



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL
STRATEGY FOR YOUTH ON THE LOCAL LEVEL
YOUTH OFFICE STANDARDS AND COMPETENCES
OF YOUTH OFFICE COORDINATORS
GUIDELINES

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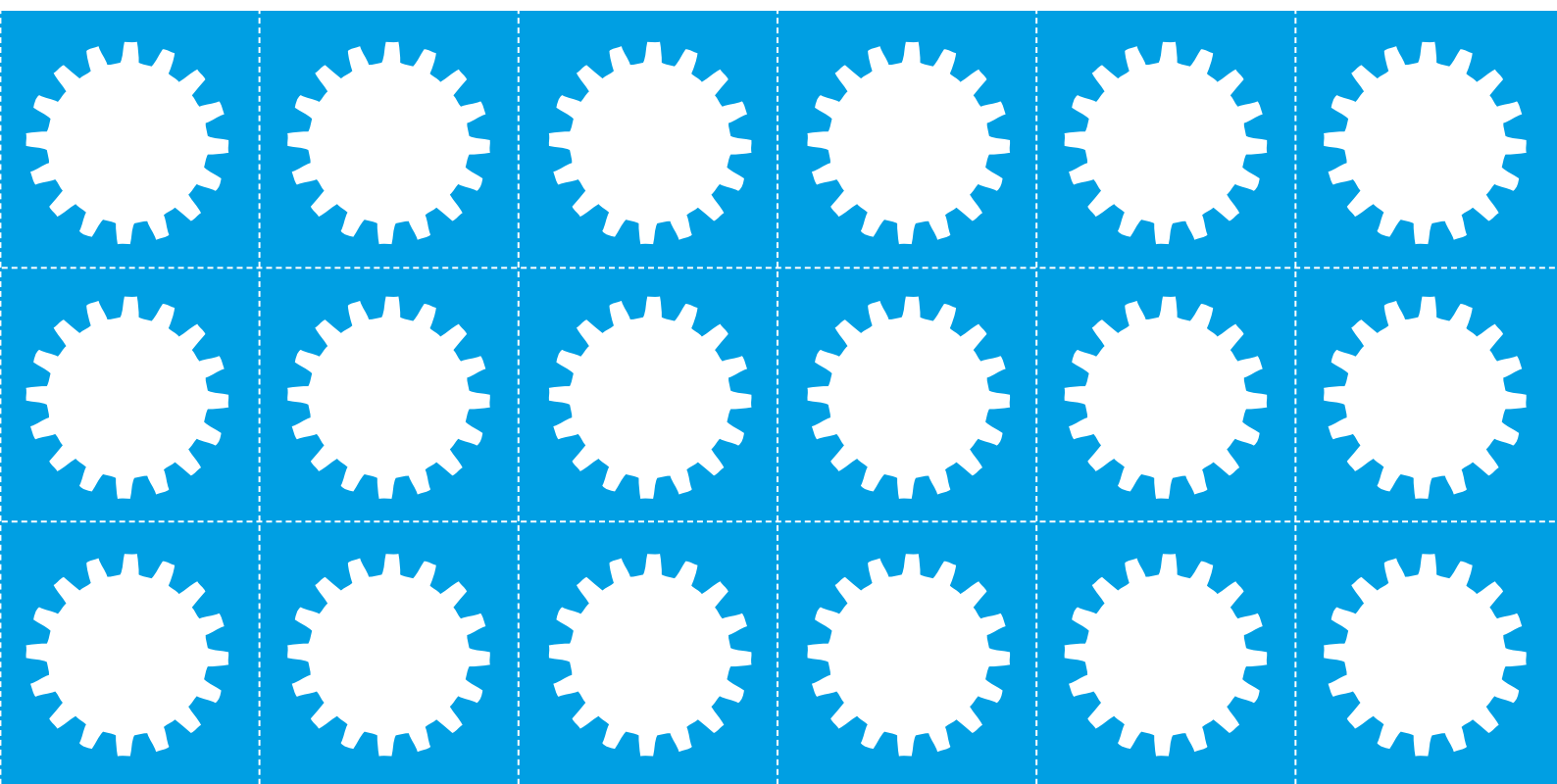
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[Thank-you note to the participants involved in the process of developing the brochure](#)

We would like to express our gratitude to everyone who contributed to and helped with the creation of this brochure, above all to the coordinators of youth offices who participated in a survey and gave comments on draft versions and in that way expressed their needs.

In particular, we thank Sever Dzigurski, Jelena Jakovljevic Zajeganovic, Stanislava Vuckovic, Danijela Jovic, Marija Rudic and Suzana Krstic for their constructive suggestions for improving the text.

We also thank KOMS and NAPOR, which contributed with comments based on their expertise and thus helped that this brochure covers all aspects of working with young people in the local community.



The past two decades in Serbia have been marked with an extensive expatriation of young people. These young people, however, are the greatest treasure Serbia possesses and a major force driving the society. Thus, it is our desire that young, well educated and skilled people remain in the country as a main resource promoting significant changes. In May of 2007, the Government supported the formation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, confirming its willingness to support youth and their overall standing in the society.

Our Ministry has been diligent about the development of youth policy, resulting in the adoption of strategic documents and consequently the development of policies targeting youth. Furthermore, for the first time in the history of the Republic of Serbia, a Law on Youth was passed on July 5th 2011. Of particular importance is the fact that youth were actively involved in the consultative process, demonstrating that they are equal participants in the creation of strategies and policies that affect them.

Local youth offices play an important role in youth policy today. Since the creation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the number of offices has risen from only five to up to 124. Local youth offices represent a place in the local community where youth can gain information, additional knowledge, and participate in projects shaping the social and cultural life in their communities. They are a service created by the youth and targeting youth, through which they may change a society towards the better. Local youth offices are a place for everyone, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or social and political affiliation.

The guidelines for youth office standards and competences of youth office coordinators represent a step further in supporting the local youth offices, which have already received support through education, the development of local action plans and co-financing of their implementation, and cooperation with international donors. They provide support and recommendations on how to improve the work of the local youth offices and are another step towards ensuring the quality of their work.

The long-term goal of the Ministry of Youth and Sports is the improvement of the standing of youth in their communities, the improvement of their lives, as well as the development of qualitative youth activism. Also, it is our goal to retain people in their local communities, give them an opportunity to do something for themselves, change what they do not like and to actively contribute to improving their lives through the local youth offices.

Young people respond to problems and contribute to solving them, changing society as a whole. Our mission is to help them do that, because it has been shown that when youth change society, the change is for the better.

S. S. Marković

Snežana Samardžić Marković
Minister

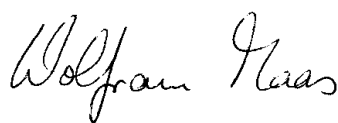
Dear reader,

Germany was one of the first bilateral donors committed to cooperation with Serbia, beginning after the democratic turn in 2000. Since its beginnings, German Development Cooperation has recognized the potential of young people in the country, who need to be acknowledged as a target group with specific needs, but just as much as active members of this society with the potential to become future leaders and positively shape the development of the country. As such, together with its Serbian partners, German Development Cooperation has implemented projects to promote young people since 2002.

Much has happened since then. The creation of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in 2007 has reflected the special recognition of youth by the Serbian government. In a period of only four years, the normative framework to promote young people was elaborated and adopted, the latest example being the adoption of the Law on Youth in 2011. At the same time, local youth offices have been established in 124 municipalities and 108 local youth action plans adopted by the municipal councils. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the implementing organization Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH has supported this process from its beginnings and directly cooperated with 41 municipalities in Serbia.

Together with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, I am pleased to present to you in one brochure a summary of the existing normative framework and the structures to promote young people and support active youth participation at the local, regional and national levels. The brochure also contains guidelines for youth office work standards and coordinator competences which were elaborated in cooperation between the Ministry of Youth and Sports and GIZ, widely discussed with local youth coordinators and adapted accordingly.

German Development Cooperation will support the implementation of the standards in the future and remain committed to promoting young people as important actors in the Serbian society.



Wolfram Maas
Ambassador Federal Republic of Germany



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CHAPTER 1.

YOUTH POLICY IN SERBIA

SECTION 1.

