

LEVEL OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL CAPITAL UNDERSTANDING IN THE YOUTH SECTOR



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“Level of civic engagement and social capital understanding in the youth sector”

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"No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts off from its youth severs its lifeline."

Kofi Annan

*Ghanian Diplomat, 7th UN Secretary-General
2001 Nobel Peace Prize Winner*

INTRODUCTION

During the past few years, the concept of youth citizenship and civic engagement has acquired attention in different fields, starting from academic research and ending with proper policy formation activities. Civic engagement usually refers to the participative activities of citizens in the various organisations and other activities in community in order to improve conditions for others or to help shape the community's future. Exercising active citizenship is one of the most important activities for a healthy transition to adulthood according to The World Bank research (2007). Adler and Goggin (2005) state that the **term "civic engagement" often refers to the younger age group**. The level of civic engagement is sometimes used to assess how healthy a democracy is. According to some political scientists, the higher the number of citizens who participate and the more varied their backgrounds, the greater the likelihood that the principle of equality—essential in a democracy—will be respected (Verba 1996). Partly interest in the concept has been driven also by concern regarding a perceived decline in levels of civic and political engagement among young people throughout the western world (Brady et al. 2012).

In 2015, the Social Innovation Centre was granted by "Europe for citizens" financed program a **project called "Social capital development as a tool of youth civic participation in Eastern Europe countries" to roll out a youth civic activism**. In several countries, strategic and long term cooperation has been established with leading youth organisations – for instance in Latvia with Latvian Youth Council. The project, entitled various activities, works directly with young people who have a passion for social



change in order to develop the knowledge, skills and networks they need to make a difference. Also it educates and supports youth leaders and youth workers to be active participants of promotion of civic engagement in their respective region or organisation. The main focus of the project is to provide training, development and networking opportunities to a group of young people from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, to support them in developing and implementing ideas for social change, and helping them to be aware of the necessity to be active society members and understand social capital development better. **The objective is to generate learning and experience that will guide the future improvement and promote positive youth development.**

The engagement and participation of youth is essential to achieving the sustainable development of any society. However, often the opportunities for youth to engage politically, economically and socially are low or non-existent, especially in rural areas. It has to be admitted that the level of civic engagement is directly connected with overall youth policy in any country or region. "The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: AGENDA 2020" published in 2008 put a very clear development path for Europe which should transfer into youth policy that aims to support young people's participation as a citizen and their - often complex – transition to autonomy.

What is more important, the European Commission also gives guidance on how to reach this ambitious aim. The core insight suggests principles for youth policy formulation:

1. **Youth policies are cross-sectoral** and cover domains such as access to education and the labour market, welfare and social and economic rights, culture and cultural production, lifelong learning and non-formal education, housing, citizenship, leisure time, criminal justice, health, sexuality, lifestyle and reproduction, mobility, military service and conscientious objection, and many more;

2. The vertical (age) and horizontal (socio-economic possibility and lifestyle) heterogeneity of young people implies that **youth policies should be evidence-based**. In the youth sector this has been expressed as a 'magic triangle' linking the research networks with relevant public authorities and civil society actors representing young people and youth policy users and respondents;

3. **Youth policy respects** the agency of young people while recognising the specific challenges and obstacles they face in according to their position and possibilities.

It is very much dependent on the country level, how much time, efforts and finance has been invested in the development of proper youth policy of the country. While there is a greater involvement of youth in national youth councils and the preparation of national policies and programmes, in many countries, youth participation structures are heavily challenged, both in terms of inclusiveness and in terms of efficiency. However, besides different country approach, it has to be taken into account that European countries were economically and politically separated and still division of Eastern and Western Europe exists. Moreover, differences in levels of expected civic participation related not only with the countries experience with democracy, but also with their cultural similarities and common history. Processes of globalisation and the formation of the European Union have contributed to blurring the borders, since information and experience exchange was possible between Eastern and Western countries. Previous studies suggest that the social transformations have differently affected civic participation of youths (Mirazchiyski et al., 2014). Despite this trend, differences in civic engagement and participation still exist between the two sets of countries. In Western European countries highly institutionalised forms of civil society are found, while in Southern and Eastern Europe it is more typical to find the less formalized forms of village community, extended clans or other types of social networks (Immerfall, Priller, & Delhey, 2010). Other study (Coffé & van der Lippe, 2009) have also shown that former East Bloc countries have lower levels of participation.

In light of the high expectations regarding youth activism and civic engagement, it's important to define the biggest challenge standing in front of sector and understand what kind of relevant tools can be used to overcome those barriers. The level of civic engagement is very much affected by following challenges: inequality; societal attitudes towards young people; normative assumptions underpinning discourses of civic engagement; and adult control of civic engagement activity (Brady et al. 2012).



There is no doubt that the development of youth policy and youth civic engagement is being continued by the qualitative cooperation with local and national governments and other public institutions, promotion of the necessity of civic education in formal and non-formal ways, exchanging experiences and supporting activities by financial resources of the European Union.

How to stimulate the active civic engagement of youth? What really motivates youth to be active and engaged? How to convince decision makers that it's worth the support and continued development of civic education of youth since very early age?

Those questions and thoughts summarised by partners of the project "Social capital development as a tool of youth civic participation in Eastern Europe countries" and implemented with the support of the "Europe for citizens" and co-financed by the European Union. The intention is to strengthen the regional network and cooperation between organisations that supports civic engagement of youth in Eastern Europe countries.

Results of this research are intended for policymakers to:

- **Establish an aspiration that directs policy, budgeting and oversight on the desired result for youth and particularly their civic engagement.**
- **Use results to drive decisions about policies, programs, practices and invest in development of proper support.**
- **Measure status and assure accountability by using research data.**
- **Improve cost-effectiveness, since smart policies that make a difference are essential to the nation's long-term economic and civic health.**

I. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

1. OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES OF RESEARCH

The “Social capital development as a tool of youth civic participation in Eastern Europe countries” project team undertook to provide an overview of the relevant and up to date situation in the field of youth civic engagement in Latvia, Estonia, Romania, Lithuania and Poland. In exploring the level of civic engagement, this study concentrates on following objectives:

Objective 1: *get overall country review about youth policy and civic engagement of youth.*

Objective 2: *to survey participants, aged 13-30 to understand patterns of civic behaviour and alternative forms of youth civic engagement.*

Objective 3: *to survey participants, aged 13-30 to explore and gain an understanding of participants' understanding about social capital.*

The research was as a starting point of preparing the recommendations for the long term planning at national and regional level with the main subject **of youth civic engagement**, in the project partner countries: Estonia, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland.

Due to the fact that among project partner countries there is no unification in terms of civic engagement or even its definition during the research we applied the definition of Starosta (2010), whose definition is broader and discusses behaviour as indicator for the civic engagement. He focuses on the manifestations of civic behaviours and states that civic participation refers to activities in the local community, politics or general society within the local country context and includes formal and informal group or organisation membership, individual actions, voluntary activities, political activities aimed to bring improvement to the local, societal or country-wide settings.

- **In terms of civic engagement research assesses level of civic engagement, motivation and influence factors to be active. Another aim of civic engagement was to assess also how much initiative and leadership youth has towards civic engagement and analyse image of civic engagement and self-assessment towards involvement.**
- **In terms of social capital focus was on mapping and assessing general level of perception of trust, level of honesty, sense of community and knowledge of social capital.**

2. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES OF THE RESEARCH

The research was based on two main research methods and use of secondary and primary data. Secondary data has been used in **content analysis** to analyse country specific situation, while **online questionnaire** among target group has been used to collect primary data.

Content analysis: The content analysis was based on available national and local documents, legislations, and reports about the condition of youth policy and relevant civic engagement activities in particular countries. Content analysis is a commonly used qualitative research method that can be effectively employed to analyse a body of text. Through content analysis, elements of a body of text are assessed empirically to establish and document specific aspects of their characteristics and the relations among them.

Elements of content analysis can include words, idioms, sentences, paragraphs, articles, or entire papers and reports. Based on a specific sequence of steps, content analysis allows the researcher meaningfully interpret the content presented to make inferences about the patterns of the content within specific elements of a given text. The experiences of the project partners as well as involvement of volunteers and relevant stakeholders has been accomplished to gather wide scope of civic youth related statistical and qualitative data.

The gained results were then filtered according to the relevance of the given title or abstract and whether or not the subjects of articles found in the search were related to the nature of the study. We also followed up on references cited within the various documents.

Specifically, we sought to identify case studies and analyses of organisations that seek to encourage youth civic engagement.

In majority of cases, data and information from not earlier as of year 2010 has been used. The role of content analysis is to identify general trends in country within youth policy, identifies good examples of development of civic engagement. At the same time, it also points out gaps in the legal regulation, challenges standing in front of youth civic engagement in terms of education and relevant possibilities of choices.

Online questionnaire: Largely because of the difficulty in reaching young people through traditional telephone techniques, a decision was made to rely on the Internet as the preferred method of questionnaire administration.

The questionnaire is divided into three thematic sets. First set of questions is related to the characteristics of sample set and consists of 6 questions.

The second part of the questionnaire researches the level of civic engagement consists of 10 questions. The last part examines what is the level of understanding about social capital also consists of 10 questions. The foundation of the part of civic engagement of questionnaire was the questionnaire previously developed by the staff of Tisch College and the Office of Institutional Research and Evaluation at Tufts University to measure civic engagement outcomes among Tufts undergraduate students and adapted questions from the Civic Measurement Models: Tapping Adolescents' Civic Engagement (Flanagan C. et al., 2007). Project team has modified these

questions where needed so that they would be applicable to a national sample, and added selected questions to obtain additional information. The foundation of the part of social capital is based on European Social Survey (2010) and adapted Social Capital Quiz questions.

Once a draft of the questionnaire was completed, it was tested during a special workshop (June, 2015) with over 25 youth and youth leaders from Latvia, Romania, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland. As soon as it was accomplished, the next stage of adoption of the online version was started. During the summer period (2015), the best chosen option was selected on typeform.com. This specific online questionnaire tool was chosen due to its attractive design, an important element for the youth target group. After the online version was completed it was tested with 3-5 representatives of the target group in each country. Feedback was collected and proper adjustments were made, to make sure that the questions appeared in the designated order, that there were no clerical



errors, and that the logic and flow of the questionnaire worked properly under all branching conditions. However, one technicality was missed, since in question 2 (Q2), there is the theoretical option to jump to question 7 (Q7), but in reality this option was blocked. The technical issue was found only at the very end of the survey (November 2015). The distribution of the questionnaire began in September 2015 and lasted till mid December 2015.

The survey was in English, assuming that youth nowadays have a sufficient level of English knowledge. The questionnaire was posted on partners' web pages, Facebook, and Twitter as well as direct contacts which were established with youth non-governmental organisations, universities, schools and other institutions involved in the work with youth. A plain text version of the final questionnaire is found in the Appendix and questionnaire can be found at: <https://renatelukjanska.typeform.com/to/TaEgSw>.

II. ANALYSIS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN FIVE CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

ESTONIA

National youth policy

Youth policy forms a part of the broader youth affairs. The main activity areas of youth policy include youth work, social, employment, health, cultural, family and crime prevention policy. In addition to the education, research and language policy, the area of administration of the Ministry of Education and Research also contains the development of youth policy.

The objective of the Youth Work Strategy 2006-2013 was to develop and implement coordinated and purposeful actions following the actual needs and challenges of young people in different spheres of life, i.e. the integrated youth policy.

The development of the integrated youth policy was supported through youth work until 2011, as no separate activities were foreseen in the implementation plans for integrated youth policy.

Youth Field Development Plan for 2014-2020: On 1 January 2013, Estonia had 288,492 young people aged 7–26, which forms 22.4% of the Estonian population. As in many other European countries, the proportion of young people among population is decreasing. According to the forecast of the Statistics Estonia, the proportion of youth among total population continues to decrease until 2022 when it will gradually start to increase again. The growth trend prevails until 2039 and then the share of youth among the total population will start decreasing again. Negative trends, such as the growing emigration of youth, high unemployment rate of youth aged 15–19, the number of young people not studying or working, high relative poverty rate, problematic health behaviour, incl. in particular the risk behaviour of young men, require special attention. Attention must be paid to the causes of such trends, prevention of potential consequences and reduction in undesirable influence. It is also necessary to promote the continuation of positive trends.

Principles: The following principles of the previous strategy serve as a basis upon implementation of the Youth Field Development Plan for 2014-2020: addressing youth as a whole. In order to implement really efficient activities to achieve any objective or solve any problem concerning young people, it is necessary to observe young people's living in its entity as well as factors affecting it and not to stay within the limits of an area of administration of the institutions or fields; involvement of youth as means to ensure good quality and impact of the planned measures; achievement of the common impact or the pursuit to the greater common impact through the use of different fields and knowledge.

Main principles of the measures of the development plan: the target group consisting of youth is not homogeneous. In developing and implementing any measures and activities, the actual conditions and needs of specific group of young people must be followed and specialties arising from the gender, nationality, culture, state of health, place of residence, socio-economic situation, etc., must be taken into account. Youth work supports the health as well as values and attitudes promoting the healthy lifestyle of youth through all the measures. This presumes the continuous development of competencies and tools of people working in the field of youth and relies on a knowledge-based approach by target groups, training courses, tools and interventions.

Youth affairs also contribute to the integration of society, including the promotion of equality and prevention of discrimination as well as care for the surrounding environment. Upon developing and implementing measures of youth policy and youth work, it is important to assist youth in obtaining self-confidence and ability to cope with crucial spheres of life, such as studies, labour market, family relations, etc.

The difficulties of youth must be early noticed and, if necessary, assistance must be provided to find the required professional support. Youth affairs form a part of the functioning cooperation between different areas related to the life of youth. If necessary, systemic cooperation must be initiated and the operation thereof must be supported.

Objectives: Within 2014-2020 youth affairs focus on objectives and measures that help to achieve a positive change in the most important challenges faced by youth and society. The general objective of the development plan is extensive possibilities of youth for development and self-realisation that supports the formation of a coherent and creative society.

The development plan does not describe the entire area of youth affairs (i.e. youth policy and youth work) and does not reflect upon measures of other youth-related spheres of life and strategies targeted at youth, but have close connections with them. The measures and activities of youth affairs are designed to achieve the goals and objectives, such as the following: young people have more choices to open their creative and development potential; youth has a lower risk to be marginalised; the participation of young people in decision-making processes is more supported; youth affairs function more efficiently. The achievement of the general objective is measured by indicators of the Estonia 2020 competitiveness strategy: the share of youth aged 18–24 who have a basic education or an even lower level of education and, who do not continue their studies; unemployment rate of youth in the age group of 15–24.

Implementation and cost of the development plan: The development plan will be carried out on the basis of the implementation plans. The draft of the first implementation plan is prepared for 2014–2017. In addition to the Ministry of Education and Research, other ministries and institutions and associations of youth affairs, local authorities and county governments will take part in the implementation of the development plan in terms of their area of responsibility in the activities set out in the implementation plan of the development plan.

The Estonian Youth Work Centre and Estonian National Agency for the Erasmus+ Programme of the Archimedes Foundation play a crucial role upon implementing the plan within the area of administration of the Ministry of Education and Research.

The total cost of the development plan is EUR 90 million. EUR 47 million of this amount is formed of external support where the share of Erasmus+: the EU programme for education, youth and sport constitutes EUR 24 million, structural funds of the European Union EUR 19 million and the Norway and EEA grant EUR 4 million.

International cooperation: The youth policies of the European Union, as well as of the Council of Europe, also have a significant role in devising and implementing youth policy in Estonia. Estonia has bilateral cooperation agreements on youth affairs with the Flemish Community in Belgium and with Finland. Both agreements are primarily targeted at exchange of experience between youth workers and youth work organisations. In addition to Estonia, the Latvian and Lithuanian partners of youth affairs also participate in the cooperation with the Flemish Region. Estonia has a separate cooperation programme with Moldova with the aim of analysing the

developments of youth policy and youth work in both countries. Possibilities for cooperation between parties to youth affairs have also been highlighted in several international cooperation agreements of the area of education. More at: (<https://www.hm.ee/en/activities/youth/youth-policy>, 2016).

Level of civic education

The Estonian civic education can be characterized as a typical authoritarian system. Somebody has the authority to set the goals (syllabus), somebody else has the authority to outline a collection of texts, somebody else to deliver the texts to students, and yet somebody else to measure the percentage of how much students have memorised these texts. Formally, everybody is invited to participate in curriculum development and make their proposals. The development does not rely on scientific principles; it relies on political and administrative models of decision making. This enables political manipulations. Some argue that curriculum development is impossible in principle and nobody is interested in it in Estonia. The majority of teachers consider education as the delivery of knowledge (meaning - texts)(Haav 2008). They are prepared neither for the development of students' conceptual thinking, nor their social and emotional skills. The national examination centre relies on these teachers and the dominant school practice. They are resistant to contemporary social and educational theories. The Centre actually has the most important role in the development of civic education. They design, analyse and evaluate the examinations. They mainly assess the percentage of acquisition of texts by students. To some extent, they also evaluate students' common argumentation skills. None of these authorities is interested in serious changes, in introduction of a deliberative civic education. It should be stressed that all these authorities are inside the education system. It may be concluded that a deliberative civic education is not possible without radical change in the authoritarian education system itself.



National civics in Estonia

The national examinations do not evaluate achievement of the goals of civic syllabus. They just assess the percentage of students' knowledge and skills. In the last five years, the average percentage has been between 55 and 59 (out of possible 100). They neither measure the knowledge nor understanding of some main concepts of democracy. Student also doesn't demonstrate their skills to implement the main concepts in description and analysis of their democratic practices.

It is hard to measure the knowledge and the skills of their implementation, because the official textbooks are inadequate in this sense. In the last methodical Recommendations for students (Valdmaa 2008), a lack of clear concepts is considered as a peculiarity of the subject itself. The Recommendations itself define society after the popular Estonian Encyclopaedia (vol. 10, 1998, p.634) and not after the official textbook (Olenko, 2005). Society is both a form of co-habitation

and collection of social relations and institutions (Valdmaa 2008). The civics examinations itself started in the school year 2001-2002. The examination is mandatory and mainly those intending to enter a university take this. The number of students taking this examination has increased from 995 in year 2002 to 5287 in 2007 in year. The examination is prepared by a commission, consisting usually out of 6 university teachers, 6 civic teachers and 3 administrators. During the examination, students are allowed to use only the Constitution, not the textbook or other materials.

In the last years, the examination has consisted of two parts: first, an essay (1-2 pages) enabling students to gain up to 20 points or 20 per cent of results. Usually, students could select one of the six topics. In 2006, the students could discuss problems of the Internet, privacy, fiscal policy, active citizens, globalization and social sustainability (Haav, 2008).

Civic engagement in the youth sector

Estonia stands out among 65 other member states of Open Government Partnership initiative (OGP) as a good example on how to engage the civil society in decision-making processes, according to the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Policy brief „Improving Government-Civil Society Interactions within OGP“.

Therefore Estonia adopts a following overall description of Civic engagement or civic participation as the incentive of the general public to become involved in the political process as well as the issues that affect their environment; namely, their community.

Liia Hänni, e-Democracy Expert at the e-Governance Academy noted that this rating is a testimonial to e-Governance Academy's activity in developing and leading the Estonian OGP network in the years 2012-2014.

Trust in government is essential for social cohesion and well-being. High voter turnout is a measure of citizens' participation in the political process. In the most recent elections for which data are available, voter turnout in Estonia was 64% of those registered. This figure is lower than the OECD average of 68%.

Even if the right to vote is universal in all OECD countries, not everyone exercises this right. There is little difference in the voting rates of men and women in most OECD countries.

In Estonia, however, women outvote men by an estimated 6 percentage points, at an estimated 66% compared to 60% for men. Income can also make a difference in voter turnout.

In Estonia, voter turnout for the top 20% of the population is an estimated 68%, whereas the participation rate of the bottom 20% is an estimated 56%. This 12 percentage point difference is slightly lower than the OECD average difference of 13 percentage points.

In general, women are in the minority among elected representatives and although their number has slightly increased in the last decade, it is still well below parity. In Estonia, only 21% of the seats in national parliament are held by women, less than the OECD average of 28%. Ensuring that government decision-making is not compromised by conflicts of interest is the key to maintaining trust in government.

Transparency is therefore essential to hold governments to account and to maintain confidence in public institutions.

Freedom of information laws (FOI) allows the possibility for individuals to access undisclosed information. For such policies to be successful, the public should have a clear understanding of their rights under the law, should be able to file requests with ease and should be protected against any possible retaliation. People in Estonia can file a request for information either in writing, online, by telephone or in person – thus greatly facilitating the FOI process. There are even provisions for anonymity – an important protection that few OECD countries have adopted. There is not yet, however, built-in protection from retaliation.

Boosting effective citizen involvement: Effective citizen consultation is critical to gaining society's agreement as to how Estonia's growing wealth should be used.

The Estonian Constitution, government rules and rules for drafting laws include elements of participatory democracy. Promising initiatives include the creation of www.osale.ee, where individuals and NGOs can publicly give their opinion about draft legislation. The website has over 3,000 registered users ranging from individual citizens to representatives of professional organisations and civil society organisations.

The government is also paying special attention to training civil servants on engaging civil society organisations and the public in policy making.

Courses are based on citizen engagement principles and participatory practices and include stakeholders and civil society organisations. Examples of public participation in action include Kambja, in south-eastern Estonia, where ZZ Youth, a local civil society organisation has been entrusted by the local government to plan and manage the services of the Open Youth Centre. This experience shows how partnerships with non-government actors can help respond to a community need which could not have been met by local government acting alone due to limited resources.

Results of our research show that the OGP process represents both challenges and opportunities. A structured approach to government-civil society interaction has proven to be the key to engagement. **This includes:**

1. The existence of a permanent dialogue mechanism that oversees the development and implementation of a country's National Action Plan (NAP);
2. The presence of joint civil society actors to pursue OGP related issues; and
3. The support of OGP guidelines to provide a solid framework for discussion between government and civil society.

Together, these mechanisms foster transparency, help to empower civil society, and facilitate interaction with governments. At the same time, a significant challenge turns out to be the complex and technical nature of OGP commitments. Only a narrow circle of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) is usually involved in the OGP process. Citizens and smaller NGOs far from the national capitals often lack the capacity to engage in consultations or simply remain excluded. On the government side, there is a clear need to build capacity among civil servants to carry out effective and responsive consultations (Francoli, 2015).

