

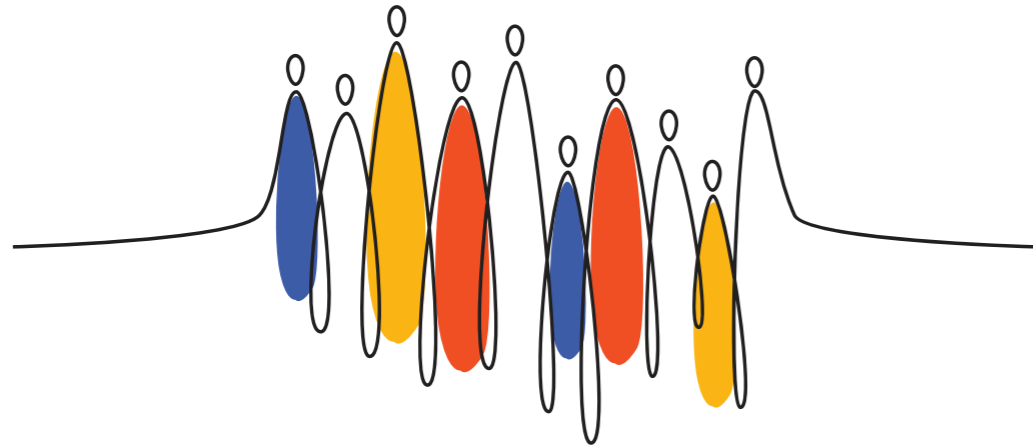


YOUTH POLICY LAB METHODOLOGY

WBYL
WESTERN BALKANS YOUTH LAB


Regional Cooperation Council


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WBYL

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May 2021

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1. Regional Cooperation Council Western Balkans Youth Lab Project Activities and Objectives

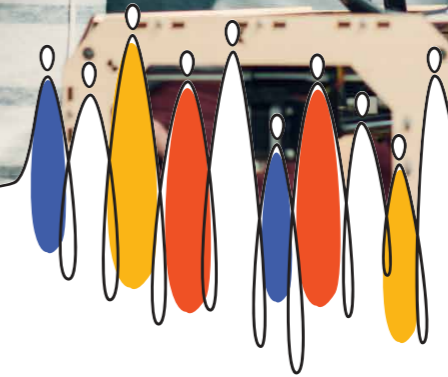
The issues which Western Balkans youth is facing have been under increased attention over the last couple of years, both at the level of each economy and as a part of the high-level dialogue taking place between the WB and the EU.

Similar to the European institutions and organisations which have continuously emphasised the importance of consulting and involving young people in relevant decision-making processes, the Western Balkans Six economies, with 3.6 million young people or 21.27% of total population, have recognised the importance and the potential of youth and necessity to address the issues they face. Respectively, Western Balkan economies established legal and strategic frameworks by developing and adopting consequent laws, National Youth Strategies and accompanying action plans aimed at addressing the challenges of the youth. In addition to this, in some of the economies relevant National Youth Councils have been established, while in others these are still non-existing or in the process of establishment.

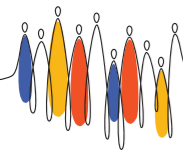
In addition to this, youth issues were discussed and Western Balkan youth representatives took part at important events organised as part of high-level political processes related to the Western Balkans. The 2018 Commission Communication on Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced EU Engagement with the Western Balkans announced increased cooperation and further support for youth sector. At the occasion of 2018 Sofia EU-Western Balkans Summit the EU and WB Leaders confirmed that special emphasis should be placed on creating further

opportunities for the youth, while ensuring that this contributes to the socio-economic development of the Western Balkans and called for the establishment of Western Balkans Youth Lab in order to provide space for innovative policy-making, to address the needs of young people and to tackle brain drain. The importance of the issue was again reiterated at the occasion of Sofia Summit held on 10 November 2020 and recognised in the Declaration, further paving the way for the work to be done.

In January 2020, Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) started implementation of the regional EU-funded Western Balkans Youth Lab Project, which seeks to provide opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making. The main components of the project include: (i) mapping of youth policies and identification of existing support gaps in financing of youth actions in the Western Balkans; (ii) Western Balkans Youth Policy Labs; (iii) strengthening national youth councils in the Western Balkans; and (iv) participation of the Western Balkans youth in regional and international events. The project strives to create a longer-term structured regional dialogue between youth organisations and governments focused on jointly devising policies which will increase youth participation in decision-making, to improve the overall socio-economic environment for and mobility of youth in the Western Balkan economies through different types of activities.



2. Introduction to the Youth Policy Labs



Youth Policy Lab brings a participatory and youth centred approach in policy making processes. It provides a safe space for youth to participate on equal basis with policymakers and engage meaningfully in policy development, policy evaluation or policy revisions based on the principles of co-management and co-production.

Youth Policy Lab is an approach which provides opportunity for decision-makers to better understand young people's realities, challenges and needs in order to work together with young people and to co-design new innovative solutions to the pressing issues youth faces.

Youth Policy Lab is an inclusive process, designing open and transparent policies which are youth centred. It offers a cross-sectoral dimension between the youth sector and other sectors in matters relevant to young people.

Policy Lab¹ practice usually involves three main areas of focus:

- providing new policy solutions through inspiring practical projects;
- building the skills and knowledge of decision-makers and youth representatives on co-policy making;
- inspiring new thinking and innovation in policy through processes of analysis, writing and experimenting.

Designed in this way Youth Policy Lab brings in the following added values:

- support policy making teams (decision-makers and youth representatives) to identify new insights into the needs of young people;
- generate ideas that can stimulate innovation and transformational change;
- test ideas and mechanisms to explore their applicability;
- acquire knowledge and expert opinion to inform policy development;
- create opportunities to make policies more deliverable through analysing and trailing the selected proposals.

Based on the above mentioned principles and approach, this Methodology introduces a new and innovative technique to have young women and men and policymakers jointly co-design policies to address issues that are important for youth.

The methodology will focus on making youth co-equal in policymaking process and thus avoids experimental elements but instead uses more convenient tools and activities to reflect the context in which it will be employed.

Respectively Youth Policy Lab brings together these two groups, youth and policymakers, in a regular policy dialogue which can imply both regional and economy levels to develop policies and implement them,

depending on the specific nature of the endeavour. The methodology is universal and easy for youth and administrations to adapt and employ for any issue they would like to address.

2.1. What Youth Policy Lab Involves

Most important aspects in implementation of the Youth Policy Labs at the level of each economy include:

- Creation of the Working Groups at economy level
- Implementation of the process step by step
- Monitoring and ensuring the impact

The Youth Policy Lab process is a youth participation instrument. It is all about good and effective youth participation in processes related to co-designing and co-implementing policies jointly with the policymakers.

The issues which Western Balkans youth is facing have been under increased attention over the last couple of years, both at the level of each economy and as a part of the high-level dialogue taking place between the WB and the EU. At the occasion of **Sofia EU-Western Balkan Summit in 2018** the EU and WB Leaders confirmed that special emphasis should be placed on creating further opportunities for the youth, while ensuring that this contributes to the socio-economic development of the Western Balkans

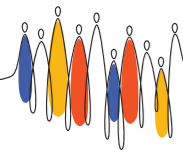
and called for the establishment of Western Balkans Youth Lab.

The stands of the EU and WB Leaders related to youth participation have been reiterated at the occasion of Sofia **EU-Western Balkan Summit held on 10 November 2020** and recognised in the final version of the Chair's conclusions. The Leaders stressed the importance of young people for the prosperity of the whole region, and addressed the necessity for greater involvement of young people in policymaking. With the aim to provide space for innovative policy-making processes that will address the needs and opinions of young people, RCC's Western Balkans Youth Lab funded by the European Union will create a longer-term structured regional dialogue between youth organisations and public administrations, focused on jointly devising policies which will increase youth participation in decision-making and improve the overall socio-economic environment for youth in Western Balkans Six.

To ensure that activities within the Youth Policy Labs meet high quality standards and become an effective tool of the relevant stakeholders, some basic methodological rules have been defined for all activities and events conducted and implemented.

This proposal aims to present a conceptual approach: economy, regional and local circumstances and resources may vary and lead to different interpretations of this approach. Nevertheless, the common aim shall be to achieve a well-balanced and successful implementation of the European Youth Dialogue.

¹ According to Open Policy Making toolkit, UK Government, 2017 retrieved during October 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-policy-making-toolkit>



2.1.1. Youth Policy Lab model principles of co-creation

The Youth Policy Lab model will be based on the following principles similar to the process conducted at the EU level:

- Information sharing among all relevant actors and stakeholders involved in the process, including participation possibilities;
- Consultations including evidence-based research results;
- Direct dialogue between policymakers and young people;
- Continuous partnership in the governance process at economy and regional level with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders depending on the topic of the cycle;
- Everyone's contribution equally matters - in the process of co-creation such as Youth Lab every actor is equal at the table and so is their contribution.

2.1.2. European Youth Goals - from concept to reality

The Methodology on Youth Policy Lab includes three regional Youth Policy Lab events, activities at the economy level including Youth Policy Labs which should take place in each economy in between the regional events and final event.

The Youth Policy Labs are primarily aiming to become a safe space for youth and enable young men and women, no matter of their background (religious, ethnic, cultural), sexual orientation, disability, any personal traits or position in society, to work jointly and as equals with policymakers to develop, adapt, and implement policies related to important issues that will be defined in the course of this project.

In order to make all of the outcomes stronger, the Youth Policy Lab work should be linked to the European Youth Goals based on the existing policy documents.

Building on the different European practices and setting the path for the following cycles, this cycle aims at:

- Positioning the Youth Policy Labs as a space for meaningful participation of young people in decision-making processes, as well as in the monitoring and evaluation of youth-related policies;
- Contributing to the mainstreaming and multi-level and cross-sectoral implementation of the European Youth Goals and responding to regional needs of young people;
- Fostering multi-level and multi-stakeholder cooperation from local to regional WB level in order to make the process more inclusive, visible and sustainable;
- Building competences of the institutions and young people to develop and implement participatory youth policy, bringing Western Balkans youth closer to the EU,

- Building on and complementing the ongoing economy-level processes and tools for youth consultations, lessons identified and learnt by other actors active in the field of youth such as Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), UNICEF, bilateral donors and other key partners

Within the 6th cycle of the Structured Dialogue (nowadays called European Youth Dialogue) under the title "What's next?" all the actors involved in the process have clustered topics relevant to young people into 11 areas and as a result 11 European Youth Goals were developed.

Youth Policy Labs being a regional co-creation platform can choose to contribute to the implementation of the European Youth Goals by aligning the cycle topics to the ones ran within the European Youth Dialogue process. The future of the youth related policies and process lies in ensuring that the Youth Goals become a reality.

There is a two-step process on how to make them a reality:

Step 1) Consultations

Consultations are run under coordination of the Working Groups at the level of each economy and may include different methods, face-to-face or online, used to reach out to young people of different backgrounds to ask for their opinion on the topic of the cycle. These methods can include questionnaires, focus groups, brainstorming sessions or any other participatory approach.

In this step, it is important to identify the approaches that will lead to meaningful and inclusive youth participation.

Step 2) Implementation phase

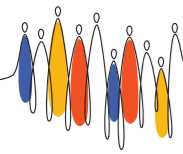
After careful analysis of the consultations outcomes, Working Groups at economy level should ensure that all relevant actors are involved in defining the political demands which will represent the goals of further co-creation process.

Working Groups should pay particular attention to the participation of the vulnerable groups in both Consultations and Implementation phase to ensure that the process and the outcomes reflect the diversity and complexity of the Western Balkans realities and contexts.

When the demands and goals are set, Working Groups at economy level can proceed to shaping them into action plans ensuring that the outcomes are a tangible political or policy change that will ensure improvement of youth policies, mechanisms or simply the situation of young people in the given economy in the long run, representing, ideally, a systemic change.

