25 and the currently operational State Programme Youth of Azerbaijan in 2017-21 (Azerbaijan Government 2017).

Legal documents list a number of government obligations with regard to youth work, notably “provision of training and additional training of specialists in the field of youth policy, including the analysis, planning, organisation and evaluation of work with young people, the organisation of regular training for this purpose” (ibid.).

The evidence base for youth policy comes from annual reports from state organisations on implementation of the Youth Development Strategy and the Youth of Azerbaijan State Programme, as well as ad hoc research conducted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and international organisations; however, there is no evidence of the research being taken into account in policy planning or implementation.

State-funded youth work is carried out by youth centres across Azerbaijan. There are about 40 youth centres in the country, 12 of which are operated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the others by local authorities and other organisations. Youth centres managed by the Ministry function according to an action plan approved by the Ministry and are funded from the state budget (SALTO 2019).

Recognition of youth work

“Youth policy” is defined in the above-quoted legal frameworks, but there is no legal definition of youth work.

Youth work is recognised as part of social work. In 2018 the subject “youth work” was included in the classification of subjects for a master’s degree in higher education (UNICEF Azerbaijan 2019).

There is no official recognition of youth work for the end user (young person) either. The current legislation recognises that youth work is the creation of conditions for the individual development of young people and the organisation of their leisure time, without specific parameters or objectives.

According to local youth work practitioners, state, non-state and international organisations work with youth centres, mostly within certain specific and targeted projects, and thus give partial recognition to youth work, but this is not structured or regulated in a systematic way (SALTO 2019).

Youth work funding

The state budget for youth policy (including youth work) was AZN 10 million (€5.35 million) in 2018 and AZN 7.3 million (€3.9 million) in 2019.

There is no separate, dedicated local youth policy budget. Of the above sums, AZN 800 000 (€428 000) is provided for maintenance and activities of local (district) youth and sport departments.

There are no dedicated youth programmes within the state youth policy framework. The 12 youth centres operated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports have an annual general budget of AZN 1 million (€535 000). This sum comes under the state budget for youth policy.

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

There are no dedicated state youth work structures or institutions in Azerbaijan – youth work, as part of youth policy, is regulated by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. There are about 300 youth NGOs registered by Ministry of Justice (EYPAR 2015). Article 9 of the April 2019 amendment of the Law on Youth Policy, which defines youth organisations, is set out in the box below.

Definition of youth organisations in Azerbaijan

9.1.1. Youth organisations are NGOs that are established for the purpose of identifying and solving young people's problems, protecting their rights, meeting their spiritual needs, etc., in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan On Non-governmental Organisations (public associations and foundations), by individuals aged 16 to 35 and/or youth organisations pursuant to this Law.

9.1.2. Membership of youth organisations is terminated at the age of 35.

9.1.3. The terms and conditions of admission and termination of membership of youth organisations, as well as termination of membership because of the age limit established by Article 9.1.2 of this Law, shall be determined by the charter of the youth organisation.

9.1.4. The requirements of Article 9.1.2 of this Law shall not apply to the founders of youth organisations established before the entry into force of this Law.

Source: Law on Youth Policy 2019 (see http://www.e-qanun.az/alpidata/framework/data/1/c_f_1619.htm)

The Presidential Administration, together with international donors and experts, including UNICEF Azerbaijan and Tallinn University, initiated a process of creating a master's degree in youth work in early 2018. The Academy of Public Administration has taken the lead on the project. The Academy identified five other universities to take part in the project, including four public universities: Baku State University, Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University and Ganja State University, as well as one private university – Azerbaijan University (Baku) (UNICEF 2018).

The entire degree programme was developed in 2018 and 2019 with the aid of international experts and donors. UNICEF recommended a common curriculum based on best international practices and added specific modules developed by local specialists with guidance from UNICEF's international experts. These modules covered areas such as: modern problems of specialisation; challenges of youth work

and youth policy; professional ethics in youth work; youth policy (international and national experience); strategic management in the youth field; leadership and youth mentoring; networking in the youth field and public relations; career guidance for young people; monitoring of youth work programmes; research methods; social policy and social issues; youth work and youth research; information technologies and innovation management in the youth sector; and history and methodology of youth work and youth work management. Tallinn University staff assisted in training local teachers from all six universities in the 2018/2019 academic year.