Main civic organisations/activities

Estonia has a very large number of registered organisations, among which the main ones are the non-profit; where its main activity is voluntary.

On 1st May 2008 there were 26,198 associations and 788 foundations in Estonia. According to the Ministry of Interior, the number of associations was 27,790 in January 2009.

The number however includes about 12,000 housing associations, which cannot be classified as organisations engaging volunteers as such as housing associations are a compulsory feature of the Estonia housing market.

Therefore, it would be more accurate to say that there are around 15,000 associations, just under 800 foundations and around 700 religious organisations that engage volunteers.

In addition, many networks and groups of individuals have formed informal organisations, which however are not official registered. This means that realistic figures could potentially be even higher, although it is important to bear in mind that the registry of non-profit associations also includes details of associations, which are no longer active (around 6,000).

As mentioned earlier, out of the 15,000 associations around 1,500 are public benefit organisations, which are entitled to special benefits as they carry work for the public good.

With regards to the distribution by sector, most voluntary associations are active in sport and leisure time sectors. Different legal types of voluntary organisations differ with respect to their primary fields of activity. Community development, health care, and social services are more important fields of activity for foundations, while sport, culture, and the representation of social (special interest) groups are typical for non-profit associations.

Activities focused on networking in the field of voluntary activities are:

The development of methods to measure the benefits of volunteering (including its economic value); the organisation of an annual day of volunteering; promoting awareness of volunteering as an important resources and ensure that it is taken into account in development/strategic plans; the formulation and dissemination the principles of a Code of Conduct for voluntary activities; and the regular collection and analysis of data. (In order to make sure that the general public recognises the importance and value of volunteering).

Annual awareness campaigns; dissemination of regular updates to actors across different sectors to notify them about voluntary activities and trends in volunteering; dissemination of good practice across all actors and sectors; and publish information material for potential participants and educational institutions (raise awareness of voluntary activities).

Enhancing legislation related to volunteering; launching programmes that support the inclusion of disadvantaged members of society in voluntary activities; providing training for voluntary supervisors and the employees of organisations that are interested in engaging volunteers; improving the exchange of information; further developing guidelines, models and recommendations for the inclusion of volunteers; ensure better cooperation between private and non-profit associations in the field of volunteer activities; providing advice and guidance to help organisations to engage volunteers; and supporting voluntary activities at regional level (creating support structures and a favourable legal environment to foster the development of voluntary activities).

This includes: regularly organised forums to discuss matters relating to volunteering; nation-wide networking between partners in the field of voluntary activities; seminars for non-profit organisations and local government to advance volunteering in the region; integrating volunteering in the educational programme by means of projects involving non-profit associations and schools; and international cooperation (improve networking in the field of voluntary activities).

In addition to the above activities (focused on voluntary activities) as the main civic activities, the following fields may be also considered with its main activities:

Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing, Apartment associations, garage associations and other management of real estate, Research and development, Education incl. Training, Health, Social care, Sports clubs and sporting activities, Activities of business, employers and professional organisations, Activities of trade unions, Activities of religious organisations, Protection and custody of civil rights, Associations and funds promoting regional/ local community life, Youth and children's associations and associations promoting welfare of the youth and children, Associations of national minorities and cultural societies, Associations engaged in leisure time, recreational and cultural, Hobby activities, and hobby clubs, Environmental and nature protection associations, Associations of disabled persons and their unions.

The main reasons of passivity among youth

The **main reasons of being passive among youth in Estonia**, according to the Liit (2007) are:

- **Insufficient support network**
- **Young people are not always taken seriously**
- **Young people have little experience in participation**
- **Young people cannot see the direct benefits of participation**
- **Young people are afraid to assume obligations and responsibility**
- **Lack of motivation**
- **Young people do not acknowledge participation opportunities sufficiently**
- **The small number of organised young people**
- **The lack of traditions of participating in associations or initiatives**
- **The multitude of alternative activities**
- **Financing does not take into account the current growth in needs**
- **Lack of consistency on the part of young people**
- **The limited skills of decision-makers and officials in involving young people**
- **Most young people have little interest in politics**
- **The weak position of social theory in formal education**
- **Formal education is relatively discouraging of youth participation**

The following threats can also be noted:

- **Involvement does not reach young people**
- **Opportunities are not realised**
- **Lack of quality information**
- **Overabundance of low quality information**
- **The decisions that concern young people are made by others - they cannot have their say**
- **Youth centres and youth organisations disappear**
- **Weakening of the third sector**
- **Alienation from the state**
- **Active and talented young people leaving Estonia**
- **People do not understand the meaning of participation, which creates a negative attitude.**
- **The main problems in the area of youth participation are and can be summarised as follows:**
 - **Young people do not have sufficient positive experience in participation**
 - **Young people are not used to participating from an early age**
 - **There is a lack of attractive and suitable opportunities for participation**
 - **The weakness of support structures**
 - **Insufficient presence of youth councils in local governments**
 - **Participation councils have little impact and they are unnoticeable.**

Three best cases of successful civic engagement in the youth sector

Public Engagement in the youth sector

Government authorities engage interest group in youth sector and the public in the decision-making process to ensure the best possible quality and legitimacy of the decisions. For the purposes of the Good Public Engagement Code of Practice, "public engagement" means informing and consulting with interest groups and the public in the decision-making process. "Informing" means providing interest groups and the public with balanced and objective information that enables the aim of and alternative options for the decision to be understood. "Public consultation" means asking for feedback from interest groups and the public in all stages of policy-making, including in raising problems, designating goals, analysing alternative solutions and preparing a draft. Public Engagement is applied in developing policy initiatives of a considerable impact on interest groups or society as a whole. The main principle is that the bigger the expected impact, the bigger the opportunity to participate should be. The need for and the extent of public engagement is decided during impact assessment and public engagement is carried out when preparing a draft decision of an estimated significant impact or interest.

Public engagement is applied when preparing a legal act to be adopted or a decision to be made at the level of the Riigikogu (parliament), the Government of the Republic and the ministers. The Good Public Engagement Code of Practice also applies to forming Government positions on European Union issues.

Cooperation with interest groups in the youth sector and the public in different stages of preparing decision and explaining purpose of engagement:

When developing drafts, a government authority consulted with interest groups and the public in the earliest possible stage of proceeding and during the whole process. A public consultation in any event has been carried out in two stages of proceedings: when applying for a Mandate for developing a draft and when the draft has already been developed. A government authority submits an Intention to develop a draft Act, a Proposal to prepare a strategy document or another issue of an estimated significant impact as well as the draft itself, before making a decision, through the Information System of Draft Acts or, where appropriate, also by addressing interest groups directly to collect proposals and express an opinion.

In European Union issues a government authority submits an initiative of the European Commission to interest groups along with a draft position of the Government of Estonia along with explanatory note. The authority keeps interest groups informed about the progress of debates in European Union institutions and, should the positions of Estonia change, also notifies interest groups of the changes. If a draft is accompanied by an impact analysis report, this is also submitted along with the draft for public consultation. A government authority provides interest groups with information about opening a public consultation. Interest groups and the public is explained why the draft decision is needed, what is the purpose of public engagement, what is the scope for their feedback and further course of proceeding of the draft, including: the interest groups addressed; issues about which positions of interest groups are searched; manners and deadline of providing feedback for interest groups are specified; further course of engagement and further proceeding of the draft is described. Parties engaged are granted an adequate period for providing their feedback. A public consultation lasts for four weeks. In justified cases the period of consultation may be shortened. The period of consultation is extended in the case of voluminous drafts or in other justified cases.

Feedback and notifying of consultation results

Interest groups have been provided with adequate feedback within a reasonable period of time, generally within 30 days of the end of consultation. If consultation lasts for more than three months or takes place in several stages, a government authority compiles, as appropriate, an interim summary about the feedback obtained during consultation and consideration thereof, changes, as appropriate, the consultation schedule and notifies all the engaged interest groups thereof.

Decision-makers were notified of the results of consultation with interest groups. A government authority prepared a summary about the consultation results. The summary sets out interest groups who were invited to participate in the consultation, presents the proposals and comments made, explains consideration of the proposals or comments and provides a justification if they were not adopted by the government authority preparing the decision.

The summary is annexed to the decision being deliberated and is forwarded to all interest groups along with the feedback specified in clause 6.1. If the analysis of feedback requires, as an exception, more time than 30 days,



interest groups are forwarded information about a new deadline. The summary is published in the Information System of Draft Acts next to the draft being processed and also made available after the end of the proceeding.

Level of trust

According to the latest The Baltic Times Eurobarometer study, Estonians have a higher level of trust in their government and parliament than European Union average, but trust their political parties less than the average, Public Broadcasting reports.

The Eurobarometer¹ shows that more than half of the Estonian people, 51 percent, trust the government, which is 1 percent lower than last year (2014). In the European Union on average, the state government is trusted by just 29 percent of the population. The level of trust in national government among EU member states is higher only in the Netherlands (52 percent), Sweden (54 percent) and Malta (56 percent) (2015).

The Riigikogu (parliament) is trusted by 39 percent of Estonians. The EU average is 30%. Trust in national government is highest in Sweden (67 percent) and lowest in Slovenia (9 percent). The European Union is trusted by 52% of Estonians; on average, 37% of citizens of member countries trust the union. Out of member countries, the lowest score was recorded in Greece, where only 23% trust the EU. In contrast, only 13% of Estonians trust their political parties and the support has declined by 9% since last year (2014). The Eurobarometer average is just 1% higher. In France, for example, only 5% of those surveyed trusted their political parties.

The level of trust in political parties was even lower than for Estonia: just 9 percent of people in both Latvia and Lithuania trust political parties in their country. The level of trust in the EU in the other two Baltic countries is similar to Estonia: in Latvia 46 percent trust the union, while 36 percent do not; in Lithuania, 59 percent express trust in the EU, while 25 percent do not (Times, 2014).

¹Standard Eurobarometer 81 (2014) coordinated by European Commission.
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/spring_eurobarometer_july_2014.pdf

National youth policy

According to the “Youth Law”, adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia and came into force on 1 January, 2009, **the main objective of youth policy in Latvia is to improve the life quality of young people – persons from 13 to 25 years of age – by promoting their initiatives, participation in decision-making and social life, as well as by supporting youth work and providing children easier transition to adult status.** Latvian youth policy development is framed by seven youth policy principles that can be clustered into three main dimensions²:

- **The vertical dimension (a) of political youth citizenship contributes to democratic power sharing, facilitating constructive youth involvement in decision-making and the definition of society. Youth participation and information, as well as the consideration of youth interests, are relevant to this dimension, along which youth policy (in a narrow sense) usually formulates its core agenda;**
- **The horizontal dimension (b) of socio-economic youth citizenship promotes equality among young people living in different circumstances. Youth welfare, inclusion and non-discrimination are among the key principles characterising this dimension, where the success of youth policy depends principally on co-operation with associated specialised policies;**
- **The reflexive dimension (c) of youth policy development emphasises its sensitivity to changes in youth preferences, as well as in international best practice.**

Youth policy principles are following³:

1. **Partnership principle** – to enhance active participation of young people in the processes of the society.
2. **Information availability principle** – to promote the provision of young people with information according to their needs and interests, especially the information that is necessary for active participation in all the processes of society.
3. **Equal opportunities principle** – to provide all young people, without any discrimination, with the potential to take part in all the processes of society and to be equal members of society.
4. **Observance of youth interests principle** – to take into account the interests, rights, needs and possibilities of young people, while solving youth-related issues.
5. **Favourable social and economic premises principle** – to enhance developing such social and economic conditions that provide all young people an opportunity to be accepted and integrated members of Latvian society.
6. **Mobility and international co-operation availability principle** – to provide opportunities for youth mobility, allowing young people to learn new skills and knowledge outside their place of abode and to promote the implementation of recommendations from other countries and the exchange and adoption of good practice into Latvian youth policy.
7. **Youth integration facilitation principle** – to facilitate youth integration into society, including the integration of minority groups, and to ensure multi-cultural dialogue at all stages of youth policy planning and implementation.

² Country sheet on Youth policy in Latvia, 2013 http://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1668141/Country_sheet_Latvia_2013.pdf/f88bc01c-a6ad-458a-a19d-64eedd5aa0c1

³ Youth Law of Latvia, came into force on January 1, 2009

According to the statistics (Central Statistical Bureau, 2015) there were 277,000 young people in Latvia, aged 13-25. The gender split was following - 49% female, 51% - male.

In total youth made up 14% of the total population of Latvia. The number of youth in Latvia is decreasing every year by 5-6%.⁴ In 2015 the Youth Policy Guidelines 2015-2020 were adopted. There are 5 main fields of actions approved⁵:

1. Education and Training.
2. Social inclusion.
3. Participation.
4. Employment and Business.
5. Health and Welfare.

Level of civic education

According to the study results of IEA (civic education study)⁶, Latvia 15 years ago was evaluated as being below the international average within achievement of civic education. Since 2001 the evaluation level has not changed dramatically.

The needs of implementation of civic education since Grade 7 more and more have been noted in different resolutions and recommendations of the youth events at local, regional, national and even international levels in the last 10 years.

At the study of The National Youth council of Latvia in 2015, collected and analysed around 60 different recommendations and resolutions at different levels (available on the request ljp@ljp.lv). 1/3 of documents stress the need of development of civic education from Grade 7 in Latvia to strengthen and develop youth civic engagement.

There are many students with high achievement, just as there are many students with low achievement in Latvia and the average numbers indicates low development level.

Also another aspect should be taken into account: in Latvia students are divided into several streams in the secondary education stage: gymnasiums, general secondary schools, technical schools, trade schools including secondary education, vocational training of different lengths without providing secondary education, agricultural schools, etc.

Each type of school has its own teaching/learning standard and the choice of stream depends primarily on students' academic achievement.

A number of the studies show that higher level of civic education can be found in the older youth. It correlates with the fact that older youth have different aims for education and activities after the school, where power of non-formal education is clearly observed (be active at NGOs work, taking part at the debates, discussions after the school, doing individual studies for the school projects, etc.).

⁴ Data of Central Statistical Bureau www.csb.gov.lv, November, 2015

⁵ The National Youth Policy Paper 2015-2020 http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/sabiedriskalidzdaliba/aktualitatesIZMPamn2015-2020_26022015.pdf

⁶ Latvia's result of IEA civic education study, University of Latvia, 2000 http://www.iea.nl/fileadmin/user_upload/IRC/IRC_2004/Papers/IRC2004_Kangro.pdf

Notable differences in student achievements are revealed when students are divided into strata according to the urbanization factor.

Students' achievements in the civic education study (The National Youth Council study, 2015) are divided into three strata – students of Riga (the capital), cities/towns and the countryside. Students in Riga have the highest achievement level in civic education topic, while students of small towns and country schools – much lower. It correlates with the access to information and availability of variety of after school activities. As well it is connected with economical aspect, since older youth have more economical independence. They can travel to attend different events, resulting into the development of their level of civic education. It is important to take into account that, certainly, school is not the only source of information of students' knowledge and skills in civic education.

The specific stress is on the smaller schools and classrooms in Latvia in rural areas and small towns. The upkeep of educational institutions in such areas is very costly, when the cost is calculated on a per-student basis.

Schools and classrooms are small and the student-teacher ratio is low. Often that leads to poorer results in terms of skills and knowledge from rural and small-town schools. This means that the low ratio of students to teachers in small rural schools is not necessarily a good thing, taking into account the limited resources available in the educational system. This does not mean that the small number of students is automatically the cause for lower levels of knowledge and skills. Quite the contrary – under conditions where a teacher has only a small number of students and has high capacity of knowledge, one might expect the best quality of educational results. In some countries, students in large inner-city schools post the worst achievements, so it very much depends on the capacity of teacher.

The analysis of data shows that differences in opinions and attitudes about social processes is greater among the students from Latvian and Russian language instruction schools, than between the rural and urban students or between genders.

The knowledge and skills in the civic education test, in their turn, are the same for Latvian language and Russian language students (Drivdale-Karuškina, 2003⁷).

The variations of students' knowledge and skills in Latvia are determined by:

- **School and classroom factors (the placement of school in a rural or urban area, open classroom climate);**
- **Family-related factors (home literacy resources, education level of parents);**
- **Individual factors (expected years of education, watching TV news).**

Different factors determine better level of knowledge and skills in civic education at secondary school level: more open classroom climate, a possibility for students to discuss freely the political and social issues at lessons, free atmosphere and discussions in the classroom. These factors are positively connected with students' knowledge and skills in the sphere of civic education.

⁷ Drivdale-Karuškina, S., Geske, A., Grīnfelds, A., Kangro, A., Sarma, V., Tipāns O. (2003). International CIVIC Education Study in Latvia. Editor A. Kangro – Series of monographies: Education research in Latvia: monograph Nr.4. Riga, publishing house "Mācību grāmata"

Students listen to and learn from the mass media and in general trust them (certainly, more than they trust government-related institutions). This means that mass media (published both in Latvian and in Russian) has a significant role and responsibility in the development of our country's young citizens. The relatively low average level of knowledge and skills in civic education and student opinions on this subject indicate need to pay more attention to this new sphere of education in our country by appropriate civic education themes as early as the junior grades.



However, civic education topics are discussed in several other school subjects, for instance, in economics. In 2015 the National working group of "Structural dialogue of Latvia" has started to develop the discussion among the several state institutions which are responsible for the education and content to figure out the possibilities to develop the civic education in Latvia since Grade 7. In 2016 there will be some studies/programs drafted to show how to implement the topics of civic education in schools programs in easy way. The responsible working group made the announcement that the first program drafts will be available in the second part of the year 2016 to start extensive discussions on development of the civic education since Grade 7.

In general, youth evaluate the education they can get in Latvia positively. Most of them (75%) agree that the level of education is suitable to get the job; knowledge of foreign languages and communication skills are high importance for youth; more than half of youth agree that the knowledge they can get through the non-formal education are privileges.

The less competitive knowledge are those got into the formal education meaning this is the part of education to be developed more efficiently. Education is one of the key issues to get great job (59%), to earn a lot of money (53%) or getting prestige profession (50%). The youth put a huge attention on quality of the education they can get and it gives the signal to invest in the quality of the education.⁸



Reforms are needed in this area – more money must be awarded, and perhaps the number of small schools needs to be reduced so that resources can be concentrated in the larger ones. It is clear that the initiative for such reforms will not come from schools or local governments – this is a matter for educational and regional development policy at the national level.

⁸ Jaunieši Latvijā 2008-2013 (Youth in Latvia 2008-2013), Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, 2014 file:///C:/Users/Nese/Downloads/Jauniesi_Latvija_2008_2013.pdf

Main trends in the improvement of civic education in Latvia should be the following:

- Schools must reconsider their current methods of promoting a democratic environment in the school and decide upon more extended involvement of students in the decision-making process;
- Education leaders and teachers should promote students' participation in state level civic projects, competitions and other activities; civic education activities of the school, out-of-class work in civic education and civic education activities should begin at the junior primary school level;
- Teachers in the sphere of civic education should:
 - Develop students' positive attitude to and trust in state institutions,
 - Organize social projects with definite aims and involve students, schools and out-of-school organisations,
 - Promote closer contact between students of Latvian language instruction schools and Russian language instruction schools through joint projects, discussions and activities,
 - Try to develop a wider sense of belonging – state belonging – in students of Latvian language instruction schools and Russian language instruction schools,
 - Learn what the non-governmental organisations in their vicinity are offering and assess the possibilities of involving them in the improvement of their civic education lessons,
 - While promoting the rights of different groups of the society analyse specific examples and widespread suppositions and do not accept postulating only principles.
- use all the possible methods more extensively, both in lessons and in civic education in general;
- Political parties have to assess their influence on young people and should promote the acceptance of values of democracy;
- State management structures must participate more actively in the development of youths' civic consciousness and must work more on providing explanations about state institutions, their objectives and activities with the aim of creating a lasting impression on young people about the positive image of the country.

Civic engagement in the youth sector

The quality of the life most likely influence the possibilities and practice to be active in social activities, to be mobile according the education and employability, to be active in civic, free time, cultural and healthy life style activities.

"Where" and "How" to be involved and to be active –very much depend on choice of youth by themselves. But it is very essential for the youth policy makers and youth policy implementers to put on agenda the issue on accessibility and variability of the possibilities for youth development mentioned above.

The factors which can't be ignored while analysing the civic engagement in Latvia in the youth sector are: demographical challenges, employability of youth, development of internet

and communication technologies, ecology and sustainability, changes of values, regional development and understanding of civic participation and engagement.

According to the data of 2013⁹, the main civic engagement for youth in Latvia is through the culture and entertainment activities 88%, through the schools activities – 67% and in the same time only 61% of youth took part in civic and social activities, moreover, only 31% - in the activities of political parties.

