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

REVIEWS ON
YOUTH POLICIES AND YOUTH WORK
IN THE COUNTRIES OF
SOUTH EAST EUROPE,
EASTERN EUROPE & CAUCASUS
- THE FORMER YUGOSLAV
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA –



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1. Introduction

Background

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ has a territory of 25,713 km² and 2050687 citizens.

The Macedonian community includes several ethnic groups: Macedonian (64.2 %), Albanian (23.2 %), Turkish (3.9 %), Roma (2.7 %), Serbian (1.8 %) and several other minority ethnic groups (Vlachos, Bosnian and other). Orthodox Christianity (64.8 %) and Islam (33.3 %) are the two most prevalent religions. Youth population of 15-29 according to the official statistics is 23.56% of the total population.² The country is situated in the South-Eastern part of Europe at the Balkan Peninsula. As ex-communist and as a former Yugoslav country, the development of the youth policy and youth work was influenced by all the political and socio-economical changes that happened in the beginning of the nineties in the last century. After the fall of the communism and the proclamation of the independence in 1991 the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia struggles with many difficulties that certainly made the process of building youth policy and strengthening youth work to be with its own specific development. The long process of transition especially influenced the youth as one of the most fragile social categories. At the moment the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a candidate country for entering the European Union which means that the process of EU accession is strongly pushed forward. This results with adoption of the EU legislation and standards that have positive influence in developing Youth Policy and recognition of Youth Work within the society.

Anyway, the political and economical processes are such that the situation in the country does not give many perspectives to the youth. That is why most of the survey shows that big percentage of the young population- more than 50%³ see their future abroad. As main problems that youths stress is unemployment, mobility, housing...

Aims

This review on Youth Policy and youth work in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia aims to assess the position of young people in the society and to give perspective on youth policy and youth work. Within the review there is presentation on all the relevant data, documents, findings, perspectives, info. It is not a direct aim to evaluate the impact of these policies on young people themselves. Also it does not aim to give final perspective and a closed picture, but on the contrary, to provoke curiosity for further development, research, updating...

¹Naming of the country is according to the Council of Europe regulations and does not represent the view of the author of the review that names his country under its constitutional name

² www.stats.gov.mk

³ Baseline study on youth trends, Skopje, February 2004 (Project for the development of children and youth, Agency for Sports and Youth, prof.d-r.Antoanela Petkovska)

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Methodology

The main approach to the study was to collect all the relevant data available from all the stakeholders and to compile according to the needs of the context and present them in an objective way. There was also clear aim to follow the structure agreed with the colleagues of the team that prepare the studies and to divide the study in 6 chapters.

Comparative analysis with other similar studies also helped in the approach to the content and wording. Having in mind that the Former Republic of Macedonia is a very small country with specific development of the youth policy and youth work and especially because of the lack of youth research and official documents, some of the good practices taken into consideration from the comparative analysis with other countries were not possible to be implemented. Most of the quantitative data came from the Statistical office of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.⁴ Since there is not specific data of youths, there was a need of summary of the general statistical information in order to come to the info for the concrete target group-youth.

Several studies, surveys, reports, assessments... were used for the quality data⁵

Challenges

Lack of information, resources, interests, relevant documents... was definitely one of the obstacles to face with. Also, as one of the biggest challenges was how to implement the latest developments that are happening related to the latest youth research (draft results of the research were presented in mid November) and the national discussion for initiating a law for youth in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that took place on November the 30, 2010. It is obvious that more events happened in the last several months than in the previous couple of years and these activities are not finished yet, since it is only a beginning phase. This dynamism of the issue and a sort of work in progress leaves space for permanent updates and changes which is something usual in this field. During the preparation of the study there was also some kind of a personal dilemma. As someone that, in a way, is part of the different parts in the triangle of decision makers, practitioners and researchers, the author of the text was trying to ensure that none of the perspectives will be privileged. Certainly it was not easy to balance as well as to have an objective perspective of an outsider, although you are inside the circle or better to say triangle. That is why national and expert check was really important.

⁴ www.stats.gov.mk

⁵ The list of this documents is in chapter 6

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2. Executive summary

It is obvious that youth is the motion of the modern democratic societies and its crucial force for development and growth. As a dynamic and specific category, the treatment of youth is different from society to society. The youth as a special social group and special phenomenon is treated by many other sectors such as education, culture, economy, health... After almost 20 years of independence the youth status in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is not widely and concretely defined. The existing law regulations only partially treat the youth issue and the situation of the youth in the country.⁶

The importance of the cultural, historical and socio-economical context is crucial for understanding the situation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This is not only connected to the youth policy and legal frames of youth work but also concrete practice and the life of youths, their vision, dreams, values....

The biggest problem among youth is high unemployment rates, having in mind that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has one of the biggest unemployment rates in Europe, which is around 32%. This number among youth of 15-29 is 70% but have in mind that high schools students are also counted among those, so it is obvious that the real percentage should be rapidly smaller.

Other issues that concern youths are certainly housing, financial dependence, postponing marriage and parenthood, low degree of social mobility, as well as the lack of information and participation in different areas of interests that is probably very similar for most of the ex Yugoslav countries. Most of these issues are certainly connected to unemployment. As one of the negative effects of unemployment and general lack of opportunities is the big percentage of brain drain. The survey that was part of the baseline study on youth trends⁷ that took place in 2003 and was published in 2004 showed that 64.9% of the young intent to immigrate (unofficial results of a latest research were 46% which is important because it degreased during a 7 year-period). This shows that this is still one of the burning issues not just for the youth policy but for the whole society, but also shows important improvement that is certainly connected with the measures taken after the adoption of the National Youth Strategy.