Once the preparations were complete, the programme launched at all six universities in September 2019. The first year of the programme has 43 students (5 to 12 at each university), and the first graduates are expected in 2020. The degree is a 2-year (four semesters) master's qualification with evening classes given by staff from all six universities. Students spend three semesters in a formal teaching programme and one semester doing an internship in a youth work setting.

As a postgraduate qualification, the degree requires students to have completed an undergraduate degree in a related discipline prior to enrolment. Profiles of the first student batch show that they come from a range of universities in Azerbaijan, including the six where the course is delivered. Their undergraduate degrees range from sociology and political science, through linguistics and philology, to public administration. Students are eligible for full state scholarships on the basis of their academic merit; non-funded students have to cover the cost of the degree by themselves.

As part of the same initiative, the Academy of Public Administration also delivers youth policy training to senior civil servants; every year, 10 senior civil servants from the Presidential Administration and government departments are introduced to the basics of youth policy and youth work by senior teaching and research staff from the Academy.

Belarus

Policy with a focus on youth work, evidence base and research

Much youth policy legislation in Belarus is relatively recent, having been formulated in recent decades. Furthermore, the process of establishing the legal framework for youth policy and youth work is still ongoing. In 2016, revisions were made to the Law on Foundations of the State Youth Policy (Ignatovitch 2019). With a view to supporting implementation of the State Programme Education and Youth Policy 2016-20, an action plan was adopted (ibid.), indicating the titles of activities, levels of implementation (national or local), timelines for each activity and sources of financing.

The Strategy of Youth Policy Development in the Republic of Belarus to 2030 (ibid.) – currently at the drafting stage – envisages further development of the institutional structures for youth policy, including youth work. Specific measures include:

- ▶ establishing a comprehensive organisational framework for youth work by instituting the position of “youth work specialist” in those enterprises and entities with over 100 (rural areas) or 300 (cities) young employees under the age of 31;

- ▶ strengthening training and professional development systems for specialists in youth work and the leaders of youth or children's organisations;
- ▶ strengthening the methodological framework for specialists in youth work, leaders of youth and children's organisations and other youth policy stakeholders.

The Ministry of Education is the main actor at the central level with regard to youth work planning, support, delivery and monitoring. The evidence base for youth policy comes mostly from the formal sector. Pursuant to the Law on Foundations of the State Youth Policy in the Republic of Belarus (Article 23), the Ministry of Education prepares annual national reports on the situation of young people in Belarus (Source: On the foundations of the State Youth Policy in the Republic of Belarus, see <http://pravo.levonevsky.org/bazaby/zakon/zakb1381.htm>). The reports present data on a wide range of issues, including youth worker policy, socio-economic support for young people, prevention of crimes among young people, youth participation in the sociopolitical life of the country, youth and children's NGOs, and systems of supplementary education for children and young people.

Since 2016, the National Institute for Higher Education has conducted research on the topic "professional and competence culture of a youth work specialist" (Salikau 2017b). The Institute also publishes the academic journals *Modern Youth and Society* and *Pedagogy of Co-authorship*, where much of the research on youth-related issues and policies is published (Salikau 2017a). However, there is an overall shortage of systematic, comprehensive and structured research dedicated specifically to youth work.

Recognition of youth work

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

- ▶ introduction of the position of "specialist in youth work" in large enterprises and entities (pursuant to the Resolution of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Belarus No. 42 of 30 March 2006 On Amendments to Revision 1 and Amendments to Revision 27 of the Uniform Classification of Qualifications for Job Positions) (Salikau 2017b);
- ▶ existence of an occupational standard with defined professional duties and requirements with regard to educational and training background;
- ▶ existence of a relevant educational standard with a distinct list of professional skills;
- ▶ existence of formal education programmes for university graduates, including a 2-year retraining course, "organisation of youth work", leading to the professional qualification "specialist in youth work" (Ignatovitch 2019);
- ▶ a variety of non-formal education programmes and professional development courses for youth workers;
- ▶ existence of a professional association of specialists in youth work as a national platform for professional youth workers.