According to the Youth policy implementation index: Latvia¹⁰ in 2012 there were 26 points given to the participation of youth in Latvia (how active in general is youth and what are the main types of participation of youth in Latvia). This is one of the dimensions which shows why Latvia



is in the Youth Development Category - Medium¹¹ and make sense for reading The Global Youth Wellbeing Index¹² which shows that civic engagement is a critical component of youth wellbeing as it is strongly correlated with community cohesion and stability. Without positive and peaceful avenues for civic engagement and political expression, youth's frustration can lead to apathy, economic and social instability, or violent demonstration or extremist behaviour. The earlier youth engage in positive and peaceful ways,

the greater the likelihood they will maintain such engagement as adults. The main reasons why the youth is taking part in civic activities are: personal interest (22%), willingness to change the existing situation (18%), to find new friends and contacts (17%), the possibility for personal development (16%) and to get new experience (15%).¹³ The survey data clearly shows that: more young people (age 13-15) are more interested in setting the personal goals, understand what they actually want in the near future, in the age 16-19 the youth more is interested in getting new experience and new contacts, while youth age 20-25 most motivated by willingness to change the situation, career development and possibility to raise their voices. Males are more interested in materialistic results like better salary while females appear to be more interested in emotional results such as new friends and new experiences. It is essential to take into account that younger people (age 14-16) listen more to parents and teachers, while older (age 17-19) listen more to friends, and others (20-25) to politicians, popular people in culture, sport, society. At the same time the youth aged 16-24 in Latvia more than average in European countries have contacted politicians via the internet (average in EU: 30%, in Latvia: 41%).¹⁴

Some facts about Latvia: the most effective ways of participations like referendum (48%), local elections (42%), Parliament elections (41%), participation in political parties (26%) are used

⁹ Annual Youth policy monitoring, 2013 http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/IZM_Monitorings_Exc_lo_2013.pdf

¹⁰ Youth policy implementation index: Latvia, 2012 <http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/25.pdf>

¹¹ Principles and some extra information you can find at Youth Development Index, 2013 http://www.youthdevelopmentindex.org/cms/cms-youth/_images/197918019952385f3219c75.pdf

¹² The Global Youth Wellbeing Index, 2014 <http://www.youthindex.org/reports/globalyouthwellbeingindex.pdf>

¹³ Survey on Youth possibilities, attitudes and values, 2013 <http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/23.pdf>

¹⁴ Jaunieši Latvijā 2008-2013 (Youth in Latvia 2008-2013), Izglītības un zinātnes ministrija, 2014 file:///C:/Users/Nese/Downloads/Jaunieši_Latvija_2008_2013.pdf

less by youth. While less effective tools and methods like political comments at internet (8%), discussion about politics (13%-14%), fund-raising for political parties (14%) is practised more by youth comparing to adults. For instance: political comments at internet are practised by 36% of youth; discussion about politics practised even by 78% of youth. It shows that the result is not the most important for youth, for them the most important is process – to discuss, to raise awareness, to express their opinions.¹⁵

Some of the facts why youth didn't take part in the election of 12th National Parliament: "don't see the reason to vote" – 14%, "were abroad" - 9%. Some of reasons for participation: "it's their citizen responsibility" – 28%, "willingness for changes" – 15%, "support for their political party they are taking part in" – 12%.

One of the very important issues should be noted: politicians don't react on needs of youth. The agenda of youth (educational system development, variety and acceptability of free time activities, number of alcohol addiction among youth, youth unemployment rate, difficulties to find the job) is not agenda of politicians and it explains some of the data on participation activity of youth.

The agenda of youth is not very much changed between 2007 and 2015 and it indicates low effectiveness to solve the key issues for youth in long term. To change the situation the hard work is needed on the information availability, explanation of information, working on youth friendly solutions.

Another aspect should be taken into the account concerning low youth participation. Only in some cases the opinion of youth is resulted into political decisions. Meaning – youth have a plenty of possibilities to raise their voice but they are not heard during the decision-making process and not taken into account. Engagement process is two-ways process and all the stakeholders are equal and should be taken into account.

Finally, it is important to mention the low capacity of the involved institutions to provide the quality and sustainability of the participation processes. The capacity building among the state institutions, local municipalities and the non-governmental institutions are equally important and essential. Civic engagement is not short-term process as it is very much depend on the political cultural in society and development process needs time.

Man civic organisations/activities

Different activities in educational institutions

There are regional and municipal youth councils established, particularly in cities, which often function in close cooperation with local municipalities. The structure, members and tasks may differ case by case and are defined by local needs. As an example one of the biggest municipal youth council is the Riga City School Council which unites all Riga's city pupil's councils as members and involves youth organisations active in Riga city. Main tasks are to work with pupil's councils in Riga, to support young people and to participate in municipal youth work planning and implementation. Pupils' councils can be established according to the Law on Education in every general education institution; they act as an independent pupil's institution which participates in the educational institutions work. Their aim is to lobby and unify interests of pupils and administration of educational institution in order to obtain active pupils participation in educational work. Work of pupils councils are supported by municipal youth affairs specialist and the State Youth Initiative Centre.

¹⁵ In the same place (Ibid).

Similar to pupils' council, according to the Law on Higher Education Institutions students' councils are established in every higher education institution that is elected, independent institution which represents interests and rights of students in the particular higher education institution or in other public institution.

Non-governmental organisations

1) Non-public actors/ structures & youth services in the youth field. An important role to develop youth policy and youth work plays The National Youth Council of Latvia - founded in 1992. It is a youth public organisation whose members are youth organisations and associations of youth organisations. In 2015 there were 33 member organisations. Members of the National Youth Council of Latvia identify and try to solve a variety of youth-related questions, and enable the participating organisations to intervene on young people's needs and growth, ensuring the flow of information and support. The National Youth Council of Latvia provides information to the public and promotes civic participation of young people, encouraging them to engage themselves in youth organisations, non-formal education activities and shelters the youth organisations. The tasks are to represent the interests of young people in Latvia and in international institutions, as well as, to gather the views of young people, explore their options, preferences in different regions of Latvia and to help them implement the various youth initiatives. Thus the mission of the National Youth Council of Latvia is to promote youth organisations, development and comprehensive cooperation, to motivate young people to get involved. Besides, the National Youth Council of Latvia in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and other stakeholders ensure implementation of European Commission structural dialogue in Latvia, organising national consultations with young people about priorities in the field of youth put forward by presidency of three members in the European Council. The National Youth Council of Latvia chairs a national working group of the European Commission structural dialogue.

2) Youth NGOs. According to the Youth Law youth organisation is a society that is registered in the Register of associations and foundations and in the Register of the youth organisations. The organisation has to meet several criteria defined in the law:

(1) One of the purposes of activity specified in the statutes of the association is youth work, the promotion of youth initiatives and participation in decision-making and social life;

(2) The association carries out youth work and tasks of the association defined in the statutes correspond to at least three main tasks defined in the third part of the article 2.1. of the law;

(3) At least two thirds of the members of the association are children and young people or also several associations, where in total at least two thirds of the members are children and young people;

(4) Participation of young people is ensured in administrative institutions of the association, and the procedures for this participation are specified in the statutes of the respective association.

3) Other NGOs are working with young people age 13-25 – are NGO's of disabled people with the dedicated section for youth, environmental NGO's with the activities also for youth, health



organisation running the activities at the schools, parents organisations working on students' rights protection at the schools, etc.

Volunteering

Youth volunteering is the key for personal development as well as being essential for society development. While volunteering, youth can obtain important personal and professional skills which help them to more competitive. Involvement in volunteering is also the key to strengthening citizenship and social responsibility.

There is a high level of informed youth in Latvia on volunteering, but organisers should work on information dissemination how to be involved in practice, what are the practical steps to becoming a volunteer. 94% of youth assures us that they know what volunteering is, at the same time 45% of youth would like to have more information regarding volunteering. At present there are around 1/10 of youth involved in voluntary work on a regular basis.

Since the 1st of January 2016 the first law came into force the on volunteering in Latvia: "Voluntary Work Law". It will bring new challenges, but also develop new approaches on youth volunteering. Only NGO's, local governments and the state institutions and political parties are allowed to develop volunteering activities in Latvia from January 2016 (no private companies, no religious organisations and individual work will not be longer classified as volunteering).

Government or political organisation

1) National public authorities. The ministry in charge of youth policy is Ministry of Education of Science and its youth related department. The main tasks are – to develop youth policy, to coordinate its implementation; to elaborate youth policy development programmes; to analyse and to evaluate results of the youth policy; to develop international cooperation in the implementation of youth policy; to facilitate collaboration among institutions involved in the field of youth; to ensure methodological management of municipal work with youth; to ensure training and exchange of experience of persons involved in the field of youth; to maintain register of youth organisations, as well as, the portal of youth issues – www.jaunatneslietas.lv; to develop information system of youth and to facilitate youth awareness of their rights, duties, possibilities and responsibilities; to ensure coordination of implementation of the European Union programme Erasmus+: Youth in Action and implementation of the Swiss cooperation programme Support to Youth Initiative for Development in Distant and Underdeveloped Regions.

Other national public bodies who are directly involved in youth policies: The Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Welfare, the Ministry of Health and The State Agency for International Programs for Youth; Parliament Commission in charge particularly for youth issues and Parliament Commission of European Affairs, Parliament Commission of Education, Culture and Science.

2) Regional public authorities with competencies in the youth field - 5 regions planning councils created from representatives of local governments (Riga, Vidzeme, Zemgale, Kurzeme, Latgale). The role of planning regions is to ensure planning process of regional development, including defining the regions development long term goals, objectives and priorities by adopting regional planning documents. The role of planning regions in youth policy is indirect and is tackled via regional development plans not only directly addressing youth policy fields, but also different youth policy directions, as example youth unemployment or education. Latvia is on the way to strengthening the role of regions-planning councils.

Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field - the municipalities and the subordinated institutions. One of local government's functions is planning and implementation of the youth work, by taking into consideration the basic principles of youth policy and the documentation for the planning of state youth policy development. According to the Youth Law, local governments plan local work with the youth, creating the documentation of local government youth policy (for example, youth work strategy) – local youth also participates in the elaboration of such documents, proposing their ideas to the local government youth policy's vision, priorities or tasks that will directly affect youth daily life and their activities in the local government in the long term. Each local government creates its own institutional system for youth work, by appointing the responsible institution or responsible employees for implementing youth work.

3) A local government is authorised to recruit a specialist on youth affairs, establish a youth centre, Advisory Committee on Youth Affairs or Youth Council. In order to promote the implementation of youth work in municipalities according to the long term national planning documents and general criteria to assess the youth work in municipalities were developed (105 general criteria grouped in 10 thematic sections that can be used to assess the current situation in the youth work).

Municipal youth affairs specialists work with young people and youth initiative groups and with youth organisations in different directions: engaging leisure time, voluntary work, non-formal education, ensuring of youth participation in the local municipal administration. Main areas of responsibility of municipal youth affairs specialists:

- **to solve youth-related issues by cooperating with youth organisations and youth initiative groups;**
- **to promote the cooperation of the municipal agencies on youth issues;**
- **to organize informative and educational activities in a certain administrative territory by involving municipality workers, youth organisations, youth initiative groups and the youth;**
- **to consult young people about non-formal education and voluntary work;**
- **to coordinate the involvement of the youth into social life activities of a certain administrative territory and to provide methodological assistance to other municipality workers on youth issues;**
- **to come up with suggestions to the Ministry of Education and Science on improving the state youth policy, as well as to the municipalities in coordinating and implementing youth policy;**
- **to take part in developing, implementing and coordinating regional and national projects and programs on youth work;**
- **to promote the work of children and youth camps;**
- **to coordinate international cooperation in youth policy. To determine the legal status of persons who carry out the municipality work with young people, youth specialist professional standard was drafted, it was accepted on 21st of May 2008 and was included in professions classificatory on 20th of January 2009.**

4) Youth centre is a place where a friendly, open and supporting environment for young people with different interests and life experience is available. The objective of the centre is to create a possibility for the youth to gather together, to plan a good usage of their time, to receive

information in compliance with their needs and interests, to give support to drafting and implementing projects. Youth centre cooperates with different persons involved in youth policy implementation process (different institutions of municipalities, youth organisations, as well as with state administrative institutions). The main assignments of Youth centres are:

- **to provide youth possibilities to spend free time usefully;**
- **to promote the development of young people knowledge and skills outside of formal and hobby education, by implementing different non-formal education programmes, projects and actions;**
- **to create favourable conditions for the development of young people's intellectuality and creativity;**
- **to promote youth participation in youth organisations, youth initiative groups and voluntary work;**
- **to provide young people access to their interests and demand appropriate information;**
- **to promote inclusion of young people from social risk groups among peer in youth centre activities;**
- **to promote intercultural dialogue in youth target group;**
- **to manage youth individual or group consultations about actual themes for young people;**
- **to promote young people's participation in local, regional, national and international youth activities, projects and programmes etc.**

5) **Advisory Committees on Youth Affairs** are institutions established by municipalities with a deliberate function on implementing youth policy and organizing youth work. For the most times the assignments of such committee are to analyse, evaluate and draft proposals for youth policy and strategy and implementation in the municipality. The objectives of the committees are to attain cooperation and coordination of interests among municipal and state institutions, educational institutions, enterprises and youth non-governmental organisations for drawing up focused and long-term youth policy in the municipality. Board members are usually representatives of municipality and youth organisations, sometimes also representatives of youth initiative groups.

6) All the **largest political parties** have their own Youth organisations; those are mostly not separately registered and work on the development of skills and attitudes of the members of political parties youth organisations. Sometimes there are the activities on some hot topic in the society and with the involvement of wider youth groups. There are some political parties' youth organisations open for cooperation among each other and with NGOs. At the same time, especially, political parties represented by Russian speaking youth organisations, are not open for closer cooperation.



Informal groups (sports, dancing, scouts, religions and similar)

Informal youth groups in Latvia are mainly based on some project initiatives, but not long-term based. They focus mainly on music, art, dance, sport and environment. There is no register of informal groups and according to the specifics of Latvian legislation majority of informal groups either become an NGO or stop their activities.

According to the specifics of the 21st century, huge informal groups can be found on Facebook and other social media platforms. One of the biggest recently established included the participation of a lot of young people - "Gribu palīdzēt bēgļiem" (I want to help refugees). It is an example of informal groups which are quite often established as a response or a reaction to the problems of society.

The main reasons of passivity among youth

The **main reasons for the passivity of youth in Latvian society**, i.e. in social and political activities, are¹⁶:

- **Lack of time as the time is needed for studies, hobbies and friends (51%);**
- **Lack of interest in the particular activities provided around (40%);**
- **Lack of enough information on particular activities (26%);**
- **Laziness (24%);**
- **Too shy (16%) and lack of money to take part (15%);**
- **Don't believe I can change anything (13%).**

To analyse more in detail the respondents' choice of "lack of information about the activities" it can be found that youth have enough information about the activities and offers in schools (57%), but not enough about the activities of NGO's (24%) and the local municipalities (18%). Youth most likely gathering information through e-mail (obvious correlation with laziness), but information provided by schools (51%) and friends (48%) is very important.

The survey shows that youth trust family (80%), friends (75%), and teachers (58%) the most, and don't trust people they don't know very much; both local people in general and foreigners (both 20%). It shows that it's vitally important to have their own small social groups around and this is the tool to influence in one or another direction the activity of youth.

Three best cases of successful civic engagement in the youth sector

Structural Dialogue Ambassadors

The National Youth council of Latvia is leading the European Union Structural Dialogue in Latvia – namely IV cycle of Structural Dialogue ¹⁷. Structural Dialogue motivated young people to become more active in decision-making and policy-making processes led to the new initiative - "Structural Dialogue Ambassadors", announced in Autumn, 2015.

¹⁶ Annual Youth policy monitoring, 2013 http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/IZM_Monitorings_Ecolo_2013.pdf

¹⁷ More info you can find at the web page of The National Youth council of Latvia <http://ljp.lv/category/strukturtaisdialogs/>

Around 40 young people from different places of Latvia aged 15-20 years applied and were approved for the cooperation. The main idea of the initiative is that young people by themselves are becoming more active in Structural Dialogue activities (meetings among youth and politicians at local and national level) by organizing the events, going to the schools to tell the stories about Structural dialogue results, giving interviews to media, making the video stories of success of young people, educating themselves and getting the new experience as well. All the Ambassadors are contracted for 18 months period and will be in charge on regular base. They will promote and observe personal development of youth as well to raise awareness among young people about Structural Dialogue process and results.

There are The National Youth council of Latvia, Ministry of Education and Science, different state institutions, local municipalities and youth NGO's involved.

Tuesi.lv initiative

I am Latvia. You are Latvia. We are Latvia. Our Latvia is as we are. YOU ARE LATVIA!

The initiative TUESI.LV was launched in 2014 by youth NGO NEXT.¹⁸ TUESI.LV tells stories full of inspiration people different regions of Latvia. Youth who make a valuable impact by own work and presents initiatives as good examples to inspire other youth. The organisers of the initiative believe that youth is the great resource for Latvia and stories should be known by youth.

The aim is to gather 100 inspirational stories before Latvia's 100th Birthday in 2018. This initiative is also the great example on cooperation among different NGOs from different regions of Latvia – Riga, Kurzeme, Latgale Vidzeme, Zemgale. The stories are neither written or video made by young people on voluntary basis to support the idea.

Initiative Manabalss.lv

More and more young people become involved by using the possibilities given by web portal www.manabalss.lv. Since 2011 the initiative has been providing possibilities to everyone who is at least 16 years old and has opened an internet bank account to apply or to vote for any of the civic initiatives published at the portal. If the initiative reaches 10,000 votes, the initiative is forwarded to the state institutions and becoming the legal base for opening the discussions and vote at Parliament. Some examples of Manabalss.lv:

- **In 2014, increase up to 2% from GDP for defence before 2020 –were approved by only 1,705 votes from society and great media support. The new aim is to increase the allocations 2% from GDP before 2018.**
- **In 2013 9,225 votes were given for the initiative to stop “legal drugs” in Latvia to protect our youth. Without waiting for the officially-needed 10,000 votes and with the great support of the media, Parliament made the changes in the legislation to set up the very strict rules for selling “legal drugs” freely.**
- **The first local initiative was applied in February, 2015. With only 395 votes and huge resonance in the society the proposal to open branches of school in Grobina municipality to provide easy access to education for children were put on agenda of local government. The initiative is still under discussion in municipality.**

There are 902 initiatives in total applied. The most popular “Responsibility for deputies of Parliament for breaking the oath” reached 17,529 votes. There are 430,000 votes in total registered mainly from inhabitants living in Latvia, the United Kingdom and Germany.

¹⁸ More info you can find at the web page of the initiative www.tuesi.lv

Level of trust

The trust is developed in the cooperation; cooperation lets us reach the goals more effectively comparing to the individual activity. The level of trust in Latvia is a bit over the average European Union level with the tendency to increase.

There are different organisations, which have been tested for the trust level. In 2013¹⁹ the trust in Latvian Army was 56%, in 2015²⁰ – 63%; the trust to the State police is 46% in 2013 and 56% in 2015; to the Youth organisations - 49% in 2013 and 56% in 2015. Youth had a high level of trust towards the European Union (44%), educational system (41%) and the church (37%) in 2015. According the data of survey in 2013²¹, youth have no possibilities or very limited possibilities to take part in political decision-making processes (68%), to take part in political parties (56%) and work at non-governmental organisations (41%). These could be the reasons of low level of trust in Latvia among youth.

The lowest trust is towards Parliament (12%), the President (20%) and overall NGOs (24%) in 2013. Similar level of trust can be observed in 2015. Since 2013 level of trust is decreasing towards educational institutions. From the demographical aspect – more trustful attitude is found among elementary and high schools students.

From the geographical perspective - among youth in Kurzeme and Latgale (regions of Latvia) the level of trust is higher. People are more cautious of trusting foreigners, students at universities and those living in Riga (capital city).



The level of social capital in Latvia is lower than in neighbouring countries. The low level of trust towards society members and the institutions is a barrier for cooperation. The situation cannot be solved in a short-term period, which is why it is even more essential to develop and implement the activities to promote mutual understanding and trust, and cooperation in any form of participation.

¹⁹ Survey on Youth possibilities, attitudes and values, 2013 <http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/23.pdf>

²⁰ Youth political participation, Survey of the National youth council of Latvia, 2015, www.ljp.lv

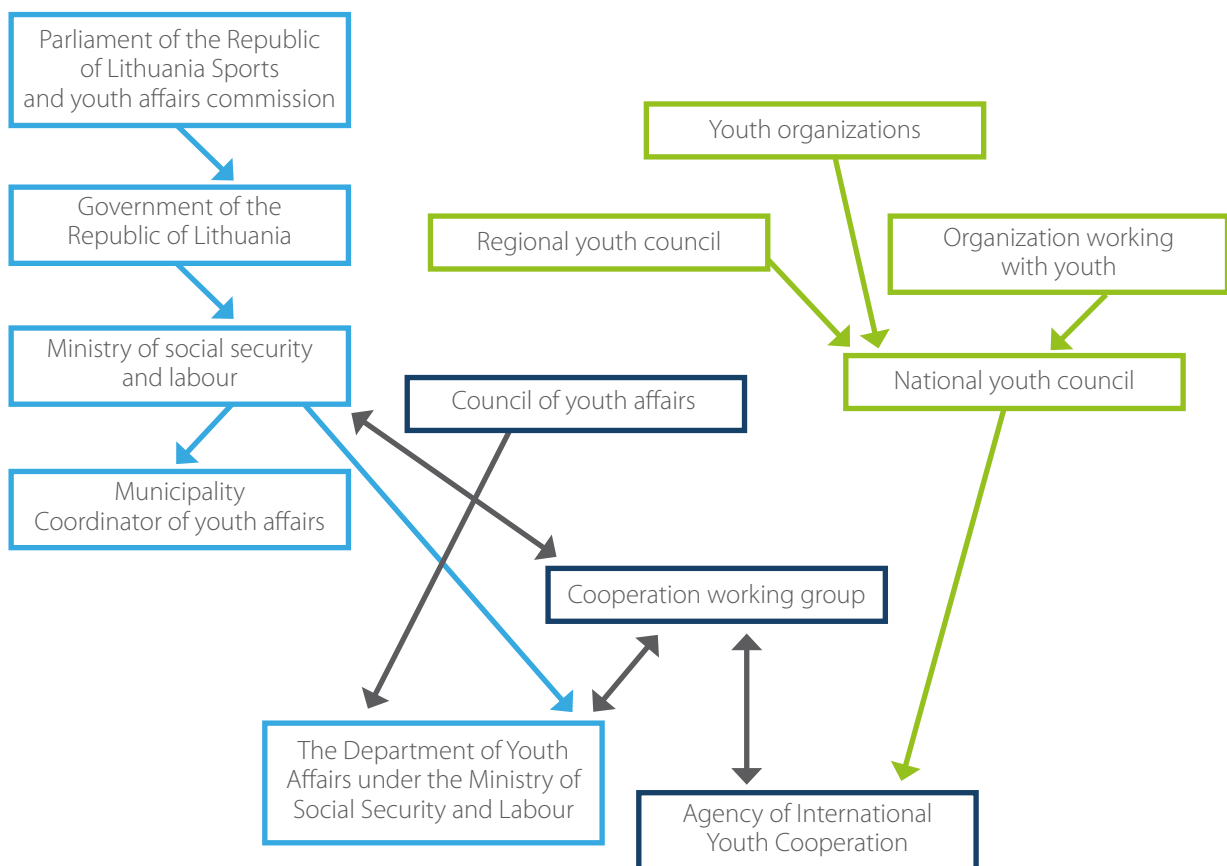
²¹ Survey on Youth possibilities, attitudes and values, 2013 <http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/23.pdf>

LITHUANIA

National youth policy

Youth policy can be defined as the entirety of systems and measures, aspiring after the most favourable terms for personal maturity of a young person and successful integration into society.