The National Youth Strategy (NYS) as the only specialized legislative document for youth was adopted by the Government in December 2005. The National Youth Strategy of the Former

⁶ Comparative analysis of the national and European legislation on youth status, Gorica Atanasova(produced by Coalition of youth organizations SEGA)

⁷,Baseline study on youth trends Skopje, February 2004 (Project for development of children and youth, Agency for Sports and Youth, prof.d-r.Antoanela Petkovska)

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Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia aims to improve the general position and satisfy the needs and interests of the young people in the country.

NYS is divided into eight thematic areas: EDUCATION, YOUTH SELF-EMPLOYMENT, SUPPORT PRIOR TO EMPLOYMENT, LIFE QUALITY, HEALTH AND PREVENTION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION, YOUTH INFORMATION, CULTURE, LOCAL YOUTH WORK

The NYS is a document valid for 10 years.

National Action Plan for implementation of NYS for 2009 was adopted in the beginning of 2009 and is still the only valid action plan in the phase of implementation.

A recent discussion was opened for preparation and adoption on Law for the Youth. Together with the law of Youth Councils these two laws are part of the National program for adoption of the EU regulations ⁸

Expectations are that the Law for youth will be adopted by the end of the 2012 and that the law for youth councils will be integrated in the law for youth. The law for youth will cover the general interests and programs in the youth field, establishing and registration of youth organizations, their activity and scope of work, property and obligations, right and obligations, expert work, international youth work, information and bodies for development of youth policy. ⁹

The Agency of Youth and Sport is the main public authority at national level in charge of youths. It is governmental body with its own budget and responsibilities. Although it is not a ministry, it is an independent structure that is not under any other particular governmental ministry and responds directly to the Prime Minister. The Agency for Youth and Sport has three departments: the Department for Sports, the Department for Normative, Legal and Economic Issues, and the Department for Youth.

Main tasks of the Youth Department are social development and social integration of youth via quality formal and non-formal education, economic prosperity of the youth via youth entrepreneurship, improving of quality of life, active participation of the youth in public life and in decision making processes on local and national level.

Youth Department is divided into two sub-departments-International cooperation and Youth policy and training.

On local level only three municipalities established youth councils but there is a political will this process to continue and it should be regulated by the law in near future.

⁸ Secretariat for European issues, National program for adoption of the EU regulation revised 2010, Skopje

⁹ Comparative analysis of the national and European legislation on youth status, Gorica Atanasova
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3. Situation of Youth

3.1 Definition of youth

According to Macedonian society, former historical, social, political and ethical practice, and in the absence of internationally recognized definition, the term youth as used in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia signifies a separate socio-ethical category of population aged between 15 and 24 that is particularly vulnerable to socio-economic changes in the society and which represents, due to its critical thought and the urge for changes and future progress of the society, a basic development resource. In light of the consequences of the socio-economic crisis in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which has been thwarting the process of development of active and responsible individuals (prolonged time of education, inability to find job, inability to create a family, economic dependence on parents or absence of economic and thus personal independence), any serious youth action or program should also take into account the persons aged 24 to 30, with the aim of mitigating or eliminating the obstacles to their development as individuals and responsible citizens of the Macedonian society.¹⁰

3.2 Key figures on young people

At present, according to the prediction based on the last Census in 2002¹¹, there is a population of 483192 young in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (15-29) that is 23.56% of the total population of 2050687.

By gender, males are 248124 or 51.35% and 235068 or 48.65% are females.

In particular age groups, figures are as follows:

- 15-19 - 155316 (79805 males and 75511 females)
- 20-24 - 164286 (84228 males and 80058 females)
- 24-29 – 163591 (84091 males and 79500 females)

- For more see detailed tables as annex 1

¹⁰ National Youth Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia (2006)

¹¹ Statistical Office of the Republic of Macedonia, www.stat.gov.mk

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3.3 Living conditions and situation of young people

Macedonian youth is facing serious challenges and obstacles towards its social and economical integration in the society. The issues of employment, housing, forming a family, mobility, participation... are among priorities for solving. This was shown in all the statistics and research and as such it is recognized and treated in the NYS.

Most of these issues are related to the economical conditions. The lack of financial independents is a result of the high unemployment rate. The consequence of this is a situation where young people depend on their parents and live with them during and long after they finish education. There are many examples where three generations live together in one house. In some cases this is not only a result of the economical circumstances but also it is a result of traditionally strong connections between the family members. Prolonged schooling, postponed marriage and child birth are also a result of the lack of financial independence. Certainly this is not the only reason. There is also a trend among the new generation to postpone marriage and parenthood and to pay more attention to the career and their individual development.

3.3.1 Education and Training

Education as one of the most important topics plays a very important role in strategies (not only in NYS) for the development of the country. It is very important that the actual Government is in favor of supporting education; for example, in prediction for the next year budget (2011) 6% of GDP is aimed for education which is even higher than the EU percentage.¹² Reforms in education brought obligatory secondary school as one of the ways to give bigger opportunities on the labor market. This is already the second year since obligatory secondary school was introduced. Thanks to the opening of several private universities and the expansion of the state ones there is significant increasing of the number of students. This also increased the number of people with high education on the labor market and statistics shows that is easier for them to find a job. The situation is such that the biggest percentage of the unemployed labor force has primary or secondary education.¹³ It is interesting that the latest research showed that more people will prefer to attend a state university rather than a private one. About 30% would prefer to study abroad.¹⁴

¹² www.gov.mk

¹³ www.stats.gov.mk

¹⁴ Research on youth trends in Republic of Macedonia 2010, Elizabeta Markovska- Spasenoska, Marija Nashokoska (produced by Coalition of youth organizations SEGA)

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Beside reforms in the education there are also a lot of efforts for providing trainings and special curricula mainly aimed for unemployed persons. These trainings are organized by different providers such as educational institutions, private schools and marketing agencies. The State Agency for Employment is certainly the biggest provider.¹⁵

Unfortunately Non-formal Education (NFE) is not playing as important role as Formal education and did not find its real place in the society. Although as such exists in most of the cases with high standards (bringing new and creative methodology and raising quality) still it is not officially recognized neither by the society nor by the wider public. At the moment there are many initiatives for changing this status and what is more important many activities are taking place that results with bigger sensibility of the citizens concerning this issue. Although it is obviously happening very slowly within some state institutions there is also intention of the public institutions for opening to new initiatives, practices, ideas...

