



Youth Wiki national description

Youth policies in the Republic of North Macedonia

2018

The Youth Wiki is Europe's online encyclopaedia in the area of national youth policies. The platform is a comprehensive database of national structures, policies and actions supporting young people. For the updated version of this national description, please visit

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REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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Overview

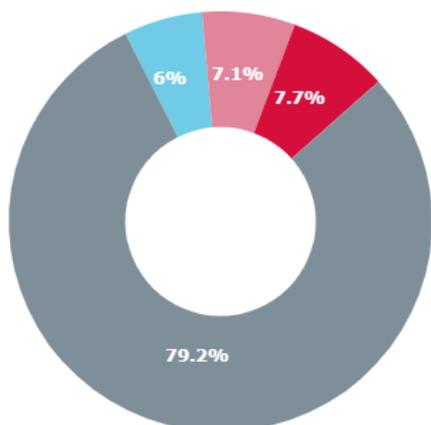
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Young People in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Ratio of young people in the total population on 1st January

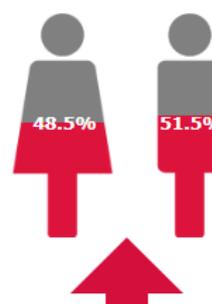


Age group 15-19

Age group 20-24

Age group 25-29

Other age groups



Ratio of men and women in the youth population

Ratio of young immigrants in all immigrants from non-EU countries

Total number of young people:

Age group 15-29

Other age groups

References:

Ratio (%) of young people in the total population (2017): Eurostat, yth_demo_020 [data extracted on 4/09/2018].

Absolute number of young people on 1 January for the age group 15-29 (2017): Eurostat, yth_demo_010 [data extracted on 4/09/2018].

Ratio (%) of men and women in the youth population (2017): Eurostat, yth_demo_020 [data extracted on 4/09/2018].

Young immigrants from non-EU countries (2016): Eurostat, yth_demo_070 [data extracted on 4/09/2018].

Republic of North Macedonia

Youth Policy in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

The main decision – making processes regarding youth policy is being made by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. The Agency of Youth and Sport (AYS) is a governmental entity designated to work on youth related issues. It is thus the leader of any youth policy process, and in charge of coordinating ministries' actions and inputs related to youth.

At local level, the Local Self-Government is responsible for decision making. The decision making is based on the existence of Local Youth Strategies (where adopted). 64Local Self-Governments integrated Councils of Youth as youth participation mechanisms in the decision making.

Macedonia has National Youth Policy document, the National Youth Strategy (2016-2025) followed with Action and Monitoring Plan. The Agency for Youth and Sports is responsible for activities relating to young people in Macedonia, also is responsible for the implementation of the youth strategy.

The country currently is an Erasmus+ Programme Country and entitled to participate in all the actions of the programme.

1. YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

The National Youth Strategy (2016-2025) followed with Action and Monitoring Plan is the main National Youth Policy document which sets out the basic principles and action guidelines for all actors in society.

In September 2017, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia has established Club for youth issues and policies, based on the trend of the European Parliament and countries' parliaments.

1.1 Target population of youth policy

In the Republic of Macedonia there is still no Law on Youth. The National Youth Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2016–2025 sets out the basic principles and action guidelines for all actors in society. Thus, the introductory part of the Strategy states that in compliance with established historical, social, political and ethical practice, the term 'young people' (youth) shall refer to any person(s) **between the age of 15 and 29**^[1]. This is a category that holds huge potential as a key resource for social progress, but also a category that is highly vulnerable to social and economic changes in society. The interventions envisaged in this Strategy should be equally available to all young people in the Republic of Macedonia, and especially to young people from vulnerable categories.

In general, municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia sit this age limit in their Local Youth Strategies with mild exceptions. For example, in the Local Strategy of the Youth of the Municipality of Strumica, the youth category is defined as a separate socio-ethical category of the population **aged 15 to 30**, regardless of sex, race and nationality, religious and political determination, sexual orientation, social status, and disability^[2].

1.2 National youth law

Existence of a National Youth Law

Currently there is no national Youth Law in Macedonia. In 2011, the Agency of youth and sports submitted initiative for developing Law on youth which addressed youth participation in decision making processes at local and national level and youth organizing. After approved by the Government, the Ministry of Justice formed working group and drafted text which was submitted to the Parliament. However, it was decided that the draft Law on Youth should be more widely consulted with the youth organizations throughout Macedonia, and therefore, the Government redraw the text to additional revision. More is described under 1.9.

Youth are targeted with other legal acts such as: Law on secondary education, Law on higher education, Law on student standard, Law on Sports in Macedonia, Law on child protection (includes age of 15-18), Law on Juvenile Justice, Law for Justice for Children, Law on Volunteerism.

¹ Agency of the youth and sports. National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 (Agency of the youth and sports, 2016), p. 7. http://ams.gov.mk/images/dokumenti/mladi/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_eng.pdf (Accessed 01.11.2018)

² Municipality of Strumica. Strategy of the Youth of the Municipality of Strumica 2015-2020 (Municipality of Strumica, 2015), p. 5. <http://www.strumica.gov.mk/downloads/publikacii/Strategija-Mladi-Strumica.pdf> (Accessed 01.11.2018)

Scope and contents

Not applicable.

Revisions/updates

Not applicable.