It is generally accepted to refer to structures of assistance (fields of socialisation), subsidiary adding to the effort of a person and, especially, of a family, and helping to prepare a young person for independent life. These structures can be divided into informal (friends, contemporaries), non-formal (communities, non-governmental organisations, youth activity system), formal (schools, universities), and commercial (telecommunications, banks, recreation and entertainment industry) (see Fig.1).



Source: <http://www.jrd.lt/nacionaliniu-lygmeniu>

Fig. 1 Youth policy management model in Lithuania

Modern youth policy is developed in the following two main directions:

- 1) **Security of interests of youth in individual areas of public policy** – education and science, culture, sports, work and employment, dwelling, health, etc.;
- 2) **Youth work** – non-formal youth education, aiming to enable young people to learn from experience and experimentation (voluntariness, independence, autonomy). Youth work “reaches” young people during their free time, when they are not within the family, at school, or at work. This involves the work of youth staff, education of youth leaders, a build-up of youth initiative, development and implementation of civil, cultural, as well as social projects. Non-governmental

(youth) organisations, local and religious communities, non-formal youth groups are the best option to ensure independence and involvement (in decision-making). Non-formal youth education can (and has to) be carried out by the institutions of non-formal education and culture, established by the government, e.g. municipal youth leisure centres, youth centres, sports centres, cultural centres in the elderships. The field of non-formal education (civil, democratic) is important in the schools for pupils' autonomy.

In accordance with Article 4 of the Law on Youth Policy Framework of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette, 2003, No. 119-5406; 2005, No. 144-5238), Youth policy shall mean a purposeful activity intended to resolve youth problems and to seek to create favourable conditions for the formation of a young person and integration into public life. As a result, achieve common understanding and tolerance of society and individual groups towards young people.

"Lithuania has been generally successful in building a democratic state that guarantees civil liberties, political rights and freedoms – an important condition to enable civil society to thrive and citizens to participate in the political process (Cameron, 2007; Skaaning, 2006).

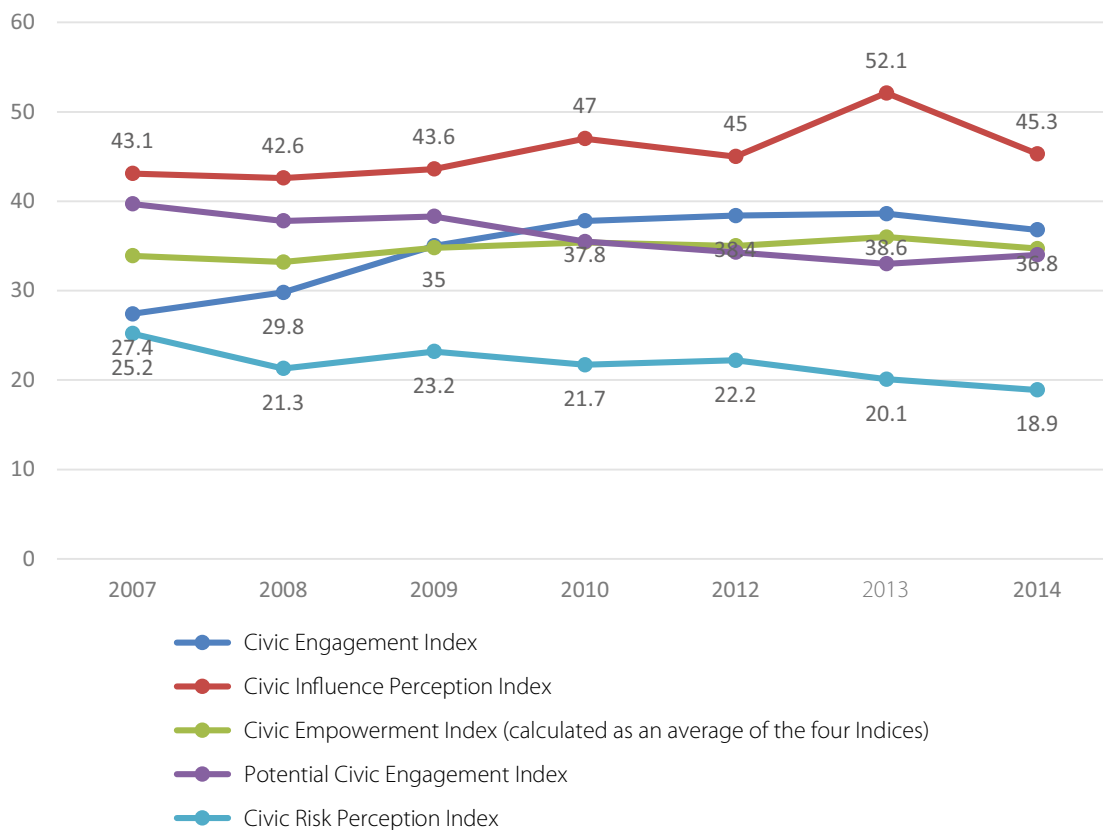
This is confirmed by indicators such as Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, which attributes Lithuania with a score of 9.58/10 for its electoral process and 9.71/10 for its civil liberties (Freedom House, 2014; Economist Intelligence Unit, 2014). At the same time, Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index points to challenges in the area of civic engagement with far lower scores on political participation (6.11) and political culture (6.25). The Civic Empowerment Index developed by the Lithuanian Organisation Civitas (published by the Civil Social Institute) with a score of 34/100 in 2014 confirms limited civic engagement. In its strategic vision Lithuania2030, the government – based on the index – acknowledges that even though civic empowerment has improved, it is still relatively limited. The index is measured through an annual survey, civic activity since 2007. It also observes civil society's perception of its influence and of the risks potentially associated with civic activity (Civic Society Institute, 2015; State Progress Council, 2012)²² (see Fig.2).

Research "The influence of civic education on young people in Lithuania" shows that engagement of the general public in policy making faces several challenges, including a generalised disbelief that it can influence policy making and that collective action can make a difference. In addition, Lithuanians associate certain risks with civic engagement, which include job loss, physical harassment or threat, having a bad reputation and being seen as selfish.

Civic engagement in the youth sector

Based on *OECD Public Governance Reviews Lithuania: Fostering open and Inclusive policy making*: "Civic unrest characterised Lithuania's path to independence in the years 1988-91. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to protest against Soviet rule and for independence. Since then, popular mobilisation has decreased in Lithuania, as in other post-Soviet countries. Government officials cited the moderate reaction of the people to the government's policies following the financial crisis in 2007/08 to illustrate the current political culture in the country. At the time, the government, in agreement with trade unions, cut public spending by 30% which did not ignite popular protest.

²² Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2015), Lithuania: Fostering open and Inclusive policy making, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing7, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264235762-en>



Source: Civic Society Institute (2015)

Fig. 2 Civic empowerment Index 2007-2014, Lithuania

According to the Civic Empowerment Index 2014, the most popular civic activities in Lithuania are donating (56%), environment cleaning actions (50%) and community activities (33%), while getting in touch with public servants, demonstrating, signing petitions, boycotting and buying ethical goods are the least popular, with a participation rate around 5-10% (Civic Society Institute, 2015). This is in line with the finding that protest campaigns are seen as a last resort only in the event of significant impact on living conditions and a threat to the political regime (Civil Society Institute, 2015).

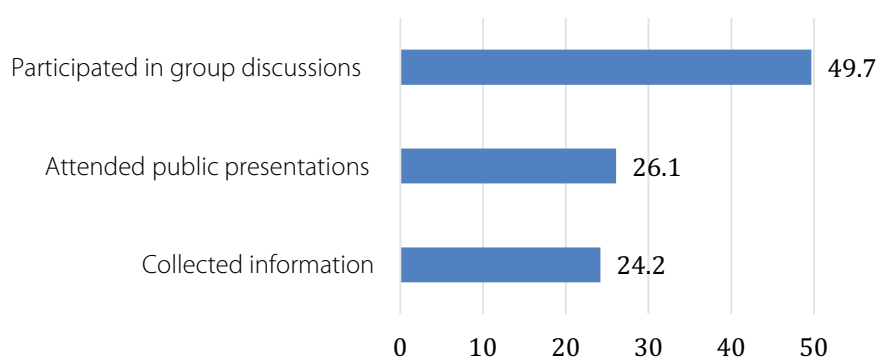
Lithuania is one of the countries where civic engagement is rather poor. The research that is being accomplished by Civil Society Institute since 2007 exhibit low level of the society's political self-awareness – in 2012 the civic engagement was rated in average 38.4 of possible 100 points (Civil Society Institute, 2013). Since 2007 this rate is increasing very slightly. The positive shift is noticed. Recently Lithuanian public more actively defends public and collective interest in governing institutions, were concerned of the public problems. Civic engagement of young people (from 15 to 29 years old) is distinguished as being significantly low. The social environment for civic engagement in Lithuania is revealed to be enough adverse. It is evaluated only 22.2 of 100 points in 2012 and does not improve during the last several years. 6-7 of 10 individuals have negative opinion on participation environment. That could be one of the reasons why society's general interest in public issues remains only average (evaluated about 40 points of 100 during the last 3 years). The existing superposition between government and society could be one of the main obstacles to strengthen civil society in Lithuania (Zliukaite, 2006). Different research results prove the necessity to search for different tracks that could contribute to stimulation of civic engagement.²³

²³ OECD (2015), Lithuania: Fostering open and Inclusive policy making, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing7, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264235762-en>

Level of civic education

Lithuanian secondary schools seek to develop conscious citizens, aware of their rights and responsibilities and able to participate in an ever changing society. It helps students realise that the development of democracy in the family, community, nation, country, and world is essential.

It is important to foster ethnic identity and respect for fundamental democratic values of human dignity, freedom, equality, justice and legitimacy, tolerance, and solidarity. The school is necessary institution to enable students to develop a sense of personal responsibility, to play an active role in society and to develop the ability to analyse society, culture, the government. It requires the ability and courage to evaluate and make decisions in an open, pluralistic society (*General Civic Education Program, 2004*).²⁴



Source: *The influence of civic education on young people in Lithuania*. Justina Saveikaitė, Lithuanian university of Educational Science

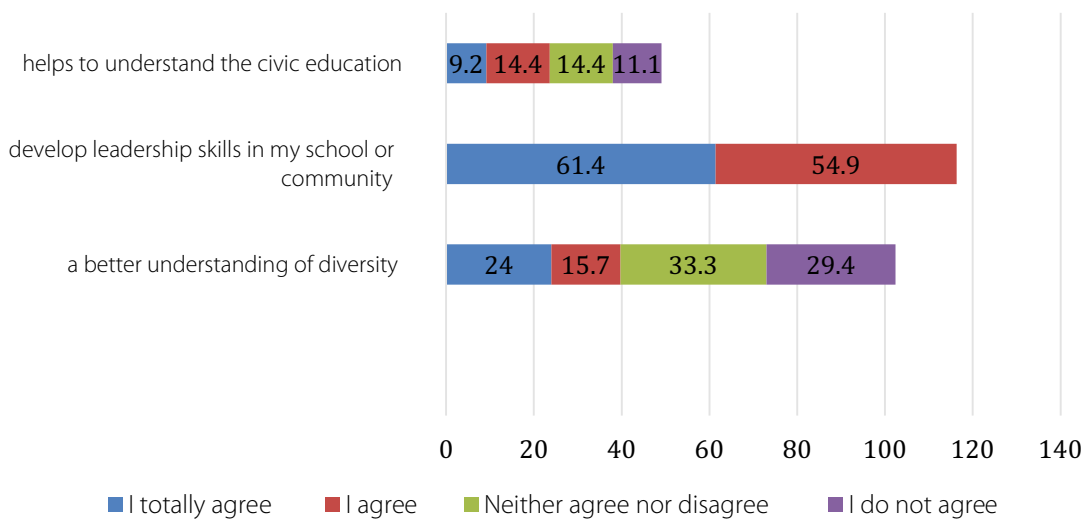
Fig. 3 Distribution of respondents by type of activity carried during the civic lessons (%)

The survey²⁵ showed that 49.7 percent of students were involved in group discussions, while 24.2 percent of students gathered relevant information for the project. The remaining 26.1 percent of students attended public opinion presentations (see Fig.3). The distribution justifies the notion that students are more actively involved in group discussions. It is likely that such choice leads to the desire of students to be recognised by peers or simply the wider opportunities to work together with peers, where some desire to realise their leader, organiser, or managerial roles.

61.4 percent of those who participated fully agree that civic education needs to develop leadership skills in schools or in the community. The lowest percentage, -1.3 percent, completely agreed that civic education promotes the emergence of innovation and 15.7 percent of respondents agreed that civic lessons they had a better understanding of diversity (different cultures, etc.). However, 11.1 percent of participants opposed fostering civic lessons to help understand the value of civic education (See Fig.4).

²⁴ The influence of civic education on young people in Lithuania. Justina Saveikaitė, Lithuanian university of Educational Science

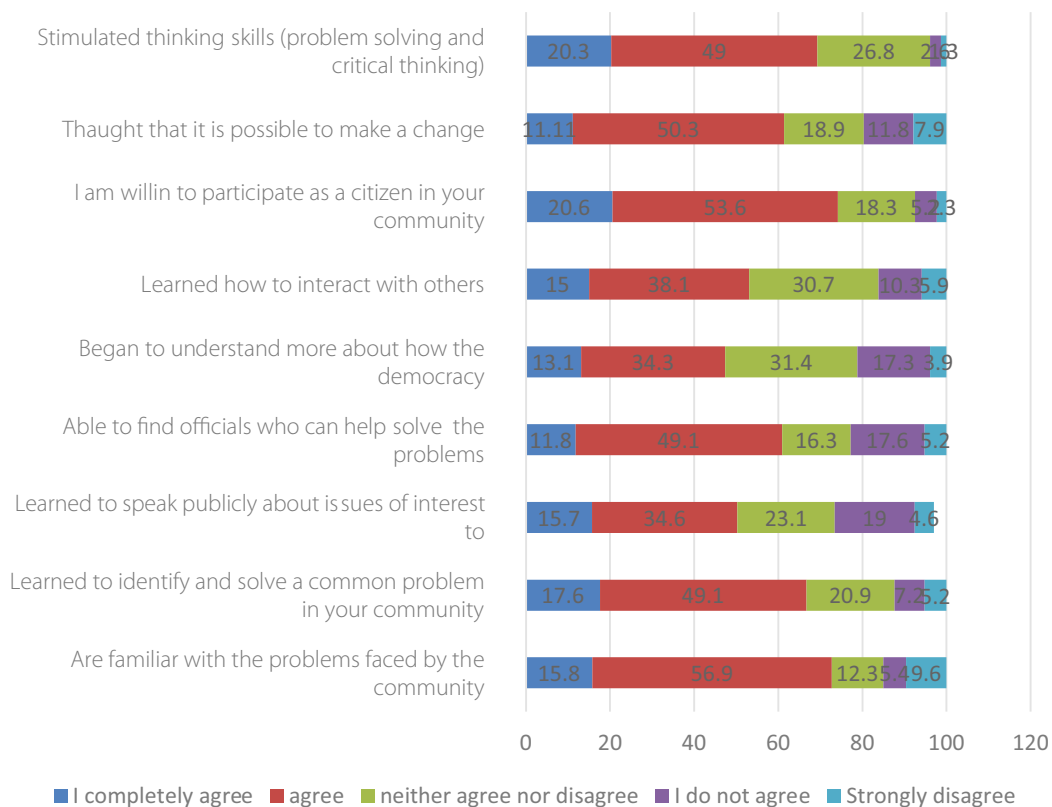
²⁵ The same place((Ibid).



Source: *The influence of civic education on young people in Lithuania. Justina Saveikaitė, Lithuanian university of Educational Science*

Fig. 4 Distribution of respondents by area of improvement in civic lessons (%)

In order to assess the activity of the respondents, students were asked to indicate what skills and knowledge they had gained from the curricular sessions. The vast majority of respondents, 56.9 percent, indicated that the civic education classes helped them to talk about the content more freely in the family regarding the problems facing the community. 53.6 percent of respondents indicated they wanted to do something as citizens about those problems. 50.3 percent of respondents also indicated that after civic education classes, they believed it was possible and were prepared to participate as citizens in their community (see Fig.5).



Source: *The influence of civic education on young people in Lithuania. Justina Saveikaitė, Lithuanian university of Educational Science*

Fig. 5 Distribution of respondents by knowledge improvement in civic lessons (%)

Main civic organisations/activities

“Of course, the nature of activities depends on the field NGO is working in. The majority of NGOs operate in educational and social areas, in rare cases are NGOs working with democracy, human rights, transparency and other core civic issues. Main activities are normally related to raising awareness (conferences, presentations, movie screenings, and exhibitions) and education in forms of training, workshops, study visits, exchanging experiences, etc. Of course, a very important activity is interests’ representation which is what LiJOT exactly does representing the opinion and needs of young people in Lithuania” – says the president of LiJOT M. Zakarka.

Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT) – the biggest non-governmental, non-profit umbrella structure for Lithuanian national youth organisations and regional unions of youth organisations. LiJOT was founded on the 19th of September 1992. Currently LiJOT has 66 members (non-governmental youth organisations), and represents more than 200,000 young people in Lithuania.²⁶ Main activities of LiJOT: Representation of youth interests; Formation and implementation of youth policy; Development of international relations; Fostering of youth leaders; Youth information.

There are 4 main political youth organisations:

Lithuanian liberal youth is an independent, non-governmental, classical liberal youth organisation, established in 1991 and currently gathering over 2500 youngsters all over Lithuania. The objectives of LLJ are political education, promotion of liberal values among young people, training its members for political activity and encouragement of the creation of open and democratic civil society in Lithuania. Training of members for political activity is one of the main goals of LLJ. Some of its members and founders are now well-known personalities in national politics and at the international level. LLJ actively participates in the international activities and maintains well established international contacts with liberal youth organisations around the world. Currently organisation is a member of European Liberal Youth – LYMEC, European Students for Liberty (ESFL) and International Federation of Liberal Youth – IFLRY.²⁷

The Youth organisation „DARBAS” (YOD) was founded in late 2003 continuing its works with 62 departments in 60 municipalities having up to 3,000 members. Unlike many youth organisations in Lithuania, YOD dynamically functions in many towns and their peripheries alike, instead of concentrating its activities exclusively in larger cities. Therefore, this enabled to reflect the diverse Lithuanian youth position. In 2006 Task control system (TCS) was introduced to the members of the organisation, which provides the opportunity effectively participate in the organisation’s activity, to be heard, democratically express views and actively communicate. In 2007 an electronic voting system was introduced. YOD became the first non-governmental organisation whose members can give their votes electronically confirmed by signature. Over the years, the YOD achieved that the youth policy issues to be included in the program of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The organisation has many partners across Europe (Spain, Cyprus, France, Italy, the Czech Republic, San Marino) – in 2007 by initiative of YOD Youth Democrats for Europe (YDE) association was established, whose mission – to represent the European Youth Policy.²⁸



²⁶ <http://lijot.lt/en/about-us>

²⁷ http://www.laisve.lt/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=35&Itemid=15

²⁸ <http://jod.lt/about-organisation/>

The Lithuanian Social Democratic Youth Union (LSDYU) is the oldest independent, national, non-governmental, volunteer-based, left-wing political youth organisation founded in 1922. LSDYU mission is to develop agile and civic Lithuanian youth throughout the values of organisation. LSDYU vision: social democratic youth – a key for a progressive, socially fair and cohesive society.²⁹

The Young Conservative League is a non-governmental conservative youth organisation, established in 1993. It is one of the largest youth organisations in Lithuania and unites more than 1300 members (aged 14 to 35). Organisation's activities: Political - elections and election campaigns, actions etc.; Public - organisation and participation in various events and projects (simulation games, trainings, and debates); Free time - summer camps, etc. Main Goals of JKL: promotion of conservative ideology and values among youth, motivation of young people to participate in political and social activities, promotion of youth policy and youth involvement in decision making processes.³⁰

Main activities of organisations

Based on Youth policy law, youth organisations shall perform the following functions:³¹

- **Attend to and satisfy the common needs and interests of young people or needs and interests of individual youth groups;**
- **Foster civic responsibility and respect for the family;**
- **Carry out informal education of young people;**
- **Organise employment, sport, tourism, cultural and professional activities of young people;**
- **Promote international co-operation of young people;**
- **Foster voluntary youth work;**
- **Carry out other activities in compliance with the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, international agreements of the Republic of Lithuania, laws, and other legal acts.**

The main activities should be:

- **The purpose of youth non-formal education shall be to educate an intelligent person, capable of responsible and creative resolution of his problems and active participation in public life as well as to develop social competencies of young people.**
- **Youth non-formal education shall be carried out by youth organisations, other legal and natural persons.**
- **Youth non-formal education programs and projects must conform to the principles of the implementation of youth policy.³²**

²⁹ http://jaunimieciai.lt/?page_id=4815

³⁰ <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/otlas-partner-finding/organisation/young-conservative-league.666/>

³¹ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=283614

³² http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=283614

Eurodesk in Lithuania

After Lithuania became EU member state, Eurodesk activities started in Lithuania too. A national partner - Lithuanian Youth Council (LiJOT) - became a part of its activities in 2004. First regional representatives joined network in 2005 and during the time of several years they covered almost all Lithuania: from Akmenė to Marijampolė, from Panevėžys to Klaipėda, Šilutė, Alytus. Regional representatives' functions were performed by youth "Round tables"- regional youth councils. 22 Eurodesk Lithuania regional representatives operates in Lithuania (in Vilnius, Kaunas, Mažeikiai, Rietavas, Plungė, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Utena, Molėtai, Biržai, Alytus, Lazdijai, Ukmergė, Gargždai, Šilalė, Visaginas, Zarasai, Rokiškis, Radviliškis, Kupiškis ir Marijampolė).

The main functions are:

- **Information and consultation on topics of mobility and possibilities for young people and people working with youth;**
- **Publicity of Eurodesk services, presentation;**
- **Organisation of informational events.**

Regional representatives of Eurodesk Lithuania participate in national network meetings, international training courses and events, implement mutual projects dedicated to encourage public spirit of young people, self-consciousness, motivation to be involved into society's life and present current possibilities for young people.