The participation of the young people in the Non -formal education activity is increasing, which is very encouraging. Latest researches showed that half of the young people interviewed, participate in some kind of activity of Non- formal Education ¹⁶

3.3.2 Leisure, Lifestyles, Sport

Most of the visitors and foreigners would probably perceive this country as a place where drinking coffee and visiting coffee bars is the highest priority among youth. It is true that this also counts for most of the SEE and mediterannian countries. Obviosly this the way that most of the young people spend their leisure time. The only competitive leisure time activity to coffee bars is the internet and certainly social networks as Facebook. It is interesting that the latest research showed that 24.9% of the young people spend their free time on the internet and in coffee bars and 24.7% in front of the TV. Sport was chosen by 19.1%, cultural activities 7.6% and involvement in NGOs 8.2%. Research shows that half of the young people spend their time in coffee bars, in front of the TV or the computer that is certainly not quality time spending. In numbers only sport can compete with the popularity of the internet, the TV or coffee bars. Probably this is the result of the strong campaign in last several years to promote healthy life style and sport activities and especially with the initiative taken by the government and implemented by the AfYS. 35 sport halls have been built, 50 football fields, 100 tennis courts, several new swimming pools, having in mind that most of these facilities are already finished and they provide real opportunities for sport activities.

¹⁵ www.avrm.gov.mk

¹⁶ Research on youth trends in Republic of Macedonia 2010, Elizabeta Markovska- Spasenoska, Marija Nashokoska(produced by Coalition of youth organizations SEGA)

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The analysis shows that most of the leisure time is spent unproductively. The findings from the survey in 2004 showed similar results and then the conclusion was of poor, stereotypical, non-creative way of using free time.

As already mentioned, leisure time activities are connected with the lifestyle of young people that obviously follows cultural and social mainstream in the society as well as global trends and it is strongly influenced by the new media especially the internet and all the social networks. The world phenomenon of socializing in the virtual world has a significant role in the lives of the Macedonian youths. Yet, this has not bigger influence to the culture of drinking coffee and personal meetings in coffee bars. The difference from the past several years is that while drinking coffee and speaking with their friends, now more and more young people have their lap tops in front of them.

3.3.3 Employment & Entrepreneurship

Employment is one of the most important issues not only among youth but the whole working population. Although in 2007 and 2008 there was tendency of the unemployment rate to go down (from 37 % it decreased to 32%), because of the world financial crisis the last two years is on the same level. This is definitely a huge percentage that concerns young people especially. In order to overcome this situation a lot of efforts were done in the field of promoting youth entrepreneurship. Young people had a key place within the state strategies for employment.¹⁷ The main instruments for supporting youth employment were and still are grants for supporting entrepreneurship among young people. Business plans and self-employment projects were financed with small grants. Some of the grants were from the budget and partly from foreign donations and credits. Having in mind that many projects were financed and many new jobs opened, this brings positive results. Unfortunately there is still not exact statistics of the decreasing percentage of unemployment among youth.

When covering employment it needs to be stressed that a lot of young people have temporary jobs and many of them are also taking part in the black economy. Paralleled with financial support for opening business there are activities connected with organizing trainings, courses and career guidance and counseling. Young people also have the opportunity to volunteer or have practice in order to gain experience and skills. Unfortunately these tools are not used enough efficiently. There is a lot of space in this field especially among youth organizations that have lack of volunteers and they should provide more active approach toward attracting youth to be involved in their activities.

¹⁷ Strategy for employment of the Republic of Macedonia

3.3.4 Health & Well-being

According to the Macedonian healthcare system every citizen that is not part of the health insurance via his job is receiving state support and gets free health insurance. This basically means that there is no citizen without health insurance. Even if young people are part of the educational system or they are unemployed they have opportunity to get free health insurance. Although statistically young people are using health services in smaller percentage than other age groups because of unhealthy lifestyles, drugs and alcohol abuse, cigarettes etc. the number of young people receiving medical treatment is increasing. Speaking about smoking for example, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is the second country by the number of smokers in Europe. Drinking alcohol is part of the culture and tradition (for example every 4th family has its own vineyards and produces homemade wine). Fortunately drug abuse is on smaller level compared with the developed western societies.

All findings confirm that there are tendencies of consuming tobacco (26 % of the teenagers from 13-15 smoke ¹⁸ and 16% of the children below 10 have tried a cigarette), alcohol and drugs to start from early age. ¹⁹

Sexual and reproductive health is priority in the strategies for health and is part of the NYS.

Prevention of sexually transmissible diseases, especially education and prevention of sexually transmissible infections is the pillar of the strategy.

Promotion of healthy lifestyles is the crucial element in health prevention together with education and information.

According to the statistical data, every third pregnancy has been aborted, so the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is the country with one of the biggest abortion rates in Europe. Since private clinics and practices also perform abortion, the number is even higher. Most of the abortions are among young population and especially among teenagers.

3.3.5 Participation and Volunteering

¹⁸ World health Organization, Elena Koseska national collaborator for global research on use of tobacco among youth, vecer.com.mk

¹⁹ European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), country review 2009
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In Macedonian society beside all the efforts for increasing the youth participation and promoting volunteering young people do not participate enough in the society and in institutions. 51% of the young people consider that they need education for youth participation.²⁰

Participation in decision making process is definitely the highest priority for youths. There is a need of establishing channels for youth participation, expression of their views and acceptance of such views by administrative bodies of the state and local self-government.