1.3 National youth strategy

Existence of a National Youth Strategy

The [National Youth Strategy 2016 – 2025](#) of the Republic of Macedonia is a strategic public document. In February 2015 the Agency of Youth and Sport (AYS) initiated the process of development of new (the second) National Youth Strategy (2016-2025). The first one was for the period 2005-2015^[3]. The process of creating of the National Youth Strategy evolved in three stages:

- Public call for participation in the working groups;
- Meetings of working groups within the priority areas identified in the Strategy;
- Public discussions to present the draft text of the Strategy.

The basis for initiating this process was the youth trends survey conducted by the Institute of Sociological, Political and Juridical Research^[4] in the period from September to December 2014. This National Youth Strategy, as a strategic document, was developed with the active participation of young people and representatives of relevant institutions who expressed their opinions and needs regarding the nine priority areas identified in the Strategy. Although youth and youth organizations were actively involved in the process of creation of the content of the strategy, after its adoption by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, there were reactions from National Youth Council of Macedonia (the largest and most relevant platform that represents the interests and needs of the youth in the country) that the final document differs from the one the youth worked along with institutions for almost a year. They also stressed that the youth strategy is not adopted as a complete package along with accompanying documents and items that ensure its implementation and precise monitoring, i.e. there was no action plan, indicators and budget for implementation. The only action plan was adopted later.

The adopted National Youth Strategy in English, Macedonian and Albanian language can be found on the following website: <http://ams.gov.mk/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/969-strategija-za-mladi-2016>.

The National Youth Strategy is followed by one action plan: [2016-2017 Action Plan for implementation of the National Youth Strategy](#). So far, there is no information or report on the level of implementation of this action plan. Currently, the AYS is working on preparation of a new Action plan which is expected to be completed by the end of 2018 or no later than the end of January 2019.

³ National Youth Strategy 2005-2015 (Agency on youth and sports, 2005). <http://www.ams.gov.mk/images/dokumenti/mladi/nacionalna-strategija-za-mladi.pdf> (Accessed on 01.11.2018)

⁴ Institute of Sociological, Political and Juridical Research. "Youth Trends in Republic of Macedonia" *University St. Kiril and Metodij*, published December 2014. <https://www.docdroid.net/qsrt/finalen-izveshtaj-agentsija-za-mladi-i-sport.pdf> (Accessed on 01.11.2018)

Scope and contents

The content of the National Youth Strategy comprises strategic priorities, the key challenges that young people encounter, and long-term objectives, divided into thematic areas.

The actions set out by the Strategy should lead to improvement in the social and economic situation of young people and the creation of an environment that will enable youth to fulfil their rights, needs and interests. The interventions proposed in this Strategy are divided into 9 key areas, as follows: **youth participation, youth information, local youth work, education, employment and pre-employment support, culture, sports, health and quality of life.**

The National Youth Strategy 2016 – 2025 outlines 4 strategic objectives:

1. Providing a better standard of living and equal opportunities for a decent life.
2. Creating conditions for effective observance and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, and systematic integration and interaction of different categories of young people.
3. Creating opportunities for the involvement of young people in the monitoring and implementation of policies and decisions that affect them.
4. Equal access to quality education and other forms of personal and professional development.

As described above, the National Youth Strategy targets young people aged 15 – 29. Under this age group, the measures prescribed with the Strategy, will include high school students, university students, young unemployed people, youth with special needs (young offenders, youth neglected in terms of education and upbringing, “phantom children”, talented children, children with above-average IQ, hyperactive children, and children with dyslexia).

Responsible authority for the implementation of the Youth Strategy

Successful implementation of the National Youth Strategy entails the broad involvement of all stakeholders and key actors who are involved, directly or indirectly, in youth development in the country. The roles and responsibilities of every stakeholder are clearly set out in this Strategy.

The Government as an institution with executive power in the development of the Republic of Macedonia has a primary role in providing opportunities for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy by adopting and implementing cohesive and coordinated programs associated with the measures envisaged in the Strategy.

The process of strategy implementation and performance monitoring is coordinated by the Agency of Youth and Sports (AYS), though data collection and reporting is carried out by all institutions that will implement activities from the Strategy within their programs. The data are in certain planning processes that take place at national level. In order to standardize and facilitate the coordination process, as part of the Plan on Strategy Implementation and Performance Monitoring, the AYS prepared a set of tools/forms with which the institutions will present the collected data, as well as special reporting formats for reporting the achievement of planned results and objectives on a biannual or annual basis.

Local authorities are also responsible for implementation of youth programmes and in their activities they are fully coordinated by the Agency of Youth and Sports. Some municipalities are developing local youth strategies in accordance with values of National Youth Strategy.

Other actors addressed by the Strategy are: the civil sector who must cooperate with local authorities and the business community in order to develop a comprehensive

approach to addressing the most urgent problems faced by young people; educational institutions as key actors involved in youth development; business community by sharing its resources with institutions and civil society organizations; media; parents and young people themselves.

Revisions/updates

In March 2018, the Agency of Youth and Sports held the first consultations with youth organizations in order to revise the National Youth Strategy. Currently, the Agency conducts consultations with the state institutions in order to analyze the strategic priorities. Upon completion of the consultations, the final document (new Action Plan) is expected to be prepared in the joint cooperation between the state institutions and the civil sector.

1.4 Youth policy decision-making

Structure of Decision-making

The main decision – making processes regarding youth policy is being made by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. The Agency of Youth and Sport (AYS) is a governmental entity designated to work on youth related issues. In accordance to the law for the Agency should lead any youth policy process in the country and should coordinate other institutions' actions and inputs related to youth. In practice, the Agency is struggling to maintain coordination of all youth policy activities, since the activities are undertaken by ministries which have bigger capacity and independence in their decision making processes.