2.1.3. Governance

The Youth Policy Lab process is a long-term process which includes a set of national and regional activities. This process is composed of three regional conferences: the Kick-Off, Mid-Term Conference and the Final event.



Between these events, activities at economy level are implemented with an aim to put in practice the political recommendations developed at the regional level, and to assure the impact of the process within the different economies, bearing in mind the specifics and context at economy level. To ensure smooth running of the process, it is essential to involve different actors and stakeholders in the governance process.

Governance relates to “the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions”. In other words, it can be described as a political process that gathers different actors to assure successful implementation and achievement of the aims that the actors have decided on together.

Youth Policy Lab Governance

Governance is the way rules, norms and actions are structured, sustained, regulated and held accountable. Within the governance of the Youth Policy Labs,

the main role is played by the Working Groups at the economy level. Working Groups will involve primarily members of the Regional Pool of Experts coming from specific economy, consisted of youth and policymakers, both fully involved and committed to the process. Working Groups will involve other members beyond the Pool of Experts. The main objective of the Working Groups at the level of economy is to discuss ideas and challenges, and find solutions at regional level at the above-mentioned regional events, while between each of them, members from each economy will work on adjusting the regional perspective to the context of their economy, including more youth and policy actors in its work (Working Group in each economy) and conducting Youth Policy Labs in each economy, while always ensuring the diversity and meaningful participation of the vulnerable groups.

Regional Pool of Experts

Youth and Policymakers from the Western Balkans Six

Work on Regional Youth Policy Lab

Working Groups in each economy

Youth and Policymakers who are members of the Regional Pool of Experts from each Western Balkans Six that will work at the level of economy, involving more youth and policy actors from respective economy.

Work on Youth Policy Lab at the level of economy

2.1.4. Role

The role of the Working Groups at the economy level (WGs) is to govern and run the process at the level of the economy. Each WG is the contact point for the process of Youth Policy Lab and a link between the WGs at the regional and European level.

The Working Group at the economy level has the task of securing the participatory process in the different economy, including outreach to a diverse range of young people, as well as the transfer of information between the local, national and regional level.

- Specific theme related organisations relevant for the process
- Youth researchers
- Relevant public administration institutions
- Others

The respective ministries and governmental bodies hold the crucial role to act as a secretariat of the Working Group at economy level, ensuring that the process and activities run smoothly.

Governmental representatives are encouraged to give a leading role to the acknowledged youth representation structures at the level of economy. In this case, they can give this role to a member from the Pool of Experts. In other cases National Youth Councils (NYC) would be the most adequate body. If there is no NYC, the role should be taken by a youth organisation with proven experience in the youth policies and direct work with young people, including the vulnerable groups and young people with fewer opportunities, represented by a young person (age limit is usually defined at the level of each economy).

2.1.5. Actors

1) Members of the Regional Pool of Experts:

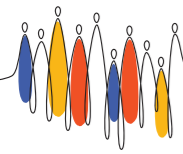
- Ministries / Agencies for Youth or other relevant Ministries in charge of youth-related processes and policies, as well as topics identified for each Thematic Policy Lab;
- Youth representatives to be selected through open and transparent process in cooperation with national Youth Councils and Youth Umbrella Organisations;

2) Members of the Working Groups at economy level, while conducting activities at economy level, are encouraged to include additional youth and policy actors:

- Local and other youth councils
- Youth organisations, as well as organisations working with young vulnerable groups

2.1.6. Co-chairing of the WG

Co-chairing can be an effective way of sharing a heavy workload and using the strengths and expertise of representatives of different sectors - in the context of Youth Policy Labs these are the representatives of Ministries in charge of the youth and related policies and youth members of the Pool of Experts. In other cases youth representativeness can be secured



through members of the National Youth Councils or representative youth organisations.

Co-chairing the WGs gives additional aspect and reassurance to different stakeholders that the Youth Policy Lab process is based on the principle of co-creation.

Practically, having co-chairs can ensure that the responsibilities are shared and that there is an equal sense of ownership of the process which further on contributes to the success of the process in general. Co-chairing of the process is also part of the trust building between the policymakers and young people overall.

On a more technical level, co-chairing will enhance teamwork - It can be difficult for one person to plan, organise and attend every single meeting. If one chair cannot attend a meeting for personal reasons, a co-chair can step up to help out. Another benefit of collaborative leadership is that it helps ease changes as people come and go. For example, if someone changes their job or has to move to another place, a co-chair ensures that the WG and the entire process of the Youth Lab continues to run smoothly.

The co-chairs should represent the two sides of the Youth Lab process, the policy and decision-makers and the young people.

The co-chair from the governmental side can be a representative of the Ministry/Agency for youth, special governmental advisor, or a representative of another governmental body working on youth participation.

The co-chair from the youth side should be chosen independently by the National Youth Council as a representative to the process. If there is no National Youth Council in the specific economy, then it should be a young person nominated by one or more youth organisations, who has substantial experience in youth participation and working directly with young people of different backgrounds..

As the two chairs of the Working Group at economy level come from different bodies (youth and public administration representative), they can assure transparency and accountability of the process, they will be able to push each other to make things happen, and will assure that the ownership of the process, and its outcomes, is shared both among the governmental representatives and the young people.

2.1.7. Financial support to WGs and management of resources

Youth Labs are demanding and time consuming processes that require full attention of their actors. It is important that the WGs are provided with substantial resources to enable stable and continuous cooperation and inclusion of all relevant stakeholders. These resources should be managed by the WG, where the group will jointly decide on the specific actions and activities it should take, in order to achieve the expected goals on the level of an economy.

It is important that the resources are co-managed by both the governmental representatives and the youth representatives within the WG (Ministries / Agencies for Youth and the National Youth Council, for example).

WGs are encouraged to invite representatives of policy sectors other than youth, but relevant for the overall thematic priority elaborated within the respected cycle.

This should ensure that the process is not only run for young people but genuinely by and with young people.

Potential sources of funding are:

- Specific governmental funds to support the process
- Technical assistance from the RCC
- Specific projects on economy level with various international organisations and foundations
- Different EU programmes and funding mechanisms
- Other sources

Having specific governmental resources assigned to support the process, besides the technical assistance from the RCC, sends a strong political message that this kind of co-creation process is encouraged and highly desirable, even if these resources are not necessarily financial.

The decisions within the Working Groups at economy level should be based on consensus among the

group members. In the case a consensus cannot be reached, it is important that different actors part of the WG have an equal say and decision-making power.

The WG is an informal body; however it can develop its own working procedures and methods, specific implementation and communication plan, in addition to the specific tasks it will be responsible to implement as part of the Youth Policy Labs.

The role of RCC and technical assistance

The Economy Specific Youth Policy Labs coordinated by the Working Groups at economy level and their participants should start immediately after the first meeting (Kick-off meeting) to conduct activities which contribute towards implementation of the policy recommendations and actions.

Such activities may include engaging expert support / technical assistance, training / capacity building, workshops / seminars / conferences, stakeholder consultations, analysis / case study / mapping, peer-learning, evaluations of programmes, awareness raising campaigns, and other activities that they may foresee in their Action Plans.

RCC WBYL project will provide a platform to support enhancing policy development and implementation related to the regional thematic Youth Policy Labs by providing possibility of cooperation among different economies as well as through Technical Assistance Instrument.

2.1.8. Monitoring and ensuring the impact

The cycle ends with the implementation phase but that is surely not the end of the process. At the very beginning, all actors involved in the process should define the indicators (both qualitative and quantitative) to measure the success of the process short-term and long-term.

Systemic changes and long-term impact require regular check points at the economy level which can be decided within WGs after consultations with all relevant stakeholders. Implementation of monitoring can be potentially foreseen through development of a tool to track the policy changes or information relevant for the verification of indicators and the level of their achievement.



3. Youth Policy Lab Approach

3.1. Policy Issue

Policymakers and young people may employ this methodology to address any policy issue. Nevertheless, there are some good practices which may improve the chances for success such as wide consultations on the policy issue that the Youth Policy Lab will address.

Consultations are important at every stage of the process, including definition of the topic or pressing issue that youth and policymakers want to address through Youth Policy Labs. Consultative process helps in understanding key issues and nuances. Moreover, it ensures stakeholders' ownership over the process..

This process may involve consultation processes with relevant stakeholders as well as secondary research of different reports, articles, opinion polls, documents, and other materials which provide the context for key issues important for youth. Consultation process with policymakers, youth organisations, National Youth Councils and Youth Umbrella Organisations, young people, and other relevant groups is important to learn about the issues key stakeholders are willing and interested to address through this methodology.

To ensure meaningful and relevant outcomes, all the stakeholders should be aware and informed about the existing policy frameworks, programmes or mechanisms already in place related to the policy issue discussed.

Holding workshops and other events prior to deciding on the issue would be an advantage.

3.2. Participants - Youth and Policymakers: Understanding Each Other and Equality in Process

The Youth Policy Labs bring together two groups, youth and policymakers, in a regular policy dialogue at regional and economy levels to develop policies and implement them. Active participation of youth and policymakers in Youth Policy Labs is crucial for the success of the activity which ultimately should lead to policy development, policy evaluation or policy revision that would address issues concerning youth.

As Youth Policy Labs involve different target groups who come from different backgrounds, this Methodology seeks to empower all participants, especially those who lack opportunities, to understand and participate in the processes of decision-making and policymaking. Methodology recognises the importance of ensuring that everyone has the same starting point and equal opportunity to express freely throughout the dialogue.

The methodology may be utilised by policymakers at different levels of government. Key policymakers involve those covering youth policies and those covering specific issue. Youth involved in Youth Policy Labs may be any young woman or men but the most suitable profile of young people is described in the section below. National Youth Councils and Youth Umbrella Organisations are best partners to facilitate

selection of young people due to their valuable role in advancing the priorities related to youth. The process may be closed through nominations or open for wider public.

Young people and National Youth Councils / Youth Umbrella Organisations

Youth is a large group and includes people from diverse social groups and backgrounds, young people from majority and minority groups, from different subcultures, of different ages, of different educational backgrounds, and so on. Differences amongst these groups are reflected in unequal access to information, education, cultural and educational content, belonging to different socio-economic groups, different class, religious and ethical affiliation.

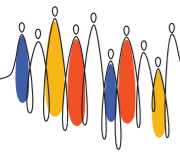
To build cohesion and integration within a youth group and have all young participants engaged equally in the process, it is necessary to understand their specific needs in order to identify potential challenges, create equal starting positions and an environment for dialogue between young people, organisation and decision-maker.

Experts from different backgrounds and fields of work who engage or will engage directly with young people should approach them in a planned and analytical manner and at all times work professionally in order to promote a healthy and safe environment.

Principles and values to keep in mind in order to avoid challenges when working with young people through the mentioned activities and programmes:

- building positive and non-judgmental and supportive relationships with young people,
- supporting young people to find the role they want in their community and society,
- supporting collaboration and understanding between people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds, no matter of their backgrounds, orientation, disability or any personal traits
- supporting and enabling young people to voice their needs and opinions to others and speak up on behalf of young people,
- enabling young people to make positive changes in their community,
- designing and creating projects and activities with young people,
- providing and supporting learning opportunities for young people.

Through participation in these processes, young people should have the opportunity to work on personal and social development, self-confidence, development of values and attitudes, communication, and active participation in community building and development. And most importantly, treat youth as a partner and a friend. Remember that they are part of the process for the same goal as policymakers are. Establishing mutual trust is difficult, but it will create a safer and more productive environment.



A Youth Policy Lab youth participant:

- has proven interest and relevant experience in the field of youth participation, youth activism, issue being discussed, and similar,
- has around multiple years of practical experience in the field of youth participation and youth-led organisations through volunteering, working, participating in CSO activities related to youth and similar,
- is open minded and willing to engage in a multi-sectoral environment,
- is aware of the importance of involving different vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the process to ensure that the societal diversity is reflected in the Policy Labs' outcomes
- is committed to participate in all activities related to Youth Policy Lab in a multiple year process,
- is interested to work jointly with others on designing and implementing policies stemming from Youth Policy Lab recommendations, and
- is interested to work on initiatives related to the issue at different levels.