YOUTH POLICY IN SERBIA

National level – strategic and legal framework

Around 20% of Serbia's population are young people¹, i.e. persons from 15 to 30 years of age². The European Union's strategy "Youth - Investing and Empowering" projects a decrease in the number of young people in the EU by as much as 4% by 2050. The Republic of Serbia is also facing this problem (it projects a decrease by as much as 2% by 2050), which urges it to invest in young people and create conditions for the full development of their potentials and active participation in society.

Serbia has long lacked an institutional, strategic and legal framework for youth policy on the national level. However, owing mainly to activism of youth associations, student organizations and youth wings of political parties the institutional environment has changed and since 15 May 2007 youth in Serbia have their own Ministry.

From its establishment, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (hereinafter: MOYS) has worked on the development, advancement and implementation of youth policy, with the aim of improving the quality of life of young people in our country, being actively engaged at all levels – from local to European. This is evidenced by the adopted strategic documents in the area of youth policy: the National Strategy for Youth – 2008 (hereinafter: NSY), the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Youth – 2009 (hereinafter: APNSY), the Career Guidance and Counselling Strategy for the Republic of Serbia – 2010 (hereinafter: CGCS), and the Law on Youth – 2011 (hereinafter LY). All these documents were adopted following the active participation of youth and institutions and bodies in charge of youth issues. More than 16,000 young people participated, in different forms, in the development of the National Youth Strategy, while over 2,500 took part in the Law drafting process.

¹ In this document, gender sensitive language is respected, however to make the document more user-friendly for the respective readers male and female are not every time explicitly emphasised.

² Source: Republic Statistical Office, 2002 Census



During the development of all strategic documents, the MOYS opted for a general consultative process, because consultation represents a part of the system of values which the Ministry seeks to establish in the country.

National Strategy for Youth

The National Strategy for Youth (NSY) is the first step in a systemic approach to enhance the position of youth in Serbia. The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the NSY on 9 May 2008. 16 ministries, 47 civil society organizations and 16,000 young people took part in the strategy's development and this process was supported by 167 round tables. The Council of Europe declared the NSY development process a good practice.

The NSY defines 11 general strategic objectives for the improvement of the quality of life of young people in the Republic of Serbia:

- › To encourage young people to participate actively in society
- › To develop youth cooperation and to provide conditions for the participation in decision-making processes through a sustainable institutional framework, based on the needs of young people and in cooperation with youth
- › To establish a system of youth information at all levels and in all areas
- › To achieve the right to equality of chances for all young people in the society, and especially for those who live under difficult conditions
- › To encourage and evaluate the extraordinary results and achievements of young people in different areas
- › To improve the possibilities of youth to spend quality leisure time
- › To develop an open, effectual, efficient and justifiable system of formal and non-formal education available to all young people, that is in line with global educational trends and the educational context in the Republic of Serbia
- › To encourage and stimulate all forms of employment, self-employment and youth entrepreneurship
- › To improve the conditions for a secure life for young people
- › To protect and improve health, to decrease health risks and to develop a youth-friendly health protection system
- › To empower young people for the initiatives and activities that are in line with the basic goals of sustainable development and a healthy environment

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy in the period 2009 – 2014 (APNSY) was adopted on 22 January 2009. The APNSY specifies concrete

activities, timeframes, expected results, indicators, responsible stakeholders and participants and funds needed for the implementation of activities.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has so far prepared two annual NSY progress reports, for 2009 and 2010. Monitoring of the progress of implementation of the NSY indicates that over 1,000 youth activities take place annually in the context of NSY implementation, with the participation of around 700,000 young people. In addition, around 6,500 university and high school students received scholarships/awards from the Fund for Young Talents, worth over RSD 1.6 billion.

Both reports show that the adoption of the NSY has brought significant progress to Serbia in terms of improved conditions for the active participation of young people in different spheres of social life and the full development of their potentials. Also, these youth activities have contributed to the improvement of their own position, and to overall societal development.

Career Guidance and Counselling Strategy for the Republic of Serbia

In March 2010, at the proposal of the MOYS, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Career Guidance and Counselling Strategy for Serbia, along with the Action Plan for its implementation in the period 2010 – 2014.

The CGCS for Serbia created the conditions for setting up a career guidance and counselling system in the Republic of Serbia, with the aim of a better utilization of human resources and the creation of a clear link between the educational system and the labour market. Career guidance and counselling is one of the key tools for the development of human potentials which helps to attain both educational objectives and those in the areas of economic development, social equality and inclusion. The concept of career guidance and counselling is especially important for young people and the development of their potentials.

The Action Plan for the implementation of the CGCS envisages, among other, continuous promotion of career guidance and counseling and a series of activities entrusted to youth offices aimed at better informing youth, facilitating informed career decisions and enhancing youth employability. Furthermore, it envisages the setting up of a career guidance and counselling centre for students who were supported by the Fund for Young Talents of the Republic of Serbia. The Action Plan also foresees the development of the National Programme for CGC and the establishment of the National Resource Centre for CGC which would coordinate and take care of the development of the overall CGC system, as a permanent link between the spheres of education and employment.

At the proposal of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Government of the Republic of Serbia established the Working Group for CGCS implementation, tasked with: 1) proposing measures for harmonizing activities in CGCS implementation according to the timeframe set by the Action Plan on strategy implementation, 2) monitoring the Strategy's implementation, 3) participating in the evaluation and preparation of annual reports for the Government on strategy implementation and 4) participating in the promotion and popularization of the establishment of the career guidance

and counselling system in the Republic of Serbia, in accordance with the Strategy. The Working Group includes representatives of the MOYS, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, National Employment Agency, Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Conference of Serbian Universities, Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and Belgrade Open School.

Law on Youth

The development of the Law on Youth began toward the end of 2009, in accordance with the APNSY.

During the process of drafting the Law on Youth, 80 events, meetings and round tables were held with the participation of all relevant actors in youth policy, bringing together about 2,500 young people and other stakeholders, thus resulting in the Draft Law on Youth which subsequently underwent public debate and was then forwarded to the Government for the development of the Proposal Law on Youth. This document of primary significance was then submitted to the National Assembly for its adoption. **The Law on Youth was adopted on 5 July 2011**, and with it, young people received their first law in the history of Serbia in the International Year of Youth.

The Law provides frameworks and conditions of support for young people relating to their organizations, social action, the development and realization of their personal and social potentials, youth sector structures, both on the governmental and the non-governmental level, respective rights, obligations and responsibilities, as well as the affirmation of the autonomy of youth and youth-oriented associations, unions and umbrella unions.

Youth offices, which now exist in 124 local governments in Serbia, thus became rooted in the Law, which will be beneficial for their future work. At the proposal of the Ministry, and in accordance with the regulations governing the operation of the Government, the Government is currently establishing the Youth Council at the national level for the coordination of activities relating to the implementation of youth policies on the territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina and local government units, while the competent body of the Autonomous Province and the competent bodies of the local government units can establish provincial, city and municipal youth councils.

For the first time, the Law on Youth clearly defines public interest in the youth sector on the national, provincial and local levels.

By adopting this Law, the state demonstrated its firm resolve to make youth its concern, and confirmed that public interest in the field of youth at the national level is as follows: funding youth programmes and projects that promote youth and youth associations, as well as youth-oriented associations and unions to take an active part in social development and in the implementation of youth related activities and the achievement of the goals set in the National Strategy for Youth; information, career guidance and counselling, self-employment and youth entrepreneurship; non-formal education, active and quality leisure time, the promotion of healthy and safe lifestyles, as well as the fulfillment of the needs of young people in culture; promoting volunteer



work and youth work and capacity-building of youth associations; promoting activities of young people on the local level through support for the realization of local action plans for youth and programmes and projects of local youth offices; research on the position and needs of youth; international cooperation, and support for young talents through awards, scholarships and further education for high school and university students.

The Law also allows for an Agency to be established under a separate law and in accordance with EU requirements for the implementation of youth programmes.

As for the provincial and local levels, it is especially important to point out that on the territory of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (AP), the importance of youth and youth policies was recognized as far back as 2002, when the Provincial Secretariat for Youth and Sport was established. Up to now, two strategic documents concerning youth have been developed: the National Youth Policy Action Plan in the AP of Vojvodina for the period 2005-2008, and the National Youth Policy Action Plan in the AP of Vojvodina for the period 2010-2014.