Lack of knowledge among youths for organizations that represent them was one of the main findings regarding youth participation. This is especially connected with their lack of interest for participation in high schools and student organizations.

There is a concrete initiative for amendment within the legislative of local self government-that will guarantee young people to be involved in the work of City Councils. In the moment only three of the 85 municipalities have established youth councils as consultative bodies to the municipality. Having in mind that this process has just recently started, increasing of the number of youth councils in the future is expected.

Findings about volunteering showed lack of interest in volunteering among young people. They are still not fully aware about the values and aim of volunteering. The law for volunteerism that was adopted several years ago offers concrete measures for stimulation and recognition of the benefits of the volunteering. This law has great importance both for organizations that host volunteers and for volunteers itself. Implementation of the law helps in improvement of the perception of volunteerism in the society general and especially among youth. In the whole scope of activities, law regulation, young people's interest etc. regarding volunteering is that still most of the young people will recognize volunteering as a serious tool for building their capacities and personal skills.

²¹

On the other hand possibilities for volunteering abroad are very popular among youth. Most of the young Macedonians are using programs such as European Voluntary Service (EVS) as part of Youth in Action Program of the European Commission in order to volunteer abroad. For an example the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is leader in participation in sending EVS projects (33 projects) among SEE countries in the period of 2007-2009. This is a great potential for volunteering and will definitely result with increase of volunteering within the country²²

²⁰ Research on youth trends in Republic of Macedonia 2010, Elizabeta Markovska- Spasenoska, Marija Nashokoska (produced by Coalition of youth organizations SEGA)

²¹ Research on youth trends in Republic of Macedonia 2010, Elizabeta Markovska- Spasenoska, Marija Nashokoska (produced by Coalition of youth organizations SEGA)

²² SALTO SEE, 2007-2009 statistics on cooperation with SEE countries, Compendia of granted projects-EACEA
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3.3.6 Culture

As we already stressed, the culture of socialization among Macedonian youths is a very important part of their lifestyle. In most of the cases young people use coffee bars as a favorite place for meetings. There is also a trend for using public spaces such as parks, squares especially during the summer period.

In the past two decades interests for subculture phenomena was increasing (drawing graffiti, skating, slam readings, hip-hop music, strip culture...)

Traditional cultural activities that are among the most popular among youth are still music concerts and music festivals, cinema, theater, reading books.

3.3.7 Religion

As multi-ethnic and multi-religious country the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has a very rich and diverse cultural live. Religious freedom is guaranteed by the constitution and different religions are equal by the law. Having in mind that in the Communism there was promotion of the atheistic values and strong oppression to religion, with the democracy there is increased interest for practicing religion also among youth. Most of the young people will stress their religious views and belonging to certain religious community as really important. Most of them practice their religion mostly in the days of greater religious holidays. Concerning more specific knowledge and practicing of spiritual live there is still difference with the western society that is mostly a result of the lack of continuity caused by the 45 years of communism. It is important also to be mentioned that the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a secular state where religious institutions do not have influence on the policy making but yet they are much respected among citizens and this is becoming more and more relevant to the youths as well.

3.3.8 Values and Attitudes

It is interesting that although financial problems (lack of employment, housing...) are considered as the biggest problem in the society for young people, they would not rank in their hierarchy of values financial needs on the first place.

Findings show that values such as: love, health, marriage, family, children are on top.

The second are values such as: interesting job, solidarity, traveling abroad...

Education and carrier development are on the third place.

Interest in politics, political action, activities in civil society associations are on the lowest level. Obviously traditional values are still priority in the life orientation among young people although values that are characteristic for modern society are becoming more and more popular. ²³

²³ Baseline study on youth trends, Skopje, February 2004 (Project for development of children and youth, Agency for Sports and Youth, prof.d-r.Antoanela Petkovska)
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4. Youth policies and youth work ---

4.1 Institutions, actors and structures

National public authorities

The main governmental body that is in charge of youth is the Agency of Youth and Sport²⁴ (AfYS) that is basically governmental body with its own budget and responsibilities. Although it is a ministry it is independent structure that is not under any other particular governmental ministry and responds directly to Prime Minister. It is important to mention that from 1998 to 2000 the Agency was functioning as an independent ministry but with the process of reducing the ministries it was transformed into Agency. Although several years ago there were also some initiatives to be under some of the existing ministries (Ministry of Education) AfYS continued to work as an independent structure. This was really seriously taken into consideration exactly in the period when the process of preparation of NYS took place and influenced by the lack of employed persons in the AfYS that limited its human resources and capacity of institutions in general.

The Agency for Youth and Sport has three departments: the Department for Sports, the Department for Normative, Legal and Economic Issues, and the Department for Youth.

Main tasks of the Youth Department are social development and social integration of youth via quality formal and non-formal education, economic prosperity of the youth via youth entrepreneurship, improving the quality of life, active participation of the youth in public life and in decision making processes on local and national level

The Youth Department is divided into two sub-departments-International cooperation and Youth policy and training.

At the moment six people are employed in the Youth Department.

Other national public bodies which are directly involved in youth policies and youth work

Partially in scope of their activities and jurisdiction the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Social Care and the Ministry of Culture have activities connected with youth.

It is important to stress the role of the new established National Agency for Youth Educational Programs and Mobility²⁵ that is in charge of the European Commission programs such as Youth In Action (certainly most important for Youth) that are widely spread among youth NGOs since the

²⁴ www.ams.gov.mk

²⁵ www.na.org.mk

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Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is one of the leading countries in SEE by participation in the program.²⁶ Beside the problems that occurred in the pilot phase (at the moment the activities are suspended and the Agency is under investigation by Brussels) expectations are that in 2011 the Agency will continue with the work and in 2012 the entry ticket to be paid and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to become a full program country of the Youth in Action.