The case of Belarus underscores the important role of professional associations of youth workers in bringing together practitioners in the field, when youth workers – elaborating and upholding shared values and ideas – self-organise to gain recognition. Another notable trend of youth work development in Belarus is strong government involvement in guiding the education and training of youth workers, in terms of not only support but also the exercise of control over the content of youth worker education.

Youth work funding

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

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

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

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

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

- ▶ the system of supplementary education for children and young people;
- ▶ multidisciplinary youth centres and clubs;
- ▶ for-profit youth entertainment centres;
- ▶ departments of youth affairs at educational institutions;
- ▶ youth social services;
- ▶ children and youth summer camps;
- ▶ volunteering programmes and students' work teams;
- ▶ youth NGOs.

Student self-governance bodies, student union committees, public youth associations and social and psychological services also play a role in this regard. As part of their regular activities, some youth NGOs provide a range of training opportunities, such as certified training courses for summer camp counsellors, volunteer groups and youth leaders.

There were 2 731 registered public associations in Belarus as at January 1, 2018; this included 320 youth associations, namely 26 children's organisations, 61 youth organisations with international and national status and 259 organisations with local status (Salikau, 2017a). However, no official statistics were available on the exact number of youth organisations that were active.

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

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

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

Georgia

Policy with a focus on youth work, evidence base and research

The legal basis for youth policy in Georgia has developed substantially over the last three decades, since Georgia regained its independence. The development of consolidated national youth policy started in 1994 with the creation of the first governmental structure responsible for development of youth policy – the Department of Youth Affairs. Although operating for only a short period of time, it initiated the creation of the first two youth laws still in force today:

- ▶ the Law on State Support to Children and Youth Unions (22 June 1999);
- ▶ the Law on the Protection of Underage Children from Harmful Influence (28 September 2001) (Fras 2017).

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

The situation changed with the establishment of the new Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs in 2010. The Ministry started developing the country's first comprehensive national youth policy in 2011, which was adopted in 2012 (Youth Policy Labs 2014). A new national youth policy was adopted in 2014, with the change of government, which was further reinforced with the adoption of the national youth policy action plan in 2015 (Georgia Youth Policy Monitor 2020). The action plan brings together the most important government programmes, projects and actions concerning young people, focusing on four priority areas:

- ▶ youth participation in public, economic, cultural and political life;
- ▶ education, employment and professional growth;

- ▶ promotion of a healthy lifestyles;
- ▶ raising awareness of civil rights and obligations.

Evidence-based approaches underpinned both the 2012 and 2014 national youth policies, and are considered to be key principles of the latter, but the integration of research and evidence into policy implementation is very limited. The most recent comprehensive youth study in Georgia was conducted by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES 2016).

Despite relevant clauses of the national youth policy document, there is no annual performance evaluation of the priorities and directions defined in the youth policy and no comprehensive assessment of the policy has been conducted to date by the government (with only partial evaluation conducted by UNICEF and UNDP in 2019). The former Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs (now the Youth Agency) has a research and analytical unit that analyses current policy implementation using 52 indicators. The main areas of evaluation are: duration; geographical coverage; gender; sources of information (government bodies/research bodies); and the responsible line ministry.

Recognition of youth work

Although youth work and youth work recognition are among the key new priorities of the 2015 national youth policy, youth work and youth workers are not legally defined or recognised in Georgia (as at December 2019).

Partial attempts at strengthening recognition were made in 2016-18 but have been suspended due to the ongoing youth policy governance reform. The then Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs – with the support of World Vision Georgia, Helping Hand and Youth Workers Association of Georgia – implemented a Youth Worker Certification Programme. During this 2017-18 project, 20 practitioner youth workers developed their skills, put them into practice at schools and youth centres, and evaluated and analysed the learning and development process (Youth Worker Certification Programme 2019).