Through this process, youth will benefit from engaging in policymaking process jointly with policymakers to address issues concerning youth, continuous, structured and planned engagement with a diverse group of young people and policymakers, opportunity to assume leadership roles and gain skills and practical experience leading to more effective decision-making in the future in regard to the issue being

discussed, contribute to co-designing and co-managing policies to address the issue at different levels, and master new policy development methodology by participating in the training.

Policymakers

Understanding the context in which actors operate is crucial for successful and meaningful dialogue. Individual actors often have limited power in decision-making, so even if there is personal will to advance a certain policy, there may be a larger organisational process within the respected institutions which they are required to follow. It is the job of policymakers to bring others on board, and this includes different stakeholders and interest groups, which go beyond youth.

In order to engage smoothly and productively with policymakers, one should take into account certain aspects.

It is important to highlight the most powerful evidence in order to show that your idea will have real impact. It is required to provide concrete results from places where the solution has worked before and explain how to adapt it. Short-term results are better than long-term, considering political cycles, but not always necessary.

As mentioned above, there is a large number of other stakeholders, beneficiaries, and interest groups besides youth who have interest and certain policies may impact them, including the ones concerning the labour market.

Policymaking is a complex process and policymakers have to consider a large number of recommendations and points of view. Hence, young people have to take this into account and make sure that their recommendations and suggestions are short, concise, and have a logical flow from NEED to SOLUTION in order to ensure policymakers can translate them easily into policies and actions. Note that policymakers may not be experts on a certain issue as a young person may be, hence, making a simple point may stick better than lists of complex details.

Policymakers tend to be realistic and need to know how long it will take to implement a proposal and when the results will show up. If it was implemented elsewhere, how it worked, how long it took to develop and implement, and what were the results. Outlining briefly, clearly and concisely step-by-step implementation process would make policymakers more open to recommendations and suggestions. One has to be practical and put him or herself in the other's shoes, in this case to envision how someone in government would move the proposal forward.

It is important to focus on evidence and facts which stem from personal experience or knowledge acquired through reliable sources and avoid politicisation. Policy solutions which may deliberately and/or unnecessarily politicise, narrow the audience and reduce the scope for a fact-based debate about what makes the lives of citizens better must be avoided.

Most importantly, youth should treat policymakers as partners and friends, as they are part of the process for the same goal as youth. Establishing mutual trust

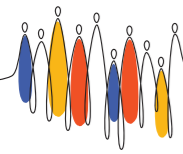
is difficult but creates a safer and more productive environment.

Through Youth Policy Labs, the policymakers engage with young women and men to develop and implement concrete policies and actions during the lifespan of the Lab. The policymakers will benefit from continuous, structured and planned engagement with diverse group of young people and policymakers, contribute to co-designing and co-managing policies to address issue at stake, and master new policy development methodology by participating in the training, and build a network, share experiences.

3.3. Youth Equality: Co-Creating Toward Meaningful Youth Participation

The principle of co-creation is the process of creating new public policies and services with people and not for them. It can also be called **joint thinking** which leads to improvements of policy development in line with the needs of the citizens as well as creating the sense of ownership which should lead to better implementation at all levels.

Decision-makers should make significant efforts to ensure that citizens are involved when trying to improve public services and policy-making processes and that one actor does not dominate the process - be it public services, politicians, citizens, in this case, specifically,



young people. On the contrary, everyone should interact with one another because they each have distinctive information, outlook and perspective to bring to the debate.

A citizen perspective on innovation: Once the actors have been identified, the second question is: what is meant by innovation and on what do we innovate? Before innovating - stop and think. The question is: are we trying to make the wrong things more efficient or are we trying to do the right thing in the first place? And the answer is: we figure that one out by looking at what is going on in the field from the perspective of the citizens.

The citizen's perspective: The citizen's perspective is the essential aspect of co-creating and it is crucial that politicians and public services are informed about what it is like as a citizen to deal with policies that at look like they make sense policy level but do not work so well at citizen level.

Citizens or a young person are not a homogenous category - It is important to create opportunities to take part in the processes together and understand each other's perspectives, thus also understanding the possibilities and constraints. If one understands someone else's possibilities and constraints, rather than just looking at their own, a lot more becomes possible.

Youth Equality: The principle suggests that youth are fully equal with adults while they are involved. This is a 50/50 split of authority, obligation, and commitment.

Challenge: There is no recognition for the specific developmental needs or representation opportunities for

youth. Without receiving that recognition youth lose interest and may become disengaged quickly.

Reward: Youth can experience full power and authority, as well as forming basic youth/adult partnerships.

Co-creation principles Who should be involved?

European Commission is making significant efforts to ensure that citizens are involved when trying to improve public services and policy-making processes and that one actor does not dominate the process - be it public services, politicians, citizens, in this case, specifically, young people. On the contrary, everyone should interact with one another because they each have distinctive information, outlook and perspective to bring to the debate.

The European Youth Dialogue as an example of policy co-creation

The European Youth Dialogue is a means of mutual communication between young people and decision-makers in order to implement the priorities of European youth policy cooperation and to make young people's voice heard in the European policy-shaping process.

It is a consultative and co-creative process, implemented by the European Commission, that aims to increase cooperation with civil society and get first-hand input from young people. It is made up of one main event,

the EU Youth Conference organised by the EU Member State currently holding the EU Presidency.

Moreover, the European Youth Dialogue involves consultations with young people and youth organisations at all levels in the EU Member States, and at EU level during the EU Youth Conferences organised by each EU Presidency Member State. The process is implemented in work cycles of 18 months that have a common overall thematic priority and are divided into three rounds of consultations (one for each presidency).

The European Youth Dialogue is a continuation of the process previously known as The Structured Dialogue which has been a result of A New Impetus for European Youth² (2001) and a sequence of the European Youth Pact³ (2005). Those documents emphasise the importance of consulting young people on policy fields that affect them directly.

In 2005, a European Union Council Resolution invited the European Commission and the Member States to develop a Structured Dialogue with young people and youth organisations, experts on youth issues and public decision-makers.

The biggest boost for its implementation happened with the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), adopted in 2009 through the Council Resolution that recognises young people as key actors in society that should be considered as an important resource.

² European Commission white paper 2001 - A new impetus for European youth <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/a3fb3071-785e-4e15-a2cd-51cb40a6c06b>

³ European Youth Pact (2005) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISSUM:c11081&from=ES>

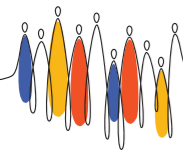
The idea of the European Youth Dialogue as co-creation process

The idea of the European Youth Dialogue is to co-create concrete recommendations and proposals of young people that will respond to their needs, gain space in current policies and measures, and improve their quality of life.

Why is it necessary?

Often the local decision-makers do not see the problems of young people as a priority of local government, and therefore do not pay enough attention to them in the process of creating public policies. On the other hand, young people in local communities do not have sufficiently developed capacities and mechanisms to participate equally in decision-making.

It is important to ensure that as many young people as possible are involved in the consultation process, as well as to ensure participation of young people from different social groups. As young people are a heterogeneous group, their needs can vary, and a co-creation process such as European Youth Dialogue allows all these needs to be gathered in one place and for each of them to find an adequate solution, measure, or strategy to successfully solve the problems.



Given that the co-creation process is conducted through consultations with young people and decision-makers in local communities, it provides insight into the needs and problems of young people, their thoughts and ideas. It also offers an opportunity for all actors to learn about young people and the challenges they face.

Involvement in a co-creation process such as this one provides youth organisations and young people with a better insight into the needs of their members, beneficiaries, and volunteers. Through constant consultations with their target groups, organisations can better understand the position of young people in the local community, and adjust their activities and programmes more successfully, but also advocate that other actors work on it.

Setting up the dialogue as policy co-creation in Western Balkans

The co-creation process such as this type of dialogue begins with exploring the challenges and problems that young people face in the region of Western Balkans. At the level of each of the six economies of the Western Balkans, specific Economy Working Groups will be established to conduct the policy co-creation at the national level and provide an understanding of the main challenges and obstacles young people are facing, which will be presented as thematic frameworks for dialogue.

The task of the economy specific working groups is to hold online and offline consultations within the econo-

my with all relevant youth policy actors, young people from different social groups, to ensure that the data obtained reflect the real state of position of young people and of youth policy at the economy level.

After the consultations with young people and other actors (such as ministries, local governments, youth councils, umbrella organisations, and regional networks) at the economy level, working groups are responsible for making a report covering thematic areas that were identified as challenges young people are facing.

The reports will be presented and discussed at the level of each economy where opinions will be further collected in one place to form joint recommendations related to the thematic framework of the current cycle.

The aim of the process is for decision-makers and youth representatives to jointly review and improve the received recommendations and opinions, as well as to define a concrete methodology for their implementation and inclusion in national and EU youth policies.

3.4. Co-management as the next step

Co-management (or co-operative management) means the sharing of power, responsibility and accountability in the area of management, between two or more parties. This system can be used successfully when involving young people in decision-making processes at various levels. The co-management system in the youth sector involves representatives of young people (usually of youth organisations) sit-

ting down with government officials who together then work out the priorities for the youth sector and make recommendations for future budgets and programmes.

This is considered a very special form of co-operation because all parties, both adults and young people, are on the same level and hold the same power to make decisions. It may, in some communities, be difficult for young people to be seen as equal partners with adults and to share power with them. The experience of various organisations shows, however, that “this concept opens the door to amazing new opportunities, ideas and challenges for young people and elders to stretch their creativity and commitment. It reduces prejudice, enhances clarity and simplicity of communication, which makes it valid and useful in any sector of daily life – family, school and business”⁴. The introduction of a co-management system can start on a small scale. In some contexts, for example, it is not realistic to expect that decisions concerning local budgets or other crucial issues will be made by or shared with young people. However, this should not be a reason for not introducing a co-management system at all. Small scale systems such as the management of youth centres or local programmes for young people can work very well. Starting small is, in many cases, a good idea.

⁴ “Co-management. A practical guide. Seeking excellence in youth participation at a local level”, Peace Child International, 2006, p. 9

⁵ Additional information about the co-management body of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe can be found at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/co-management>

Co-management in the Council of Europe⁵

The Youth Department of the Council of Europe provides guidelines, legal instruments and funding through different programmes and the European Youth Foundation that support the creation of youth policies at local, national and European levels. The most important decisions related to the programme and budgetary priorities are taken jointly by governmental and non-governmental partners in the framework of the co-management system.

The co-management system of the Council of Europe Youth Department is consisted of 4 different bodies:

- The European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) which brings together representatives of ministries and bodies responsible for youth matters from the 50 Parties to the European Cultural Convention (North Macedonia representative is from the Agency for Youth and Sports as the most relevant institutional body for youth in the economy).
- The Advisory Council on Youth is made up of 30 representatives from youth NGOs and networks who provide opinions and input on all youth sector activities. It also ensures that young people are involved in other activities of the Council of Europe.

- The Programming Committee on Youth is a subsidiary co-decision body made up of eight members each from the CDEJ and the Advisory Council on Youth. It establishes, monitors and evaluates the programmes of the European Youth Centres and of the European Youth Foundation.
- The Joint Council on Youth brings the CDEJ and the Advisory Council together in a co-decision body which establishes the youth sector's priorities, objectives and budgets. This is the supreme decision and policy-making body for the Council of Europe's governmental and non-governmental partners in the Youth Department. It is composed of all members of the CDEJ and all members of the Advisory Council. All of the decisions are made by consensus and all members have equal power within the body.

Throughout the process of co-management many specific recommendations have been developed that could be relevant for the WBYL process. Here we will reference two of them, however the experts are invited to explore other recommendations and standards set.

Access to rights recommendation⁶ calls on members of the Council of Europe to adopt a human rights-based approach to ensuring young people's access to rights in order to empower people to know and claim their rights and increases the ability of individuals and institutions to take responsibility for respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights. It also asks the members to establish or develop youth policies that more effectively facilitate young people's access to rights.