Parliament commission in charge of youth issues

At the moment there is not such a commission. Only in some of the parliamentary groups there is a lobby group for youth where initiative can be suggested and then supported within parliament. Since establishing of the parliamentary commission for youth is part of the National program for adoption of EU legislation establishing of the commission should happen in the near future.

Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field

In the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia there are 85 municipalities and only few of them have serious focus on Youth and support youth activities mainly by supporting youth information centres.

The municipality of Skopje, the capital, has a structure within city administration that provides support for NGOs including Youth NGOs and also Coordination Council of NGOs on city level is established.

There is also Association of Local Communities that was included in the process of adoption of the National Action Plan for implementation of the NYS by nominating a member in the National Steering Committee for implementation of the NYS.

At the moment there is a process of establishing Councils of Youth, such as independent counseling bodies within the municipal councils. Structures have already been established in three municipalities.

Youth councils

The non-governmental umbrella organization Youth Council of Macedonia (YCM), which emerged in 1990 from the Union of Socialist Youth, has gathered 12 national youth associations and by 2003 it had only a membership of 6 associations. Since 2001, YCM has not had any major activity,

²⁶ SALTO SEE, 2007-2009 statistics on cooperation with SEE countries, Compendia of granted projects-EACEA
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and it was not represented in international youth organizations and is not active at all. Although it was never formally announced in practice the Youth Council stopped to exist.

At the moment the only relevant youth umbrella organization is SEGA coalition. It was involved in the process of drafting national youth strategy, preparation of the Action plan and now leading in initiative for starting a process for preparation on Law of youth. (As part of this initiative recently a survey was prepared by a team of experts engaged by SEGA Coalition in cooperation with the Agency of Youth and Sport and supported by foreign donors.)

Since there is no Macedonian youth council the only participation within the activities of European Youth Forum (YFJ) is via international organizations that have branches in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and that are members of YFJ.

Youth NGOs

Nowadays, the youth sector in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a combination of associations such as: youth organizations, organizations of different fields with youth target group, student associations and student unions, junior members of political parties, and cultural and artistic youth associations.

In the framework of the research for the capacities of the youth organizations in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, realized as a part of the project "Together for the Youth" in 2006, a sample of about 69 associations has been selected, including the junior members of the political parties that illustrate the combination of associations. In the latest Research on youth organizations in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (March-November 2010) 103 organizations were part of mapping as relevant to be involved, but only 55 (Annex 3) fulfilled the questioner and participated.²⁷

Organizations that were existing and were also active during Communism such as Red cross, Scout union are still playing very important role in the society since they are the from the few with own property and widely affirmed in the society. This provides basics for their self-sustainability. We have to mention also the SEGA coalition and it s member organizations. As well as organization such as Youth Education Forum that are active in the field of youth Policy. Also organizations that are very active in Youth in Action program such as Creative, Volunteer center Skopje, Council for prevention of Juvenal delinquency ...

²⁷ Research on status, function and scope of activities of youth organizations, Elizabeta Markovska-Spasenoska (produced by Coalition of youth organizations SEGA)

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4.2 Context of youth policies and youth work

4.2.1 Youth policy

With the beginning of the 21st century when the process of establishing National Youth Strategy started, real efforts were made for establishing a national youth policy. It is important to stress that paralleled with the processes of Euro accession, the interest and enthusiasm for development of youth policy grows. As a part of the activities within one of the biggest projects financed by the World Bank (Babylon youth centres) in 2003 a big survey took place: A baseline study on youth trends prepared and conducted by a team of researchers from the Philosophical faculty- Institute for Sociology(led by Dr Antoanela Petkovska Phd.)

On the basis of this study wide consultative process started where main stakeholders were involved in the process of drafting the National Youth Strategy. After more then a year the draft document was released and given to the government for adoption. The process of adoption took almost a year and finally in the end of 2005 the National Youth Strategy was adopted by the government.

The National Steering Committee for implementation of the National Youth Strategy that consisted both from government and youth NGOs was established. The Committee came out with action plan proposal for 2009.

The National Youth Strategy of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia aims to improve the general position and satisfy the needs and interests of the young people in the country.

It is divided into eight thematic areas:

- EDUCATION
- YOUTH SELF-EMPLOYMENT, SUPPORT PRIOR TO EMPLOYMENT
- LIFE QUALITY
- HEALTH AND PREVENTION
- YOUTH PARTICIPATION
- YOUTH INFORMATION
- CULTURE
- LOCAL YOUTH WORK

4.2.2 Youth work

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At the moment there is not an official and widely accepted definition of youth work in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Data of the number of youth workers is also not available.

There is an initiative for recognition of the youth work and systematization and accreditation of youth workers in the Nomenclature of professions. Several years ago special studies for Youth work were established at one of the private universities in the country.

4.2.3 Youth research

Although youth research is not developed and there are not researchers that are specialized on youth, yet for all the important activities connected with youth issues and youth policy such as the process of preparation of the National Youth Strategy, Law for Youth etc, the basis were researches done by experts. Most of these experts come from social sciences and are involved in social researching. Obviously that youth research is very important and it has perspective for development as the youth policy and youth work will develop.

Having in mind what was done in the recent period, the activities of the Institute of Sociology as part of faculty of philosophy should be mentioned as well as some individual names such as Antonela Petkovska, Elizabeta Markovska, Marija Nasokovska, Gordica Atanasova, Julijana Daskalov. Their research was used in this review.