The role of the Local Government - The Law on Youth specifies that funding of the needs and interests of young people in the Autonomous Province or a local government is to be brought in line with the interests and needs of the Autonomous Province, or individual local governments and their respective financial situations. Special emphasis has been given to meeting the needs and interests of young people in terms of creating conditions for the participation of youth in the development and implementation of provincial or local youth action plans, encouraging young people to take an active part in social development through the promotion and support for youth activities, work and non-formal education, and the establishment and operation of youth offices, youth clubs, centres and similar. Young people should further be encouraged to take part in the implementation of youth policy, including capacity-building of their associations and unions, making use of the conditions for active and quality leisure time, including sports, promoting healthy and safe lifestyles, conducting volunteer activities, as well as organizing trainings, seminars and events important for the employment and further education of youth. The Law clearly states that funding for the above mentioned and other needs and interests of young people is to be provided from the budgets of the Autonomous Province or local government.

Consequently, it should be noted that, under the Law on Youth, the Ministry governs and monitors the implementation of the National Youth Strategy on the local level.



The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is one of the most active institutions dedicated to the development and promotion of youth policy across Europe.

The Council of Europe youth sector has been developing for over forty years, initiating a range of structures and official documents for the implementation of youth policies on the European level: the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg 1972, the European Youth Foundation in 1974, the Solidarity Fund for Youth Mobility and another Youth Centre in Budapest in 1995, the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility and the Partial Agreement of the North-South Centre, the Partnership Agreement with the European Commission in the field of youth, or the European Charter on the Participation of Young People. Research work in the field of youth policy was also included (i.e. Compass: a Manual on Human Rights Education, and a range of others).

The programmes and the policy of the Council of Europe youth sector have been developed in close cooperation and partnership with governmental and non-governmental sectors, through participation of representatives of both sectors in two significant youth related bodies on the European level. Cooperation and joint decision making by the two sectors embody another essential concept characterizing the Council of Europe youth sector, namely, co-management.

A direct result of joint decision-making processes between young people and decision-makers has been the Agenda 2020 which offers guidelines for European youth policy until 2020. All priorities in the document are realized through a range of trainings, symposiums, training courses, seminars, expert meetings, as well as field activities, publications and studies, special events, ministry conferences and similar. In November of 2010, the Council of Europe adopted another significant document, namely the Council of Europe Resolution on youth work.

More at: www.coe.org.rs

The European Union

In the European Union youth policy is a separate field of cooperation, conducted through open coordination among the states. The document which testifies to the readiness of European states to invest in young people is the New EU Youth Strategy titled "Youth – Investing and Empowering", adopted in 2009 for the period

2010-2018. The Strategy specifies concrete objectives: creating better opportunities for young people in the field of education and employment; improving access and providing for full participation of youth in society; strengthening solidarity between youth and society. In addition to the new European strategy, in March 2010 the European Commission introduced the strategy **Europe 2020**, pointing out the necessity to define economic development in a context of social unity. It puts youth at the top of the priority list of the European Union, as is also confirmed by the launch of the programme "Youth on the Move". The programme aims to make higher education institutions more attractive for young people and generally contribute to improving the quality of education and trainings in the EU at all levels, through the promotion of the mobility of students and interns and improvements in the field of youth employment. The programme "**Youth in Action**" deserves mention here, which was started as far back as 2007 and is to end in 2013, and whose funding is intended for the realization of a range of youth projects.

More on EU activities and programmes at: www.europa.rs

Partnership of the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth

The European Commission and the Council of Europe have formed a partnership in the field of youth for more effective work, providing support for young people themselves, as well as for organizations and institutions dealing with youth issues. The focus of this partnership and activities is as follows:

- › The European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy
- › Partnership in the area of research
- › Partnership in the area of training and education
- › Partnership in the Euro-Mediterranean region and regional cooperation (South Eastern Europe/East Europe and Caucasus)

More on the partnership at: www.youth/partnership.net

The Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

At the beginning of the 1990s, The Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe developed and adopted the **European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life** which clearly recognized the importance of young people for the development of a local community, as well as the importance and the role which local and regional authorities play, as those who are closest to youth, in the improvement of their position. Ten years later, in 2003, as a response to the observed limitations of the Charter, the Revised Charter was adopted, amended and adapted so as to provide more concrete guidelines for the definition of local policies in line with the changed social conditions. The Charter clearly specifies:

- (1) concrete sector policies – 14 concrete themes and measures concerning youth
- (2) the vehicles for the participation of youth on the local level, as well as
- (3) concrete instruments for the institutional participation of youth in local and regional affairs which are to provide an opportunity for young people to become involved in the decision making process. For this purpose, the establishment

of bodies such as youth councils, parliaments and fora was recommended. In addition, the Charter emphasizes the necessity for clearly defining “guaranteed” support for the structures for youth participation. To that effect, it was proposed that a structure should be established, or, alternatively, that a person or a group of persons should be designated to monitor the implementation of youth policy, and that the scope of activity of the person or group nominated should be clearly defined. In order for this newly formed structure to operate effectively, it is necessary to set aside facilities, material resources and funds for the realization of youth programmes.

The overview of European guidelines and policies points to the fact that without the development of youth policy on the local level it is impossible to achieve meaningful impacts relating to the improvement of the position of young people in the country. At the same time, economic recovery and the development of local communities cannot be achieved without the participation of youth and without creating possibilities for their development. This is supported by the fact that one of the common characteristics of all underdeveloped municipalities in Serbia is a massive drain of young people to larger centres or abroad. Such migrations have adverse economic effects both on larger centres and on smaller communities, and consequently, if a local government is to work for the economic and social benefit of its community, it is necessary for it to recognize the importance of youth policy and to create conditions for its realization.

FINANCING YOUTH POLICY ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

SECTION 3 .

Since its establishment, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has been announcing open calls for financing and co-financing programmes and projects in the field of youth policy, owing to the fact that the civil sector and local governments are among its most important partners for the realization of the vision and goals of the National Strategy for Youth and the Action Plan for its implementation. So far, over 600 projects have been financed or co-financed in the field of youth policy, realized by 298 different associations. Within the programme Youth are Law, the MoYS in cooperation with different associations has financed 178 youth volunteer actions all across Serbia. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has provided direct financial support for the establishment of youth offices, the development and implementation of Local Action Plans for Youth, and in total for 246 projects realized through 102 youth offices in the amount of RSD 92 million.

Through regular annual calls for proposals, the Ministry of Youth and Sports seeks to establish sustainable mechanisms for the cooperation between the governmental and non-governmental sectors, build the capacities of youth associations and create opportunities for their active participation in the achievement of the goals set by the National Strategy for Youth. To date, 84 youth associations have taken part in trainings for writing projects and project cycle management.

Relating to this, the Ministry of Youth and Sports announces a higher number of public open calls every year (www.mos.gov.rs and www.zamislizivot.org).

In addition to the support by the Ministry, young people can address other, primarily foreign programmes, funds and donors. Some of the most important of these are:



Youth in Action is the programme of the **European Commission** intended for young people all over the world, between the ages of 15 and 28 (in some cases from 13 to 30), as well as for youth organizations and those who work with young people. The programme aims to support mobility, informal education and youth activism. It covers the period from 2007 to 2013 and disposes of a EUR 885 million budget earmarked for the realization of various youth projects. Given the fact that our country is not yet a candidate for membership in the EU and due to this fact still does not possess an accredited National Youth Agency in charge of the implementation of the Programme, responsibilities are assumed by contact points – non-governmental organizations accredited by the South East Europe Resource Centre (SALTO SEE RC) whose role is to promote the programme, provide information and encourage youth in Serbia to use it. The Ministry of Youth and Sports financially supports contact points in Serbia with the aim that as many young people and their organizations have the opportunity to attend the trainings and do the application for this programme. In contrast to our country, the countries which have National Agencies in operation have access to funds and opportunities of all five actions listed in the programme, while other countries (ours included) are limited to two actions only:

- › action 2 – European Volunteering Service (EVS), and
- › action 3.1 – youth exchange, trainings and networking

More at: www.salto-youth.net/rc/see/seecontactpoints

The European Youth Foundation provides financial support for youth activities on the European level, with an annual budget of about EUR 3 million. It supports activities organised by youth NGOs (international, national, regional and local), networks and initiatives, most notably youth meetings as well as campaigns, exhibitions, publications, audio-visual material, web sites and pilot projects. There are four categories of grants and clear conditions for application for each one of them.