Network representatives of Eurodesk provide services and cooperate with Eurodesk partners in other countries. Eurodesk Lithuania is a place to get both national and Europe related information. Since January 2011, Eurodesk Lithuania in cooperation with EU program "Youth in Action" gathered network of young „Žinau viską“ journalists. People joining this network are interested into European themes and want to write or make pictures. Right now this network has more than 200 young journalists.³³

The main reasons of passivity among youth

According to LiJOT president Mantas Zakarka „First of all, there is a lack of quality civic education in schools, because of which young people do not get sufficient knowledge on political system and democratic processes.

Therefore, they do not trust themselves with being able to make decisions (if talking about conventional forms of political participation) nor really know how to exercise the rights they have. There is also lack of trust in political parties and politicians closely related to another reason – lack of political efficacy of participation. In other words, they do not think that, e.g. members of Parliament will actually do what young people ask and even if they decide to express their opinion, in the end, young people do not see that it was taken seriously. Finally, there is the lack of recruitment networks - ordinary ways to attract young people and encourage them to be more active does not function anymore. Regarding this problem LiJOT is running a campaign called "I do care" has already proved to be very successful tool informing and involving youth during national and European elections".

³³ <http://www.lijot.lt/en/projects/all/national/769-%C5%BEinau-visk%C4%85>

The head of the Marijampolė youth organisation council „Round table“ R. Bagdanavičius highlights 2 main reasons: “1) All people around you are usually passive, so you don’t have motivation to make changes and be active. 2) Nowadays youth can get whatever they want. The IT sector gave us a lot (computers, smart phones, and fast internet) for making things easier; however, IT made us lazy.

That is why it is hard to motivate ourselves to do certain activities, trying to learn something interesting, something new. More or less, people see no perspective why to be active, they don’t have the motivation. Also, there is a lack of information, problems with family, friends who are not active and they just imitating them. It is also possible that in some regions are no opportunities for young people to engage”.

Three best cases of successful civic engagement in the youth sector

Youth campaign „Man ne Dzin“ („I Do Care“)

Project “I Do Care” is an information and election promoting campaign for young people. It aims to inform young people about the importance and opportunities of participation in democratic decision-making process and to develop the positive image of young people as active citizens of Lithuania and European Union. It is important that this campaign is apolitical. The main objectives of the campaign is to provide needed information for young people about the importance of their participation in the democratic life, information about democratically electable institutions (municipality, Parliament, President, European Parliament) and their importance in citizen’s life, main information about European Union, and most important – to develop young people’s sense of citizenship.³⁴

„Three Nations – One History“

Is the citizen initiative to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Baltic Way. The goal is to continue spreading the message of the Baltic Way that through unity we can face adversity. In the challenges that people face today, unity is the only way people can face today’s challenges, just like in 1989 when our nations stood united in the Baltic Way. Initiative was created in a free, sovereign country by a generation which has been untouched by the occupation. It aims to illustrate the importance of independence for younger generation and the ones to become. The symbol of this initiative is the eternal circle, which symbolises the common goal, history and the road towards the independence of the countries.³⁵

„Misija Sibiras“

The idea for the project came up in 2005 when a resolution for building patriotism was approved in the Youth Organisations Assembly of Lithuania. This resolution claims that the youth of Lithuania is patriotic, but they perceive it differently than the generations before, therefore the youth does not have the opportunities to show it to the public in traditional ways and means. As a result, the initiative of ‘Mission Siberia’ was born.

³⁴ <http://www.lijot.lt/en/projects/all/national/770-i-do-care>

³⁵ <http://www.balticway25.com/index-en.html#apie>

Goals of the project

- **Foster national history awareness and patriotism among youth;**
- **Stimulate communication between generations and understanding (especially in the spheres of the modern history of Lithuania);**
- **Form a positive image of Lithuania's patriotic and publicly aware youth in the public; Remember and honour the lost souls and injured during the Exile of Lithuanians in the middle of the 20th century;**
- **Remind the public that Siberia is not just an area in Russia – it is a very broad definition that stores in itself many territories of other CIS countries where Lithuanians have been exiled;**
- **Commemorate the memory of the confined countrymen in Siberia, according to the capabilities of the expedition help to clean and tidy up the graves and tombs of the exiled; Meet with local Lithuanians still living in Siberia.**

Level of trust

According to December, 2015 survey data (N=1035 – number of participants)³⁶, people from the age of 18 trust the most: firefighters and policemen (91,1% and 59.7%), also people trust in education (52.7%), health insurance (51.7%), military forces and church, and the president. The least trusted are: parliament (53.9%), government (28.1%), courts (27.3%). Based on this survey, Lithuanians trust in street level bureaucrats (firefighters, policemen, teachers, doctors and etc.).

"Generally level of trust regarding governmental institutions could be described as average. People strongly trust President Dalia Grybauskaitė and Prime Minister Algirdas Butkevičius.

The interesting and joyful fact is that normally prior Parliamentary elections (the next ones will be in October, 2016) the level of trust of the government drastically decreases now I would say that the situation isn't so dramatic and people keep their trust in executive power. On the other hand, level of trust in Lithuania is especially low regarding the main legislative body in Lithuania-Lithuanian Parliament" - Mantas Zakarka, LiJOT president.

³⁶ <http://www.vilmorus.lt/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=2&cntnt01returnid=20>

POLAND

National youth policy

As a result of the parliamentary elections (autumn 2015), Poland is experiencing rapid changes in policy. Many of the strategic programs will be cancelled and replaced by new ones, the targeting of national and Christian values.

There is a high probability that this change will soon concern also the youth policy. The youth policy is described in the Governmental youth program – “Active youth”. The program is in force until 2020. It focuses on the age group 13-30, which forms approximately 23.4% of total population of Poland. The age group has been defined according to the European Union youth strategy from 2009.

Main objectives of the program are:

- **To increase the chances of development and improvement of youth possibilities to enter the social and professional life;**
- **To increase their participation in decision making process;**
- **To train youth leaders.**

The preparation of youth for future life can't be made only on the basis of formal education. The important issue is to encourage them for civic activism. In Poland during 2008-2012 unemployment of young people increased up to 9.3%. It was 3.7% higher than average in the European Union. Unemployment often drives lower level of trust among society, including towards the institutions, lack of interest in social and public affairs and non-participation in elections. The important factor influencing the difficult situation on the youth labour market is lack of match of competences towards requirements of constantly changing labour market. Polish employers appreciate competences of working in group, resolving conflicts, good coping with stress, independent work organisation.

Quoting the National Program for Youth, Active Youth 2013, “in 2011, only 29% 18-34 years old were involved in voluntary service.”

Although there are voluntary centres and the points of information of Eurodesk, it seems many young people aren't aware of these possibilities. In Poland the system of supporting of groups of youth hasn't been established yet. In this field the **following aspects should be taken into account:**

- **Preparation of youth leaders to work with their peers age group;**
- **Preparation of adults working with youth;**
- **Availability of places for youth meetings and different forms of activities;**
- **Availability of finance for youth actions.**

Another issue is involvement of youth within decision making process. According to the Act of law on Public Benefit and Volunteer Work from 2001, the municipalities and communes can establish the youth councils. The councils should express opinion about local resolutions concerning youth policy. However, it isn't clear to what extent the city councils are obliged to

take into account the opinion of the youth council. As a result, the youth councils usually aren't involved in the life of their local communities. Moreover, the system of election of the councils' members is based in schools. That means often they are very young, not prepared for this work and don't have the necessary competences.

The National Program for Youth "Active Youth" 2013 has two components: long-term (systemic) and short-term (competitions).

The first one seeks to find effective long-term solutions of the youth policy. It is based on recommendations included in the report "Youth 2011". Based on the long-term component, the Youth Council will be established with the aim to monitor the youth programmes and provide opinions about youth solutions. The competition component will be financed by grants for non-governmental organisations. It will be financed from national and European sources. The activities will be pre-financed, what is very important particularly for small organisations. The own contribution for the period 2014-2020 will be 10%, including financial and personal costs.

This component is concentrated on four objectives:

- **Development of social competences, including those necessary on the labour market;**
- **Increase of social and civil engagement of youth;**
- **Increase of participation of youth in public decision processes;**
- **Development of supporting system of the youth initiatives.**

There will be four fields of activities:

- **Priority I. interests and hobbies,**
- **Priority II. Social and civic activities,**
- **Priority III. Preparation to the labour market,**
- **Priority IV. Support infrastructure.**

The National Youth Council will be established to coordinate mentioned above priorities. The Council will be composed of representatives of ministries involved in actions for youth and youth organisations. **Tasks of the National Youth Council will be following:**

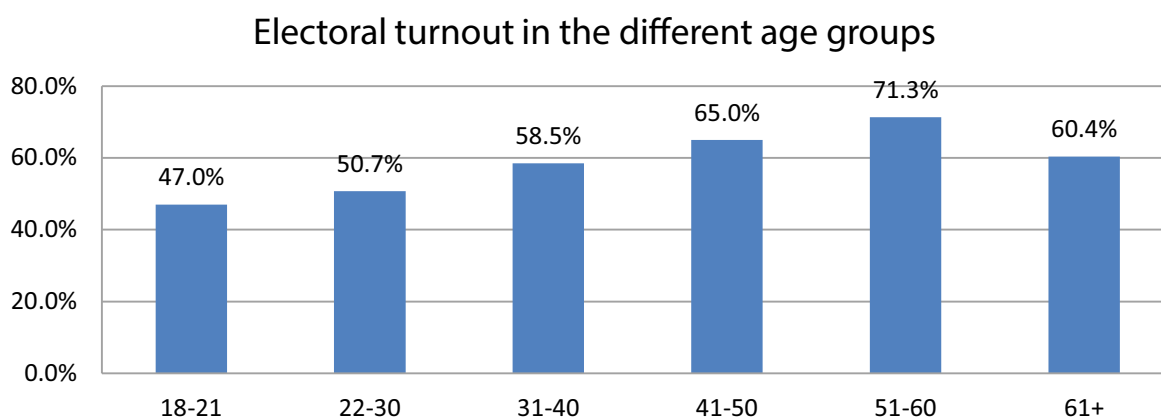
- **Coordination of actions for youth,**
- **Strategic decisions concerning the National Youth Programme,**
- **Evaluation of annual reports,**
- **Creation and monitoring of innovative projects,**
- **Expression of opinions and recommendations of new solutions concerning youth,**
- **Expression of opinions about necessary modifications of the programme.**
- **To facilitate the work of the Council, the National Youth Secretary will be created in the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.**

It is worth noting that in Poland, there were a number of strategic documents, which became the basis for the development of national policies. The first one was a governmental report Poland 2030. "At the end of 2009, after a discussion on the report "Poland 2030" there was the idea of launching a debate on the situation of the young generation. This was accompanied by intuition that with the young generation of Poles happens to be something special. Understanding this phenomenon and its accompanying processes could be useful for many reasons" (Youth, 2011).

Civic engagement in the youth sector

Participation in elections in the youth group is the lowest in Poland.

Age is the most important factor making difference between active and passive electors. This is confirmed by the results of research conducted by Polish General Election Study (*Polskie Generalne Studium Wyborcze* (PGSW))³⁷. The level of attendance is highest among middle-aged people, and the lowest among young people (see Fig.6).



Source: <http://www.batory.org.pl/>

Fig. 6 Electoral turnout in the different age groups

Young people have limited knowledge about politics and it is rather not interesting for them. Often they consider it as boring and the source of conflicts. Previous studies indicate that the Poles are becoming more stable with age in their behaviour regarding electoral participation or abstention. The similar situation is in municipal, national and European elections. Public Opinion Research Centre (Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej CBOS)³⁸ conducts regular surveys on a representative group of adult Poles, including about their participation in elections. Based on data from these studies are carried out after the elections to the European Parliament confirms the hypothesis that young people in the majority do not participate in the European elections. Analysis of survey data (see Table 1) broken down into two age groups between 18-34 years of age (young voters and young adults), and over 34 years clearly shows that the percentage of voters in a group of 34+ is much higher compared to the younger generation voters.

³⁷ <http://isppan.waw.pl/pgsw/>

³⁸ <http://www.cbos.pl/PL/home/home.php>

Table 1

The percentage of voters in elections to the European Parliament by age voters

Election	Age group 18-34	Age group 34+	Difference
Year 2004	19.2	31.70	12.50
Year 2009	23.14	35.84	12.70
Year 2014	27.20	41.32	14.12

Source: <https://repozytorium.umk.pl/>

However, there is also good practice of civic participation by youth. One of them is YouthBank – youth bank of civic projects – it is the initiative which engages young people in the process of establishing and realising projects for local communities.

The first YouthBank was established in Northern Ireland. Its objective was cooperation and understanding between young Catholics and Protestants. The idea of an active supporting of youth in civil activities became more popular not only in Europe, but also in Asia and Africa. At present Youth Banks are in more than 200 communities in 29 countries. They are supported by the network YouthBank International. In Poland the first edition of the YouthBank was in 2014. Youth realised 16 projects concerning health, disability, culture and active spending of free time by young people. Now the project is realised in 5 local communities in partnership with two foundations – Orange and PZU. The project targets youth aged 15-20. Young people are supported by adults, but they make their own decisions about projects they choose to carry out and money to be spent. YouthBank members develop many skills, including leadership, fundraising, communications and strategic thinking as well as self-esteem and team spirit.

Level of civic education

According to the Minister of the National Education, as of 2012 pupils of secondary and high school have obligatory civic education lessons.

In secondary school (youth aged 13-16) the minimum number of civil education is 65 hours for 3 years of education. It should be noted that there is a condition for a positive evaluation of the behaviour at this stage of education; the student has to participate in a collective educational project. Very often, these projects are aimed at the common good. Many schools in their statutes require the student to demonstrate his social involvement (voluntary work). In vocational and high school (students aged 16-19) it is only 30 hours of civil education for 3 years. Only those students who chose civic education for final exam have additionally 180 hours dedicated to the topic. In technical school (age 16-20) there are also additional 30 hours during 4 years period and additional 180 hours for those who chose subject of civic education for final exams.

"In my opinion it isn't enough. It is necessary to follow the curricula and material included in school books. There is no time for real civic education. I encourage my students to do volunteering, discuss with them some civic issues, but I have time to do it only with a class I am responsible for.

We do it during our weekly meetings. I am lucky to work in a private school, so there are more opportunities. I participated with students in events before the elections; we distributed leaflets and posters, interviewed people. We also went to the court and city hall. In public schools teachers don't do it. As a result, quite often a young person aged 18 doesn't know where to go to get the ID card" – explains the experienced teacher from Upper Silesia region. Civic education in Poland focuses neither on action, nor on assimilation of practical skills. In practice, even sociology students rarely know the basics of civic education such as what NGOs are.

Main civic organisations/activities

In December 2014 there were about 17,000 foundations and 100,000 associations. However, it does not mean that all of them operate. On the basis of the results of research "Situation sector, non-governmental organisations" estimates that approximately 70% of those registered operates.

Others have been suspended or aren't involved in any activities, but still they remain in the register. That means in Poland around 80,000 associations and foundations are active. Polish organisations stand out from the eastern part of Europe, meaning that they have a social influence - even at a governmental level. The www.ngo.pl website is a place to exchange information and knowledge for the entire civil sector in Poland.

One of the key operating institutions in the described area is Centre for Civic Education (*Centrum Edukacji Obywatelskiej*). Foundation registered in Poland since 1994. It is the educational institution and non-governmental organisation with the status of public benefit organisation. Its main objective is to improve the quality of the education system, to promote civic knowledge, practical skills and attitudes necessary to build a democratic state and civil society. The activities carried out by the foundation are nationwide with participation of several thousand of schools. The Foundation's programs include a wide range of topics - from teacher training through public education programs and political (organised on the occasion of each election, "Young People Vote", covering from 1,000 to several thousand schools), education, cultural, historical, economic, global education and ecological topics; a program to support school student self-government, media education programs.

Methods of implementation programs are primarily e-coaching courses, training sessions, workshops and conferences, individual contact coordinators with participants and schools, online tools (a blogging platform, the database edutuba.pl, educational materials, and a website with plenty of support material), publishing (mainly manual for knowledge of society for high school - KOSS).

CEO of foundation works with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Ministry of Environment, the Chancellery of the Sejm (parliament), the Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw Uprising Museum, numerous non-governmental organisations.

Volunteering

Long-term volunteering requires time, motivation and responsibility. That's why many youngsters prefer to be involved in occasional voluntary activities.

In schools they collect used batteries, waste-paper and plastic caps. It has both ecological and financial dimension – in exchange they receive money for a charity cause. In spring many schools and youth organisations join also a national event Cleaning the World. Moreover, for more than twenty years in January another big national event has been organising – the Great Orchestra of Christmas Charity. The Grand Orchestra of Christmas Charity (GOCC, in Polish *Wielka Orkiestra Świątecznej Pomocy, WOŚP*) is one of the biggest, non-governmental, non-profit, charity organisations in Poland. The GOCC Foundation has American Heart Association Certification for providing courses in Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and Emergency cardiac care (ECC) use of high technology for medical lifesaving. It was founded in 1993. The main objective, at that time, was "Protecting Health and Saving Children's Lives by Providing Medical Equipment to Public Hospitals" (as stated in the deed of foundation). During the first Finale (for the benefit of pediatric cardio-surgery) in the same year, the Foundation collected a total of USD 1,535,440.68. Every

year, millions of Poles donate their money to the Foundation and, between 1993 and 2005 they collected more than \$200 million for public hospitals in Poland. Volunteers (about 120 thousand a year), mainly youth, collect money for Purchase of medical equipment for pediatric wards and providing decent medical care for seniors. In such ways financed e.g. The Universal New-born Hearing Screening Program. It provides test of the hearing of new-borns in neonatology wards. Another action popular among youth is "Noble package". Volunteers find and interview people in a difficult financial situation, make a database on the internet. Afterwards individual, family, school or company can choose a family to prepare a Christmas gift. The difference between the action and other charities is that people are treated on individual basis and receive what they really need.

Moreover, some NGOs have special sections for youth. One example is the Polish Blind Union. Blind and partially sighted youth can learn how to prepare a youth exchange, organize a trip, work with the local community, sometimes there are leadership trainings organized specially for them. Those who know languages can take part in the European Voluntary Service adapted to their needs. Due to that, they gain new experiences and skills, learn foreign languages, meet new people, become more independent and self-confident. According to the information from the EVS coordinator from the Polish Blind Union, all blind and partially sighted people who were on EVS now have a job.

Another possibility to learn responsibility and develop civic skills is involvement in the class or school autonomy. There are elections of the head of the class. Students also elect their representatives in the school council. Representatives can suggest some activities, initiatives, negotiate with teachers. As a result, students have the influence on their school life.



Youth have also the possibility to develop their skills and interests in informal groups in sport clubs, scouts or attending artistic activities organised e.g. by libraries or cultural centres: drawing, dancing, singing, theatre. There are also youth groups organised by churches of different confessions. They focus not only on development of religion awareness, but also organise trainings and summer camps with English classes. In July 2016 in Krakow

in Poland will be organised the World Youth Day. It will be the great opportunity for Polish youth not only to practice their language skills, but also their openness and civil attitudes. It is observed that more young people are interested in standing for in elections in municipalities and even to the parliament. There are also the youth associations which focus on political issues, e.g. *Młodzież Wszechpolska* concentrated on national values. On the other hand, many youth vote neither in local, nor in national and European elections. They talk a lot about necessary changes, complain against the government, but are passive citizens who don't do anything to make a change.

The main reasons of passivity among youth

The already mentioned study "Social Diagnosis" clearly indicates that young people are least focused on the common good. At the same time pupils and students, according to the same

survey, have the best living conditions among all social groups. Young people also evaluated worse reforms in Poland after 1989. This phenomenon is difficult to explain in one way. Why are those (youth), who have an overall decent situation, so reluctant to participate in active citizenship? It seems that reason should be searched for within educational system, as well as the prevailing belief that cooperation is bad, associated with communism and historical events. It juxtaposes with liberalism, which is desirable, but also focused on the individual and consumption.

The tendency to be member of voluntary organizations fell sharply from 30.5% in 1989 (World Value Survey <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp>) to 14.8% and remained at this level till now (2015) 13.4%. In the edition of 2015 Diagnosis also researched the type of organisations Poles are active. Most active members are in religious organisations (24.5%), sport clubs (13.8%), groups of interests (e.g. fishing, philatelic, automotive, etc.) (13.6%) and trade union (12.1%); in the remaining 11 types of organisations (listed in the questionnaire) actively works less than 10% of those claiming being active in any organisation and 24.5% state being active in organisations not listed in the questionnaire. As for the age structure, the favourite organisations of youth up to 29 years are sports clubs, circles of interest and environmental organisations. Young people are mainly active in occasional actions, like in described above The Grand Orchestra of Christmas Charity, in protests against Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), but also in groups of sports fans.

Three best cases of successful civic engagement in the youth sector

Civic fairy-tale workshops. For a few years, the Civil Initiatives Development Centre (CRIS) has been organising a few civic fairy-tale workshops. They are designed for youth aged 13-16. Youth have participated in a few workshops: on citizenship, writing and illustrating fairy stories. The resulting stories were published as a book and an audio book, recorded by local celebrities, including actors, politicians and journalists. The Civic Fairy Tales project has been distributed to kindergartens and other centres for children. In organised sessions young people read the fairy tales aloud for children. The workshops are becoming increasingly popular and were held four times in 2015. Many participants started volunteering. By popularising volunteering and increasing the youth engagement this project fulfils the objectives of the Governmental youth program.

“I can do it myself! Project-based teaching”.

The CRIS association makes other youth-related projects. One of them is “I can do it myself! Project-based teaching”. This project was co-financed by the European Social Fund and involved four schools from small communities in Upper Silesia. Its main aim was equal educational opportunities for everyone. The project has provided 350 students with additional teaching in English, maths and other school subjects and established a number of clubs/networks for instance on computers, tourism and entrepreneurship topics. The project has also provided support for career planning, for instance through meetings with career advisers and visits



to a number of firms. ICT training was provided for teachers. The project also provided financial support to enable students and teachers to engage in a number of different activities. For instance, groups of participating students received a small budget and decided as a group how to spend it. They drew up project proposals and campaigned to convince other students to vote for their proposals. The projects with the most votes received funding. A number of innovative and creative projects were funded, including the production of a short film promoting the local community, a trip, dancing classes, a meeting with an actor and instruction in building and programming a robot using Lego. The students also decided to buy books for the school library.