The decision making process of youth policies includes other institutions / ministries such as: Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Agency of Employment, Education Development Bureau, National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility, Local Self-Governments etc. Up until now there is no universal or comprehensive way of coordination of the work of all institutions that create and implement youth policies.

However, at the initiative of the National Youth Council of Macedonia on a special Governmental session dedicated for youth policies in March 2018, proposed a model for establishment of a co-management body for coordination between youth and institutions.

The Government gave obligation to the Agency of Youth and Sport to establish working group and the working group is currently developing the structure, area of work and funding of the body.

At local level, the Local Self-Government is responsible for decision making. The decision making is based on the existence of Local Youth Strategies (where adopted).

Most of the Local Self-Governments integrated Local Youth Councils as an advisory body within the municipalities.

The initiative for establishment of Local Youth Councils came as recommendation by the Government to the Local Self Governments in 2009. Despite the fact that 63 out of 81 municipalities have established Local Youth Councils. Majority of them are inactive, without budget and power to influence the decision making processes on local level.

Structured Dialogue is one of the most comprehensive and useful European practices for dialogue between young people and decision-makers on issues of their concern as well as for increasing the cooperation between young people and decision makers.

In first half of 2018 National Youth Council of Macedonia held several consultation meetings with youth and representatives of youth organizations as part of the VI Cycle of Structured Dialog of the European Union.

The main aim was to introduce and promote the process of structured dialogue as very efficient tool for dialogue between young people and decision-makers.

Unfortunately, in Macedonia there is still no national working group for Structured Dialogue and there is no based evidence whether and in what extent the young people in Macedonia use this mechanism.

Following the example of the European Parliament and other Western European parliaments, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia has established a Club for Youth Affairs and Policies. The Youth Affairs and Politics Committee is an informal body in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, composed of members of all parliamentary parties whose goal is to realize the interest of the youth in the Republic of Macedonia, in cooperation with youth organizations, informal youth groups and party youth.

Main Themes

The priorities set in the [National Youth Strategy](#) comply with the priorities defined with the EU Youth Strategy – Investing and Empowering. The following priorities are included in the National Youth Strategy: youth participation, youth information, local youth work, education, employment and pre-employment support, culture, sports, health and quality of life. The selection is based on the priorities included in the previous strategy and complying with the [EU Youth Strategy](#). Specific country programmes are designed for employment and education.

Youth Unemployment is the highest priority at country level since according to the World Bank (2017)^[5] 46,95% of the young people in Macedonia aged 15 – 24 are unemployed. On the other side, according to Eurostat (2017)^[6] 37,4% of young people aged 20-34 are NEET group (young people neither in employment nor in education or training).

Therefore, the main target group of the Youth Policy within employment area are the unemployed youth, NEET groups, youth with disabilities (Specific Action Plan 2016 – 2020 for Youth Employment is operationalized in Macedonia and includes specific measures for young people and various sub-groups).

The [Youth Trends Research](#) (2014) included the youth unemployment as priority issue in order to identify the opinion of young people on how to improve the current unemployment situation. Furthermore, the country cooperates with the International Labor Organization in developing youth employment policies. The ILO conducts regular surveys which are integrated into the youth employment actions plans.

Education is included as one of the highest themes on youth policy in the country. Recently, Ministry of education and science adopted new [Strategy on education 2018-2025](#) with Action Plan (more in the chapter for education).

The National Agency for Youth

In Macedonia exists Agency of Youth and Sports established in 2000, after the decision to exclude the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which was the main institution for youth development, was adopted by the Parliament.

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

⁵ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?locations=MK> (Accessed October 31 2018)

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Statistics_on_young_people_neither_in_employment_nor_in_education_or_training (Accessed October 31 2018)

integration of youth via quality formal and non-formal education, economic prosperity of the youth via youth entrepreneurship, improving of quality of life, active participation of the youth in public life and in decision making processes on local and national level. Youth Department is divided into two sub-Departments-International cooperation and Youth policy and training.

Policy monitoring and evaluation

In 2016, a monitoring plan was prepared for monitoring the activities of the Action Plans for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy (2016-2025).

Currently there are no publicly available documents on the conducted monitoring.

1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

Mechanisms and actors

The process of creation of the National Youth Strategy included in-depth cross-sectorial approach through matching ministries, agencies and other relevant institutions. Initially, all ministries and institutions under the Government of Macedonia were active in the formed working groups for the Youth Strategy. After the Strategy was drafted, the text was submitted to the responsible ministries for feedback and comments as final filter before submission.

Related to implementation, the institutions at horizontal levels are responsible for reporting the activities under their jurisdiction to the Youth Department within the AYS. Each institution has appointed one person responsible for data collection / monitoring based on the Monitoring System in accordance to Decision made by the Government of Macedonia. However, no Inter-ministerial group is formed to coordinate the implementation of the NYS.

In September 2017, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia has established Club for youth issues and policies, based on the trend of the European Parliament and countries' parliaments. The Club for youth issues and policies is informal body within the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia, composed of members of all parliament parties aiming to accomplish the interests of youth in the country, in collaboration with the youth organizations, informal youth groups and youth political wings.

No specific legal framework for youth-policy making is in place. The coordination, cross-sectorial practices and political commitment is based on the internal procedures in the Government related to development and implementation of National Strategies and Programmes.