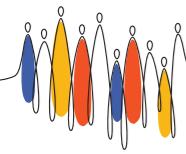
The Enter recommendation⁷ calls on membersto implement public policies that take into consideration the specific situations and needs of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to prevent and eradicate poverty, discrimination, violence and exclusion.



4. Youth Policy Lab Process

⁶ Access to rights recommendation, can be found at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/recommendation-on-young-people-s-access-to-rights>

⁷ The Enter recommendation can be accessed at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/the-enter-recommendation>



4.1. Policy Development Stages

4.1.1. Issue Analysis

The first step of the policy development process is to identify the problem/issue that are tackled within the community, and mobilise the community around it. This can be done through various methods and tools, requiring a deep understanding of the context and economy.

Exploring the issues for young people, or the wider community, is an important step in deciding around what the community will organise. Begin by mapping the key issues of the community, discussing them and finding out more about each problem. Some of these things might be obvious, but some of the issues might need further research, evidence or investigation.

Starting with mapping⁸

Whether it is done physically or online, it is recommended to make a map as a visual with pictures, maps, and symbols to help bring the ideas to life. Consider using large sheets of paper, photos, newspaper pictures, paintings, postcards and getting out into the community to explore different areas. Do not obsess over getting every tree in the right place! Focus on the important parts – the bits that create the campaign.

Once the map is created, what does it say? Are there any new aspects in regard to the community? Does everyone – particularly young people versus older generations – feel the same about these areas? Did everyone agree?

The three Ps to be remembered

Places

Physically understanding the community and mapping the environment that people are living in helps to uncover some of the issues, challenges, and different experiences of those around us. It is worth checking whether urban and rural communities are facing the same reality as well as identifying the key places in the community, especially where young people hang out. Facilitators should consider the following: Where are the specific youth services young people go to if there are some? If not, it is recommended to identify what is missing in order to assure there are no deprived areas, or places unsafe for the youngsters to go to. Facilitators should also reflect on the places different groups and ethnicities go to. Are young people segregated, and if yes what can be done about it? Are there some places where the different groups feel safe? Specific industries nearby that affect people's lives, health or economic well-being, cultural and historical places of the community

People

Mapping out who makes up the target groups is an important part in further understanding the issues of the area, considering different perspectives and thinking about which groups and individuals can help the situation analysis.

Aspects that need to be considered:

- different religious and ethnic groups;
- age profiles;
- older community groups;
- minority groups, such as LGBT, immigrant communities; people with disabilities; students; new groups in the areas;
- changing patterns of people in the community;
- economic migrants arriving to the area;
- migration of young people or workers out the area

Process wise, there are a number of different stakeholders to consider:

Natural supporters – Who are the people most likely to support and join the initiative? This could be the group most likely to benefit from a successful outcome, or the group that is currently most affected by the situation discussed within the community.

Friends & supporters – Who are the groups, organisations or individuals that support the initiative and could help? These could be other organisations campaigning on similar issues, partners and allies in different networks, and individuals supportive to the cause.

Decision-makers & those with powers – Who are the people with power? Are there specific people able to take decisions and impact the success of the initiative? Who has the power to support the community to change, and tackle the issues identified? These could be local or national politicians, business owners, service providers or high profile individuals.

Those against – Which groups, organisations or individuals might disagree with the initiative and lobby against? Not everyone is going to support the initiative, and through community organising, some issues tackled can be aggressively challenged and fought against – particularly if people have vested interests in things remaining the same.

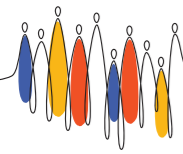
Power

Understanding who has power in the community is at the centre of any policy development process, and yet is often ignored during the planning process. This does not need to be the power of Presidents or Prime Ministers, but could include: religious figures; business owners; elected politicians; celebrities; academic figures; respected community leaders; elders; influential groups.

Power & Money - Follow the money and it might suggest who has power in the community. Who has money and who does not? How much money is being spent on programmes for different groups? Who runs services in the community?

Who makes decisions? – Is it the local authority, the regional body or the central government? Who gets consulted on these decisions? Who are the elected

⁸ Based on activity from "Act by Right - Skills for the active involvement of children and young people in making change happen" Bill Badham



representatives? Who gets left out? Are there organisations or groups who have bigger influence within the community?

Who does not have power? If working out who has power in the community is difficult, it can be easier to think of the groups that are often excluded. One should think of people who look, sound or act differently to those typically with power, or in some cases groups that have different levels of rights – such as minorities.

Individual might be powerful – it should be remembered that power is not just about authority. Groups have power to change things, and individuals have power between and within themselves to make things happen.

4.1.2. Developing Recommendations

A **policy recommendation** is simply written policy advice prepared for a group that has the authority to make decisions – institutions, governments, local authorities.

Policy recommendations are presented in different formats but all of them should have a number of common features. They all, for example, begin with an issue that requires being resolved with a policy action. Policy recommendations also include one or more recommendations and in between the issue and the recommendation often there is policy analysis.

A policy recommendation may have other pieces, but those three parts—issue, analysis and recommendation—will always be there.

One reason for this structure is that writing policy recommendations is basically a process of problem solving. In some version or other (there are many variations on the problem-solving model), most problem-solving approaches to policy follow a simple sequence:

- identify and clarify the policy issue,
- research relevant background and context,
- identify the alternatives,
- carry out required consultations,
- select the best policy option,
- prepare policy recommendation document for approval.

One specific method is described below within the session plans for the Kick-off conference. As noted there, following the theme of youth unemployment it is crucial to specify the focus of the recommendations as much as possible. This could be done through defining specific sub-themes that will give the directions to the groups as to what could be achieved, for example:

- education opportunities for youth and employability,
- entrepreneurship programmes for employability,
- sustainable and green youth employment,
- employability of rural youth,
- inclusive opportunities for employment of marginalised youth,
- regional youth employability collaboration.

Additionally, the level of political recommendation will be set through the discussion among the different stakeholders. That is the power of having a participative process, as usually the practitioners (young people) will seek for something more ambitious, while the policy-makers are there to level with their expectations and share what is actually realistic. Based on the mutual agreement of the participants the recommendations can vary from setting up national programmes like:

Develop financial support for internship providers that offer quality internship opportunities for young people

or

Expand opportunities for good quality offers for youth employment, continued education, apprenticeship, and traineeship

or can focus on specific legislative measures, where it will be required to develop or modify a certain law:

Regulate, evaluate and monitor the quality of internship through the establishment of a binding legislative framework within the national economies to prevent the fraudulent use of internships. This framework should guarantee:

- a. a written contract specifying the terms of the internship
- b. no replacement of paid job
- c. individual tailored tutorship
- d. full accomplishment of the training hours

e. fair remuneration

f. establishment and strengthening of the inspection bodies for interns' working conditions

g. support the access to work contracts once the training has ended

or

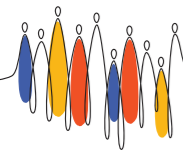
Ministries of labour should improve social security measures to encourage employers and employees to use various flexible working forms, especially telework, part-time work, job sharing or work from home, and develop a clear framework for freelancers.

The recommendations could also be focused more on raising awareness like:

Government authorities together with youth organisations should provide tailored training for specialised youth workers, teachers and career advisers to deliver employment related information and career counselling.

4.1.3. Developing Action Plans

Developing an action plan can help turn visions into reality, and increase efficiency and accountability within the team. An action plan describes the way the policy recommendations will turn into specific policies. It incorporates the different steps needed to be taken, such as specific consultations, panel debates, workshops, advocacy and campaigning initiatives, etc.



Once the overall policy plan with clear recommendations has been developed, it is important to plan how it will take place. This needs to be done in terms of timing, resources, budgeting and personnel. Planning should be thorough but flexible. The possibility of making changes should be built into the plan.

An action plan is the strategy and road map to achieving the goals set. It defines the objectives, identifies barriers, explores solutions and produces actions. It is the backbone to any policy development process or campaign, giving a direction for going forward and supporting when things do not go to plan.

An action plan is not just a checklist or a set of well-written documents. In order to be useful, it needs to set out the goals will be achieved, what obstacles might be faced, how to overcome them and the actions needed to be taken. It is crucial that it is tailor-made and specific to the groups' reality, taking into account their strengths and weaknesses:

- WHO will do what?
- WHEN will this be done, and with whom?
- WHAT types of inputs, besides people, will be needed?

4.2. Effective and Purposeful Youth Policies

Key aspects of effective and purposeful youth policy include⁹:

- a concrete and transparent strategy and an action plan, and mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation, to keep policymakers accountable and to learn in order to improve youth policy,
- a knowledge base, for example, a mapping of the different needs of different young people, research and statistics, and empirical information from policy implementation,
- a vision considering young people as a resource, not as a problem, to support and empower young people to develop their full potential and to contribute positively to society,
- a belief in the value of and a capacity to enable meaningful youth participation, i.e. young people participating in policy processes,
- a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy, bringing together different sectors of public policies that have a role to play in the lives of young people, from the "youth field" and beyond,
- a separate sustainable budget, because policy needs to be backed by sustainable, dedicated, adequate resources for implementation,

⁹ Zara Lavchyan, Howard Williamson (2019) Youth Policy Essentials, Youth Partnership (p. 16-17) <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261953/Youth+Policy+Essentials+updated.pdf/92d6c20f8c8a-205f-0e53-14e16d69e561>

- established links between local, regional and national levels, recognising the competences and responsibilities of all actors and seeking co-operation, coordination and partnership,
- consistency with international practice, considering standards, recommendations and good practices.

4.3. How to Conduct a Youth Policy Lab

Youth Policy Lab should follow and uphold standards, practices, approach, principles, and processes presented in previous and current chapters. Youth Policy Lab process involves:

1. Preparatory phase (identification of the issues youth is facing, ensuring there is no overlap with the existing policy frameworks or mechanisms, selection of participants, training on the methodology);
2. Kick-off (definition of possible solutions and action plan);
3. Implementation phase (during which policymakers and youth are working jointly on implementation of jointly identified solutions);
4. Mid-term review of the achievements and adjustment of approach if needed;
5. Final review of the success of solutions deployed to tackle specific issues.

The process starts with identification and selection of the topic or the policy issue. Chapter 3 suggests that the best approach is to conduct research and wide consultations to learn about the issue and nuances which could lead to definition of the topic as well as sub-topic for the Youth Policy Lab. Such consultations may improve the chances of success for Youth Policy Lab as it would build cohesion and understanding of the issue around which there would be genuine interest and willingness of youth and policymakers to engage in policy development, policy evaluation or policy revision.

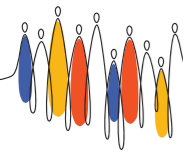
The next step is selection of participants, youth and policymakers, whereby the Youth Policy Lab should contain approximately equal number of participants from each group. More on the adequate profile of participants can be found in Chapter 3.

Following their selection, participants should undergo training on Methodology in order to form the Pool of Experts and be able to utilise this methodology for the purpose of co-creation and co-management of policies.

Development of the policy and action plan will follow some stages such as:

Situation Analysis

The main aim of this analysis is to discover and gain common understanding of current youth policies, level of youth participation, policy challenges and problems, as well as relevant stakeholders. The analysis includes, but it is not limited to, desk analysis of existing youth policies and practices, conducting research



directly with young people, inputs from experts, etc. It is of high importance that policy-making process is based on data and research on youth. This process serves to help youth representatives and decision-makers to identify policy challenges and problems which need to be addressed.

Policy planning

The main goal of this stage is to explore youth needs, challenges and realities. These insights should help decision-makers and other stakeholders to gain better and in depth understanding of young people's needs. At the end of this stage the team should identify a policy area which they would like to work on within the next stage.