- A. International youth meetings*
- B. Activities other than meetings (publications, information campaigns, exhibitions...)*
- C. Administrative grants*
- D. Pilot projects (up to EUR 7,600)*

More at: www.eyf.coe.int/fej/portal

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance - IPA was designed as a simple, clear and comprehensive financial instrument through which the EU supports candidate countries and prospective candidates, Serbia included, in the period 2007-2013. The



instrument provides support to the beneficiaries in facing the challenges presented by European integration, the execution of reforms and similar. The Serbian EU Integration Office (www.seio.gov.rs) coordinates all activities relating to the IPA on the national level, more specifically, it develops plans and programmes concerning IPA funding.

In addition to the mentioned forms of support, local youth policies can also be funded from other domestic and foreign sources of financing. For further information on different possibilities and forms of funding, we recommend the **Guide** through Potential Domestic and International Sources of Funding for NGO Projects, Local Governments and similar. (www.inkluzija.gov.rs)

GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL YOUTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT

SECTION 4.

The development of local youth policy is a prerequisite for comprehensively dealing with the challenges youth are facing in Serbia, primarily for the improvement of the quality of life and the social status of the youth. For these reasons, from its earliest days the Ministry of Youth and Sports has raised awareness on the necessity of local youth policy development as a prerequisite for the implementation of national policies and strategies in the local environment. In order to ensure that local youth policies produce tangible and concrete impacts on the position of young people in Serbian municipalities/cities, the Law establishes that the Ministry of Youth and Sports shall provide guidance on local youth policy development. Local youth policy development is a time and resource consuming process. In any case, it starts with the decision of a local government to invest in young people and to recognize local youth policy development as one of its strategic priorities.

Local youth policy actors

Local youth policy actors are: (1) Person appointed to deal with youth policy, (2) Local Youth Office (LYO), (3) Youth Council, (4) Youth Club (YC), (5) institutions, and (6) the local civic sector (youth organizations, organizations for youth and local umbrella organizations). In the period 2007-2011, 124 municipalities in Serbia founded their Youth Office, more than 70 municipalities envisaged in their Statutes and established Youth Council, while the initiatives to form city/municipal Youth Club have grown in number. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has initiated and provided significant support to youth policy development to all municipalities and cities which demonstrated their willingness to systemically address youth issues.

Further on in the document, we will present the roles and significance of all local youth policy actors which are within the mandate of the local self government.

Person appointed for youth policy

It is of key importance for local youth policy development to raise the care for youth to the highest level and to ensure the full support of the municipality/city. Therefore, the Municipal/City Council should designate one of its members to deal with municipal youth policy. Local youth policy is implemented in compliance with the Law on Youth and National Strategy for Youth. The person in charge of youth issues should be a member of the Municipal/City Council or some other municipal decision-maker.

Youth Office

The Youth Office (YO) is a part of the local government and, as the first link in a chain of stakeholders marks the beginning of the development of youth policy in Serbian municipalities and cities. Prior to the establishment of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, only five progressive and proactive local governments had recognized young people as a resource and understood the need to actively involve them in community life. The process of YO establishment and the development of strategic documents is considered one of the most intensive and most inclusive processes of youth policy development in the recent history of Serbia's public administration. We have come a long way from a modest beginning and in November 2011, 124 municipalities/cities in Serbia had established their YOs.

The Youth Office carries out the following activities:

- › Plans, implements and monitors the development of youth policy on the local level;
- › Initiates and monitors the implementation of the Local Action Plan for Youth (LAP);
- › Establishes cooperation with all the relevant partners and works on their networking, communication and coordination;
- › Informs young people on issues that are relevant for them;
- › Encourages youth activism, communicates with young people, youth and youth-oriented associations and ensures youth participation in decision-making processes;
- › Supports initiatives of young people and youth and youth-oriented associations;
- › Supports the implementation of programmes and projects for informal education of youth;
- › Supports the work of the Youth Council and Youth Clubs;
- › Conducts research about youth needs, trends, vulnerable groups of youth and their inclusion;
- › Keeps a database on active youth and youth-oriented associations and informal youth groups.

The Youth Office is intended for all young people, regardless of their sex, race, nationality, religion, language, social background, financial status, membership in political organisations, trade unions and other organisations, psychological or physical disability, health status, physical appearance, sexual orientation and other real or assumed personal characteristics.

We recommend that the job position Youth Office Coordinator be included in the regulation about description of jobs. The coordinator manages YO resources in compliance with standards recommended by the MOYS, ensuring a high quality of work of the Youth Office.

Youth Council

According to the Law, the Youth Council (YC) is an advisory body of the municipal/city assembly which encourages and coordinates activities related to the development and implementation of local youth policy and proposes measures to improve it. The YC plays two important roles which make it a key body for the functional development and implementation of local youth policy: (1) the Youth Council is a body enabling youth to take active part in decision-making (2) it is a body facilitating the networking and inter-sectoral cooperation between different institutions which deal with youth issues as part of their activities (schools, National Employment Service, Centre for Social Work, Police Department, Health Centre...).

The establishment of the Youth Council should be defined by the municipal/city Statute, which ensures the legitimacy and transparency of its work. This method of council establishment is recommended by the MOYS and Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities in the proposed City/Municipal Statute Model. A minimum of one half of the Youth Council members should be young people aged 15-30, representatives of institutions whose scope of work includes areas of interest for youth, representatives of youth and youth-oriented associations, and respective experts.

Youth Club

The Youth Club is a city/municipal space where activities involving direct work with youth take place. The Youth Club hosts activities laid down in the Local Action Plan for Youth responding to youth needs. It is a place where young people can get together and gather support for their initiatives, and where a range of activities take place: non-formal education, informing of youth, organizational activities, networking of young people with institutions, and supporting and implementing programmes which promote volunteerism and the mobility of youth. It is also a place for the gathering of youth and for their creative expression, and the promotion of their creativity.

The Youth Club space should be accessible to youth, outside the municipality building, and available for the implementation of programmes and projects at a time convenient for youth. It should also be convenient for the organization of different youth activities (trainings, workshops, meetings etc.) as well as for providing different services for youth (volunteer services, career guidance, informing etc.). It is important that such a space is perceived as a public space for youth, open for all young people and all youth groups, either formal or informal, and for youth and youth-oriented associations which implement programmes for youth.

The recommendation is that municipalities allocate space in institutions which are already financed from the municipal budget, so that the basic expenses are covered. Also, a person employed at the Youth Club should be specially trained for working with youth. The YO coordinator is responsible that the activities implemented at the Club are in line with the priorities and measures specified in the Local Action Plan for Youth.

SECTION 5

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL YOUTH POLICY

The Local Action Plan for Youth (LAP) is a strategic municipal/city document which identifies priority areas for youth and activities responding to the specific needs of youth in the given local community. The Local Action Plan enables the implementation of the objectives and priorities of the National Strategy for Youth on the local level, as well as the other sector strategies which are influencing the lives of young people (eg. action plans for children, youth entrepreneurship, strategy for the development of youth health, employment, etc.), and international documents in the field of youth policy.

Through the LAP development process, local governments ensure: responding to youth needs in a planned and long-term manner by creating innovative measures and services tailored to the actual needs of youth in the specific local community; cost-effective use of available resources (financial, technical and human) through the networking of local institutions and organizations; cost-effective and efficient spending of the municipal budget earmarked for youth programmes; opportunities for the use of alternative funding sources.

Local youth policy planning produces the following results: defining the rights, obligations and responsibilities of all stakeholders, establishing the institutional mechanisms for youth participation, applying approaches based on relevant data, recognizing youth as a resource and potential of the society, creating systemic solutions for long-term funding of youth office (YO) work and LAP implementation by defining separate budget items, networking of local actors coordinated by the YO (which enables the identification and more efficient use of existing resources for the implementation of youth activities), the positioning of the YO as a relevant actor in the area of youth policy, as well as creating a positive climate in the wider community for dealing with youth as a local resource.