1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

In order to reduce the differences between the supplied workforce and the required skills, the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia conduct a survey for analysis of skills needs in the labor market. The analysis provides some short-term indicators of employers' expectations in term of new employments and the skills needs that people have at their disposal, as they could be competitive on the labor market. The findings of the analysis provide the basis for creating active programs and measures for the preparation for employment, aimed at raising the skills of the unemployment, in order to increase their competitiveness on the labor market and faster employment. However, it is important to mention that such analyzes do not include young people in particular, but they are general and cover the entire working-age population in Macedonia.

Youth Employment as high priority of the Government is a theme that requires specific scientific research aimed at developing tailored and relevant programmes and measures. The development of the Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016 – 2020 was based on specific evidence-based research supported by the International Labor Organization in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, using specific economic indicators ([Labor market transitions of young women and men in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia](#), June 2016).

With the support of the International Labor Organization, for the purposes of the Youth Guarantee, a study was conducted on the profile of young people who are not employed, nor are involved in education or training. The objective of this policy guidance note is to provide a snapshot of young people neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEET) in Macedonia.

Cooperation between policy-making and research

No institutionalized mechanisms of cooperation with the research community exist in Macedonia. There is no specific Youth Research Center or Youth Institute funded by the State.

Researches commissioned by the institutions are not done continuously but from time to time, so for example, the latest survey of the Youth Trends in Macedonia dates back to 2014.

National Statistics and available data sources

The State Statistical Office (SSO) is responsible for overall statistics for the country, including young people. According to the 2002 census, the population of Macedonia is 2022547 inhabitants. The population of young people aged 15 – 29 is 480828 inhabitants (which is almost 24% of the population).

<http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziPoslednaPublikacija.aspx?id=54>.

The SSO collects data for youth for the following age groups: 15 – 18, 19 – 24, 25 – 29. At thematic level, the SSO collects data on education, labor market (employment), population, social welfare: http://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziPublikacija_1.aspx?rbr=552.

The following youth indicators are collected at national level: Unemployment rate; Working age population by economic activity; Labor force by educational attainment, Activity rates of the population aged 15 years and over, NEET, Immigrated and Emigrated citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

No regular youth reports at national level, other data and analysis are produced.

Budgetary Allocations supporting research in the youth field

No budgetary allocations or particular budget lines are available for supporting research in the youth field.

1.7 Funding youth policy

How Youth policy is funded

Youth Policy does not have specific budget line in the Governmental Budget for 2018. In 2018, the total budget of the Agency of Youth and Sport is 484.413.000,00 MKD (app. 7.871.073,00 EUR), of which 31.386.000,00 MKD (509.981,00 EUR) are intended for the youth sector.

For comparison, in 2017 the Agency has budget in amount of 524.903.000,00 MKD (app. 8.535.008,00 EUR), of which 21.175.000,00 MKD (344.309,00 EUR) for department

youth, which is 4% of the total amount. The total budget of the Agency for the current year is slightly lower compared to the previous one, but it is noticeable that there is an increase in the budget for youth sector.

According to the National Youth Strategy, 9 priorities are defined and each includes set of measures. Specific ministry or institution is responsible to implement the measures under each priority. Thus, the budget for the measures falls under the budget for those specific institutions/ministries.

No disaggregated data on budget for youth measures exists for the institutions except the Ministry of labor and social policy, responsible for youth employment.

According to The Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016 – 2020, total planned amount for realization of the Action plan is 30.950.000,00 EUR^[7].

For comparison, in the previous Action Plan for Employment of Youth 2012-2015, the budget provided for achieving the intended goals was 28,2 million euros^[8].

The Pilot phase of the Youth Guarantee scheme measures are funded through the National Employment Plan, however the outreach and field activities that are conducted by the National Youth Council of Macedonia are funded by international donors.

While there is a noticeable slight increase in the budget for the current Action plan, it must be borne in mind that the previous one was created for a period of 3 years, while the new Action plan is for a period of 4 years.

What is funded?

Employment measures for young people are funded.

At priority level, highest priority within youth policy in Macedonia holds youth unemployment – specific Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016 – 2020 is developed. This action plan is operationalized into annual plans with specific budget for young people aged 15 – 29, as described in the previous section.

Financial accountability

N/A

Use of EU Funds

According to the National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility, 4.798.684,00 are spent in 2017, 4.861.562 EUR are spent in 2016, while 4.230.000,00 EUR in 2015. No other EU funds for youth policy were spent in 2015-2016.

By priority, IPA funds are used for the implementation of the Youth Employment measures, administered by the Ministry of labor and social policy. No other data on usage of EU funds are available.

⁷ Government of the Republic of Macedonia. Ministry of Labor and Social Policy "Action plan for Youth Employment 2016-2020", p. 45 http://dit.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2016_Akciski-plan-za-vrabotuvanje-mladi-2016-2020-godina_MK-pv-.pdf (Accessed October 30, 2018)

⁸ Government of the Republic of Macedonia. Ministry of Labor and Social Policy "Action plan for Youth Employment 2015", p.59 http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/vrabotuvanje_mladi_akciski.pdf (Accessed October 30, 2018)

1.8 Cross-border cooperation

Cooperation with European countries

RYCO (Regional Youth Cooperation Office): During the Western Balkans Summit in Vienna, the 27.8.2015, the Prime Ministers of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia have signed a "Joint Declaration on the establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office of the Western Balkans", in which they declare that they have agreed to "create the Regional Youth Cooperation Office of the Western Balkans, as a regionally-owned structure that leads and coordinates youth cooperation in our region", aiming "to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in our region".