4.3 Legislation and provision of youth work

With regard to legislation, it is important to stress the Law on Volunteerism as well as the Law on Associations and Foundations that was updated this year. The new version of law is especially important for youth as it facilitates forming groups and envisages the possibility of registering associations for youth under 18 years of age- older than 15 with special statement from its law adviser.

Within the new initiative for adoption of the law for youth as well for youth council there is also a proposal for implementation of a legislation that will precisely define establishing and law regulation on youth organizations. Within this area it needs to be stressed that youth branches of the political parties are not registered as separate law entities.

4.4 Strategies, Programmes, Action Plans in youth work and non-formal education/learning

Unfortunately at the moment there is no action plan and concrete steps on national level in the field of youth work and non formal learning apart from what is foreseen in the NYS. There is political will for formal recognition of the non formal education and these processes are with different varieties depending in which area they are taking place. Obviously there is an aim state to deliver some of its activities and services in the hands of civil society organizations and slowly it opens space for non formal education. This outsourcing process is still in the very beginning but also helps for recognition of the non formal education as such. It is important that activities in the field of non formal education /Learning developed and run by NGOs are taken more and more priorities in their annual programs and strategic plans.

Regarding information and participation although that this is one of the priority of the NYS still there is not real network of the info centers and in most of the municipalities there is no existence of info centers at all. Volunteering that was recently put into law frame did not have intensity and is losing its popularity among youths. Fortunately still some of the bigger organizations and structures have a network of volunteers (such as the Red Cross that are widely speeded and very well organized). Volunteering in international context plays serious role thanks to the programs such as EVS within Youth in Action that are quite popular in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

At the moment there are several activities where young people can participate. Twice per year there is a so-called Day of the tree-a National campaign for planting trees and keeping environment where youth is as well as the whole population organized and participate through schools, universities, NGOs. By the way this activity is organized by civil organization but strongly supported by the state both financially and logistically. Since these days are non-working, the participation is very big.

It should also be mention that there are different smaller activities such as festivals, camps, conferences.

4.5 Strategies in cross-sectional policies

Basically the NYS is a cross sectional policy document. Several ministries are obliged to implement the strategy in the part where it is under their remit. In the body that is in charge of implementation of the NYS-National steering committee there is one representative from each of the ministry that takes part in implementation of the strategy,

Certainly each of them has a strategy within their remit that influence youth. For example there is Strategy for Education, Strategy for employment, and Strategy for health protection and prevention, Strategy for social care etc.

It is important to stress that for several years there is no obligatory military service in the country since Macedonian army is fully professionalized.

4.6 European and International dimension

European Union programmes

The previous Youth and today Youth in Action program as a European Commission program on different level include The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as a member of the partner countries. With the establishment of the National Agency for Youth Educational Programs and Mobility that is also a responsible agency for implementation of Youth in Action, expectations are that in 2012 FYROM will become a full program country. The program exists for several years and still has a great impact with the same intensity for Macedonian youth NGOs that use the program very successfully and already dozen of projects are taking place in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (in actions available for the country) and respective number of Macedonian youths went abroad and participated in activities taking place in the frame of Youth in Action.

Having in mind the numbers of applications (especially successful ones) sent to Brussels, this is the key program for international projects of Macedonian NGOs. Obviously the role of Youth in Action will be important in the next period and a guarantee for this beside the Agency are also several contact points that are working on promotion on Youth in Action and certainly good practise of the organizations already involved.

According to the existing data for the projects decided on centralized and decentralized level FYROM is a leading country in participation in Youth in Action projects especially in the part of projects that are implemented in Macedonia and also projects implemented by Macedonian NGOs that show serious capacity and quality.

The Agency of Youth and Sport disseminates the information to the Council of Europe programmes in the field of youth to relevant organisations and participated in its structures (CDEJ). FYROM has also nominated representative in EKCYP.

There is also an office of Council of Europe that disseminates information regarding Council of Europe activities.

4.7 Budget/Funding

National level

Agency of Youth and Sport within its budget of Youth Department financed activities mainly by supporting projects with the open competition/announced public call. The 2009 budget was 17 million mkd –approximately 280000 euros.

Unfortunately because of the economic crisis in 2010 there was no budget for open public call for financing Youth NGOs with their projects. For 2011 no budget is foreseen. There is also a possibility that some of the activities of the youth NGOs will be activated by the grants organized through the system of open completion/ announced public call that are given by the department for cooperation with NGOs that is part of the Secretariat of Government. They have budget for support of all NGOs in general. There is no data available how many youth NGOs applied and if some of them were successful and what was the total amount received.

Regional level

In practice there is no system for financial supporting of youth activities on local level, although in some of the municipalities there is a symbolic budget for granting resources to the civil sector each year. There is no data available how many youth NGOs applied and if some of them were successful and what was the total amount received on local level as well.

Other recourses

It is important to stress that there are several foundations and funds available for youth activities. Foreign Embassies mostly through their countries' international programs support youth activities. Corporative awareness is growing and there is interest among companies to support youth activities.

5. Trends, needs, challenges and expectations

It is obvious that the Youth policy and youth work in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is still in developing phase and it is closely related to political and especially economical situation in the society. As such it is influenced by the main trends in the country. Together with the reforms of the country connected with the process of EU integration there is much attention put into the strengthening institutional support and especially into law and legislation. Unfortunately economical crisis that hit the country also has influence into implementation of the policies in the youth field that means lack of implementation of the action plans. Paralleled with this, the main stakeholders especially youth NGOs are not economically independent to play bigger role in the processes (with lack of self-sustainability they are very weak and also strongly influenced by the political and economical situation). Lack of recourses, stable finances, not providing self sustainable programs make NGO's very fragile. This is especially obvious in the times of the economical crisis when the state funds are reduced. Withdrawal of many foundations and other donors from the country and widely in the region also has a serious negative impact toward NGO's.