Policy development

The main goal of this stage is to transform youth needs into youth policies in collaboration with youth representatives. This stage brings the knowledge and understanding gathered in the previous two stages to start the process of creating ideas that will respond to youth needs. It is of high importance to empower innovative thinking and outside of the box ideas. Start with a big quantity of ideas to finish with quality ideas. Make sure that the process of idea generating is participatory and collaborative.

Policy in Action

The main goal of this stage is to elaborate the proposed ideas in the previous stage and map milestones for policy adoption. Planning and moving forward the

selected ideas for policy making is the core of this final stage. It is of high importance to include youth in every step of the action plan, from creation, its implementation to monitoring and evaluation.

4.3.1. Kick-Off

This will mark the start of the work of the Youth Policy Lab and its main goal is to stimulate dialogue among various actors, who will be provided with some background information on the theme but the key contribution will come from participants through specific expertise on youth and the policy issue being discussed as well as personal experiences. Based on this dialogue, the main result of the Kick-off Event will be a set of recommendations and action plan, which will be jointly developed by policymakers and youth participants.

Aims of the event

- Commence the work of the Youth Policy Lab, whereby policymakers and youth will work jointly on co-designing and co-managing policies,
- Discuss policy issues and develop policy recommendations,
- Implement model of Youth Policy Lab as a model for co-creation of youth policies,
- Co-create action plan for selected policy recommendations,
- Develop action plans for national consultations,
- Promote cross-sectorial cooperation for achieving sustainable solutions.

Expected outcomes of the event

Policy recommendations and action plan are developed, implementation in collaboration with young people is ensured

The main parts of the Kick-off are:

- Setting the tone, stimulating a getting to know each other process and presenting the stakeholders involved,
- Apply Youth Policy Lab methodology for co-creation of youth policy at economy level
- Explore youth issues and policies at economy level based on evidence, data, and needs of youth presented by youth themselves,
- Understand the policy landscape limitations and opportunities,
- Develop innovative and youth driven solutions which address core issues of young people,
- Provide space for participants to reflect, and develop sustainable solutions to identified challenges for young people.

(Please refer to Annex 5 for suggestion how to organise Kick-off event).

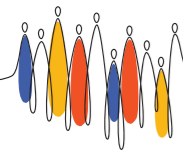
Guidelines how to co-create action plans

Co-creation of action plans is of high importance for engaging young people in every step of the de-

sign and implementation of the action plan. Ensuring meaningful participation of young people is a basis for successful policy design and implementation. The action plans should be built on the strengths, skills and interests of young people and include roles for youth (youth representatives) and opportunities for youth to lead and design initiatives.

There are various approaches and effective methodologies and action plan tools. For the purposes of this manual we will present one model described in the following steps:

1. Define the end goal, create measurable objectives using the SMART model. The goal of the action plan needs to be clearly defined, as, after all, an action plan serves to achieve its goal(s). If there are multiple goals, create a separate action plan for each goal.
2. Set milestones and criteria for success
3. Define the approaches to ensure young people are engaged in the implementation of the action plan
4. Identify ways to track the implementation of the action plan and define the method(s) for evaluation
5. List all tasks and activities necessary to achieve the goal and assign them to the relevant persons
6. Prioritise tasks and add deadlines
7. For each task identify the resources needed to complete the task
8. Visualise the action plan by completing the template for Action Plan



(Please refer to Annex 5 for Template for Action Plan and how to organise sessions).

4.3.2. Implementation Phase

The Youth Policy Lab participants, youth and policy-makers, cooperate and work jointly to implement the action plan by organising joint activities to advance implementation of Youth Policy Lab policy recommendations and actions.

4.3.3. Mid-Term Review

Mid-term Review Meeting will serve as a platform to share developments, identify shortcomings and possibilities for further improvement, explore specific good practices, update policy recommendations, action plan and other activities.

Aims of the event:

- Present implementation of the Action Plans,
- Provide space for networking and design of new initiatives and activities for cooperation,
- Review economy specific action plans and activities,
- Advance implementation of strategy and policies.

Expected outcomes of the event:

- Developed final versions of economy specific Action Plan,
- Develop concrete plan for Advocacy of Policy recommendation,
- Equip participants with ideas and best practices for advancing the Action Plan.

The main parts of the Mid-term Meeting will be:
Review and develop further quality Action Plans by incorporating youth voices and feedback and best practices from other Youth Policy Labs,
Enhance strategy and map to adopt policies,
Update activities and plans accordingly.
(Please refer to Annex 5 for suggestion on how to organise Mid-term session).

4.3.4. Final review of the success of solutions deployed to tackle specific issues

Final review of the Youth Policy Lab should aim to look back and evaluate the process, what has happened until then, identify the strengths and results, as well as the shortcomings and possibilities for improvement. Based on the evaluation, the stakeholders draft plans on how to make it sustainable and continue with implementation. Within this part, beside the specific reflections on the success of the process, there will be space for further networking, creating links and joint actions.

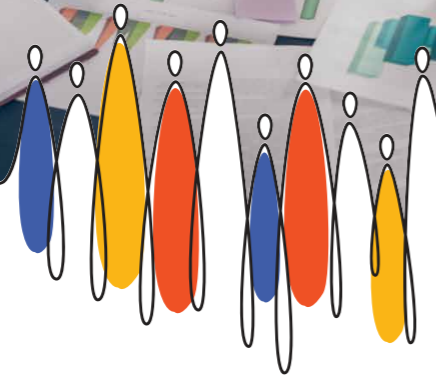
This meeting will provide space to take stock on what has happened until then, and learn from the experience.

The main aims of the event

- Share success stories from implementation of Youth Policy Lab and co-creation of youth policy,
- Provide space to celebrate success and map out next steps,
- Encourage replication of Youth Policy Labs.

Expected outcomes from the event:

- Disseminate successes of Youth Policy Lab and changes they have created for young people,
- Map out next steps for continued cooperation among youth and policymakers.



5. Context on the Regional Cooperation, Mapping in Each Economy, and the EU Approach

5.1. Western Balkans Youth Policy Lab Mapping of Youth Policies

Within its first component, Western Balkan Youth Lab Project is conducting a Mapping of Youth Policies and Identification of Existing Support and Gaps in Financing of Youth Actions in Western Balkans aiming to provide more specific insights and nuanced approach to be reflected in the activities which will be implemented within the project. Reflections on new COVID-19 and post COVID-19 pandemic-induced realities and changes in policy areas of high relevance for youth (ex. education, upskilling, innovation, etc.) will be specifically provided.

Within this component, the Project strives to provide six updated reports per each economy and updated comparative summary report highlighting the commonalities and differences between the six Western Balkan economies, providing new instruments for donor community coordination and detailed information on youth policies.

The following sections present key information in regard to youth policy and statistics per each economy.

5.2. Mapping for Each Economy

5.2.1. Albania

According to 2020 estimates, Albania has 327,930 young women and 333,435 young men. Trends suggest a decrease in youth population as a percentage of the total population and thus Albania faces an aging population, from 24.9% in 2016 to 23.4% in 2020. Youth unemployment is estimated to be around 27%. The Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth is in charge of the youth policymaking portfolio. Albania adopted a Law on Youth in 2020. The National Action Plan on Youth adopted in 2016 will expire in 2020, and its main goals included establishing institutions, such as youth centres, to support young people, and strengthening and enhancing the structures and capacities of youth organisations and networks. Other essential strategies such as the National Action Plan for LGBTI 2016-2020 or the National Action Plan for the Integration of Roma and Egyptian Communities mention youth as a target group, but not as a specific category. Issues such as youth employment and vocational education are targeted in the Employment and Skills Strategy 2013-2020. There has been no dedicated budget for youth in the public budget thus far.

5.2.2. Bosnia and Herzegovina

The legal and policy framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an overly intricate political structure based on ethnic divisions. Three Youth Laws govern these issues, one for each corresponding level of government: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Brcko District. This creates a complex web of policies and institutional frameworks. There are institutions that deal with youth-related issues in one segment of their authority. Therefore, the jurisdiction for sectors directly related to youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina: education, employment, social policy, health policy, youth participation, mobility, culture, and sport are with the Republika Srpska, Brcko District and cantonal levels in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Despite the lack of central-level youth policy, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and District Brcko have prepared and adopted their youth laws. According to 2013 census, there are 723,116 young people (age 15-29) in Bosnia and Herzegovina's overall population, which is 20.47% of the total population, and the official government estimate is that there are 777,000 young people currently living in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Employment data is discouraging. Over 60% of youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina is unemployed, and 50% have been unemployed for more than two decades. Bosnia and Herzegovina lacks a central-level Youth Strategy, and the budget lines of Bosnia and Herzegovina's subunits

reflect this situation - there is no specific budget line for youth policy implementation. The only central-level funding related to youth is the one allocated for the Commission for Coordination of Youth Issues of Bosnia and Herzegovina (under MoCA BiH jurisdiction). The government of Brcko District has three specific budget lines relating to youth issues/activities. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has only a single one. Lastly, the Republika Srpska has six specific budgetary allocations for youth-related themes/issues.

5.2.3. Kosovo*

With 26.29 percent of the total population belonging to the age group 15-29, Kosovo* has the youngest population in Europe. Youth in the age group 15-19 represent 9.58 percent of the community, while age groups 20-24 and 25-29 represent 8.66% and 8.05% of the total population respectively. But, with 46.4 percent unemployed, particularly among women, although women tend to attain higher education levels more than men, and with 32.7 percent inactive, youth position remains a widespread challenge. The Law on Youth Participation and Empowering (LYPE) is in force since 2009, while the National Strategy on Youth and Action Plan have been developed and adopted in recent years. The 2018-2020 Action Plan for Increasing Youth Employment remains a crucial document on employment policy, sponsored by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and adopted by the

Kosovo* Government. Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is responsible for the development, approval, and implementation of documents and programmes relevant to youth sector, alongside with establishment of youth structures and financing of youth activities. On the other hand, municipal authorities have youth divisions in place to ensure day-to-day implementation of the LYEP and to provide financial and human resources for the implementation of youth programmes.

5.2.4. Montenegro

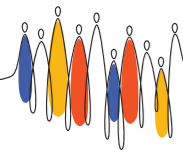
Montenegro's national youth policy framework is defined by the Law on Youth and Youth Strategy 2017-2021. The Government adopted the Youth Strategy in Montenegro (2017-2021) in September 2016, with an Action Plan for 2017. All municipalities are obliged to submit the draft Local Youth Action Plan to the Ministry of Sports and Youth to obtain opinion on its alignment with the Strategy. Starting from May 2019, all 24 municipalities adopted the Local Action Plan for Youth. On the other side, youth clubs were opened in 11 municipalities. Participation in decision-making is governed by the Law on Youth and by other laws and bylaws that define in general terms participation of citizens in decision-making and community development, and which are therefore applicable to young people. The process of establishing a Representative Umbrella Association of NGOs implementing youth policy has been initiated by youth NGOs in March 2020 and the Ministry of Sports and Youth has immediately established cooperation with the Initial Board of future Rep-

resentative Umbrella Association named Montenegrin Youth Network. Over the years the number of people living in Montenegro has been increasing, while at the same time, the number of young people has been decreasing. Out of the total number of people living in Montenegro in 2019 (622,028), there were 118,649 of young people aged 15 to 29, 61,393 (51.74%) young males and 57,256 (48.25%) young females, which makes 19.07% of the total population of Montenegro. While the rate of early school leavers is low (5%), the NEET rate is almost double in Montenegro (21.3%) than in the EU27 (12.6%). In June 2020 youth unemployment rate increased by 29.12%, which is 7% higher than it was at the end of 2019 (22.8%).

5.2.5. North Macedonia

In North Macedonia young people have to deal with persistent challenges, including formal and informal education, unemployment, social protection, gender equality, career development, and others. National youth policy aims to create mechanisms to deal with these challenges and enable young people to develop knowledge, skills, and competences. The most important achievement has been the adoption of first-ever Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies in January 2020. The adopted law aims to: create and implement youth policy at all levels through multisectoral approaches; strengthen young people's participation in policy-making processes and raise awareness of the importance of young people and their social role; further promote intergenerational partnerships to support youth

* This designation throughout this document is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence



participation in the decision-making and policy-making processes; support youth organisations; and encourage structural dialogue at the national and local levels.