The Agreement on establishment of RYCO was signed by the WB 6 Prime Ministers on WB Summit held in Paris, on 4 July 2016. The Head Office is in Tirana with local branches in all the capitals across the region (Podgorica, Sarajevo, Skopje, Pristina, Belgrade). The local branch office of RYCO in Macedonia was opened in Skopje on August 31, 2018

The Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO - rycowesternbalkans.org) is an independently functioning institutional mechanism for sustainable regional cooperation among young people, established by regional governments to promote reconciliation, mobility, participation, active citizenship and intercultural learning, in an European spirit and within the European integration process of the region. Macedonia is represented with 2 representatives (1 from Agency of Youth and Sports and 1 from youth civil society organization).

European Youth Forum: Macedonia is represented in the European Youth Forum by the National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM) which is a full member. As official member NYCM is invited to delegate participants on the YFJ events.

Council of Europe

The Republic of Macedonia has its representative in the [European Steering Committee for Intergovernmental Cooperation in the Field Youth \(CDEJ\)](#). The person comes from the Agency of Youth and Sport.

Macedonia also has its own representative in the Advisory Youth Council (CoE) who is coming from the youth CSO [Center for Intercultural Dialogue](#)⁹.

International cooperation

Governmental institutions in Macedonia responsible for national youth policies such as the Agency of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of Education, the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia cooperate with international organizations in Macedonia such as OSCE, UNDP, USAID, as well as with the delegation of the European Union in Macedonia, Swiss Embassy and the Embassies of United Kingdom, France and Germany. These partners support the government in the implementation of various youth policies, for example OSCE supports the establishment of local youth councils, Swiss Embassy and USAID support the government by funding the outreach activities of youth organizations in the Pilot phase of Youth Guarantee.

1.9 Current debates and reforms

At the beginning of 2018, the issue of drafting the Law on Youth was raised. The issue was initiated by the Club for Youth affairs and policies of the Assembly of Macedonia. The most recent debate on youth legislation is the debate about the Law on Youth that has

⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/2016-2017-ac-members-contactlist-with-photo-responsibilites-august-17/1680751877> (Accessed October 30 2018)

not yet been adopted. The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia on 11 of April held the first public debate on the topic "Whether and what kind of youth law is needed" ^[10]. This public hearing was preceded by the process of starting the creation of a Law on Youth, as an initiative of the Club for Youth.

In May 2018, the Agency of Youth and Sport (www.ams.gov.mk) organized the first consultations with young people from 3 cities (Kicevo, Ohrid and Kumanovo) in order to hear their opinion on what kind of youth law is needed in Macedonia. Beside by the organizer, the consultations were also attended by representatives of the youth organizations and the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. After the initial consultations, the Agency of Youth and Sport held consultations with young people in Prilep and Bitola, and to date, such consultations are organized in several cities throughout the country ^[11].

As complementary to the process started by the Agency of Youth and Sport, the National Youth Council of Macedonia as part of an ongoing project also organized educational workshops for the need and importance of Law on Youth. The project is a joint initiative of all youth organizations members of NYCM and it encompassed all 8 planning regions of Macedonia. The aim of the workshops is to provide information for the target group of young people, as well as the wider public in the country about the benefits of adopting the new Law on Youth in the Republic of Macedonia. The other goal of the project is to create recommendations that will contribute to the creation of operational documents for the implementation of the new Law on Youth.

Also, the Club for Youth Affairs and Policies is strong lobby group for articulating the interests of young people. The working group that is already established is intensively working on preparation of the Law on Youth, which is expected to enter parliamentary procedure by the end of 2018.

In March 2018, a [59th session of the Government](#) of the Republic of Macedonia was held, which was entirely dedicated to youth policies. This was the first ever thematic session for youth policies of the Government of Macedonia. On this occasion youth organization had the possibility to share their initiatives and recommendation for improvement of the youth policies in the field of youth participation, youth employment and green jobs, sexual education and other priorities of the youth sector.

The discussion for the first time opened the issue of establishing a co-management body for coordination between youth and institutions. The establishment of such a body was initiated by NYCM. The Agency of Youth and Sports has been appointed as the bearer of the activities for specifying the priorities of the co-management body. Such a body has not yet been established, but it is likely that it will be regulated with the new Law on Youth. Discussions are still ongoing.

There is an ongoing debate about the youth participation in high school and universities an issue that has been facilitated by three youth CSOs. The aim of the debate is to amend the respective laws on Secondary Education aimed to integrate the right to participation and organizing in the educational system. In June 2018, the last panel discussion on the topic "New high school organization 2018-2019" was organized ^[12]. Currently, the process is stalled.

¹⁰ <http://www.nms.org.mk/mk/otpochnuva-konsultativen-proces-za-pishuvanje-na-zakonot-za-mladi/> (Accessed October 30 2018)

¹¹ <http://ams.gov.mk/odnosi-so-javnosta/20-soopstenija/1319-nedelava-se-odrzhuvaat-prvite-konsultacii-za-nov-zakon-za-mladi-vo-makedonija>(Accessed October 30 2018)

¹² <https://www.radiomof.mk/novoto-srednoshkolsko-organiziranje-vo-fokus-na-panel-diskusija-vo-javna-soba/> (Accessed October 30 2018)

2. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

Volunteering is an activity of interest for the Republic of Macedonia which contributes to improving the quality of life with the active involvement of people in the social life, as well as for the development of a humane and equitable democratic society.

Volunteerism in Macedonia is regulated by the Law on Volunteering from 2007 (more is described under 2.4.).