Development of Local Action Plans for Youth

In light of the importance of the implementation of the NSY on the local level, the project "Strengthening of the Structures for Youth Empowerment and Participation (SoSYEP)", implemented by the GIZ³ on behalf of the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, has developed a series of tools to support the work of the MOYS with local governments that recognize youth and youth policy as their long-term strategic objective.

The local planning process is coordinated by the local self government (YO coordinators), which includes representatives of youth, local institutions/organizations, associations

³ The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, implements the project, with the key objective to build structures on the national and local levels to support social, political and economic participation of youth in Serbia and to create sustainable conflict transformation models. The project structure is complemented by cooperation with civil society organizations (particularly NGOs, youth initiatives and similar) which are encouraged to develop and implement new, innovative and integrative approaches to youth empowerment and participation.

of youth/for youth, different departments of the local self government, the private sector, the media etc. in the process.

The recommended steps for the successful development of a LAP for youth are as follows:

- › LAP DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY – The methodology specifies all the steps that need to be undertaken by a local government and youth office in order to ensure a successful local action planning process. To assist local government organizations in this process, GIZ SoSYEP has developed a manual for the development of a LAP. The purpose of the LAP Development Manual is to present the steps in the process of development of a LAP for youth in detail and to explain why these steps are important in the process of LAP preparation.
- › The LAP MATRIX is the structure for the LAP for youth. The matrix provides a clear insight into the type and scope of information necessary for the successful preparation of a LAP to the members of the LAP Development Working Group. The Matrix should contain goals, activities, expected results, responsible persons, time frames, and indicators.
- › SET OF TRAININGS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LAP FOR YOUTH – An integral part of the LAP development process is a set of trainings for all members of the LAP Development Working Group. During the trainings, the understanding of the process and of the values and principles of youth policies is developed, and appropriate methodologies and matrices used for the development of the LAP are introduced. Active participation of youth and an active role of key stakeholders on the municipal level are the preconditions for the successful development and implementation of the LAP for youth.

Implementation of LAPs for youth

LAP implementation on the local level is a process of realizing the planned activities and achieving the expected results, which should have a direct influence on the improvement of the status of youth and the quality of their lives. This process is financially supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sports (direct project-financing for YOs), by local governments (direct financing from separate budget lines earmarked for LAP implementation), by different donors and by private entities. Similar to planning, LAP implementation is the responsibility of all stakeholders, i.e. those organizations and institutions identified as carriers of the activities defined by the plan.

Monitoring and evaluation of LAP implementation

Monitoring and evaluation (revision) of LAP implementation are crucial for the process and are aimed at:

- › Measuring the level of achievement of the plan
- › Identifying obstacles and guidance on finding alternatives
- › Identifying lessons learned to consider in subsequent steps
- › Assuring the continuous improvement of the quality of implementation.

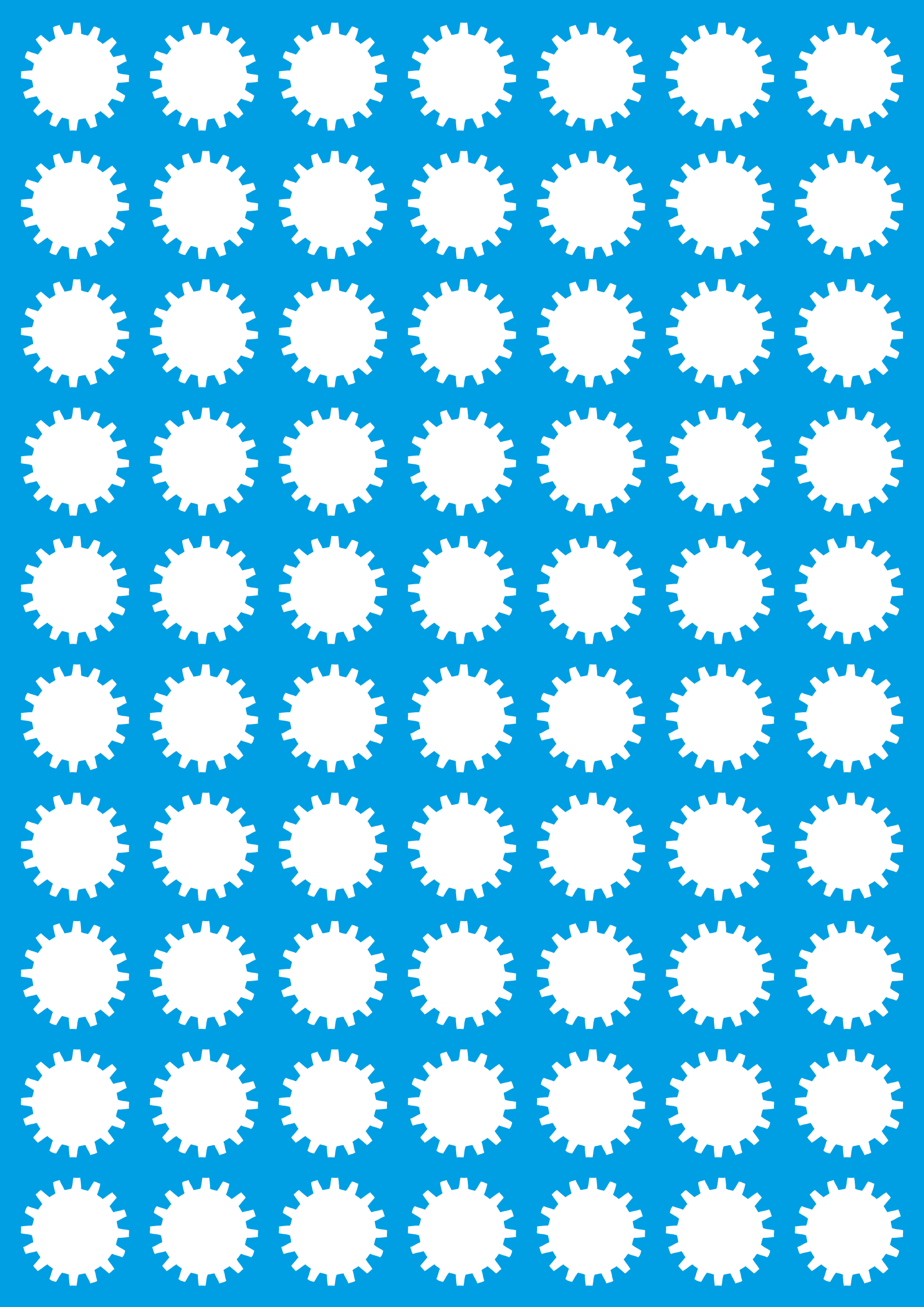
Also, the monitoring and evaluation (revision) of LAP implementation includes clearly defined mechanisms which enable us to monitor changes resulting from activities of youth offices and other local youth policy actors and to improve the quality of work of all actors in local youth policy.

In methodological terms, the monitoring and evaluation (revision) of LAP implementation includes the systemic collection and analysis of data on all levels – both among the users of youth programmes and the ones implementing them (institutions, organisations, civil sector representatives).

The revision of LAP implementation is coordinated by the YO coordinator, while the collected data are analysed by the Youth Council or the LAP Development Working Group which makes decisions on potential changes and amendments to the LAP, both in programme and financial terms.

The revision of LAP implementation is of key importance for every local government, because this process provides a realistic overview over the results achieved in the area of youth policy.

Based on the data obtained from the process of monitoring and evaluation of LAP implementation, a revision of the existing LAP will be done. This will ensure that the LAP continues to be sensitive to the existing problems of youth in the community and a provider of adequate responses to address them.





CHAPTER 2.

YOUTH OFFICE STANDARDS AND COORDINATORS' COMPETENCES

Successful LAP implementation requires the full use of available human, financial, technical and time resources on the local level. Recognizing wide differences between youth offices in 124 local governments, from demographic to economic, including their work experience (some have a three-year track record, while others have only been established in 2011), youth office coordinators realized that new systemic support is needed to further improve YO operation.

Responding to this need, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in cooperation with its international partners, started to define new support mechanisms that could meet the specific needs of particular local communities, i.e. youth offices, in a systemic and long-term manner.