The Youth Agency, integrating the Ministry of Education's Youth Affairs Department and the National Children and Youth Centre and its Fund, is currently working on the creation of national professional standards and certification criteria for youth workers. Within the same project, the Agency aims to develop qualification courses for youth workers, to be launched in 2020. A framework document on key skills in youth work, based on EU good practice, has been drawn up by the Ministry of Education and is awaiting official endorsement by the Youth Agency.

Youth work funding

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

In the previous system, whereby the Ministry of Education covered youth policy and youth work matters, both the planning and implementation (programme/financial) burden of youth interventions came from the Ministry's annual budget. The budget of the Youth Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education has decreased over the last three years from GEL 2 million to GEL 500 000 (i.e. from €600 000 to €150 000).

In 2017, the project that specifically supported youth work was the “youth workers’ certification project”, with a budget of GEL 50 000 (information based on interviews with the Youth Agency in 2019).

Local authorities in Georgia have substantial youth budgets, far exceeding the ministerial budgets for youth policy; for example, the Tbilisi Municipality spent GEL 7.3 million on youth in 2018 alone (Fras 2019).

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

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

The Youth Agency, created in August 2019, is in the process of establishing its formal structures and activity programme. There are no central government youth work structures. The Agency’s new management declared that youth work will remain a key priority of its future activities and that relevant institutions would be set up.

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

In 2017 and 2018, World Vision Georgia, together with the former Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, implemented a project supporting local municipalities in the establishment and effective operation of youth councils. A “youth council” was defined as a group of elected community leaders who voluntarily form a group. Youth councils are supported through the participatory budgeting model. The project co-operated with the School Youth Networks for Sustainable and Effective Solutions (SYNCS) project funded by the European Commission. Through youth-led advocacy, communities with youth councils enjoy more accountable and responsive local governments, and have municipal budgets that address the distinct needs of communities as defined by young people.

The Youth Workers Association of Georgia, established in 2018, is a membership-based organisation uniting practitioner youth workers. The aim of the Association is to contribute to the quality development and recognition processes of youth work and youth workers in Georgia. Objectives of the Association include raising awareness and popularising youth work at government and civic level, advocating for recognition and professionalisation of youth work at national level, supporting the youth work development processes and the creation and adoption of a code of ethics for youth workers, creating an educational platform for developing the skills of youth workers and supporting the co-ordination of youth workers at local, national and international level.

The Association’s work in 2019-22 focuses on three main areas:

- ▶ supporting the development of youth work in Georgia (including competent development of youth workers and raising awareness about youth work, its role and functions);

- ▶ international co-operation (including international building partnerships with youth worker organisations and international educational activities about youth work and youth workers' skills development);
- ▶ networking and membership (including development of the membership structure and supporting members in developing their skills) (Youth Workers Association of Georgia 2020).

Youth work methods used in Georgia depend on the institution delivering a given service. Although no specific data exist, according to Georgian youth work professionals most youth work is delivered through the so-called “hobby-education” activities that are often delivered in schools after formal teaching hours and in local community and cultural centres. NGOs run a wide range of project-based youth work initiatives. For-profit organisations, including training providers, run educational courses and skills-based education. The Youth Agency aims to prioritise outreach to vulnerable groups using all available methods, and digital youth work in particular, in their future work planning.

Moldova

Policy with a focus on youth work, evidence base and research

Moldova has recently substantially reformed its youth policy and integrated European practices in its legal framework. The legal framework of the national youth policy is comprised mainly of the Law on Youth adopted in 2016, the National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020, supported by the National Youth Action Plan 2020 and the Education 2020 Strategy (EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership 2018).

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

The National Strategy of Youth Sector Development 2020 aims to develop and strengthen the youth sector by contributing to the creation of an adequate environment to ensure the evolution of every young person, including those who have fewer opportunities. Its main objectives are to encourage the participation of young people, to provide quality youth services, to ensure economic opportunities for young

people and to strengthen the youth sector. According to the National Strategy, the responsible Ministry reports to the government by 31 March of each year on the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan.