In terms of policy, the National Youth Strategy (NYS) 2016–2025, adopted in February 2016, has been followed by one action plan only - Action Plan (AP) to implement the National Youth Strategy (2016 – 2017). While there is no Ministry of Youth in the economy, the most crucial governmental institution remains the Agency for Youth and Sport. Under the new law, the government and municipalities are obliged to adopt specific strategies and action plans dedicated to young people. Also, in each municipality, at least one youth centre should be established. The ratio of young people in the total population in North Macedonia is among the highest in the Western Balkans Six (WB6). However, unemployment among youth is also among the highest in the region. According to Eurostat, there were 411 979 young people in North Macedonia aged 15 to 29 in 2018, which represented 20.32% of the total population. No data is available for the migration of the young people only. Youth Policy in North Macedonia did not have a specific budget line in the Government budget for 2019 and 2020. Overall, there are many challenges the economy has to deal with in terms of efficient policy implementation and financing of youth programmes.

5.2.6. Serbia

According to 2011 census, young people make up about 18.4% of Serbia's population (48.8% women).

However, according to the latest population estimate, this percentage has decreased to 16.7%. The data from the Statistical Office of Serbia (SORS) show that the number of young people has been continuously decreasing since the last census in 2011. The ratio of young people (age 15 to 29) in the total population in 2011 was 18.55% (1,341,783), while it was 16.70% (1,166,404) in 2018. The number of active youth, which was 531,400 in 2019, consists of 114,200 unemployed and 417,200 employed persons. The youth employment rate in 2019 was 36.9%, which is by 0.6 percentage points higher than in 2018. The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), established in 2007, is in charge of the coordination, development, and improvement of youth policy, its implementation, the National Youth Strategy (NYS), and other national youth plans and programmes. MoYS supported three national associations: the National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS), the National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR), and the National Association of Local Youth Offices. The National Youth Strategy adopted in February 2015 will expire in 2025, and active youth participation and cooperation is one of the fundamental principles underlying the NYS.

5.3. The EU Approach

Processes similar to WBYL have been run at the EU level successfully for many years and active and meaningful participation of young people is at their

very core. Consultative and co-creation processes between policymakers and young people have led to development of strategies, goals and different mechanisms. The most relevant for the WBYL process are:

5.3.1. Youth Strategy 2019-2027

Youth Strategy 2019-2027 is the key policy document at the EU level, together with the European Youth Goals, as it is setting the framework of objectives, principles, core areas and measures for youth policy cooperation among different and relevant stakeholders. By working together, implementation of the Strategy can ultimately lead to the achievement of the vision of a continent where young people can seize opportunities and relate to European values. The Strategy focuses on the three core areas of action: *Engage, Connect, Empower*.

5.3.2 European Youth Goals

11 European Youth Goals are the result of the participatory and co-creation process called Structured Dialogue (now known as the European Youth Dialogue process). The Goals represent 11 priority areas for the future youth policy related processes:

#1 Connecting EU with youth/ #2 Equality of all genders / #3 Inclusive societies / #4 Information and constructive dialogue / #5 Mental health and wellbeing / #6 Moving rural youth forward / #7 Quality employment for all / #8 Quality Learning / #9 Space and participation for all / #10 Sustainable

green Europe / #11 Youth organisations and European programmes

5.3.3. Youth Guarantee as an EU Mechanism to Tackle Youth Unemployment

The Youth Guarantee is a mechanism and a commitment by EU Member States to ensure that all young people under certain age (25 or 29) have a chance to find a good quality job or acquire education, skills and experience they need to find a job in the future, within four months of leaving school or becoming unemployed.

Every Member State runs a national Youth Guarantee scheme that includes apprenticeships, traineeships, jobs or financing for start-up companies. In each of the national schemes, there is a large coalition of partners from different sectors involved with a role to support a variety of activities that can support young people in finding work.

Since January 2014, 14 million young people have entered Youth Guarantee schemes. In July 2020, European Commission launched Youth Employment Support: A Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation which aims to provide a bridge to jobs for the next generations.



Annexes

Annex 1: Quality Standards for Youth Policy Development

European Youth Forum has established 8 key quality standards for youth policy¹⁰. The standards are a valuable reference for both governmental and non-governmental institutions working with youth or on youth issues as well as researchers in the field to identify the gaps between what is current youth policy and ideal youth policy. These standards can be used for international, national and local level youth policies¹¹.

Standard 1: Rights-based approach to youth policy

Youth policy should be based on the standards set out by the international human rights framework and follow the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

Standard 2: Evidence-based youth policy

An evidence-based youth policy means that all stages of youth policy development use and are based on reliable, relevant, independent and up-to-date data

and research in order for youth policy to reflect the needs and realities of young people.

Standard 3: Participatory Youth Policy

Participatory youth policy involves all stakeholders, at all stages of the policy cycle, from creation and implementation to evaluation. Particular attention is paid to participation of vulnerable and marginalised groups among all stakeholders.

Standard 4: Multi-level youth policy

Multi-level youth policy means that it is developed, implemented, and evaluated in a coordinated manner between all relevant public authorities from local, regional, national and European levels.

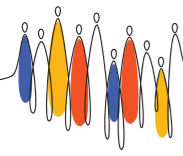
Standard 5: Strategic Youth Policy¹²

Strategic youth policy is built around a long-term vision and consists of a set of measurable, resourced

¹⁰ European Youth Forum (2016) A toolkit on quality standards on youth policy <https://www.youthforum.org/toolkit-quality-standards-youth-policy>

¹¹ Each of the standards has a measurable indicator you can read more about in the toolkit. <https://www.youthforum.org/toolkit-quality-standards-youth-policy>

¹² Council of Europe has developed a self-assessment tool for the development of youth policy with specific indicators, for more information check the following link: <https://rm.coe.int/self-assessment-tool-for-youth-policy-english/16808d76c5>



and timely objectives, identified target groups and a clear division of responsibilities amongst the different public authorities for its implementation and evaluation.

Standard 6: Availability of resources for youth policy

Sufficient resources, both in terms of funding and human resources are available for youth organisations, youth work providers as well as public authorities to develop, implement and evaluate quality youth policy. Supportive measures, from training schemes to funding programmes, are made available to ensure the capacity building of the actors and structures of youth policy.

Standard 7: Political commitment and accountability in youth policy

Political commitment and accountability mean that decision-makers are taking the appropriate measures to implement youth policy, ensuring transparency, reporting and accountability.

Standard 8: Cross-sectoral youth policy

Cross-sectoral youth policy implies there is coordination among different ministries, departments and public bodies responsible for and working on issues affecting young people, jointly working on the creation, implementation and evaluation of youth policy.

Annex 2: Values and principles

Direct work with young people implies certain values and principles. The purpose of the activity will be to empower the young person enough to be able to actively participate in the life of the local community and to create a space in which the young person feels safe and accepted by others.

Experts from various fields, who will work directly with young people, will approach them in a planned and analytical manner and at all times work professionally, promoting a healthy and safe environment. Principles and values that we rely on in working with young people through the mentioned activities and programmes include:

- building positive and non-judgemental and supportive relationships with young people
- supporting young people to find the role they want in their community and society
- supporting collaboration and understanding between people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds
- supporting and enabling young people to voice their needs and opinions to others and speak up on behalf of young people
- enabling young people to make positive changes in their community
- designing and creating projects and activities with young people

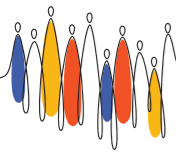
- providing and supporting learning opportunities for young people

Through participation in these processes, young people will have the opportunity to work on personal and social development, self-confidence, development of values and attitudes, communication, and active participation in community building and development.

Through programmes and activities, the goal is to develop the potential of young people from the Western Balkans and encourage them to actively participate in their community, to improve their information, and encourage employability.

As further reading on this topic, it is recommended to read the guiding principles of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 which should be applied in all policies and activities concerning young people:

- **Equality and non-discrimination:** Combating all forms of discrimination and promoting gender equality, recognising that young people are at risk of facing multiple forms of discrimination, including age-based discrimination, and observing the principles recognised, inter alia, in Articles 21 and 23 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- **Inclusion:** Acknowledging that young people are not a homogenous group, and thus have diverse



needs, backgrounds, life situations and interests, the EU Youth Strategy should promote activities and policies that are inclusive for all young people, especially those with fewer opportunities and/or those whose voices may be overlooked.

- **Participation:** Recognising that all young people are a resource to society, all policies and activities concerning young people should uphold young people's right to participate in the development, implementation and follow-up of policies affecting them by means of meaningful participation of young people and youth organisations. In this context, policies should be built in recognition of the changes brought about by digital communication affecting democratic and civic participation.

- **Global, European, national, regional and local dimension:** In order to ensure sustainable impact on young people, it is important that EU youth policy is implemented with the interlinkages with regional and local levels in mind and that activities are conducted to support youth policies at grass-roots level. At the same time, young people's voices should be taken into account whenever global issues are addressed.
- **Dual approach:** Policies that strive to improve the lives of young people can never be limited to the field of youth itself. Therefore the dual approach agreed upon in the previous cooperation framework 2010-2018 is still indispensable as it aims to tackle youth-relevant issues on the one hand by mainstreaming initiatives across policy areas and on the other hand by specific initiatives in the youth sector.

Annex 3: Participatory approach

To ensure that everyone feels comfortable in participating in the event, organiser should be mindful of access, safety, inclusion and respect.

Access: Before setting up the event, make sure to understand the realities of the future participants better. If they come from a vulnerable group, or group living in poverty, organiser needs to ensure that they can attend the event. If people with disabilities are participating, space needs to have adequate access

A space is **physically accessible** if, for example, it is safe to move around in a wheelchair, it is easy to move between floors both by stairs or elevator, toilets take into account different disabilities, there are enough seats for everyone, and the lighting is moderate and will not blind anyone. People who need an induction loop have easy access to it.

In case it is an online event, organiser should choose a platform or tool that participants will be able to access from their devices and consider before asking participants to upload data, heavy content or video if it is really necessary.

Safety: Co-creation means that all participants are free to express their opinions even if others might disagree with them. It is part of the facilitator's role to ensure that everyone is comfortable to express themselves.

Whether it is online or face-to-face event, organiser and facilitators should make sure that everyone is

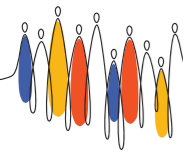
aware that the event is hate and discrimination free, especially if it is held in multi-cultural and multi-religious environments, or involves groups of different background (origin, sex, gender, disability or any other personal trait).

In case of online events, organiser should know who is attending and choose a platform which will be accessible to all participants but in which participants will pre-register and leave their information, accessible only to organisers.

To avoid inappropriate content by unknown participants, it is recommended protecting the event with the password which will be accessible only to those who have registered.

Inclusion and respect: Apart from the freedom of expression, facilitators need to ensure that events, both online and face-to-face, are open to everyone. Working in the region such as Western Balkans means that, very likely, organisers might encounter situations in which there will be participants speaking a dialect or non-native language which might make them feel less eager to actively take part. It is better to ask them before the event what would be their preferred way of participating than assuming that they are not willing to share their points of view because of language barriers.

Cultural and religious sensitivity is a very important aspect when working in Western Balkans. It is crucial



to make sure that the cultural, religious and historical background of the participants and their communities are respected. For example, events should never be scheduled on holidays that might be important for some of the participants or, in case the community is multilingual, organiser should check if anyone in the group would need translation.

However, it is important to stress that being culturally and religion sensitive does not mean suppressing the expression of other groups of, for example, different genders. On the contrary, inclusion and respect are a two-way principle.

Young people should have a chance to participate in the decision-making processes in which their future is

discussed or anything related to it, but they should be able to participate according to their own abilities. Facilitators need to ensure that everyone's contribution is equally important and taken with respect. Participation should not have age limits.