The cooperation between the MOYS and the German organisation Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and the vast experience of the GIZ project "Strengthening of the Structures for Youth Empowerment and Participation (SoSYEP)" in over 75 local governments in Serbia, resulted in defining work standards for youth offices and competences of youth office coordinators. The purpose of these standards/competences is to ensure more efficient work of youth offices and efficient implementation of youth policy on the local level.

These standards are the next logical step in local youth policy implementation, which started with the setting up of the normative framework and the establishment of local youth offices and continued through the development, implementation and revision of local action plans. In the course of these processes, local coordinators themselves recognized the need for standards and initiated the drafting of this paper.

The paper is the result of a highly participatory process, involving, apart from members of an expert working group, local coordinators of 100 youth offices and representatives of the civic sector.

The document seeks to introduce a comprehensive and systemic (qualitative and quantitative) model of work of youth offices, as an efficient support to youth policy implementation, taking into account the specific features of each local community.



The application of YO work standards and coordinators' competences ensures a competent approach to youth policy by local governments, as well as the involvement of all stakeholders in line with their scope of work and resources, and creates a conducive environment in the local community.

YOUTH OFFICE STANDARDS

SECTION 1.

Youth Office Work Standards define the quality which needs to be achieved in the work of a youth office. In order to achieve the standards, it is necessary for a local self-government unit (hereinafter referred to as LSGU) to ensure that the conditions for the implementation of adequate activities as part of the work of a youth office and a youth club are in place.

The activities which a youth office and youth club carry out should lead towards the accomplishment of the standards in accordance with local resources (material, technical and human ones) and specific local youth needs.

A youth office will be operating successfully if it carries out its activities ensuring (1) good local youth office management, (2) active partnership with local stakeholders, (3) a high rate of youth participation in local youth policy, and (4) inclusive youth policy.

A successfully operating youth office meets the following 4 standards:

1. Good Youth Office Management
2. Active partnership with local stakeholders
3. High level of youth participation in local policy
4. Inclusive local youth policy

STANDARDS	DESCRIPTION OF THE STANDARD
Good Youth Office Management	The youth office works in a transparent manner on the preparation and implementation of youth activities; existing (human, technical, material) resources are utilised in an efficient and accountable manner, whilst decisions are based on the predetermined needs of young people in a given community.
Active partnership with local stakeholders	The youth office has established strategic alliances with organizations from the private, public and non-profit sectors, with the aim of creating the conditions of support to youth regarding their organisation, social activities, and the development and achievement of personal and social potentials. The youth office contributes to the promotion of youth work.
High level of youth participation in local policy	The youth office provides a stimulative environment and actively supports youth in the implementation of youth activities, youth initiatives as well as their involvement in decision-making processes and the implementation of the decisions that contribute to personal and social development; youth actively participate in all levels of youth policy at the local level (planning, implementation...).
Inclusive local youth policy	Respect for the diversity of each individual as well as equal opportunities for all young people, regardless of individual differences, are ensured to improve their participation in all domains of social life, in accordance with the principles of the National Youth Strategy and the Law on Youth.

Indicators for the achievement of Youth Office Work Standards

In expert literature, a large number of indicator definitions⁴ are being used. They differ depending on the area which they cover – economic indicators, social indicators, environmental indicators, health indicators, education indicators, management indicators, quality-of-life indicators, etc.

Indicators in this document represent a measurement of the achievement of a qualitative standard for the work of a youth office, i.e. they are the instruments for the monitoring of youth office progress towards the achievement of standards. Indicators may be qualitative or quantitative.

Quantitative indicators for the achievement of standards provide an insight into the level of achievement of standards which may be expressed in numerical terms.

For quantitative indicators, a **minimum for the achievement** of the standards which a local youth office should meet has been determined.

Qualitative indicators for the achievement of the standards represent a measurement pertaining to those aspects of standards which are difficult to quantify (e.g. acquired knowledge, cognitive or behavioural changes).

The targets / achieved goals/ results provide an insight into what is to be achieved by applying a certain standard. Also, targets/ goals allow for the monitoring of institutions and the strategic development of youth policy at the local level.

⁴ Definitions – The English language dictionary describes an indicator as “an instrument which gives you information”. In line with this description, in the context of development cooperation indicators come into the picture at the moment that specific information is required. In this context, different definitions are being used. According to OECD/DAC, an indicator is: “A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure an achievement, to reflect changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor”. According to the definition adopted by USAID, an indicator is: “A variable, whose purpose is to measure change in a phenomena or process”. The European Commission describes indicators as: “A description of the project's objectives in terms of quantity, quality, target group(s), time and place”.

The list of quantitative and qualitative indicators serves as a guideline for a LSGU and coordinator as regards the requirements they should meet and the activities they should carry out, as well as the ways in which these activities should be carried out in order to achieve the given standards.

The listed indicators are intended to give an answer to the following question: "Do all the implemented youth office's activities, which comply with the standards, have a positive impact on the life of young people in a local community?"

Verification Sources – In addition, it is necessary that there be clearly defined verification sources (documents) by way of which the process of achievement of standards will be monitored. Verification sources may be the following documents: annual youth office work plan, annual youth office work report, researches, photos, evaluation forms, statements of youth, video records etc.

MINIMUM FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF YOUTH OFFICE WORK STANDARDS

The scope and content of activities for the achievement of youth office work standards are not the same for all local communities given that the municipalities differ among themselves in many aspects – demographic and economic, and related to the scope of resources available (financial, material, human and technical resources).

The minimum for the achievement of the standards represents a numerical value of quantitative indicators, i.e. a number or a percentage point reflecting the degree of implementation of a quantitative indicator, which youth offices should achieve at an annual level.

This document takes into account the above-mentioned diversity among municipalities, and by defining the **minimum for the achievement of the standards** recommends the scope (number or percentage) of activities whose realisation would ensure a minimal achievement of standards.

Since the **minimum for the achievement of youth office work standards** relies primarily on the acknowledgement of differences in the local communities' respective capacities, youth offices have been divided into 3 categories. The categorisation is taking into account the size of the local population, and in relation the size of the established state institutions dealing with young people. Depending on the given category, the scope of activities was defined⁵:

- › Category 1 – Youth office in municipalities with a population size of 25,000;
- › Category 2 – Youth office in municipalities with a population size of 25,000 – 80,000;
- › Category 3 – Youth office in municipalities with a population size of over 80,000.

⁵ An example of the categorisation of municipalities by demographic characteristics and compliance of such a classification with other characteristics of local communities (size of municipal budget, number of NGOs dealing with young people, number of institutions dealing with young people, number of local/regional media outlets, level of utilisation of external sources of funding, etc.) is the model used in other sectoral analyses and recommendations (Council of Europe Office – Analysis of Needs for Building of Institutional Capacities for Efficient Provision of Social Protection Services within a Decentralised Framework – Report on Cost of Social Services at Local Level, NGO PANACEA), and represents a model of work which has already been applied regarding the defining of recommendations targeting the local level.

STANDARD 1. – GOOD LOCAL YOUTH OFFICE MANAGEMENT

STANDARD	STANDARD DESCRIPTION	QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE INDICATORS	Minimum for the achievement of the Standards (annually)			TARGETS/OBJECTIVES/ RESULTS
			Municipalities with pop. size up to 25,000	Municipalities with pop. size up to 80,000	Municipalities with pop. size over 80,000	
Good Youth Office Management	The youth office works in a transparent manner on the preparation and implementation of youth activities; existing (human, technical, material) resources are utilised in an efficient and accountable manner, whilst decisions are based on the predetermined needs of young people in a given community.	1. Number of employees at youth office/youth club	1	2	3	1. There is a minimum of technical conditions in place - required number of employees and associates, gender balanced structure of employees, adequate and available space, covered material costs, allocated resources from the local budget. 2. Local resources have been identified, and they are managed responsibly for the purpose of implementation of youth policy at the local level. 3. The youth office adopted and implements an Annual Work Plan. 4. Established system for monitoring and self-evaluation of the quality of work within the youth office. 5. Participation of youth and the public is guaranteed and they are more informed (they participate in the work of the youth office and are informed about its activities). 6. Youth office work is realised in accordance with the real needs of young people which are regularly being monitored and examined.
		2. Number of collaborators at youth office/youth club (number of male and number of female)	4	7	15	
		3. Size of local budget allocated for the implementation of the local action plan and work of the youth office/youth club	0.2% of municipal budget			
		4. Amount of funds acquired from external sources of financing	50% vis-à-vis funds allocated by the local self-government (0.1% of municipal budget)			
		5. Number of approved projects in which the LSGU/ youth office is the main applicant and which are funded from external financing sources (all sources of financing except municipal budget)	2	3	5	
		6. Number of approved projects in which the LSGU/ youth office is a project partner and which are funded from external financing sources (all sources of financing except municipal budget)	1	2	3	
		7. Number of media presentations on local/ regional media (TV, radio, print media)	6	10	20	
		8. Job description of employees exists, and procedures for the engagement and monitoring of the work of collaborators are developed	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		9. A decision about the designated space and reimbursement of costs for the youth office/youth club exists	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		10. A budget line for the LYO or for the implementation of the LAP exists	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		11. Mapping of the local resources is conducted and an analysis is prepared	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		12. Annual Work Plan is developed	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		13. A system for the monitoring of the youth club is developed	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		14. A system for the monitoring and self-evaluation of the quality of work is developed	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		15. A method for data collection about the status of youth in the local community, and activity implementation (according to the indicators of the LAP) exists, as well as, an annual report	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		16. A system/ procedures for monitoring the implementation of the decisions made by the Youth Council are developed	Yes	Yes	Yes	