2.1 General context

Historical developments

The Republic of Macedonia is a small Balkan country which became independent in 1991. Volunteering in Macedonia has not seen any attractiveness in the past, and even today we cannot boast of a large number of voluntary activities at the state level.

The [National Youth Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia](#) (2005-2015) emphasizes that “the development and strengthening of the civil society, volunteering and civil association are vital step in the promotion of responsible citizenship and democracy guarantee”. One of the measures of this Strategy was: The Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia to adopt a Law which will regulate the volunteer work. This is the first state official document that raises the question of regulating the volunteering in the country, and recognition of the volunteering on the other hand.

The Macedonian Law on Volunteering^[13] was adopted in July 2007. Prior to its adoption, the legal system imposed several obstacles to volunteering and in some instances reflected a misunderstanding of the concept. For example, reimbursement of expenses incurred by volunteers was subject to taxation, the lack of volunteer status led to misapplication and misunderstanding of the concept, and the status of foreign volunteers was not regulated. The law remedied these problems.

The law regulates organized volunteering, i.e., volunteer activities that take place between a volunteer and a host organization. The law states explicitly that it does not aim to limit other types of volunteering (such as informal, occasional, etc). Article 4 of the Law on Volunteering (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 85, July 9, 2007) defines a **volunteer as a natural person who provides services, skills, or knowledge for the benefit of other people, bodies, organizations and institutions on a voluntary basis without financial or other personal gain**. The principle of free will embodied in this definition distinguishes volunteering from unpaid mandatory services such as military or apprenticeship.

The Law has undergone two amendments. The first one in 2008^[14], related to the reimbursement of the costs of the volunteers (about food and travel), and the second one in 2015^[15], related to the penalty provisions. In 2013, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy proposed amendments to the Law on Volunteering regarding the personal data protection of foreign volunteers. For unknown reasons, the proposed amendments were not incorporated in the amendments of 2015 and they have not yet been voted.

Research analysis indicates that low number of citizens participate in civil society sector and in other community activities in general. According to Central Registry of the Republic of Macedonia there are 14,291 civil society organizations in Macedonia

¹³ Law on Volunteering. "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 85 July 9, 2007

¹⁴ Law for amendments on the Law on Volunteering. "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 161/2008"

¹⁵ Law for amendments on the Law on Volunteering. "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 147/2015"

(November 2018), however, not all of them are active. According to the previous Strategy, about 15% of the citizens' volunteer in various activities and initiatives, and only 10% volunteer in civic organizations despite encouraging legal and fiscal framework for volunteering. Citizens do not have continuity in voluntary activities; a total of 10 volunteer hours a year on various unrelated objectives / activities. According to National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 local self-governments and government institutions do not contribute adequately to encourage volunteer work among young people, despite the fact that the majority of the young population support this type of engagement as an opportunity for training that will make them better prepared for future job positions.^[16] Therefore, it is important to continue to raise the awareness among citizens, especially young people about the opportunities and benefits that civil society provided in order to encourage their active participation, and the importance of monitoring and participation in policy and decision making.^[17] In October 2018, the Government adopted the new [Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for Cooperation with and Development of the Civil Sector 2018-2020](#), together with [Action Plan](#) which in the Priority area 3: Civil Society as an Actor in Social and Economic Development, provides concrete activities for promotion and development of volunteerism at the state level.

Civil society organizations have developed their own initiatives based on their program needs and priorities, such as establishing international and local volunteer centers, exchange services for volunteers, such as the European Voluntary Service, organizing local volunteer actions, capacity building, and development of manuals or guides, organizing promotional events, volunteer camps and so on.

With the adoption of the Law on Volunteering the Government laid the foundation and framework for encouraging people to engage in social processes through the activities of public and private entities.

Main concepts

Definition on volunteering

Volunteering (in terms of the Law on Volunteering, Official Gazette 85/2007, article 3) is understood as free will (voluntary) providing personal services, knowledge and skills and/or commitment of other activities in favor to other persons, bodies, organizations and other institution, without compensation. This Law does not limit the possibility to provide volunteer services that are inconsistent or accidental by nature voluntary, without compensation.

According to the Law on Labor^[18] (Official Gazette 54/13, article 61) if the volunteering experience is requirement for a professional exam or for independently performing activities in accordance with a special law should be carried out by signing a contract for volunteer service, between the employer and the volunteer. For the volunteer in these terms apply the provisions of this law regarding the duration and performance of the internship, limitation of working hours, daily breaks and leaves the responsibility for compensation, as well as ensuring safety at work, in accordance with the law. Contract for volunteer work must be concluded in writing and a copy of it within three days of signing, must be submitted to the labor inspection.

¹⁶ National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, Agency of Youth and Sport of Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2016), p. 13 <http://strategijazamladi.mk/sites/default/files/National-Youth-Strategy-2016-2025.pdf> (Accessed November 20, 2018)

¹⁷ Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for cooperation with civil sector 2012-2017, p. 38 https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/strategijaa_2012-2017.pdf (Accessed November 8, 2018)

¹⁸ Law on Labor. "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia 54/13", Article 61

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

Youth Volunteering in Republic of Macedonia is not strictly regulated. There is a Law on Volunteering but it's general and it doesn't emphasize youth as target group. Three local municipalities from [Tetovo](#), [Bitola](#) and [Kavadarci](#) in cooperation with the non-governmental sector, have adopted Local Strategies on Volunteerism. The processes of adopting of Local Strategies on Volunteerism, were initiated by civil society sector and funded by International Foundations. Local Strategies are aiming to provide sustainable development promotion and strengthening of volunteerism at local level, also provides analysis and detail action plan, adopts measures for all key stakeholders. However, does not delegate key staff on monitoring and evaluation of the implementation. Main responsibility for implementation of the Local Strategies remains on Local Self-Government. Volunteering as a subject in Republic in Macedonia has a general focus and the Government does not target young people with tailor-made approaches, thus all legal documents are based equal inclusive opportunities, regardless of gender, ethnicity, social status, age and does not target specifically young people. Therefore, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is responsible for volunteerism in general, not the Agency of Youth and Sport. However, all legal bindings connected with young people and volunteering are exclusive and provide greater focus on young people and their process of development.