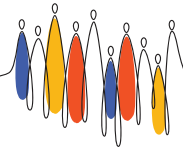
Young people from multicultural backgrounds are in a threat of facing discrimination, and therefore their participation should be secured with appropriate means - such as ensuring that they take the floor equally as representatives of institutions and that they are not patronised by any other participant of the event, no matter of the position.

Annex 4: Safe space for everyone

Safe space is defined as 'a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment or any other emotional or physical harm'.

Here are some tips on how to create a safe space environment. Organisers might not always be in a position to follow each of the recommendations, but should make sure to be mindful of them:

1. Choose and prepare the space carefully
In case of a face-to-face event, it should be set in an inspiring natural environment which helps people to relax and connect with themselves and others.
In case of the online space, organiser should make sure that participants are registered, there is no spam-bombing of the event which can be prevented by setting a password and that the recording is used only for the purposes of reporting. In case organiser wants to publish the recording or publish photos it should be ensured that participants fill in the consent form (examples in Annex 1).
2. Tune the welcome and hospitality to the individual. Make sure the participants feel welcome and at home which will allow them to concentrate on the topics discussed.
3. Make sure that the group is inclusive and diverse in terms of gender, age, race, religion, political views and whatever else is important for the people in the room, so that a wide range of perceptions can be shared and acknowledged.
4. Make sure that ground rules or guidelines that are owned by the group are set. It can be useful to keep the following in mind: mutual interactions and communication, how the information is shared outside the group (common understanding of confidentiality) and the rules for decision-making. Specific agreements should be set for online events such as: raising hand to speak, microphone is off when not speaking, camera is on.
5. Make sure there is enough time for the dialogue activity or event. Time is needed for human relations to unfold and trust to be built.

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6. Bring conversations onto the personal level to avoid generalisations, allow for empathy and build awareness of human interconnectedness. By focusing on the relational level, trust can be built which can later help to reach breakthroughs on the issues level.
 7. Create space to acknowledge history and accept responsibility for the future so that participants do not get stuck in old paradigms and can move forward. It is important to give space to what participants want to say, and to paraphrase or 'translate' when participants express themselves in a way that could hurt others.
 8. Be aware of the posture and approach to facilitation. This is not about skills, methods, or personal ambition or motive, but about the capacity to be fully present and holding the space with care, in full service of the participants and the dialogue.

Accessibility of tools

When working with different target groups it is essential to choose tools that are accessible to everyone attending, especially in the case of online context. Various useful tools can be found in the section Methods and Tools as well as in the Annex section.

Interactive methods

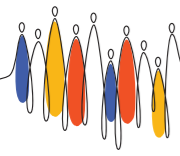
Interactive methods are very important when working with participants of different backgrounds. Examples of different methods that can be used to ensure interaction are described under the Methodology part.

Annex 5: Outline of the sessions for different phases

1. Kick-Off

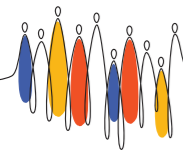
Developing Policy Recommendation/s and Action Plan

Time	Session Title	Description	Activities
30 mins	Introduction	Introduction of the event and logistics	Aims and objectives of the Youth Policy Lab, Working Agenda, Working Rules, introduction of participants
75 mins	Setting the Challenge	Explore challenges that youth faces and define challenges that Youth Policy Lab will work on	Participants write down up to 4 challenges that young people face (with focus on the policy issue / topic), and that they would like to address through Youth Policy Lab. Everyone presents the challenges and discusses them with the group. Participants prioritise the challenges by voting on most important and those highest on the list will be the focus of the Youth Policy Lab.
90 mins	Understanding the Policy Landscape	Capture the groups' understanding of policy landscape of identified challenge and clarify the challenges	The Youth Policy Lab discusses the policy landscape and prepares their findings on the topic. This activity should be assisted by a facilitator and an expert who should provide the following information 1. Data & evidence: What do the data and wider evidence tell us about the issue? What is the most important/ interesting/surprising point? Where are the evidence gaps?



			<p>2. Beneficiaries/stakeholders: Who are the beneficiaries, i.e. the people targeted with the policy (rural youth, minority youth groups etc.)? Who are the other key stakeholders involved?</p> <p>3. Other policy: What are the other policies/pieces of work in this area/aimed at addressing the same issue?</p>
90 mins	Understand the participant	Build empathy with young people, understand multiple and diverse needs of diverse young people, provide evidence and research on young people	Have researchers and youth experts present on the topic and youth. Provide opportunity to young people to present their needs and viewpoint. Participants individually write down highlights from meeting young people and experts. They share these with the group.
90 mins	Develop Policy Recommendation	Develop ideas and policy recommendations for the identified challenges, develop policy recommendations which addresses young people's realities and needs	Each participant writes down up to 4 ideas on how best to address the challenge and needs of young people. Discuss these ideas with the group. The group develops key policy recommendations.
90 mins	Action Planning	Map out milestones of the next steps on how to move forward the policy recommendation Complete Action Plan Template	Participants should discuss briefly: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the immediate next steps, i.e. what is needed to be done in the next 24-72 hours? 2. What immediate further work can be done to better understand the problem and/or needs?

		<p>3. Do the policy recommendations require clarifications?</p> <p>Once the first questions are answered, the group spends next 15 minutes to map out activities which are beyond 72 hours.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1. What are the timescales and key milestones for this project? 1. 2. What success would look like? 1. 3. What activities need to be done? 1. 4. What data or insights need to be gathered? <p>Once the team has answered all the questions, they can start filling out the template for the Action Plan</p>
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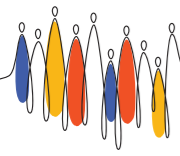


2. Template for Action Plan

ACTION PLAN					
GOAL					
Benchmark for success					
Describe how young people are engaged					
Monitoring and evaluation plan					
Tasks	Who is responsible	Due date	Resources required	Potential risks and strategies, how to navigate them	Expected outcomes

3. Youth Policy Lab may use this phase to plan for consultations with young people:

Time	Session Title	Description	Activities
90 mins	Introduction	Introduction to economy specific consultations with young people	<p>Provide information on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is an economy specific consultative process and why it is important? 2) What are tools and methods to carry out a consultative process with young people online? 3) Timeframe 4) Example/ Best Practice <p>Allow time of 10-15 min for Q&A and clarification</p> <p>Ask participants to discuss how they would like to see the national consultative process with young people for their policy recommendations.</p> <p>Some guiding questions for discussion (40min)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is the target group for consultation? 2) What methods will be used for consultation? 3) What will young people be consulted for? 4) How will young people participate? 5) What main stakeholders will be consulted? <p>Ask a note-taker to capture the main points of discussion into a google document.</p>
90 mins	Develop economy specific Consultation Plan	Design the process for economy specific consultations	<p>Participants will continue to discuss the process of economy specific Consultation Process (45min).</p> <p>At the end of the session they will have to answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the main aims and expected outcomes of the consultative process?



2. What methods will be used to consult young people?
3. What is the timeframe?
4. Which stakeholders will be consulted and how?
5. What are the consultations about?

Group will present their initial plans for economy specific Consultative Process (40min)
 Participants will share their thoughts and provide feedback to each other:

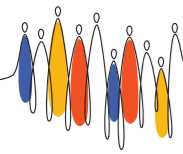
1. What they like about the plan
2. What they can recommend to improve the plans

Note-taker captures feedback.

90 mins	Plan Activities	Plan Concrete Activities for economy specific Consultative Process with Young People	<p>Participants discuss the feedback and develop a concrete Action Plan for Consultative Process which will include information such as: (60min)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Description of Methodology 2. Timeframe 3. How young people will be included, expected number of young people to be consulted 4. How information will be gathered and processed and the findings analysed 5. Resources needed 6. Risk assessment 7. Description of activities step-by-step <p>Share out the Action Plans</p>
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4. Mid-Term Review

Time	Session Title	Description	Activities
75 mins	Best Practices	Share best practices which could be replicated or reinforced	<p>Present up to 4 best practices that the group has identified.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Short overview of the best practice. 2. What needs and challenges of young people did this best practice address/tackle? 3. How young people were engaged? 4. How it can be applied in the current national environment? <p>Individual reflection, which best practice would be applied in the economy context and why, what modifications are needed?</p>
75 mins	Review the Action Plan	Review the Action Plan and incorporate comments and best practices.	Evaluate activities and actions undertaken. Include feedback and key findings in the Action Plan. Review and rework Action Plan to incorporate at least one best practice.
90 mins	Finalise the Review of the Action Plan	Finalise the Action Plan Review	Group continues work in assessing implementation of activities, feasibility of activities, and overall action plan.
90 mins	Advocacy Plan for Institutional Support	Update strategy for policy adoption and implementation and set success benchmarks or policy implementation	<p>Participants brainstorm on key considerations regarding policy adoption and implementation.</p> <p>The group develops a strategy for policy adoption with concrete examples.</p> <p>Each participant writes down 2-3 indicators that policy implementation is successful. Participants review the answers and select few to be used as indicators.</p>



Annex 6: Online environment, methods and tools

Online group interactions do not always “happen” spontaneously. Online facilitators’ most important skills include them being a skilled group facilitator and genuine, authentic communicator.

Facilitators in offline situations have certain established roles providing leadership, focus, stimulation for group interaction, support, team building, refereeing, dealing with problems, timekeeping, responding to feedback and group regulation. These may also be needed online, but there are also differences in text-based and synchronous web interactions.

There are number of roles during online events:

- Pedagogical Role - Create discussions that focus energy on critical concepts, principles, and skills.
- Social Role - Foster a friendly, social environment to promote learning and sharing.
- Managerial Role - Clarify discussion objectives, timelines, and procedural rules.
- Technical Role - Make participants comfortable with the learning management system, tools, and software.

In general, there are four pillars of online facilitation:

1. **Understanding of group facilitation as it occurs face-to-face and online.** This includes understanding issues around group size, differentiating

convergent and divergent processes and having a range of facilitation methods to choose from.

2. **Knowledgeable about design.** Ideally, facilitators are involved in the conceptualisation, design and implementation of the online space to ensure that participants’ needs are accounted for. They participate in pre-assessment and planning.
3. **Grounded in the group’s purpose with full understanding.** Facilitators understand the “why and what for” of an online group and can convey it clearly to participants.
4. **Prepared with tools and technical practices.** Facilitators have enough knowledge and comfort with technology to use it, to diagnose problems others might have in using the tools and an ability to coach others to use the tools.

Online facilitators might find this checklist a useful starting point.

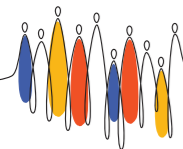
- Check that all resources, activities and links work and are accessible by participants.
- Provide contact details for technical support and queries.
- Make everyone feel welcome and heard; setting the initial mood or climate of the environment (choosing

- the right platform for the event can impact this as well).
- Establish clear goals and expectations at the outset by providing, for example, learning outcomes for each topic/week, a schedule of activity deadlines, timetable of facilitators’ availability.
- Develop the widest possible range of learning resources and activities online that address a variety of learning styles.
- Provide behind-the-scenes support, for example, via email, instant chat services or other platforms.
- Foster communication between participants, encourage reflection.
- Build motivation into online activities.
- Keep discussions live, revive activity when postings are flagging.

Some aspects to keep in mind while facilitating the online event:

- Limit sessions to 90 minutes at most.
- Break up the agenda into digestible sections, about 10 to 15 minutes each that focus on one concept or topic at a time. It helps retain concentration of the audience/participants. In addition, in between sessions it gives time for a Q&A session or other interaction, giving the participants more opportunities to discuss the content or otherwise participate.