Polichrom. Another good practice is gamification as a method of motivating young people. Gamification is a project implemented by the Regional Voluntary Centre in Katowice. This is the concept of applying game mechanics and game design techniques to engage and motivate people to achieve their goals. Polichrom is a game for school volunteering groups of students. "Polichrom" is the opposition of the Monochrom which destroys the world when people are closed to others and egoistic. Volunteers organise some events like a charity concert or picnic for local communities. They get points for the events and there is a ranking table of the most active volunteering school group. Students have a mission to accomplish – they are volunteers in the real world, but there is also a virtual world of the game on the website (<http://www.polichrom.pl/>) and in the social media. When they do something for others in the real world, they receive points in the virtual one.

Level of trust

"The European Social Survey 2014" shows the gap between the level of trust in the Nordic countries and Poland and other post-Soviet countries.

Since 2002 every two years there is research done in the European Union countries, but also in Russia, Ukraine, Switzerland and Israel. It is done with the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Respondents answered three questions:

- **Do you generally think that most people can be trusted, or in dealing with people you have to be careful?**
- **If the opportunity should appear, would most people try to take advantage of you, or be fair?**
- **Do you think that people first of all try to help others, or do they primarily care about self-interest?**

Replies have been evaluated on a scale from 0 to 10. The highest number of points collected was 30 points. Denmark is the European leader with 20.5 points, continued by Norway (19.7), Finland (19.3), Sweden (19.1) and Iceland (19). In the forefront are also the Netherlands (19.9) and Switzerland (17.8) - as stated by prof. Henryk Domański of *Instytut Filozofii i Socjologii Polskiej Akademii Nauk*/ The Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IFiS PAN) "a symbol of pluralism, democracy and freedom". At the bottom of the ranking is Poland with 12.8 points and behind only Bulgaria (10.8), Cyprus (11.2) and Slovakia (12.1).

What distinguishes the Scandinavian countries from the others, where the people are the most trustful? Prof. Henryk Domański of IFiS PAN lists several factors: citizen-friendly welfare state, low income inequality (the Nordic countries have the lowest level of the Gini index measuring inequality, at 0.25, and such. Poland - 0.34, England - 0.36, Portugal - 0.38, UKRAINE - 0.45, Russia

- 0.46), equal opportunities, low levels of corruption (the Nordic countries in the international ranking are least corrupt societies in the forefront), the participation of citizens in social organisations. Another important factor is equality. In Sweden 43% of members of parliament are women, in Denmark 39%, in Finland 37%, and Norway 36%. It's better than the world average (just over 19%, and in Poland 24%). The Public Opinion Research Center examines the level of trust every 2 years and last available data is from 2012. Researching whenever people can be trusted, the results show that in social situations Poles are rather wary of other people. Only less than a quarter of respondents (23%) had the assumption that most people can be trusted. While nearly three-quarters (74%) believe strongly in maintaining a caution in their relations with others. Another study (*NR 29/2014 ZAUFANIE W RELACJACH MIĘDZYLUDEK Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej Warszawa, 2014*) found that: "Generalized social trust indicator shows that in Poland the distrust of the other invariably prevail over openness and trust. In addition, in the last two years, has a group of people with the highest degree of caution in dealing with others (from 19% to 25%)".

ROMANIA

National youth policy

At a national level, law No. 350 from the 20 of July 2006 regulate the legal framework necessary to ensure the adequate conditions for the socio-professional integration of young people.

- **This law institutes a series of policies in the youth field, especially:**
- **The responsible central and local public administration structures in the youth field;**
- **The non-governmental structures in and for the youth sector;**
- **Stimulation of the participation of youth in the civic life and social protection of young people;**
- **Financing of the youth activities;**
- **Public material resources designed for the activities of young people.**

The Romanian Youth Council has participated in developing the “National Action Plan for Youth in Romania”, in developing the law no. 146/ 2002 regarding the youth foundations from Bucharest and around the country and the National Youth Foundation; developing the law no. 425/ 2004 regarding the establishment of the National Day of Youth. The Romanian Youth Council took part also in developing the draft of the law of youth.

The Romanian youth Forum drew the attention upon the fact that the Law of Youth (350/ 2006) doesn't respond to the actual needs of the 5.5 millions of youth in Romania:

- **The actual legislation in the field of youth doesn't solve the problem of social inequalities which exist in Romania, nor the discrepancy between youth from the urban and the rural areas.**
- **The actual legislation should be correlated with the main pillars of the National Strategy For Youth (Work and Entrepreneurship, Culture and Non-formal Education, Health, Sports and Recreation, Participation and volunteering), to eliminate the main difficulties in accomplishing its objectives.**
- **The current legislation does not put enough emphasis on active participation, civic responsibility and structured dialog with youth; meanwhile these objectives are being part of Europe 2020 Strategy.**
- **The actual legislation in the field of youth does not respond to the needs of our generation.**

In addition to these, there are a small number of laws in the field of youth and their implementation is inadequate as well.

Level of civic education

Citizenship education in school

Civic education begins already in secondary school, as a subject. Children learn about the basic concepts of society and how society, a state, or a community works.

It continues in high school, in form of social studies/ subjects like: sociology, economy, psychology. In university civic education as such is not part of the curriculum any more, but there are many ways of involving youth to participate in different programs. The Ministry for Education recently proposed to change the subject of civic education and replace it according to the following:

- **Education for the children's rights – in the 5th grade, 1 class/ week**
- **Intercultural education – in the 6th grade, 1 class/ week**
- **Education for democratic society – in the 7th grade, 1 class/week**
- **Economical education – in the 8th grade, 1 class/ week**

Based on the "Citizenship Education in Europe" report of the European Commission (2012), we can state the following about the citizenship education in Romanian schools:

- **Citizenship education exists as a compulsory, stand-alone subject in primary and/or secondary education;**
- **The length of time citizenship education is a compulsory subject is of 4 years;**
- **Romania is between the only 6 countries in Europe (along with Estonia, Greece, Spain, France and Portugal), which has specific recommendations for citizenship education in primary education; However, none of these countries prescribe taught time exclusively for this level;**
- **As regards the parents' participation in schools, Romania is one of the small number of countries where parents' participation in class councils is officially founded;**
- **Along with Spain, Latvia, Slovenia and Sweden, Romania also has specific recommendations for assessing student attainment in citizenship. In conclusion, for example in year 2003 a series of assessment standards were developed for civic education (grade 4) and civic culture (grade 8). For grade 8 new marking criteria was developed for civic culture.**

If we consider nationwide initiatives we can say that Romania has a yearly organised after-school program called "other kind of school" ("ScoalaAltfel" in Romanian), during which all the schools provide activities devoted to citizenship education. In Romania people already learn about citizenship during school, they have a base of improvement for the future in this field.

Civic engagement in the youth sector

Civic engagement in public issues and decision making

Based on the document "Does public participation exist in Romania?" (*Centrul de Resurse pentru Participare Publica*) since 2000 the Romanian legislation in the field of civic participation in public issues and decision making is continuously developing.

However, the surveys conducted in this field state, that in Romania the engagement in political and public issues is low – fact available for every age category, including youth. For example the survey conducted by ANSIT-ANT (2008) declares, that around 65% of the youth show low or very low **interest for politics**. The same study also shows that youth are not interested in the activities of public institutions. The **interest for central public institutions** was lower (16%), then that for the local public institutions (36%).

More recent data (2011) shows that in the opinion of youth aged 15-35, the public administration in Romania didn't change (negatively or positively) during the last years. If we compare responses we can state, that youth are even more indifferent and less critical then adults above 35 (ANSIT-ANT, 2011).

As regards the **level of satisfaction towards the functioning of democracy**, most of the youth (70%) declare themselves totally or mostly unsatisfied, while only around 25% have rather positive attitudes towards this question. Comparatively, at European level only 48% declare themselves unsatisfied with the functionality of democracy in their countries.

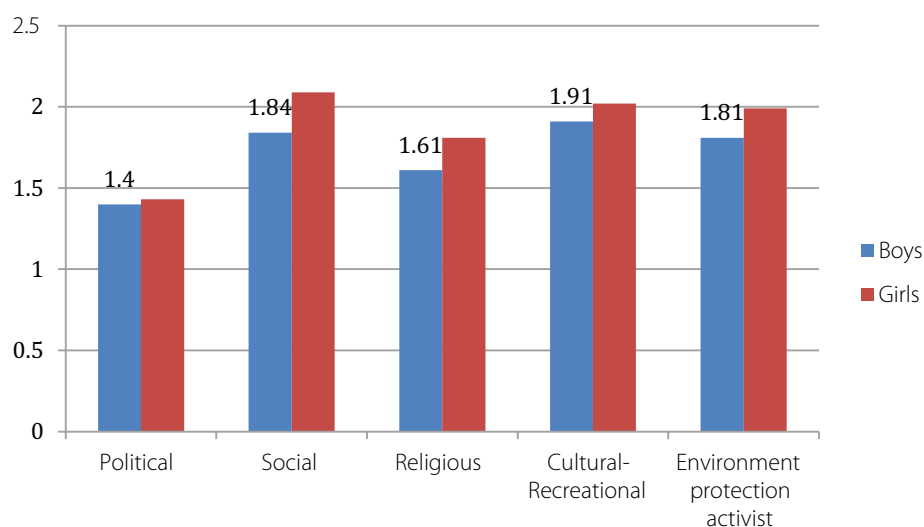
Identity and sense of belonging to a community

The EVS survey (ANSIT-ANT, 2008) shows that approximately 15% of the Romanian youth aged 15-35 are not proud to be Romanian citizens, while 30% are proud or very proud of it.

Compared with the responses of adults above 35 we observe, that youth are less proud then adults for being Romanian citizens. Compared with the responses of youth from European level, Romania obtained approximately 13% lower rates at this aspect.

However, youth consider themselves proud and the rates of belonging were much bigger in the case of their own geographical regions (counties, regions).

In Romania civic engagement in most cases means being active and doing volunteer work in different areas. A survey made among 1,108 high school students from Northern Transylvania and Szeklerland proves that civic engagement is quite equal with volunteering. In our research executed during February – June 2015 we separated five areas of activities; environmental, social,



Source: Rusu Szidonia, Max Weber Foundation

Fig. 7 Volunteering areas divided by gender, Romania

political, religious and cultural. The age groups targeted: 14-18 year olds. The following diagram (see Fig. 7) shows the intensity of each activity divided by gender. (The activities were placed on Likert scale from values 1 through 5, where 1 means "I do not take part in activities", and 5 means "I take part many times a week".

The red column shows the values of the girls and the blue one shows the values of the boys. The first column refers to political activities, which has the lowest intensity index, after that comes the one with the highest values, the Social area, than the Religious, the Cultural/Recreational activities, and the last column is the Environment protection activist.

Volunteering

As a result of the amendment, since 2014 volunteering has been accepted as professional practice in Romania.

Based on the research among high school students it can be observed that more than 80 percent of them are or were involved in volunteer work, but only 66 of them have contracts of volunteering. The most popular organisations and activities are from the social sphere and environmental protection.

Based on a survey (type Omnibus / made by Mercury Research in 2010) in 2010, the level of volunteering in Romania is best shown by this table below (distinguished to different volunteer activities) (see Table 2).

Table 2

Volunteering in Romania

In the past 12 months, have you personally	Yes, once in my lifetime	Yes, a few times	No	I don't know/ I don't answer
Donated to a church	19,2%	33,0%	47,2%	0,6%
Donated, as an answer to a humanitarian calling from the newspaper or television for people in need	7,6%	11,3%	78,7%	2,4%
Did volunteer work for the local church or the community	3,5%	15,1%	79,7%	1,8%
Donated blood	4,8%	6,8%	86,7%	1,8%
Donated for other purposes	4,4%	6,4%	86,9%	2,3%
Did volunteer work for a non-governmental organisation	0,7%	3,0%	94,2%	2,2%

Source: Romania 2010. Nongovernmental sector- profile, tendencies, challenges

Main civic organisations/activities

Among the main youth civic organisations we can mention:

- **Romanian Youth Council (CTR)** – is an autonomous, non-governmental organisation, established through the free association of the interested non-governmental structures for youth. CTR is the main non-governmental partner of the public institutions and authorities in what regards the problems of youth. CTR is the youth platform acknowledged as the structure being the Romanian member of the European Youth Forum, a platform which represents the youth at European level, with a headquarters in Brussels, the main discussion partner of the European Committee, European Council and of the United Nations (UN) in developing the policies for youth at a European and an international level.
- **Romanian Youth Forum** - is the non-governmental, apolitical, non-profit federation, which represents 155 youth organisations from Romania (6 national and 149 local organisations). Promoted values: empowerment, equality, respect for diversity and minorities, acknowledgement, lack of discrimination, innovation. Romanian Youth Forum has the following objectives: stimulating the democratic participation of youth; research in the field of public policies which regard/ influence the life of youth; developing recommendations regarding public policies which regard/ influence the life of youth; monitoring the process of decision making with the scope of promoting the rights of the Forum's members; integrating the youth on the labour market; social inclusion.
- **The Foundation for Development of Civic Society (Fundatia pentru Dezvoltarea Societatii Civile – FDSC)** in 2009 made an online catalogue for Civic Society. This register contains data about NGO's in Romania. In Romania the Department of Justice and Equality distinguishes these non-governmental organisations: associations, foundations, federations and unions.

The main reasons of passivity among youth

According to the Romanian Youth Forum:

Out of the **main problems and risk situations which the youth are dealing with**, we name the following:

- 51.5% of the youth below the age of 18 live under the poverty line;
- 59.9% of the Romanian youth live in chronic unemployment (longer than 6 months);
- 1 out of 10 young people sustains his family by working and his main preoccupation is to make a living;
- 1 out of 10 young people abandons his studies;
- 82% of the Romanian youth thinks that school doesn't prepare them for the labour market;
- 60% of the young people can't afford a place to stay (to rent, or to buy an apartment);
- Only 1 percent of the youth decides to start a business on his own;
- Only 5% of the youth has opportunities of actively involving in the society;
- One third of the youth never does any sports;
- Around 10% of the youth has ended up consuming alcohol on a daily basis;

- 65% of the youth below the age of 16 already smokes;
- For more than 60% of the youth politics don't represent an area of interest.
- We consider the following to also be very serious:
 - The lack of any references to health, healthy lifestyle, mass sports, non-formal education or youth workers in the current law;
 - Low financing of youth activities.

Under the circumstances described above, it is easier to understand the passiveness of youth. They are very little encouraged to express their opinions, to get actively involved in society, or to participate in policy making.

The most common and known form of civic participation is still mainly volunteering, and it's still not too widely spread across the country. There is still a large gap between youth from rural and urban areas, those from rural areas having considerably less opportunities to develop, both personally and professionally.

Three best cases of successful civic engagement in the youth sector

Though in Romania the civic engagement of youth has just extended during the last years, one could already describe many best cases of successful civic engagement initiatives. However for a more objective view the examples presented below were taken from the "Catalogue of winning stories from the Public Participation Awards Gala" (Source in Romanian language: http://www.ce-re.ro/upload/Catalog_G3P6_web1.pdf). All the initiatives presented below were winners of the Awards Gala organised in 2015. The three examples were chosen based on the results they produced, meaning that we have chosen the initiatives which covered bigger geographical areas with their results (national or regional rather than local).

"Network for Cytostatics" - Campaign

Initiators of the campaign: Vlad Voiculescu, Vlad Mixich – MedAlert

Between 2008 and 2013 thousands of patients suffering from cancer started their treatments late or followed incomplete treatments. The reason was that in Romania the cytostatics prescribed for them were not procurable – this period being mentioned as the "cytostatic crisis".

The initiative of the civil society started from a man, who procured the needed medicine from foreign countries and brought them to Romania. The initiative was soon extended within a campaign, others started to join him as well and at the end 600 volunteers were bringing medicine from abroad. However, the initiators of the network did not stop at this point, as they wanted a long-term solution and also a concrete response from the responsible public institutions. So they organised an advocacy group, which was meant to convince the government to provide the needed medicine stock for the hospitals. The initiators also created an online platform, where hospitals from all around Romania could send alerts, if medicine was missing in their institutes. After months of monitoring and maintaining the subject in the public agenda, two emergency orders were voted and assured the needed procurements for the hospitals. The prime minister from that moment, Victor Ponta stated in an interview for Hotnews "It is justified to ask for my resignation for the cytostatic crisis, however until Wednesday I am going to resolve this issue".

“Last chance for the mountain rivers” – Campaign

Initiators: WWF Romania

Small hydropower stations are presented as having an important economic potential, so they started appearing in mountain areas without taking into account the protection requirements of these zones. However, the hydropower stations are devastating to the ecosystem (ex. nationally and internationally protected fish species die because of them). During 2013 construction approvals were given for approximately 300 hydropower stations, without a strategic planning. As the subject was rather technical and the public didn't understand the long-term effects of these stations on nature, WWF started with a national campaign for informing people. Afterwards, they requested for meeting with the competent public institutions and with relevant non-profit institutions working in the field; they created an online platform for discussions and informing; they have sent claims to the European Commission; they have organised an online petition and many other initiatives.

As a result, together with 20,000 followers they suspended the issuing of construction approvals of small hydropower stations in naturally protected areas until a coherent legislation is realised in this domain and they obtained stopping the financing of these stations via EU funds (2014-2020). The campaign is still going on and obtains positive results.

“A law, a 25 year jump” - campaign

Initiator: Daruieste Viata Association

The members of the association observed during time, that the budget is not planned correctly in the public health sector: money is given for treating the lymphatic cancer and leukemia, however, the diagnosis is not covered by the public budget. So even if the oncology hospitals were equipped with very expensive diagnosis infrastructures, many people couldn't afford to



use them, so their diagnosis were sometimes incorrect, they didn't get the correct treatments, etc. In order to resolve this issue the initiators first started to write notifications to the Ministry of Health for changing the legislation in this field, however, they didn't get a response. The next step was to organise a public campaign involving mass media and the public itself. Even if they obtained a meeting within the Ministry of Health and presented the facts, nothing happened next. So the subject was presented

during news and other media channels and a second meeting was obtained with the Ministry of Health. The efforts of the association and its followers conducted to create a subprogram dedicated to fund the diagnosis (Government Decision No. 18/17.10.2014). Since then more than 800 new patients were diagnosed and could benefit from the correct treatment.

Level of trust

Trust in people

A national statistical analysis realised in 2008 asked respondents about the level of their trust in people.

Being asked "Generally speaking do you think you can trust in most of the people?", 75% of the respondents declared that it is better to take care regarding relations with people and only 16% of the respondent think, that you can trust most of the people.

Statistically no difference was found between the respondents aged 15-35 and adults above 35. However, differences can be found if we compare the responses of youth from our country and those from other countries of Europe: 82% of Romanian youth declared you generally can't trust people, while the rate of youth from other European countries was of 72%. If we look at the trust level of teenagers however, the situation is different. Based on the "Civic and political engagement of youth" (Soros Foundation, 2010), the teenagers aged between 14-19 trust their families at a rate of 95.6%. As regards strangers, 35% of respondents said they are "quite enough" and "enough" trustful.

Trust in institutions

Based on the data provided by the Eurobarometer (2010), youth aged 15-35 tend to trust in: Church, the European Union and the Internet (more than 50% at each). Other institutions in the case of which the level of trust was high was the army, radio, television, and the United Nations. On the other hand the institutions in which youth don't trust are the national political ones, namely the political parties, the government and the parliament. In comparison with the trust levels at European level, Romanian youth tend to be more distrustful in institutions (both civic and political). The comparative diagram below are about those countries where the level of general trust is very low, shows that in Romania the level of trust by 2014 was increasing, but comparing to OECD countries it is still very low. Based on political surveys made by INSSE (The National Statistical Institute), most of the people in Romania don't trust authorities.

III. RESULTS OF ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. RESEARCH SAMPLE OF ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Initial screening questions were used in the questionnaire to determine whether each respondent can be qualified based on age. The next question made a split of gender of respondents. Following questions examined level of education and employability status. The final question in the section assessed belonging to the rural or urban community. Responses were accepted from qualified respondents until the quotas of at least 100 questionnaires per country were completed. In the selection of the respondents, a systematic random sampling method was applied, which determines the geographical location and studying as characteristics of the selection. Average time of completion for participating respondents was approximately 9 minutes and 4 seconds; time for completion by tablets and smartphones is shorter than 9 minutes. From the device perspective, 75% of responses have been submitted by PC's and laptops, 23% by smartphones and 2% by tablets. The response rate is 45%.

A total of 550 questionnaires were fully completed. Latvian respondents in total were 101, Lithuanian 102, Estonian 110, Poland 113 and Romanian 116 and 8 responses from other countries, which are not included in the analysis.

Characterization of Latvian sample set. Age groups: The dominant age group is 19-25 years old and is represented by 40.6%, followed by age groups of 15-18 years old with 27.7% and 26.7% of the group of 26-30 years old. The smallest group is youth under 15 with 5.0% representation. **Gender:** The gender distribution ratio is unequal: female – 79.2%, and male - 20.8%. **Level of education:** 33.7 % of respondents are involved in studies at university; 28.7 % are enrolled in schools and 10.9% are college students, while 26.7% have responded that they are not involved in the study process. **Employability:** The employability has been evaluated by indication of "Yes" or "No". 54.5% of respondents have replied that they are employed and 45.5% that they are not. **Urban or rural living place:** Concerning respondents' belonging to the rural or urban living place, the majority or 69.0% of respondents are from the urban environment and the rest 31.0% are from rural settings.

Characterization of Lithuanian sample set. Age groups: The dominant age group is 15-18 years old and is represented by 69.6%, followed by age groups of 19-25 years old with 22.5%. The smallest groups are youth under 15 with 4.9% representation and age group of 26-30 years old with 2.9%. **Gender:** The gender distribution ratio is more unequal comparing to Latvian sample set: female – 61.8%, and male - 38.2%. **Level of education:** 68.6% of respondents are involved in studies at school; 23.5% are enrolled in universities. There are 6.9% enrolled in college, while 1.0% has responded that they are not involved in the study process. **Employability:** Since major age group is relatively young, it is also observed in employability. Only 35.3 % of respondents have replied that they are employed and 64.7% that they are not. **Urban or rural living place:** Concerning respondents' belonging to the rural or urban living place, the majority or 75.5% are from the urban environment and the rest (24.5%) are from rural settings.