Main actors

Nationwide, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is responsible for youth volunteering. More concrete, after the expiration of the Strategy for the Development of Volunteering, the policies for volunteering in Macedonia are under the responsibility of the State Labor Inspectorate. To date, a revision of the previous Strategy that has expired in 2015 has not yet been made, nor is the adoption of a new Strategy planned.

In direction of the fulfilment of the institutional support in the process of volunteering, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy formed [National Council for Volunteering Development](#) where 9 representatives were nominated from, The Ministry for Labor and Social Policy, Ministry for Education and Science, Agency of Youth and Sport, the General Secretariat – department for cooperation with non-governmental organizations, Association of Local Self – government and 4 representatives of the Civil sector. But since the mandate of the Council has expired (in 2016), it does not currently function.

Ministry for Education and Science initiated the opening of the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility that has the leading role in providing international volunteering opportunities for Macedonian youngsters and volunteering assignments in Macedonia for young citizens from EU member states, with its sub programs adopted by European Commission. [The Law on establishing the National Agency for European Education Programmes and mobility](#) was adopted in 2007.

Non-state Actors such as civil society organizations and non-formal groups, mainly have the role of initiators and contributors towards implementing the measures set by the government. Civil society organizations are the main organizers of voluntary job. Given that volunteers work for a common good and not for someone's own interest, business organizations must not conclude voluntary agreements.

2.3 National strategy on youth volunteering

Existence of a National Strategy

In September 2010 The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of Republic of Macedonia, have adopted "[Strategy for promotion and development of volunteering \(2010 – 2015\) and Action Plan](#)". It is important to indicate that Republic of Macedonia hasn't adopted specific Strategy on Youth Volunteering and as a subject it is incorporated within the general strategy mentioned. The strategy itself doesn't target only youth but has general focus and it is set in the spirit of equal rights on volunteering. Currently, there is no active strategic document and institutions haven't started yet a procedure for new strategy that regulates volunteerism on national level. In addition, the "[Strategy for cooperation of the government with the civil society with Action Plan \(2007 – 2011\)](#)" and "[Strategy for cooperation of the government with the civil society \(2012 - 2017\)](#)" were synergized with the "Strategy for promotion and development of volunteering (2010 – 2015) and Action Plan" and they main initiators for creating legal framework and strategic documents on volunteerism in general, with greater focus on youth volunteering in particular. The Action Plan for the Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for Cooperation with and Development of the Civil Sector 2018-2020 also provide measures for promotion of volunteering, or more specifically: Improving the legal framework for the promotion and development of volunteering and Encouraging volunteer activities and financial support for civic organizations that promote volunteering.^[19]

Furthermore, Youth Volunteering to some extent, was incorporated within National Youth Strategy, 2005-2015 and within National Youth Strategy 2016 – 2025. Youth Volunteering is not a main thematic area in National Youth Strategy 2016 – 2025, it can be found within the thematic areas Youth participation and Local youth work on a cross sectorial and transversal level of incorporation.

In 2015, Three Local strategies on Volunteerism (2015-2018) were created, by initiative of the Civil Sector with partnership with the [Municipality of Tetovo](#), [Municipality of Kavadarci](#) and [Municipality of Bitola](#). These strategies are still active, but since the end of 2018 is nearing completion, the Youth Cultural Center - Bitola (as the main initiator) has already begun consultations to renew the strategies for the next 3 years. Moreover, in the course of 2019 it plans to carry out local strategies in 2 other municipalities in Macedonia (the municipality of Strumica and the municipality of Sveti Nikole).

Scope and contents

The main aim of the previous Strategy for promotion and development of volunteering (2010 – 2015) was to provide continuous development, promotion and strengthening of the volunteering engagement in R. Macedonia. With the Strategy, the Government stand to fulfill the following concrete strategic aims:

1. Promotion of volunteering at the broader public
2. Encouraging of the culture of volunteering within the educational system
3. Increasing the level of volunteering in the civil sector
4. Establishment of a system for institutional support of volunteering.

The local strategies adopted in the three Macedonian municipalities mentioned above follow the goals and values of the previous national strategy. It's important to be mentioned that same as previous national strategy, local strategies also have general focus and does not target specific youth group.

¹⁹ Action Plan for Implementation of the Strategy of the Government of Republic of Macedonia for Cooperation and Development of the Civil Sector 2018-2020, p. 39-40.
<https://www.nvosorobotka.gov.mk/sites/default/files/Akciski%20plan%202018-2020%20usvoen%209%2010%202018.pdf> (Accessed November 9, 2018)

Responsible authority

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has the main competence for volunteer policies. After the expiration of the National Volunteering Strategy (2015), the competence remained in the hands of the MLSP, but this time it is taken over by the State Labor Inspectorate (as a body within the MLSP).

Revisions/ Updates

Till date (November 2018) no revision is made. So far, the MLSP does not plan to adopt a new national strategy.