- Keep information “push” to a minimum, and look for opportunities for sharing and interaction.
- Plan sessions in details and devote enough time for planning - preparation for an online event last longer than face-to-face, because everything needs to be thought through with prepared plan A and plan B (if something is not working because time is limited).
- With online sessions, more slides are probably required than in workshops where participants can rely on facilitators’ body language and activity to stay engaged - therefore spend several minutes per slide. It is recommended to have one new slide every two-three minutes for live sessions.
- In live sessions, participants need a visual cue that the slide has changed so that they know there’s something new to pay attention to. Avoid having every slide look the same. Use images effectively to support the text. A splash of colour can brighten the slides. Most importantly, use less text. Set a limit to only one concept or point per slide.
- Learn the technology and anticipate any difficulties with the online software used, such as Zoom, Skype, BlueJeans, Webex or other. Have the guidance and support at hand in preparation for the session (if possible, have a technical team to deal with the technical difficulties during the session while facilitators’ focus on the content).



Online working space technicalities to take into consideration:

- Join from a laptop or desktop computer and not from phone or tablet (if possible)
- Have the camera on during the online sessions for both facilitators and participants
- Mute the microphone when not speaking to avoid background noise
- Download and/or update to the latest versions of the platforms used (sometimes it could be beneficial to share the platforms beforehand with the participants so they could open/install them)
- Use headset or headphones (and not use audio from computer or loudspeakers) to avoid audio feedback loops
- Make sure they are undisturbed for the time of the event, and prepare the space to feel comfortable (for example, prepare pen and paper for notes, snacks and drinks, etc.)
- Turn off all other internet consuming apps and notifications to have full bandwidth
- Share instructions to the participants for the platforms planned to be used, so they know how to use them and which functions exist
- Change between “gallery view” and “speaker view” and see what feels more comfortable
- Use the “reactions” function like “applause” or “wave” to foster some interaction with the speakers and participants

- Be mindful of time as online formats require more focus and concentration from participants and people get tired faster

Online tools¹³

Many organisations, institutions and facilitators are still quite sceptical about the possible success of the online encounters, because “nothing can replace face-to-face interaction”. However, COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that it is absolutely possible but, in order to make the event a success, organisers need to: 1) understand what is the purpose of the event in order to be able to select the most appropriate tools and 2) adapt the programme to the online context.

Before preparing the online programme, organisers need to think about the following:

People learn in the same way online and offline. If possible, find ways to prepare the learning with some tasks that can be done offline, or in cooperation between participants beforehand. The most important is to ensure that facilitators are aware of their starting points and learning needs.

Be aware of the level of digital literacy of the participants. If and where possible, do the assessment of the participants’ digital literacy level to understand if they would need any support but without making them feel less valued. If their digital literacy is low, anticipate how can they be supported individually to ensure that their voice is heard and input properly harvested.

Connectivity and technical issues. Be aware that not

all participants have access to strong internet connection or have devices to which they can download different tools. Try to select tools which can be accessed through a browser and do not require a lot of data. Before choosing a tool to use, understand what is it needed for. Here are some examples:

Dividing participants into groups to engage in collaboration:

Participants split into groups based on interest areas:

1) Backchannel chat; 2) Discord

- Participants create peer learning circle groups to discuss resources about the skill they are working to improve:

1) Slack; 2) Teams; 3) WhatsApp

- Participants create breakout groups during a real-time webinar to have a targeted conversation:
 - 1) Zoom (real-time); 2) Signal

Polling or surveying people:

Facilitator polls participants to pick a peer discussion topic.

1) AnswerGarden; 2) DirectPoll; 3) Mentimeter; 4) Poll Everywhere

- Facilitator uses the tool to share a presentation during which participants are polled. Then they see the results:

1) Slido; 2) Kobotoolbox

Facilitating game-based quizzes:

Participants take quizzes to demonstrate their understanding of the content and facilitator can view a spreadsheet to see how individual participants responded

1) Kahoot

Communicating to others in audio or video:

A participant or moderator shares a presentation with others in real-time.

GoToMeeting; 2) Freeconference.com; 3) Slack; 4) Teams; 6) WhatsApp; 6) Zoom; 7) Jitsi; 8) Google hangouts

Sharing an interactive presentation:

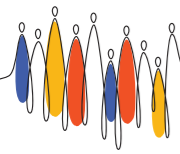
A facilitator prepares and shares an interactive presentation where participants can provide input and otherwise participate - respond to open-ended questions, take part in games, contribute to a document, participate in a discussion:

1) Nearpod; 2) PlayPosit

Drawing and conceptualising things:

A group of participants brainstorms ideas to solve a problem. A facilitator creates an online “whiteboard” for participants to collaborate on.

¹³ Adapted from <https://www.irex.org/sites/default/files/node/resource/online-collaboration-guide-for-facilitators-2.pdf>



Participant brainstorm ideas for:

1. a collaborative exercise during
2. a session or meeting (stakeholder mapping or mapping a business idea on a business model canvas.)

1) Canvanizer; 2) Draw.io; 3) Google Slides; 4) Miro;
5) Mural; 6) Sketchboard.io;
7) Teams Whiteboard tool; 8) Twiddla; 9) google jam-board

Brainstorming:

1) Mind mapping; 2) Be- nnovative

The role of the facilitator

Facilitation is about...

process rather than task. The process does not necessarily bring about resolution or have an end product. The output is what the group agrees it must achieve:

- helping the group move forward by encouraging cooperation
- exploring what lies behind the stance and the territory between people
- encouraging disclosure and participation
- exploring emotion as it arises
- encouraging commitment, not just compliance

- developing the group's trust. A facilitator is trusted because of the environment they create not because they have authority
- creating an inclusive atmosphere
- focusing on the practical rather than the theoretical
- having no emotional commitment to the group or outcome. This has potential implications for internal facilitators.
- being dispensable – a facilitator should encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own learning
- doing a job so well that the skills of facilitation look invisible.

Use a DIRECTIVE style when...

Working with immature groups with members that are not used to working together

Aims and objectives are unclear and will be difficult to clarify

There are very tight time constraints

The office culture or workshop atmosphere is one of suspicion and insecurity

The policy towards information is one of limited access and concealment

Facilitation skills require more development or experience

Use a FACILITATIVE style when...

Working with mature groups with members that are used to working together in a facilitative way

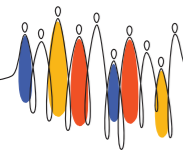
Aims and objectives are crystal clear or can be easily clarified

Sufficient time is available or can be made available to meet the aims and objectives

The office culture and/or workshop atmosphere is one of openness and trust

The policy towards information is one of accessibility and transparency

Facilitator is confident about their facilitation skills



Annex 7: Some core practices

Regardless of the type of process being facilitated, all facilitators need to constantly use some core practices to be effective:

Stay neutral on content, focus on the **process**, and avoid the temptation to offer opinions about the topic under discussion. Use questions and suggestions to offer ideas that spring to mind, but do not impose opinions on the group.

Listen actively and use attentive body language. Use eye contact to let people know they can speak next, and to prompt the quiet ones in the crowd to participate.

Ask questions. This is the most important skill a facilitator possess. Questions test assumptions, invite participation, gather information, and probe for hidden points. Effective questioning allows the facilitator to delve past the symptoms to get at root causes.

Paraphrase to clarify. This involves repeating what people say to make sure they know they are being heard, to let others hear their points a second time, and to clarify key ideas. For example, “Are you saying . . .?” “.... Is that an accurate summary?”

Synthesise ideas, do not just record individuals’ contributions. Instead, get people to comment and build on each other’s thoughts to ensure that the ideas recorded on the flip chart represent collective thinking. This builds consensus and commitment. For example, “Alice, what would you add to Jeff’s comments?”

Stay on track by setting time guidelines for each discussion. Appoint a time keeper inside the group to use a timer and call out milestones. Point out the digression if discussion has veered off topic. The group can then decide whether to pursue the side-track, or stop their current discussion and get back to the agenda. For example, “We are now discussing something that is not on the agenda. What do you want to do?” “Park” all off-topic comments and suggestions on a separate “Parking lot” sheet posted on a nearby wall and remember to address them later.

Give and receive feedback. Periodically “hold up a mirror” to help the group “see” itself so it can make changes. For example, “Only two people are engaged in this discussion, while three others are looking at the workbook. What does this tell us we need to do?” Also ask for and accept feedback about the facilitation, “Are we making progress? How’s the pace? What can I do to be more effective?”

Test assumptions. Bring the assumptions people are operating under out into the open and clarify them, so that they are clearly understood by everyone. This may be necessary before a group can explore new ground. For example, “John, on what basis are you making the comment that ‘Bob’s idea is too narrow in focus’?”

Record accurately emerging ideas and final decisions. Summarise on a flipchart so everyone can see the notes. Notes should be clear and concise. They must always reflect what the group actually said, rather than the interpretation of what they said.

Summarise clearly. Listens attentively to everything that is said, and then offer concise and timely summaries. Summarise when discussion requires revival, or to end a discussion when things seem to be wrapping up.

Annex 8: Consent form

To avoid uncomfortable situations or conflicts over the published images of participants of the events, always make sure to do one of the following:

1. Announce that photos and videos will be taken and that participants accept to have their images captured by registering for the event:

Photographers will take pictures and videos of the event which will be downloadable from the (add the name of your institution/organisation) website, free

of charge and copyright. We therefore need to collect consent of prospective participants in that regard. By agreeing with this form you unambiguously authorise the (add the name of your institution/organisation) to make free use of documents portraying your image, with a view to their conservation and distribution for any publicity that the (add the name of your institution/organisation) deems appropriate, without any limitation in space or time.

2. Have participants sign the consent form:

PHOTO/VIDEO RELEASE FORM

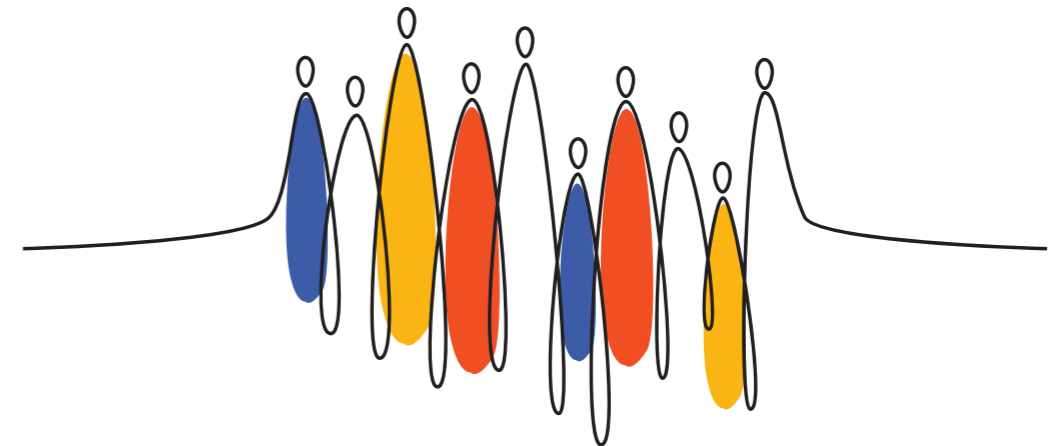
I hereby give permission for my images captured during (add name of the event or project) activities in (add place) through video, photo and digital camera, to be used solely for the purposes and dissemination activities of (add the name of your institution/organisation) and the partner organisations of the (add name of the process/project/event).

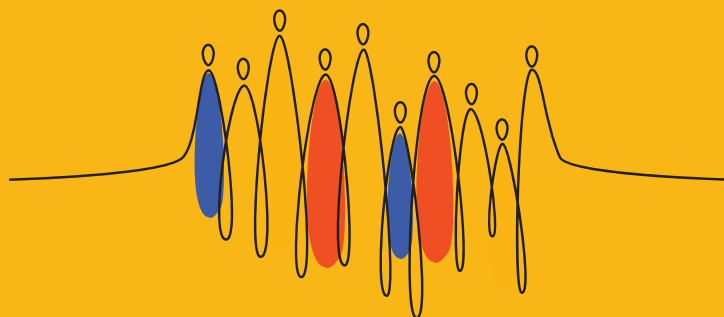
Name/Surname:

Date:

City, Economy:

Signature:





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