In correlation with the situation in the region it is reasonable to say that the situation is really similar to the situation with the rest of the countries in the Western Balkans. This means that it is far away from the situation in most of the European Union countries. There is no doubt since the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is one of the poorest countries in Europe that this has influence toward the implementation of the action plans and good practices and certainly influence especially the daily work of youth NGOs.

On the other hand with the process of EU accession there is a trend of achievement of higher standards. It is very crucial to stress the importance of EU funds that are available for the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. For example Macedonian NGOs are one of the biggest users of funds from Youth in Action program. This shows capacity for both preparing and implementation of projects under the criteria of Youth in Action program.

As one of the most important perspectives for development of the youth policy and youth work is outsourcing of the state run projects, facilities etc. to the NGOs. This will give them solid bases for developing and running self-sustainable activities and programs. Related to this is the bigger awareness among citizens about the activities of the civil society and willingness to participate in them. They become key players in the field and although this is maybe not shown enough in the youth sector it will have positive results in the years to come. Certainly these are also some of the biggest challenges for the youth NGOs since they will need to show capacity to face the situation in society and to face the needs of young people in order to provide activities, programs and services that would be attractive for them. In order to be successful in this they will need to cooperate with

other stakeholders and also rely on other segment on youth work. There is a need of more structural approach and bigger expertise. Unfortunately there is lack of experts working in the youth field. The situation with the researchers is not bright. Research and expertise is basically coming from the general social research. There is a clear need of focus on youth researchers and need of developing human resources active in the field with strong sense of ownership. It is clear that this is necessary for all the main actors in order to develop and deliver successful youth policy in the country. Youth NGOs are only one side of the triangle. State institution within inter-sectional cooperation must invest in their human resources in order to deliver successfully and implement into practice their part of obligations and tasks.

APENDIX

Last but not least author of the review would like to thank you to everybody that contributed for the review by providing info, materials and advices. Special thanks to SEGA coalition and its Executive director, as well as to Youth Partnership and its staff for their permanent support and understanding during process of preparation of the review.

6. Sources of information

Comparative analysis of the national and European legislation on youth status, 2010, Gorica Atanasova (produced by Coalition of youth organizations SEGA)

Research on youth trends in Republic of Macedonia 2010, Elizabeta Markovska- Spasenoska, Marija Nashokoska (produced by Coalition of youth organizations SEGA)

Research on status, function and scope of activities of youth organizations, Elizabeta Markovska-Spasenoska (produced by Coalition of youth organizations SEGA)

National program for adoption of EU legislation, Secretariat for European issues, Skopje 2010(revised), 2004

Government of the republic of Macedonia, program for development of youth and sport for 2010, official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia

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Strategy for employment of the Republic of Macedonia, Government of the republic of Macedonia

Law on voluntarism

Youth work development report on the study visit to Macedonia 10-14 October, A Youth forum Publication Brussels, 2006

Together for youth Project, National Youth Parliament report, 2006

Analysis of the capacity and needs of the youth sector in the Republic of Macedonia, Skopje, January 2006, Julijana Daskalov, Together for youth project

National program for development of education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015

National Strategy for Youth of the Republic of Macedonia, December 2005

Baseline study on youth trends, Skopje, February 2004 (Project for development of children and youth, Agency for Sports and Youth, prof.d-r.Antoanela Petkovska and team of experts)

Census of the population, households and apartments in the Republic of Macedonia, State Statistical Office, 2002

Important web sites:

www.gov.mk

www.mon.gov.mk

www.mtsp.gov.mk

www.kultura.gov.mk

www.stat.gov.mk

www.sega.org.mk

www.ams.gov.mk

www.na.org.mk

www.avrm.gov.mk

www.eacea.ec.europa.eu

www.salto-youth.net

List of abbreviations:

AfYS- Agency for youth and sport

EU-European Union

EACEA- The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

EVS-European voluntary service

NYS-National youth strategy

SALTO- Support, Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within European Youth programme.