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

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research is the main actor at the central level for youth work planning, support and delivery. Following the government reform in 2017, and the merger of the Ministry of Education with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Culture, the youth branch became the Youth Department. According to the Law on Youth, both central and local authorities are involved in the planning, support and delivery of youth work. However, despite being assigned a leading role in the development of the youth sector, and its clear definition, the local public authorities (LPAs) are severely constrained by the absence of local public administration reform, which is expected to provide methodological and technical assistance, and necessary resources and capacities.

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

The Government Commission for Youth Policies, headed by the Prime Minister and following the Council of Europe's principle of co-management, is the official youth policy co-ordination body (EU–Council of Europe Youth Partnership 2018). However, the Commission stopped functioning in 2016. Furthermore, the National Agency for the Development of Youth Programmes and Activities – tasked with the implementation of the youth policy – has not been established to date. Following the advocacy campaigns of the National Youth Council of Moldova, in August 2019, the new government included in its 2019-20 agenda the creation of the Agency and the renewal of the Government Commission.

Recognition of youth work

The Law on Youth makes a clear distinction between the notions of “youth worker” (on a voluntary basis) and “youth work specialist” (professional, employee). Youth workers support young people in their personal, social and educational development and their integration into society, mainly by implementing specific activities in the area of youth work; they perform different types of activities with young people in the community or with youth groups, without necessarily following a planned and systematic activity; they can be youth leaders, volunteers, or members of a youth organisation or any other organisation.

Youth work specialists, on the other hand, have special training in the field of youth work and offer professional services to young people; they are engaged in planned, systematic and professional activity in relation to young persons or groups of young people within an institutionalised service for young people.

Under the Law on Youth, only youth specialists can provide youth services, defined as a set of measures and institutionalised activities carried out to meet the needs of young people or young families. The term “youth specialist” is normally used with regard to employees of youth centres or persons responsible for youth activities (civil servants) within LPAs.

Youth work funding

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

Every year the National Youth Council of Moldova produces a report on allocations from local budgets towards youth policy. The total budget allocated by second-level LPAs amounted to approximately €600 000 in 2017, representing a slight increase compared to 2016 (+5%). It is notable from these reports that the amount allocated by LPAs to youth activities is very uneven across the regions.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research has a dedicated annual grant programme dedicated to supporting and developing the youth NGO sector in Moldova; the programme provides, on a competitive basis, logistical and financial support to develop youth initiatives, programmes and projects, thereby consolidating co-operation with civil society. While the annual grant programme is not exclusively dedicated to youth work development, it offers support to youth organisations carrying out youth work.

The total amount allocated towards the 2019 annual grant programme, financed from the state budget, is approximately MDL 7 million (€360 000). In 2018, the budget allocation by second-level LPAs was approx. €1.5 million; the increase in the financial allocations is related to the launch in 2017 of the National Programme for Youth Centre Development 2022; the youth centres were established by the LPA (22 local youth centres in 2019).

An important achievement in the area of youth services and youth work development in Moldova is the National Youth Centre Development Programme 2017-22. In this regard, the partnership between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and UNFPA Moldova was established by signing the agreement for the Joint Fund for Development of Youth Centres, including for vulnerable young people. The programme is implemented in the territorial-administrative units of the Republic of Moldova, where second-level LPAs undertake to develop and expand the territorial coverage of youth services. As of 2019, other partners joined the Joint Fund, including the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Council of Europe, with the objective of developing a civic and volunteering spirit among youth and to build the School Youth Centre Partnership.

Programme components:

- ▶ component I: professional development of human resources in youth centres;
- ▶ component II: support for the development of the technical and material basis of youth centres;

- ▶ component III: support for the development of the district/municipal grant programme to fund youth initiatives/youth projects.

Thus, youth centres are considered to be a friendly space for young people, offering opportunities for information and involvement, and represent a platform for promoting and recognising the role of young people in society. Youth centres are the most important tool for public authorities to carry out youth work locally.

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

A more conducive environment for the development of youth organisations is currently under development. The Youth Strategy 2014-20 places significant emphasis on the development of support systems for young people, including through youth centres or youth-friendly health centres (Moldova Government 2014) and on strengthening the youth sector through consolidation and inter-ministerial co-operation.