Characterization of Estonian sample set. Age groups: The dominant age group is 19-25 years old and is represented by 49.1%, followed by age groups of 26-30 years old with 25.5%

and 23.6% of the group of 15-18 years old. The smallest group is youth under 15's with 1.8% representation. **Gender:** The gender distribution ratio is unequal: female made up 80.0%, and male 20.0%. In Estonia highest gender inequality in sample is observed. **Level of education:** 48.2% of respondents are involved in studies at university; 22.7% are enrolled in schools and 10.9% are college students, while 18.2% have responded that they are not involved in the study process. **Employability:** An equal split of 50.0% employed and 50.0% unemployed has been reported. **Urban or rural living place:** The majority or 65.5% of respondents are from the urban environment and the rest (34.5%) are from rural settings. That is highest amount of rural participants among countries sample sets.

Characterization of Romanian sample set. Age groups: The dominant age group is 19-25 years old and is represented by 56.9%, followed by age groups of 26-30 years old with representation of 37.9%. The smallest groups are youth of 15-18 years old – 4.3% and youth under 15 – 0.9%. **Gender:** The gender distribution ratio is unequal similar to other sample sets: female – 68.1%, and male - 31.9%. **Level of education:** 60.3% of respondents are involved in studies at university, correlated with domination of older youth age groups; 28.4% are not in education process, while 6.9% are enrolled in colleges and 4.3% are enrolled in schools. **Employability:** 62.1% of respondents have replied that they are employed and 37.9% that they are not. Taking into account age group, the employability level might be higher; however, it might be affected by unemployment challenges. **Urban or rural living place:** The majority or 85.3% of respondents are from the urban environment and the rest - 14.7% are from rural settings. Comparing to other sample sets, Romanian has the highest number of urban participants.

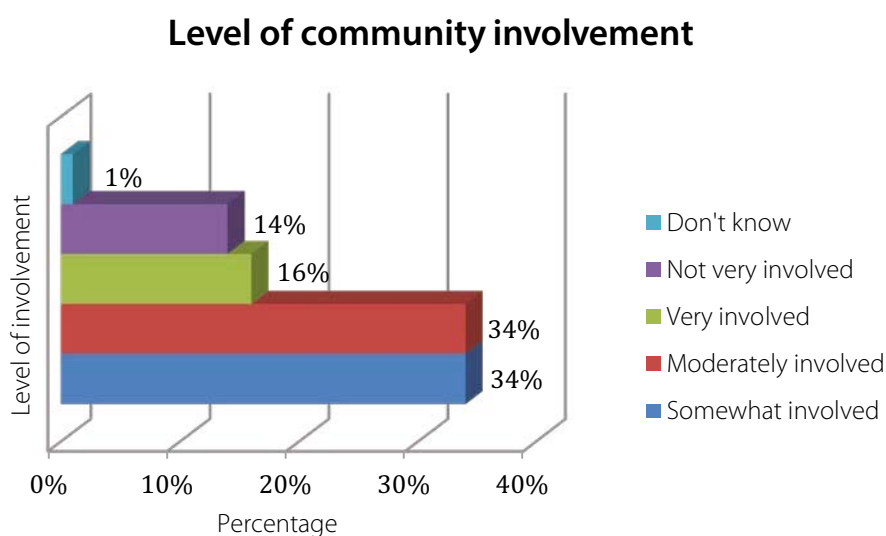
Characterization of Polish sample set. Age groups: The dominant age group is youth 15-18 years old and is represented by 61.1%, followed by age groups of 19-25 years old with 16.8% and 12.4% of the group of 26-30 years old. The smallest group is youth under 15 with 9.7% representation. **Gender:** The gender distribution ratio is unequal: with female at 70.8%, and male at 29.2%. **Level of education:** Majority of respondents (60.2%) are involved in studies at school, correlating with respondents' ages; 16.8% are enrolled in colleges and 14.2% are students at universities, while 8.8 % have responded that they are not involved in the study process. **Employability:** The high level of youth representatives can also be observed in employability trends. Only 17.7% of respondents replied that they are employed and 82.3% that they are not. **Urban or rural living place:** The majority or 72.6% are from the urban environment and the rest 27.4% are from rural settings.

Overall characterization of sample sets. Age groups: The sample sets are different in terms of distribution according to age group. Polish and Lithuanian sample sets has dominant very young youth groups, while Latvian and Estonian has similar distributions of age groups with majority of respondents within age group of 19-25 years. Romanian sample is also characterised by dominance of the age group of 19-25 years old, but also large proportion is age group of 26-30 years old, indicating that its oldest youth sample set. **Gender:** Gender split has been unequal in all sample sets, with closest to equal split among Lithuanian sample set, while Latvian and Estonian sample sets have the most unequal gender distribution. **Level of education:** Level of education correlates with the ages of specific sample sets; the highest amounts of youth not involved in study process are in Romania and Latvia, while lowest – in Lithuania. **Employability:** Employability also is very much related to the age group dominance. However, comparing sample sets with young dominant youth groups (Poland and Lithuania), it can be observed that employability is higher in Lithuania. In Latvia and Estonia, with similar distribution of age groups, employed are half of respondents, while in Romania with oldest youth groups, the number of employed respondents is relatively lower comparing to Estonia and Latvia.

2. ANALYSIS OF YOUTH QUESTIONNAIRES IN 5 COUNTRIES: ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA, POLAND AND ROMANIA.

Analysis of online questionnaires will be made as single data set, not making division by countries. While, from one point, it gives more general information, it still represents important opinion of Eastern European countries as a single, united view and helps understand general trends. More reasonable analysis can be rather done by age distribution, but not by countries and might be more interesting for academic research, while objective of this study, provide trends for policy makers to have an overall view of situation in region.

As previously described, the online questionnaire consists of 2 parts; concentrated on the civic engagement and social capital, as well as understanding of it. The first part of analysis will describe civic engagement of youth. The first question (Q1) of the section: "How would you describe your level of community involvement?" (see Fig.8).



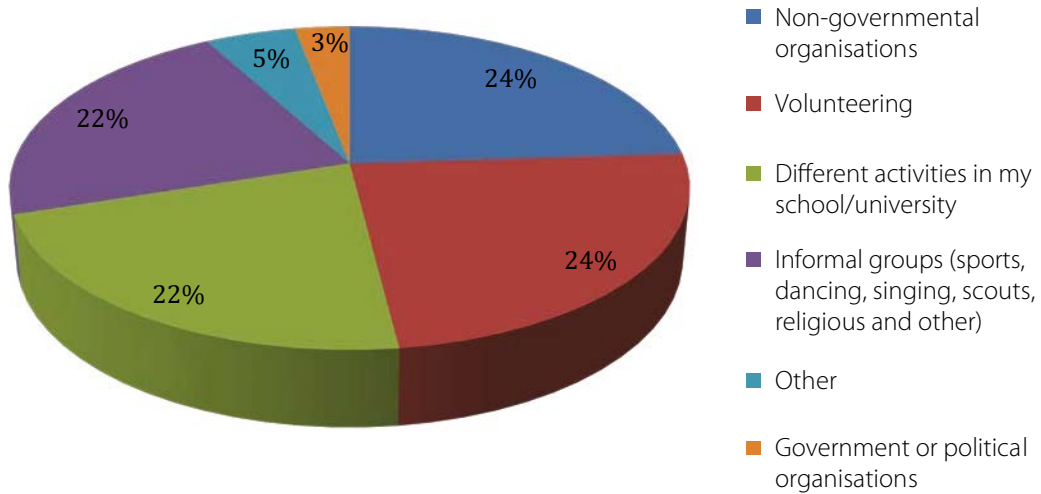
Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 8 Level of community involvement

According to the results of questionnaires, there is an equal distribution among moderate and somewhat involvement, which in general shows positive trend of positive, average. Smaller amounts of respondents are either very involved or not involved, making community involvement assessment rather positive. It has to be admitted, that for instance in Poland, where the majority respondents group have been younger, there was a need to make some extra explanation, what does question mean.

The next question analyses, whenever respondent is involved in the civic organisations or related activities, executed by those organisations (Q2): "Are you involved in the civic organisations or activities?" 71% has responded positively, while 29% have responded negatively. The gained result means, that youth might be involved in community work, however, not necessarily related to civic activities or term of "civic organisation" might not be also well understood. To understand, what exactly youth is involved in, the next question offers different options to choose from and multiple choice option has been offered (Q2A): Please, specify the main civic organisations or activities that you are involved in? (see Fig.9).

Involvement in civic organisations

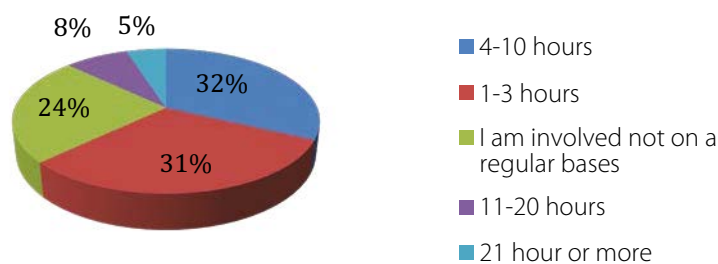


Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 9 Involvement in civic organisations

Question of involvement within civic organisations, indicates that relatively equal split is between involvement in non-governmental organisations, volunteering and different activities and educational institutions. Low level of involvement has been observed within governmental and political organisations. It confirms that active youth, is involved in variety of different activities and there is no dominant one. Such distribution allows gather wider experiences of activism and can be characterised as positive. To understand amount of time spent in the organisations or community, the next question has inspected time limits. It can be observed, that the majority of youth spent either 1-3 hours per week or 4-10 hours. Almost ¼ isn't involved on a regular bases, while only smaller proportions of youth have very active engagement activities of community work (see Fig.10).

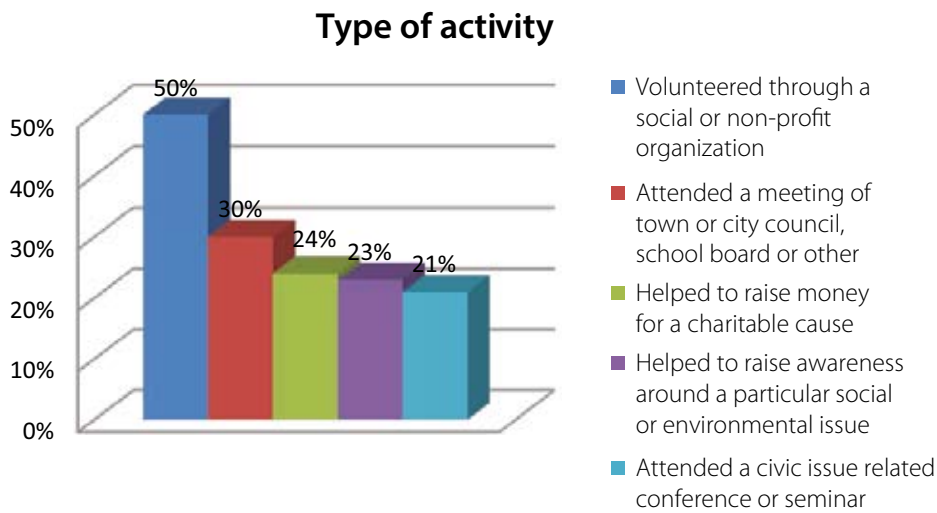
Number of hours spent per week on average in community activities and civic organisations



Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 10 Number of hours spent in community activities

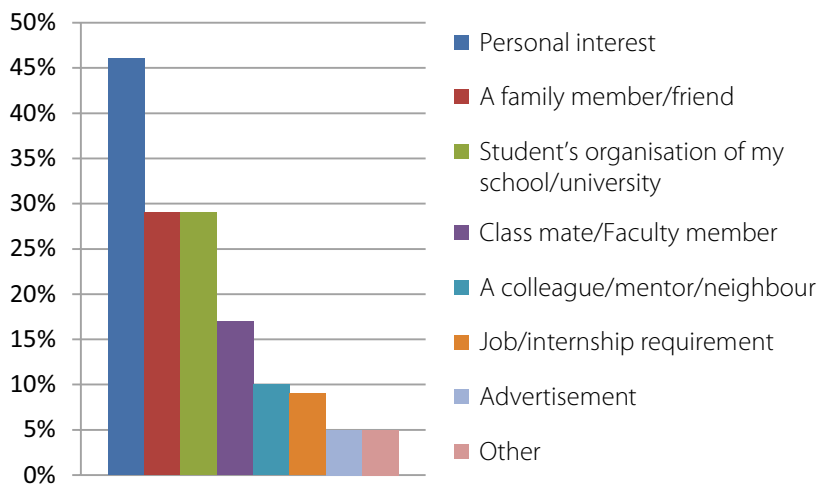
To understand, what kind of activities youth have been involved, while being active in community, the replies of next question states that major type of activity is volunteering. In the question, multiple choices have been allowed (see Fig.11). Other activities like attendance of meetings, rise of charity and awareness are also important activity types of youth involvement. After going deeper and asking whether the youth play a leading role in the activities they have mentioned only 37% have replied "Yes".



Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 11 Type of activity

There are different motivators, why youth starts to be actively involved. Hence, next question has inspected following: "What or who originally motivated your involvement in civic activities? Please select the most influential factor in your involvement"? Multiple choices were possible (see Fig.12).



Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

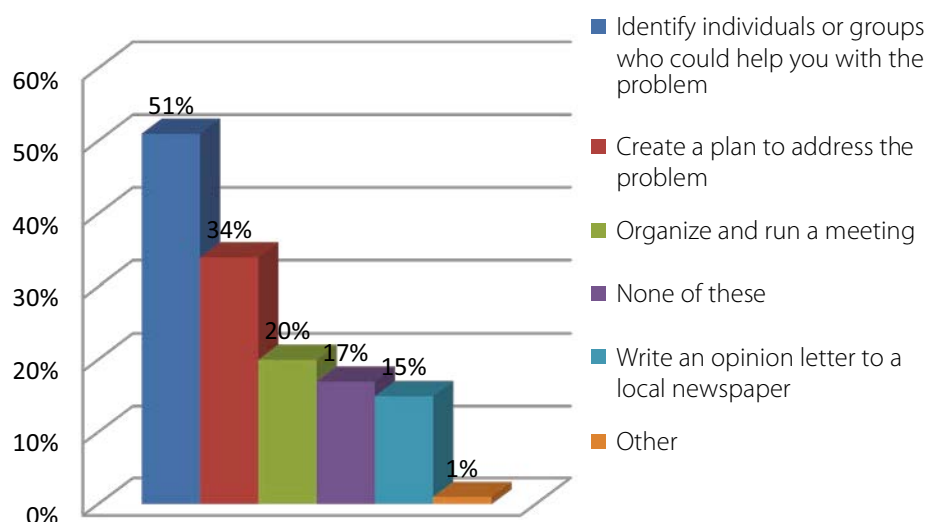
Fig. 12 Motivators to get involved in civic activities

From the image above, it can be observed that strongest motivation is personal interest; however, family and student/school organisations play equality important roles to promote civic engagement. Less can be done by classmates and sometimes civic engagement happens because of job requirements, advertisement or other matters.

Involvement and civic engagement can be characterised by different forms, however, it is important to understand, if youth feels that active involvement in necessary for fruitful community development. One of the questions in this sense, have questioned following: "Being actively involved in community issues is my responsibility". Out of the pool, 52% agreed, 24% were uncertain, 12% strongly agreed, 8% strongly disagreed and 4% disagreed. To sum up, it can be observed that majority agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. It means that youth have a healthy sense of necessity to be involved in community life.

In the online questionnaire, one of the aims was to inspect also level of initiative of youth to solve specific problems by targeted actions. Hence, next question has been following: "If you found out about a problem in your community that you wanted to do something about (for example, illegal drugs were being sold at a school nearby), which of the following would you feel able to do?" Multiple choices were allowed. In more as half cases, respondents would try to identify individuals, who could help with problematic situation (see Fig.13).

Problem solving approaches

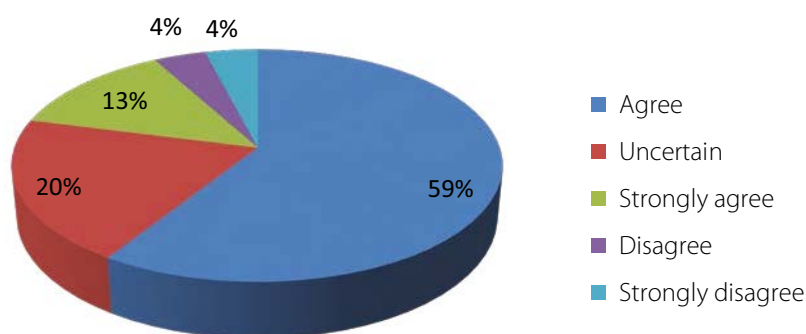


Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 13 Problem-solving approaches

Finally, in terms of civic engagement, the need to inspect of youth impact towards change was very important. Form the figure below, it can be observed that youth in majority of cases believes that they can make change. However, 20% of respondents were uncertain, while also 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed with statement (see Fig.14).

I can make a difference in my community

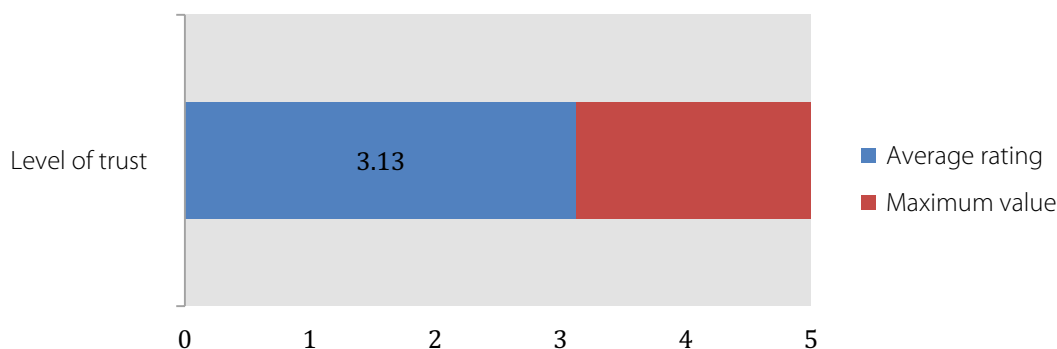


Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 14 Impact on community

Since the online questionnaire was twofold, to find more about youth civic engagement and understand of social capital, next set of questions is more related to find different elements of social capital, including trust and networking skills of youth. The first question in the section

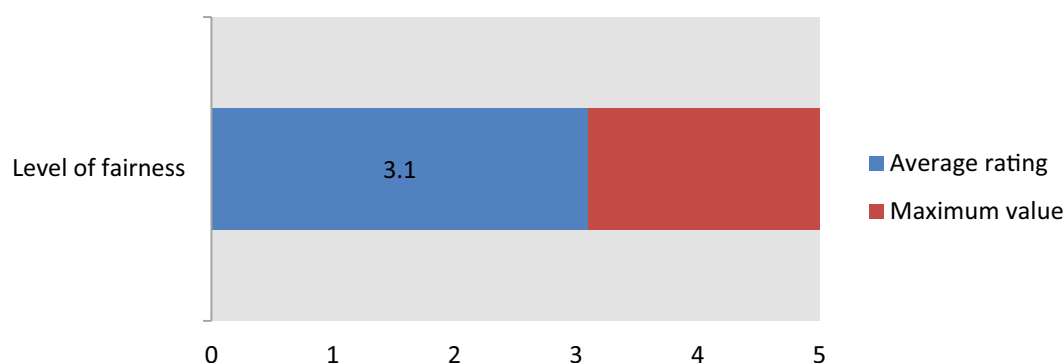
of social capital was inspecting the level of trust of youth towards other society members. The ranking scale was from 1 to 5, where rating 1 meant “can’t trust and rating 5 meant “full trust”. The average rating of youth trust is 3.13 points (see Fig.15).



Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 15 Level of trust of youth

A next question was very close to the previous one. The scale was the same, rating from 1-5. The question inspected level of fairness and how does youth feel about fairness in society. Similarly to the previous question, the level of fairness is assessed as just above average (see Fig.16).



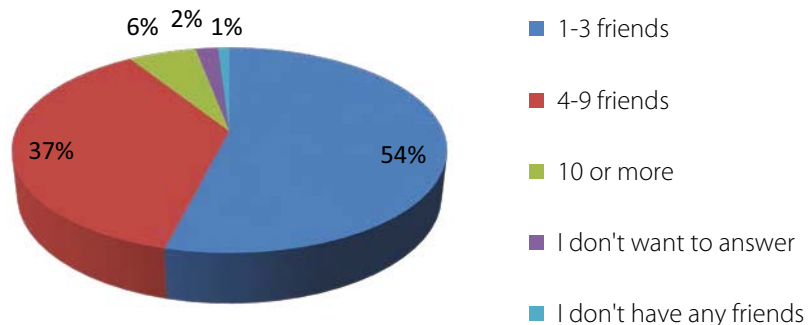
Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 16 Level of fairness

The intention of next question was to understand how many close friends youth has and evaluate networking skills. The question has also an option do not provide reply to the question as well as justification, what is meant by “friend”. The more precise definition of friend was that these are people you feel at ease with, can talk to about private matters, or call on for help.

Majority of youth have 1-3 friends or 4-9. There are few people who do not have friends or have a lot of friends (see Fig.17).

Number of friends



Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

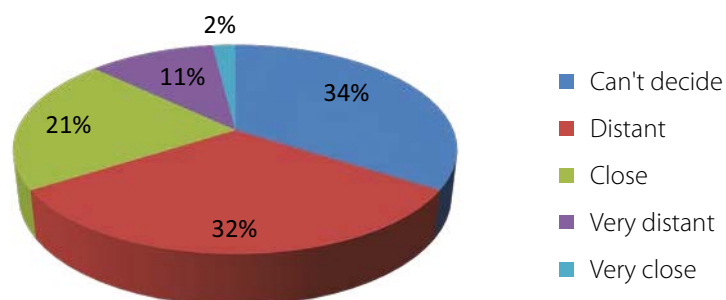
Fig. 17 Number of friends among youth

In the section of social capital, also benefiting towards community has been checked with the question: "In the past 12 months, have you worked with others to do something for the benefit of the community"? 78% of respondents have responded affirmatively.

A next question was following: "How strong is the feeling of togetherness or closeness in your village/neighbourhood"? The question raised some confusion since for the youth in some countries it was difficult to understand, what it meant by the term "closeness".