SEE-South Eastern Europe

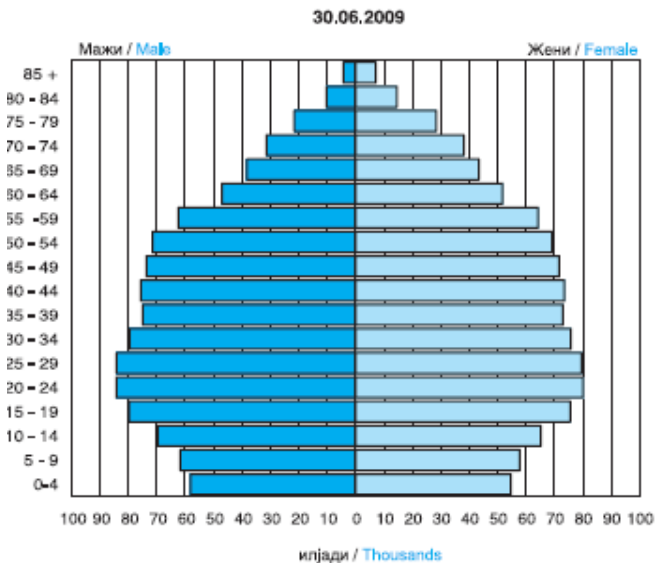
Annexes

Annex 1: Population Estimates

POPULATION ESTIMATES

30.06.2008			30.06.2009				
total	male	female	total		male	female	
	Total	2 046 898	1 026 022	1 020 876	2 050 671	1 027 810	1 022 861
0 - 4	112 825	58 140	54 685	112 671	58 082	54 589	
5 - 9	121 202	62 566	58 636	119 468	61 674	57 794	
10 - 14	139 813	72 075	67 738	134 704	69 572	65 132	
15 - 19	157 897	81 191	76 706	155 316	79 805	75 511	
20 - 24	165 069	84 618	80 451	164 286	84 228	80 058	
25 - 29	162 300	83 591	78 709	163 591	84 091	79 500	
30 - 34	153 804	78 523	75 281	155 188	79 510	75 678	
35 - 39	147 677	74 820	72 857	147 766	74 884	72 882	
40 - 44	149 467	75 835	73 632	149 078	75 603	73 475	
45 - 49	144 753	73 547	71 206	145 233	73 663	71 570	
50 - 54	139 803	71 017	68 786	140 607	71 440	69 167	
55 - 59	124 053	60 716	63 337	126 459	62 317	64 142	
60 - 64	93 375	44 623	48 752	98 640	47 035	51 605	
	Over 65	234 191	104 600	129 591	237 068	105 762	131 306
	Unknown	669	160	509	596	144	452

Annex 2: Population by Age



Annex 3: Youth NGO lists

Name of the organization	e-mail	Web site
Youth Cultural Centre-Bitola	mkcbt@t-home.mk	
YMCA Bitola	contact@ymcabitola.org.mk	www.ymcabitola.org.mk
Creactive–Skopje	contact@cre-act-ive.org	www.cre-ast-ive.org
Youth for youth – Skopje	mladizamladi@yahoo.com	
HERA-Skopje	hera@hera.org.mk	www.hera.org.mk
ERASMUS STUDENT NETWORK – Skopje	macedonia@esn.org	www.esn.org
Roma center of town of Skopje	center@mt.net.mk	
Roma progress-Skopje	romaprogres@yahoo.com	
Union of students of Medical science –Skopje	contact@emsa.org.mk	www.emsa.org.mk
AIESEC Macedonia		
AIESEC – Skopje	lcskopje@aiesec.net	www.aiesec.net

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	AIESEC – Prilep		
	AIEGEE – Skopje	contact@aegee-skopje.org.mk	www.aegee-skopje.org.mk
	Youth can-Skopje	mladitemozat@gmail.com	
	FEJS-Skopje	info@mladiinfo.com	www.mladiinfo.com
	Center for intercultural dialog-Kumanovo	contact@cid.mk	www.cid.mk
	Mother-Kumanovo	lidija63@hotmail.com	
	Red cross- Prilep	prilep@redcross.org.mk	www.redcross.org.mk
	Peace action-Prilep	mirovna@freemail.com.mk	
	Scouts-Struga	13.maja@gmail.com	
	Council for prevention of juvenile delinquency-Kavadarci	contact@sppmd.org.mk	www.sppmd.org.mk
	Youth organization Water plus0Stip	kire_stip@yahoo.com	
	SSUGD-Stip	zdravkov_1987@yahoo.com	
	Foundation for development- Stip	ngoscst@sonet.com.mk	
	Moon-Gostivar	mescina@mescina.org.mk	www.mescina.org.mk
	Foundation for development of local community-Debar	smarku@sonet.com.mk	www.cscd.org.mk
	Focus- Veles	v.skortova@focus.org.mk	www.focus.org.mk
	Gevdion- Gevgelija	blagoj_rstv@yahoo.com	
	SOZM- Skopje	sozm@mt.net.mk	www.sozm.org.mk
	Academic- Krusevo	akademikkrusevo@gmail.com	
	Organization for music-Scen	lazostage@yahoo.com	
	Alavand-Valindovo	alavand.valandovo@yahoo.com	
	Cultural union Burimet et Sharit-	zilfi.aliu@pofix.com	

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	Tetovo		
	Red cross of the Republic of Macedonia	vukelic@redcross.org.mk	www.redcross.org.mk
35	Youth council- Prilep	contact@ycp.org.mk	www.ycp.org.mk
36	HOPS- Skopje	hristijan@hops.org.mk	www.hops.org.mk
37	Union for cultural cooperation- Intercultura- Skopje	interculture@mt.net.mk ; vbube@mt.net.mk	www.interkultura.com.mk
38	IRZ-Tetovo	cdi@mt.net.mk ;	www.irz.org.mk
39	Youth club-Stip	volunteer_mk@yahoo.com	
40	YMCA Macedonia	yca@ymca-macedonia.org.mk ;	www.ymca-macedonia.org.mk
41	Center for democratic development and integration –Tetovo	nvocdri@yahoo.com ;	
42	Youth forum EYE	contact@youthforumeye.org.mk ;	www.youthforumeye.org.mk
43	Student parliament of University of St. Cyril and Metodi- Skopje	ssukm@ukim.edu.mk ;	www.ssukm.org.mk
44	Volunteer center -Skopje	vcs_contact@yahoo.com ;	www.vcs.org.mk
45	Network of young farmers-Skopje	kontakt@ffrm.org.mk ;	www.ffrm.org.mk
46	Zona-Kavadarci	info@zonakavadarci.org.mk	www.zonakavadarci.org.mk
47	Multicultura-Tetovo	multikultura@mt.net.mk ;	www.multikultura.org.mk
48	Center for development and promotion of public live-Tetovo	cruzte@yahoo.com ;	
49	Organization of women of municipality of Sveti Nikole	wom_org@yahoo.com	www.womsvetnikole.org.mk
50	Youth Forum-Bitola	youthforumbitola@gmail.com ;	www.youthforumbitola.org
51	Citizens center for prevention and re-socialization	gcprneg@gmail.com	

52	Citizens initiative for equal opportunities-Semper	semperbt@yahoo.com	www.semper.org.mk
53	Youth council-Gevgelija	boskopetrov@yahoo.com	
54	Youth multicultural union-Prilep	mmz.prilep@gmail.com	
55	Democracy-Sveti Nikole	zg.demokratija@yahoo.com	