Youth centres provide a variety of services (programmes) to target youth groups. With the involvement of young people, these centres carry out educational and methodical activities; cultural activities and services, including training and access to information; civic participation with a focus on decision-making processes, human rights advocacy and social reintegration; skills training and professional integration; entrepreneurship development; volunteering; promotion of healthy lifestyle; leisure time; outreach/mobile youth work, etc.

Although there is no official network or platform recording the exact number of active youth organisations, the number of NGOs is high (USAID 2018). Moreover, the National Youth Council of Moldova – an umbrella structure of 61 youth organisations – operates on a nationwide basis. At local level, there is a national network of local youth councils, i.e. a youth NGO that consists of youth councils at district/municipal level and is also represented at national and international level.

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

However, under the Joint Fund implemented by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research and UNFPA Moldova, youth work specialists from youth centres are currently undergoing training and professional development.

Positive tendencies in youth work developments in Moldova are as follows: synchronisation and harmonisation of youth policy with European standards and practices; youth work is clearly defined in legislation, where the civic nature of that work and non-formal learning is emphasised; a dedicated national financial grant programme supporting youth work.

Areas warranting further development and consideration include the absence of educational and occupational standards for youth workers; absence of a youth work quality assurance framework and lack of an institution in charge of youth work implementation and development.

Ukraine

Policy with a focus on youth work, evidence base and research

Despite the lack of a comprehensive national youth strategy in Ukraine, youth policy is covered by ample government documents and frameworks relevant to youth. The main strategic issues are covered by three documents: the Strategy of development of national youth policy up to 2020 (Ukraine Government 2013), the Roadmap for reform: youth policy in Ukraine (Ukraine Government 2015) and the Concept of the state social programme Youth of Ukraine 2016-20 (Ukraine Government 2016).

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

As the Ministry of Youth and Sports was merged with the Ministry of Culture in September 2019, further governance changes are to be expected in 2020. Assessment and changes in the implementation of youth policy are reflected in the annual state reports on the situation of youth submitted to the President of Ukraine, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and the cabinet of ministers on youth (Ukraine Government 2019). State reports are elaborated at the order of, and funded by, the Ministry of Youth and Sports. Reporting is overseen by the State Institute of Youth and Family Policy, an organisation under the Ministry of Youth and Sports that is mandated to carry out ongoing research and draft reports (For more information on the State Institute, see <https://dismp.gov.ua>). The Ministry allocates financial resources for preparation of the state report. The annual youth research programme, started in 2014, is usually conducted by involvement of research companies via an open tender launched by the Institute. The research covers the areas of demographic characteristics, values, family, employment, education, health, migration trends, political engagement, citizenship participation, volunteering and identity. Data from central and local executive authorities, ministries, state statistical service research institutions and the results of sociological research are used. The results of research are presented in the annual state report on youth. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that research data influences policy development.

Recognition of youth work

Ukrainian legislation does not define youth work (or the status of youth workers), but the Ministry of Youth and Sports operates a large-scale national Youth Worker

Programme in partnership with UNDP, providing training to youth workers since 2014 (Youth Worker Programme 2019).

The Youth Worker Programme issues certificates to its graduates that are recognised at the discretion of individual organisations and institutions.

There is no formal recognition of youth work in Ukraine. At present, youth work is commonly understood as the activities of youth centres and public organisations and government agencies working with youth. The draft law on youth (2019) contains a section on the organisation of youth work in Ukraine but has still to be adopted.

The definition of non-formal education, complementary to youth work provision and applicable in the youth work context in Ukraine, is provided in the 2017 Law On Education, which states that: “non-formal education is education obtained, as a rule, according to educational programmes and does not assume awarding qualifications that are recognised by the state by levels of education, but may lead to awarding professional and/or partial educational qualifications” (Ukraine Government 2017a). There are no evaluation or accreditation mechanisms for recognition of non-formal education; the law remains to be implemented. While the Ministry of Youth and Sports translated the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio, and uses it during local and national training for youth workers, it has not been incorporated into legislation.