STANDARD 3. HIGH DEGREE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL POLICIES

STANDARD	STANDARD DESCRIPTION	QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE INDICATORS	Minimum for the achievement of the Standards (annually)			TARGETS/OBJECTIVES/ RESULTS
			Municipalities with pop. size up to 25,000	Municipalities with pop. size up to 80,000	Municipalities with pop. size over 80,000	
High level of participation in local policy	The youth office provides a stimulative environment and actively supports youth in the implementation of youth activities, youth initiatives as well as their involvement in decision-making processes and the implementation of the decisions that contribute to personal and social development; youth actively participate in all levels of youth policy at the local level (planning, implementation...).	1. Number of young people informed about youth office/ youth club activities	30% of total youth population in LSGU			1. Young people are involved in the youth office's work, as well as in the adoption and implementation of local documents in the youth sector.
		2. Number of young people who participate in activities carried out by youth office/ youth club	10% of total youth population in LSGU			2. Youth office activities are planned and designed in accordance with youth needs.
		3. Number of young people who participate in the creation of structures and definition of the no. of activities for youth, which are implemented by the youth office/ youth club, using some model of communication (survey, evaluation of existing services, focus groups...)	30% of young people from designated youth target group to which a given activity is relevant			3. Through the youth office, young people are involved in different forms of local youth work.
		4. Number of young people who directly implement/actively participate in youth office/ youth club activities	50% of youth activities at youth office are implemented by young people			4. The youth office implements various informal youth education programmes.
		5. Number of realised initiatives and activities initiated by youth associations and informal youth groups	5	10	15	5. Activities implemented via the youth office empower boys and girls equally.
		6. Number of volunteers involved in the preparation and realisation of activities carried out by the youth office	40%-60% of the total number of young people are involved in the preparation and realisation of activities carried out by the local youth office			6. Volunteering is recognised as a model for the inclusion of youth in the youth office's activities.
		7. Number of young people who are members of the youth council	A minimum of 50 % of the total number of youth council members			7. The youth office organises various forms of peer education in the youth sector.
		8. Number of youth that participate in the development and revision of local policies regarding youth	5% of the total number of the youth population			8. Local sector policies are developed with the participation of the youth office and youth.
		9. Number of developed local policies targeting youth that youth office representatives/youth participated in	1	2	2	9. The youth office is following the implementation of local policies that target youth.
		10. A budget and documents/ reports about the monetary resources for youth at the local level are available	Yes	Yes	Yes	10. Support for the development of volunteers' services and programmes as well as other services for youth in the local community is provided.
		11. Mechanisms for the monitoring of different policies for youth on the local level are developed	Yes	Yes	Yes	11. Support to the establishment of youth organizations and their capacity building is provided.
		12. Number of existing services in a municipality	1	1	1	12. Support to the establishment of a local alliance is provided.
		13. A system of support for the development of services (volunteers, info) is developed	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		14. A local network of youth/ for youth (umbrella organization) exists in the municipality				

STANDARD 4 – INCLUSIVE YOUTH POLICY

STANDARD	STANDARD DESCRIPTION	QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE INDICATORS	Minimum for the achievement of the Standards (annually)			TARGETS/OBJECTIVES/ RESULTS
			Municipalities with pop. size up to 25,000	Municipalities with pop. size up to 80,000	Municipalities with pop. size over 80,000	
Inclusive local youth policy	Respect for the diversity of each individual as well as equal opportunities for all young people, regardless of individual differences, are ensured to improve their participation in all domains of social life, in accordance with the principles of the National Youth Strategy and the Law on Youth.	1. Number of young people who are informed about local youth/youth club activities	30% of estimated youth population from vulnerable groups			1. The youth office is operating in accordance with the principles of the National Youth Strategy and the Law on Youth.
		2. Number of young people from vulnerable groups who utilise youth office's/ youth club's services/activities	20% of total youth population using youth office services			
		3. Number of young people from vulnerable groups who are involved in the process of activity planning of the local youth office/youth club	5 % of total youth population from vulnerable groups			2. Young people from vulnerable groups are involved in the drafting of local documents in the youth sector.
		4. Number of young people from vulnerable groups who are involved in the implementation of activities carried out by the youth office/youth club	5 % of total youth population from vulnerable groups			3. Young people from vulnerable groups utilise the activities carried out by the youth office/youth club.
		5. Number of activities for awareness-raising among young people regarding the problems of youth from vulnerable groups	2	6	12	4. Young people from vulnerable groups initiate activities in the community.
		6. Number of activities organised through the youth office/youth club for the empowerment of young people from vulnerable groups	2	6	12	5. The annual programme of the youth office includes activities for strengthening young people from vulnerable groups and for the further awareness-raising of the local community on their needs.
		7. Number of inclusive activities for youth	2	6	12	
		8. Number of implemented projects in which the youth office is a partner of youth associations / associations for youth and institutions whose objective is the advancement of the position of youth from vulnerable groups	1	2	4	6. Youth associations and associations for youth from vulnerable groups are recognised as partners in youth office work.
		9. A research on how to target vulnerable groups of youth is conducted.	Yes	Yes	Yes	
		10. A research on the topic/ problems of specific vulnerable groups of youth is conducted	Yes	Yes	Yes	7. The youth office/youth club is accessible to youth with disabilities.



SECTION 2.

WHAT ARE THE COMPETENCES OF A YOUTH OFFICE COORDINATOR?

There are differences among authors in defining competences which stem from differences in their approaches as to what competences are, what they encompass and how to measure them ⁶.

Competences of a youth office coordinator constitute a set of skills, knowledge and value-based attitudes that enable the coordinator to coordinate and implement youth policy at the local level in an efficient, effective and constructive manner.

A coordinator's general competences constitute a necessary set of skills, knowledge and value-based attitudes that he/she should possess in order to achieve the youth office performance standards. Along with general competences, the standards for whose achievement a specific competence is crucial are also presented.

A coordinator should possess general competences at least on a basic level when he or she starts working at a youth office. In his/her work, he/she should develop them fully.

For the purpose of achievement of these competences, different training modules will be prepared, whilst coordinators will ascertain, through self-evaluation, what the level of their competences, as listed in these Guidelines, is; based on this, they are to select a type of training module that they should complete.

Ideally, after five years of work at a youth office, the coordinator should have general competences developed up to the highest level.

A separate Manual for the Application of Standards and Competences, which will also list the levels of competences in detail, is currently being prepared.