The more than one third of respondents could not decide about the level of closeness. A bit more than one third of respondents indicated that the level of closeness is distant. Around one fifth has stated that it is close. As summary it has to be admitted that the topic has to be inspected in some other researches, since it raised confusion (see Fig. 18).

Level of closeness in community

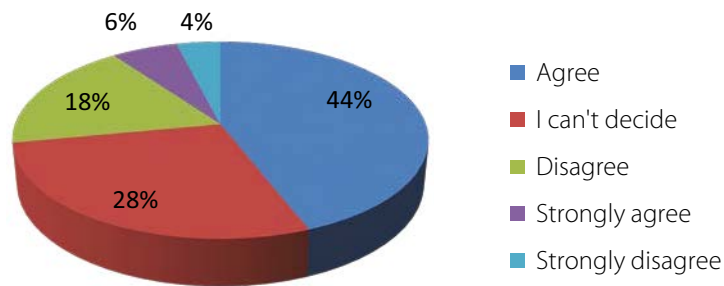


Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig.18 Level of closeness

Next questions have inspected interaction of youth in virtual environment and real life settings

Interaction with society - online

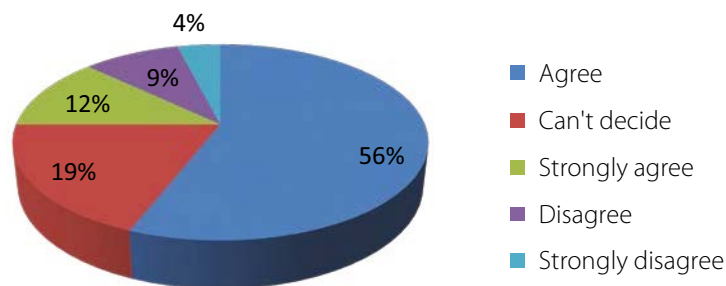


Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 19 Youth interaction with society - online

The base of the question is following: "I interact with people (online/in society) who make me feel like a part of larger community".

Interaction with society - real life settings



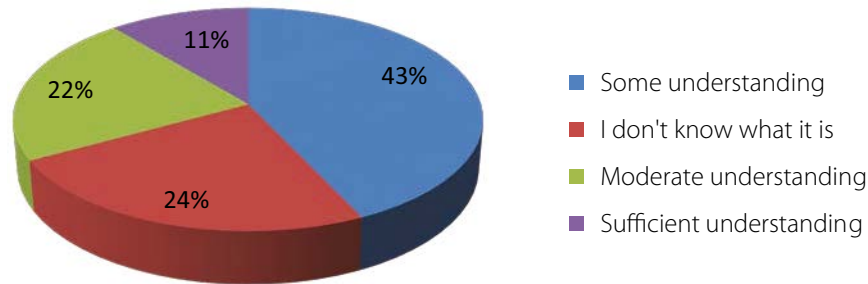
Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 20 Youth interaction with society – real life settings

What can be observed from the interaction differences is that interaction in real life settings makes youth feel at larger extent as part of community comparing to the online interactions (see Fig.19 and Fig.20). Also, number of respondents who could not decide about the feeling of community involvement is larger at online (see Fig.19). Hence, assumption is that youth still value real life settings and online interaction does not serve to youth absolute feeling of belonging to community. However, the fact that 44% respondents have replied affirmatively towards online interaction as a source of community belonging, cannot be ignored as well.

Final set of questions is dedicate to the term “social capital”. First question in the sub-sections is about level of knowledge of social capital. The majority of respondents believe that they have some understanding about term, while about ¼ believes that their knowledge is either sufficient or moderate. Only 24% have replied that they do not know what it is (see Fig.21).

Level of knowlege about social capital

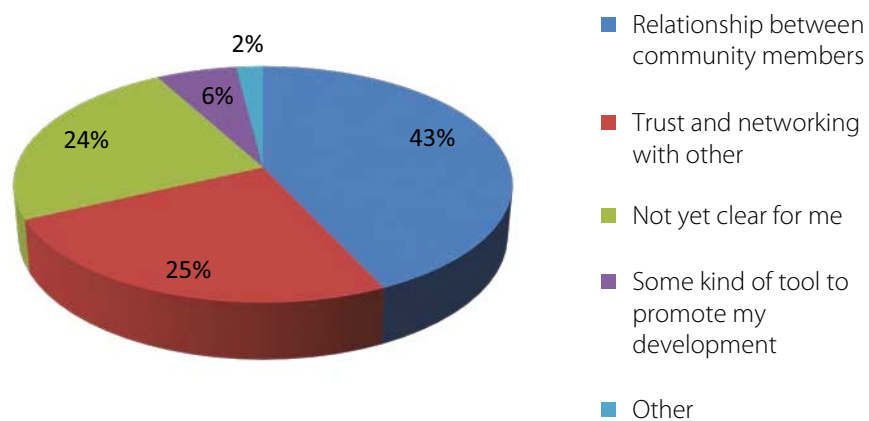


Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 21 Level of knowledge about social capital

Continuing social capital terminology research, next question asks to explain, what really social capital is (see Fig.22). The respondents, who in previous reply have chosen an option that they do not know what it is, have chance to skip question.

What is social capital

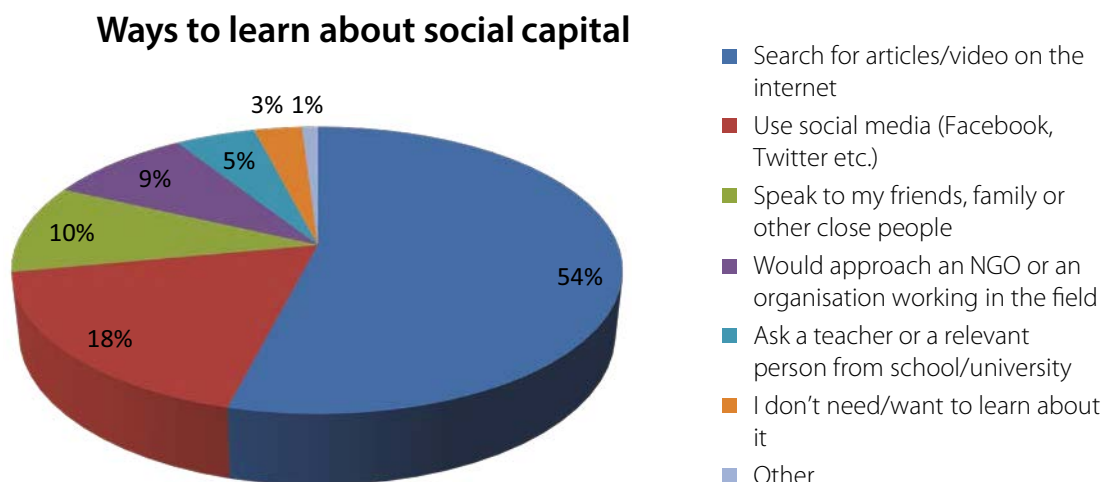


Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 22 Definition of social capital by youth

While defining social capital, the majority of youth choose the option of “Relationship between community members” and second most preferred choice is “Trust and network with other”. Basically, it confirms that level of knowledge about social capital is sufficient among youth.

Final question inspects what would be the tools and methods, if youth would like to learn more about social capital (see Fig.23).



Source: Developed by authors, based on questionnaire data

Fig. 23 Ways to learn about social capital

The major tools would be internet and social media, meaning that proper information has to be distributed and available in national languages about the topic.

As a summary it has to be admitted that questionnaire was valuable in a sense that give very varied answers to both civic engagement and social capital development. Some of the questions have been frustrating to youth and it means that topic has to be better researched. Overall, it provides a typology of youth, assessing their civic engagement, personal features, networking skills and needs and knowledge about civic engagement and social capital.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH IN CIVIC PARTICIPATION

As a summary of country reviews and online questionnaire, there is a set of recommendations for public authorities.

The recommendations are developed with aim to provide some guidelines, tools and solutions, which are relevant to engage youth in civic activities.

Country specific recommendations are provided by partnering organisations and reflect mainly country specific needs, however, applicable also for wider scope.

Role of social media: The participatory culture of the Internet provides undiscovered opportunities for engaging youth into civic activities, enabling them to express their point of view. Given the prominence of social media applications such as Facebook (Lenhart et al. 2010), government and non-profit agencies are increasingly seeking to motivate teens toward community activism through social media tools. Networked communication, a variety of organizational structures (informal, networked, and individual, in addition to formal) are now capable of achieving the key tasks of collective action: identifying people with common interests, communicating with them as a group, and coordinating their efforts (Bimber 2005).

There are many examples of Facebook groups or pages representing social movements engaged in political activities.

According to the several researches, these pages played an important role in motivating youth toward civic activities. Youth are increasingly accessing each other and the Internet through mobile devices (Lenhart et al. 2010).

Research also has found that while youth report spending the most of their time in Facebook, they rate email and text messaging as more important for sharing and communicating with others, and for communicating with people in their local communities about civic issues. Those youth more experienced with social media in the public sphere (such as blogs, wikis, and Twitter) and with sharing personal media had higher levels of real world civic engagement (Farnham et al., 2013). Hence, the **recommendation** for active engagement of youth is to find a proper way to interact with youth and engage it actively is to work actively with youth through social media channels, educate youth about relevant social media channels and work towards engagement of youth into local community media space.

Early Opportunities for Involvement: In part, the civic skills, habits and motivations of young adults result from opportunities for engagement during childhood and adolescence. Children and teens that have opportunities for involvement in extracurricular activities and community institutions are more likely to vote and participate in other forms of civic engagement as young adults.

Hence, the role of parents is important factors towards motivating youth to become more active.

To make civic engagement more effective public organisations/ NGO's and other relevant civic activism organisations has to engage with parents, village elders, and other key adult community stakeholders. During the study, none of partners have mentioned any system or policy in place for engaging with parents or community stakeholders. The model for work towards parents' engagement to motivate children and youth is of high important and is one of the **recommended actions** for policy formation and execution institutions.

Education: Education has been shown to have a significant impact on youth civic engagement. Research suggests that both the educational experiences of youth themselves and the educational experience of their parents have an impact on whether or not young adults vote.

Dropping out of high school decreases young adult voter turnout.

Additionally parental education has been found to be a more powerful predictor of young adult voting than either parental income or profession. Having well-educated parents increases the normative pressure to be engaged in the civic process, thereby providing youth with an early introduction to civic engagement and establishing voting early on as an important right and responsibility is one of the **recommendations for policy formation institutions**.

Socio-Economic Factors: The relationship between social class and political participation has been referred to as the "best documented finding in American political behaviour research." Social and class disparities in civic participation often begin during a person's teenage years and are intensified by the lack of opportunity to practice civic participation in their communities and schools. For instance, schools in less privileged neighbourhoods have fewer opportunities for learning about and engaging in civic activities and service learning. Also some research found that less educated, unemployed, and from rural areas are the least likely to be civically engaged. Hence, civic engagement is affected by complex factors and it has to be developed in parallel with development of education, rise of favourable economic conditions and availability of relevant activities in rural areas.

Hence, recommendation is for policy formation institutions to develop civic engagement as an element of broader scene, where also other factors, important for youth development, has to be developed in parallel.

Main elements of effective engagement model: According to research by Clement (2014), a successful model would build on young people's creativity, passion and capacities, and support them to ensure that youth are not merely present in activities, but are actively engaged in initiatives that are meaningful and interesting to them. What motivates young people to be and stay engaged?

- **Opportunities for self-development:** programs should have the potential to benefit the young people at the individual level by giving them the opportunity to gain new skills, access networks, travel, build relationships, and be exposed to ideas and knowledge that would be useful for their future, etc.
- **Opportunity for community development:** programs should support youth to identify and address real community needs, and have the potential to change the status quo and improve the situation.
- **Tangible results:** Programs should be designed to deliver tangible – and when possible immediate - results and a felt impact on the participants themselves or their community. Young people are often fed empty promises and are increasingly frustrated by initiatives that do not yield a clear and concrete output or result. When young people don't see the results of their work for a long time, they might start to feel exploited and question the value of their participation. Concrete and tangible outcomes from an activity become a motivation that reinforces young people's belief in the program and the value of their participation in it.
- **Fun and challenging activities:** if young people don't enjoy being part of the activity, and don't feel any degree of challenge, they might lose interest. Ensuring that there are multiple levels of engagement and responsibility and that the type and intensity of engagements escalates can be helpful to keep young people interested and involved.

While planning activities for engagement, the recommendation is to base it on four mentioned above components for successful engagement of youth.

Next section of recommendation is based on the country specific recommendations, however, relevant also for wider consideration in other countries.

Estonia

Recommendations for effective stimulation engagement of youth in civic participation are based on the suggestions from the Liit (2007) and are following:

- **To legalise the obligation to involve young people in making decisions that concern them both on the level of state and local governments;**
- **To tie youth involvement with funding the youth work of local governments (incl. development of infrastructure), young people must be involved when the funds of the area are used;**
- **To guarantee sufficient funding for participation councils both on the level of state and local governments, to support the development of structures and activities that promote cooperation;**
- **Participation opportunities must be made real, local and attractive for young people**

- **The first participation experience should be positive and yield visible results;**
- **Young people must be involved in a manner that is suitable for them - explaining, making the subject simple, involving youth in areas where they are already present;**
- **Participation opportunities must be expanded and diversified, there must be more opportunities for youth in rural areas, Russian-speaking youth and other young people with less opportunities;**
- **To offer participation and involvement training to youth, youth organisations, youth workers and decision-makers;**
- **To highlight the best models for involvement and participation (incl. materials)**
- **To create a youth council development unit.**

Latvia

In Latvia, it is important to work on the development of qualitative information for youth and to provide it on internet.

Continuation of the provision of access to the Internet,³⁹ since it is one of the main tools used to gather the information. Important is role of national youth information system and policy implementation; cooperation among all stakeholders to set up the national youth information system⁴⁰. According the different recommendations and resolutions of youth, including the European Union Structural Dialogue activities (2005-2015) important activities for better youth engagement in civic processes are:

- **Educational institutions should recognize different forms of civic engagement such as volunteering, in order to stimulate a culture of participation at school;**
- **Policy formation institutions should further develop or include citizenship education in the curricula at all levels of formal education, bringing a local, national, European and global perspective. Formal education providers must include non-formal learning methodologies to encourage critical thinking and enable young people from all backgrounds to develop attitudes and values to participate actively in the society;**
- **By implementing transparent, sustainable and collaborative structures and providing financial support, authorities on the local, regional and national levels should ensure full participation of youth NGOs in decision making processes of policies that affect young people;**
- **Policy formation institutions should provide the youth sector with the necessary resources: operational and project funding; necessary support structures such as a legislative framework, networks and trainings; and the formal, social and political recognition of youth work and non-formal learning;**
- **Policy formation institutions are encouraged to establish cross-sectorial initiatives and long-term partnerships with youth workers and non-governmental organisations in order to transfer knowledge and develop participation competencies of young people;**

³⁹ Survey on Youth possibilities, attitudes and values, 2013 <http://www.izm.gov.lv/images/statistika/petijumi/23.pdf>

⁴⁰ Official position of The National Youth council of Latvia on Youth information system in Latvia, 2014 www.ljp.lv/ministriju-parstavji-saeimas-deputati-un-pasvaldibu-vaditaji-diskute-par-jaunatnes-politiku/

- To ensure recognition of young people's participation and sustain their involvement in civic society processes; online tools should be combined with offline methods and have a follow-up phase;
- To ensure access of young people to information and opportunities to experience tools for participation, policy formation and execution institutions should ensure that trainings on the existence and the use of such tools are provided to teachers and other people working with youth.
- Policy formation and execution institutions and youth organisations should recognise and make better use of alternative forms (all participation forms that take place outside of the institutionalised system) of young people's participation aiming to enrich the debate and decision-making processes.

Lithuania

Recommendations for effective stimulation engagement of youth in civic participation for the policy formation and execution organisations are following:

- Creation of attractive environment for youth;
- Creating ownership of decision making process (discussion with direct implementations of youth suggestions);
- Presenting different ways, forms and models of civic processes (e.g. civic processes can be presented in informal education);
- Spreading information, highlighting the importance of civic processes;
- Meeting with politicians;
- Creating more (part-time) jobs of public sectors for young people. It would encourage to be interested in public problems & search methods to solve these problems;
- A better public relation system;
- More (governmental) projects related with civic processes involving youth;
- An improvement of education system on the matter of civic engagement.

Poland

It seems there is no easy solution.

Sometimes youth are interested in participatory budget, because they can influence the spending and using of money, have some benefit. However, it does not cause systemic change.

To make a real change process has to cover school, family and public media. "Most families believe children are the greatest good. And children know that they are the greatest good. Their needs are a priority and they themselves ascribed the right to put them in the first place. When we complain that young people are too demanding and too impatient, we shouldn't forget about the circumstances related to their socialisation in family. This is where young people from the

earliest childhood gain the conviction that their needs are paramount" ("Youth 2011"). The report contains 35 recommendations. **Here are the most relevant to the topic of civil attitudes:**

- **Create new conditions for the freedom of action of civil society and its institutions (including NGOs in various forms), strengthening them by building long-term project multiannual program for the financial support of the organisations;**
- **Develop a new way of functioning of strong organisations representing young people at different levels and in different areas, giving them a real task to perform and thus contribute to the government's coordination of efforts for the young generation;**
- **Create the political climate for debate on intergenerational solidarity and exchange, lead it with appreciation and respect for the autonomy of philosophical and ideological differences in political views, but in search of the goal of the common good and the transfer of leadership.**

Romania

In 2014 according to a law modification the volunteer work is accepted as professional practice. This is a good external stimulation to the youth in order to be more engaged in the civic processes.

But still in Romania volunteerism does not have a strong tradition, even though the activities and the researches about it are exponentially increasing.

Besides encouraging volunteering, the following activities/ methods would simulate the more active civic participation of the youth:

- **Information sessions – organising information sessions, both online (i.e. webinars, Skype conferences, etc.) and offline regarding the different aspects of civic life, regarding different social problems, about how institutions work and how taxes are being used;**
- **Information sessions and open days in public institutions – welcoming young students and young people in public institutions on open days, showing them around and explaining how the institution works, what are the main procedures;**
- **Training sessions, courses – providing learning and training opportunities in different areas, skills development (leadership, entrepreneurship, communication, etc. skills);**
- **Listening to the youth, giving opportunities to express opinions, attitudes, expectations – it is very important not only to give information, provide training, but also to gather their opinions, and use every opportunity to assure them, that their voice really matters, and that by getting involved, they can really make a difference.**

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METHODOLOGICAL ATTACHMENTS

This survey is a part of project "SOCAP". Help us to understand better your involvement in different activities in community as well as understanding of social capital. It will take around 10-15 minutes to reply. Your answers will be kept confidential.

How old are you?

- 15 or younger
- 15 to 18
- 19 to 25
- 26 to 30

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male

Level of education currently involved in?

- School
- College
- University
- I'm not studying at the moment
- I do not study at the moment

Are you employed?

- Yes
- No

What kind of place are you living?

- Urban (city)
- Rural (small village, countryside)

What is your country of origin?

List of countries provided

Q1: How would you describe your level of community involvement?

- Not very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Moderately involved
- Very involved
- Don't know
- I prefer not to answer

Q2: Are you involved in the civic organisations or activities?

- Yes
- No

Q2A: Please specify the main civic organisation or activity that you are involved in?

- Non-governmental organisations
- Volunteering
- Informal groups (sports, dancing, singing, scouts, religious and other)
- Different activities in my school/university (newspaper, board, events organisation)
- Government or political organisations
- Other

Q3: Please specify number of hours spent per week on average in community activities and civic organisations?

- 1-3 hours
- 4-10 hours
- 11-20 hours
- 21 hour or more
- I am involved not on a regular bases
- None

Q4: Please mention what activities you did in the above mentioned activities and organizations?

- Volunteered through a social or non-profit organization
- Attended a meeting of town or city council, school board or other
- Helped to raise money for a charitable cause
- Helped to raise awareness around a particular social or environmental issue
- Attended a civic issue related conference or seminar
- Contacted a newspaper, radio or TV to express my opinion
- Contributed money to a political candidate or political party
- Other

Q5:Do you play a leadership role in any of previously mentioned civic engagement activities?

- No
- Yes

Q6:What or who originally motivated your involvement in civic activities? Please select the most influential factor in your involvement

- Personal interest
- A family member/friend
- Student's organisation of my school/university
- Class mate/Faculty member
- A colleague/mentor/neighbour
- Job/internship requirement
- Advertisement
- Other

Q7:How often do you follow what's going on in government and public affairs?

- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Regularly
- Do not follow at all

Q8:If you found out about a problem in your community that you wanted to do something about (for example, illegal drugs were being sold at a school nearby), which of the following would you feel able to do?

- Identify individuals or groups who could help you with the problem
- Create a plan to address the problem
- Organize and run a meeting
- Write an opinion letter to a local newspaper
- None of these
- Other

Q9: Being actively involved in community issues is my responsibility.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q10: I believe I can make a difference in my community

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Uncertain
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q11: Would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful with in dealing with people?

Scale from 1...5

Q12: Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair?

Scale from 1...5

Q13: Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful or are they mostly looking out for themselves?

Scale from 1...5

Q14: How many close friends do you think you have? These are the people you feel at ease with, can talk to about private matters, or call on for help.

- 1-3 friends
- 4-9 friends
- 10 or more
- I don't want to answer
- I don't have any friends

Q15: In the past 12 months, have you worked with others to do something for the benefit of the community?

- Yes
- No

Q16: How strong is the feeling of togetherness or closeness in your village/neighbourhood?

- Very close
- Close
- Can't decide
- Distant
- Very distant

Q17A: I interact with people online who make me feel like a part of larger community

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- I can't decide
- Disagree
- Strongly agree

Q17B: I interact with people in society who make me feel like a part of larger community

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- I can't decide
- Disagree
- Strongly agree

Q18: How would you describe your level of knowledge about social capital?

- Some understanding
- Moderate understanding
- Sufficient understanding
- I don't know what it is
- Other

Q19: Social capital is...

- Relationship between community members
- Trust and networking with other
- Some kind of tool to promote my development
- Not yet clear for me
- Other

Q20: If I wanted to learn more about social capital I would...

- Search for articles/video on the internet
- Use social media (Facebook, Twitter etc.)
- Speak to my friends, family or other close people
- Would approach an NGO or an organisation working in the field
- Ask a teacher or a relevant person from school/university
- I don't need/want learn about social capital
- Other