Youth work funding

Funding of youth policy comes from the state, local budgets and other sources. Since 2015 the Ministry of Youth and Sports co-operates with international donors, mainly UN agencies, in co-funding measures and activities. The budget necessary for implementing youth policy is defined on an annual basis when drafting respective annual budgets with regard to their actual capacity. The financing of youth policy implementation is channelled through the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

The distribution of budgetary costs is set up in the allocation plan of the Youth of Ukraine 2016-20 Programme. The total budget planned for the period of the Programme amounts to UAH 501 million (approximately €19 million).

The total budget of the Youth Worker Programme is difficult to estimate, owing to the variety of funding sources, including the Ministry, UNDP, UNICEF, USAID and regional and local authorities. Current estimates and projections put government expenses at around €120 000 between 2014 and 2022, and UNDP's expenses at €650 000 in the same period – a total of approximately €770 000. Local authorities provide substantial funding and resources but this cannot be measured in precise terms as data are not aggregated at regional and national level (Fras 2020).

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

There are no central government youth work structures in Ukraine. The government funds a number of youth work initiatives within its youth policy programmes, and provides a reference framework on quality criteria for youth centres (Ukraine Government 2017b). In the absence of state structures regulating and managing youth work, civil society organisations and local authorities remain most relevant

actors in the field. According to the State Statistics Service, there were 5 450 officially registered youth NGOs in (7.8% of all NGOs). According to the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Science, in the past 20 years not more than 2% of the population aged 18 years and above were members of student associations or youth organisations; a poll conducted in 2015 by the GfK Ukraine Institute showed 2% of members of youth organisations among respondents aged 14-34 (EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership 2017).

A national Youth Worker Programme was launched in 2014 by UNDP Ukraine in co-operation with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the State Institute for Family and Youth Policy (see “Recognition of youth work” above). The programme is aimed at training public servants and civil society representatives working with youth to empower and equip young people with the necessary skills to engage with civic life and with policy making and decision making at local and national levels.

At the time of the programme’s launch in 2014, youth policy in Ukraine was over-regulated and administered by central state authorities. Since the start of the decentralisation reform in 2014, powers have been transferred from centralised management to local self-government bodies, replacing the principle of “work with youth” with that of “youth participation”. The challenge emerged, however, of the lack of clear definition of “youth work” in the legal documentation of the newly created amalgamated communities. Youth activities, and funding for youth work, remain within the remit of local self-government bodies. An urgent need has emerged for youth work professionals, methodologies and recommendations for the development of local infrastructure for youth.

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

The Youth Worker Programme is aimed at public servants, and leaders and activists from youth NGOs, who work with youth on a daily basis. The programme consists of a series of training sessions aimed at increasing the professional skills of youth workers. The programme consists of training sessions, involving equal numbers of public servants and civil society representatives, aimed at facilitating dialogue and co-operation between the state authorities and NGOs.

Currently, the Youth Worker Programme consists of three levels of training. The basic training is composed of modules on youth policy, youth work in the local community and personal skills for youth workers. Graduates of the basic training can proceed to the specialised training course, the themes of which are developed at the request of participants. Currently, the modules “project management in youth work”, “civic education for youth workers”, “inclusion in youth centres”, “volunteer management” and “healthy lifestyle for youth” are included in the specialised training course. “Training for trainers” is aimed at youth workers with experience in education and youth work, who are able to conduct training for their peers across Ukraine (Youth Worker Programme 2019).

As a result of active joint advocacy efforts by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and UNDP, the Youth Worker Programme is included in the Action Plan for Implementation of the EU–Ukraine Association Agreement and Concept of Youth Development Strategy 2016-20; it is defined as one of the priorities of the state programme Youth of Ukraine 2016-20; and it is recognised at state level by Governmental Decree No. 4334 On the Realisation of the Youth Worker Programme.

Since the start of the programme, more than 2 400 youth workers from 24 regions of Ukraine have been equipped with innovative tools to engage young people in civic life, policy making and decision making at local level, which is essential in view of the roll-out of decentralisation reform.



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