A youth office coordinator should possess or develop the following general competences:

⁶ "A competence is an underlying characteristic of a person that leads to or causes effective or superior performance. It may be a trait, motive, skill, aspect of one's self-image or social role, or body of knowledge that he or she uses." (Boyatzis, 1982; according to Kurtz and Bartram, 2002)

"Competences are sets of behaviours that are instrumental in the delivery of desired results and outcomes." (Kurtz and Bartram, 2002, p. 229)

"A competence is the set of behaviour patterns that the incumbent needs to bring to a position in order to perform its tasks and functions with competence." (Woodruffe, 1991)

"Competence is a set of behaviours, knowledge, thought processes and/or attitudes, which are likely to be reflected in job performance that reaches a defined elementary, basic or high-performance standard." (Warr and Conner, 1992, p. 99)

"Individual competences are measurable work habits and personal skills used to achieve a work objective." (Green, 1999, p. 5)



Optimal coordination of local youth office activities

The coordinator is familiar with and understands the role of the coordinator and youth office. He/she is enabled to perform his/her assignments within his/her scope of work in a quality manner within the framework of a local self-government unit.

The coordinator creates and carries out activities intended for young people in accordance with the youth office's scope of work and strategic documents in the field of youth policy. He/she understands the scope of work of the youth office and other parts of the municipal/city administration, and operates in accordance with the LSGU rules and procedures. He/she understands and applies national and local guidelines in youth policy.

The coordinator knows and understands the role of different institutions which are targeting youth at the local level and actively promotes, initiates, and supports the development of youth clubs, services for youth and other. The coordinator understands the working process and the relationship of the LYO and other actors in youth policy.

The coordinator is familiar with the work of the local government and possesses the competences and the knowledge necessary for working in the local government.

Efficient management of available local resources

The coordinator is capable of managing the youth office's material and technical resources – The coordinator is utilising technical equipment in a responsible manner. He/she is acquainted with the basic procedures in the process of drafting a LSGU financial plan and reporting on the implementation of such a plan. He/she is capable of managing financial resources (he/she utilises available financial resources economically and efficiently, in accordance with the adopted financial plans).

The coordinator possesses skills for human resources management – The coordinator possesses the skills and knowledge required for team work; he/she plans his/her time and activities in an appropriate manner, develops his/her own leadership skills, but also those of other young people. He/she is familiar with and utilises motivational skills in order to include as many young people and collaborators as possible in the youth office's work.

The coordinator is capable of identifying and utilising alternative sources of financing – he/she recognises potential alternative financing resources, and successfully applies for different sources of financing.



Cognizance of strategic and legal documents in the field of youth policy

The coordinator is acquainted with, understands and applies in practice the basic national and local documents in the field of youth policy (National Youth Strategy, Youth Act, Local Action Plans). The coordinator is familiar with all the strategic documents in the field of youth policy. He/she is cognizant of the process of drafting and implementing youth action plans. He/she is capable of setting priorities on the basis of youth needs surveys. He/she is capable of reporting on the implemented activities from the local action plan.

The coordinator possesses basic knowledge about European trends in the field of youth policy. He/she is familiar with the basic bodies and organs for youth in the Council of Europe and the European Union; the organisation of institutions and modalities of decision-making, as well as the fundamentals of EU law and policies and youth policy principles in the EU and Council of Europe.

Written and oral communication, and digital literacy

The coordinator possesses skills for the written presentation of information, analyses and ideas. The coordinator is capable of presenting information to a reader in a clear and organised fashion. He/she is capable of drafting a memo, report, communication and analysis. He/she is capable of using an appropriate style of writing depending on the target group that he/she is addressing.

The coordinator possesses skills for the oral presentation of information, analyses and ideas. The coordinator is capable of presenting information to a listener in a clear, convincing and purposeful manner. He/she is capable of speaking clearly, logically and comprehensibly while addressing the target group. He/she understands and utilises active listening principles.

The Coordinator possesses skills for the utilisation of information technologies. The coordinator is capable of using a computer and MS Office applications. He/she is capable of finding and conveying information by technological means.

The Coordinator possesses active knowledge of the English language.



Communication and interaction with youth and other youth policy entities

He/she successfully communicates, exchanges information and collaborates with young people – The coordinator is capable of identifying, collecting and systematically classifying data of importance for young people. He/she is capable of listening to young people, receiving and conveying initiatives of young people.

He/she successfully communicates, exchanges information and collaborates with local and other institutions, organisations and associations dealing with youth issues – The coordinator is familiar with the institutions, organisations and associations dealing with youth issues in the local community. He/she provides and seeks information of importance for young people in an appropriate fashion. He/she successfully collaborates with organisations, institutions and associations at all levels of power to the benefit of all young people.

He/she successfully communicates, exchanges information and collaborates with media outlets – The coordinator is familiar with and has contacts with local media outlets, informing them about all youth-office related events and inviting them to attend and report on such events. He/she understands that by way of his/her press releases and appearances in the media he/she would improve the youth office's visibility. He/she is capable of giving information on the youth office's work in a clear and easily understandable manner.

He/she successfully communicates, exchanges information and collaborates with other youth offices – The coordinator understands that collaboration and the exchange of good practices with other coordinators is important for the successful work of the youth office.

The coordinator is cognizant of and applies negotiation and mediation skills – He/she understands conflicts, and applies skills of non-violent communication and alternative conflict resolution. He/she is familiar with the mediation procedure and applies it in his/her work.

Youth policy planning

The coordinator is capable of project planning and applies it in practice. The coordinator is familiar with all the phases of designing, implementing and monitoring projects. He/she is capable of drafting a project proposal as well as narrative and financial reports on project implementation. He/she understands and observes guidelines for project implementation and contractual obligations with respect to donors. He/she is capable of responding to unforeseen problems/circumstances.



Work with youth

The coordinator possesses the knowledge and skills required for the second level of competences of a youth worker – The coordinator is capable of independently creating, planning and organising the implementation of activities, programmes and projects for young people; he/she is capable of acting as a young people's mentor,

easily establishing contact with young people. He/she is cognizant of young people's development periods/phases, and is capable of managing group dynamics. He/she knows how to motivate and train young people for active participation in decision-making processes, and to promote equality, the interests and the welfare of young people. He/she is capable of designing strategies and public policies intended to ensure the systemic care of young people, of planning, developing and managing youth work programmes, and of managing teams and his/her own self. He/she is capable of supporting and developing effective, efficient and ethical practices in youth work.

Work with vulnerable youth groups

The coordinator is cognizant of theoretical and practical aspects of work with vulnerable youth groups – The coordinator is acquainted with the theory and practice of fundamental human and civil rights on the part of various population categories,

with gender equality, the basic elements of social inclusion, the development of multidisciplinary approaches in solving the problems of persons belonging to vulnerable groups or exhibiting difficulties in adjusting to a narrow or wider social environment, as well as with the fundamental international documents and national legislation regulating this area.

The coordinator understands the needs of young people from vulnerable groups and involves them in youth office activities – He/she is familiar with the ways in which the public at large may be sensitised to the needs of young people from vulnerable groups. He/she works on the active involvement of young people from vulnerable groups in the preparation and realisation of youth activities.

Work with volunteers

The coordinator is acquainted with the basics of volunteering – What is a volunteer, inclusion and motivating of a volunteer, volunteering models, volunteer trainings, volunteers' orientation for specific fields in which they may act as volunteers, coordination, record keeping, and volunteer management.



APPLICATION OF STANDARDS AND COMPETENCES

SECTION 3.

These Guidelines are, above all, intended for **youth office coordinators** since they directly define their competences and achievements, thus contributing to personal and professional development.

They are also intended for **local self-governments** so that they can comprehend in a transparent and comprehensible manner the needs of a local youth office as part of the local administration, but also as a vehicle for the provision of services intended for specific target groups, in this case the young people in a local community.

Therefore, the Guidelines are also intended for all **the young people** who are thus informed, motivated and encouraged to actively participate in the designing and implementation of youth policy, particularly at the local level, so that they can be empowered and partake in the further development of their local community.

The achievement of standards is a prerequisite for visible results of the youth office's and local coordinators' performance.

The achievement of standards and application of competences in general are intended to overcome limitations in local youth policies that are due to a lack of resources, as well as to identify alternative solutions to problems that cannot be solved under the current circumstances.

Therefore, multi-faceted support to youth offices is required in order to achieve the standards.

To accomplish this objective, the work will unfold in several directions, among which the fundamental ones are as follows:

1. Drafting of a Manual for the Application of Standards and Competences;
2. Formation of an association of youth office coordinators as the institutional framework within which technical support for youth offices will be provided in order to achieve the standards;
3. Formation of a team for support to the association of youth office coordinators within the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR YOUTH ON THE LOCAL LEVEL
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