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

National Programme for Youth Volunteering

National Program on Youth Volunteering is still not adopted from the Government of Republic of Macedonia. Each individual organizer of voluntary work needs to conduct Program on volunteering according to the Law on Volunteerism. The organizer of volunteering determines the need of engagement of volunteers, types of services and manner of providing them, based on a program for volunteering. There is internal document within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Registry of Volunteers set within "Regulations on form, content and methodology for the register on persons engaged with agreement on volunteering", with data on active volunteers nationwide (volunteers that have signed the voluntary contract with organizer of voluntary work). Responsible for implementation of the Law on Volunteerism is the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

Funding

Each organizer of Volunteer Work provides its own funding from domestic sponsors, company/organizational budget, international funding organizations, programs and donors. Nevertheless, when Public institutions have the role as organizers of volunteer work, according to [Law for transformation into permanent employment](#), article 7; Institutions engage volunteers with contract for volunteering after obtaining consent from the Ministry of Finance, furthermore they need to provide certificate from the Registry of volunteers during the volunteering issued by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Institutions that are second-line budget users (spending units, financed through the appropriate budget user) need to request consent submitted to the competent authority, i.e. first line budget user.

Characteristics of youth volunteering

The latest data about youth volunteering are according to the research from the University Cyril and Methodius, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research Skopje, Macedonia, [Youth Trends in Republic of Macedonia in 2014](#). The research shows the trends of participation in volunteering and the main fields of volunteering. Youth often (in quite large percentage) 72.8% are assisting in schoolwork to their peers or friends, 54.2%, are part of fundraising and community actions. 46.7% of the young people are volunteering in activities connected with assistance to elderly or disabled persons. While volunteering in CSOs is less common (24%). In Republic of Macedonia there is no public accessible data that provides information on youth participation in decision making on volunteering.

Support to young volunteers

According to Law on Volunteerism, Organizers of Volunteer work in Republic of Macedonia are obliged to cover the compensation of the previously agreed expenses related to volunteering (cost of food, transportation costs 'to and from' the place of volunteering, expenses for official travels and training expenses). Furthermore, the reimbursement of expenses for food and transportation costs 'to and from' the place of volunteering is paid up to 15 % of the average monthly salary in the Republic, for the previous year and the cost of official travel and training costs are paid in the same amount as for employees of the organizer of volunteering. Volunteers stationed in Republic of Macedonia regardless of citizenships, shall be entitled to, accommodation health insurance and travel reimbursement.

Quality Assurance (QA)

According to [Law on volunteerism](#) (Art.21), monitoring of the implementation of the provisions of the law is responsibility of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The inspection is performed by the State Labor Inspectorate. National registry of organizations offering volunteering opportunities is lacking. The organizer of volunteering is obliged to keep records for the volunteering of all volunteers if not; it will be forced on penalty fees according to the law on volunteerism. There is Registry on Volunteers, however it is an internal document.

Monthly reports, on-the-spot visits and direct interviews are the mechanisms used for collecting young volunteers' feedback on their volunteering experiences. Republic of Macedonia strives to improve the process of collecting quality and quantity data regarding volunteerism and the implementation of the legal framework due to its scarcity. Currently there is no publicly accessible, nationwide process that periodically evaluates the quality of volunteer work provided from organizers of volunteer work, or measuring the satisfactory level of the volunteers. There is only Registry of Volunteers in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, internal document that collects all volunteers that have signed voluntary contract with organizer of voluntary work.

Target groups

The legislation on volunteering in Macedonia targets all citizens, domestic and foreign, who are willing to volunteer, and domestic institutions and organizations in the role of organizers of volunteering service. The law forbids discrimination upon race, skin color, gender, age, health condition (disability), and religious, political or other beliefs, national or social origin, family status, property status, gender orientation or any other personal circumstances.

Any domestic or foreign individual may be a volunteer. Also the Law enables minors (15 - 18) to commit volunteer activity with parental / guardian written agreement.^[20]

As organizers of volunteering service might appear: civil society organization or foundation; religious community or group; public institution; state body; local self-government unit and the City of Skopje. The organizer is responsible for defining the need of volunteer engagement, type and procedures for committing the services according to volunteering program.^[21]

²⁰ Law on Volunteering. "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 85, July 9, 2007", Article 5

²¹ Law on Volunteering. "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 85, July 9, 2007", Article 6

2.5 Cross-border mobility programmes

EU programmes

Erasmus + Programme

The main EU programme promoting youth mobility, and is available for Macedonia is the Erasmus + Programme. The decentralized actions of the programme are implemented by the National Agency for European Education Programmes and Mobility.

Macedonia is Programme Country of the Erasmus + Programme, and following actions are available in Macedonia:

- Key Action 1 - Learning Mobility of Individuals
- Key Action 2 - Co-operation for Innovation and the Exchanges of Good Practices
- Key Action 3 - Support for Policy Reform
- Jean Monnet Activities
- Sport

According to the Erasmus + Project Results webpage, by the moment (last checked on 01 November 2018) 4037 Erasmus + project involved Macedonian entities, either as coordinator / beneficiary ether as partner, of which 2599 are in Erasmus + Key Action 1 - Youth Mobility.

European Voluntary Service

At the moment [60 organizations form Macedonia are accredited EVS organizations](#) (last checked on 01 November 2018). The process of Accreditation for EVS can be found in the [European Voluntary Service Accreditation Guidelines](#).

Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) 2007 - 2013

In December 2005, Macedonia was granted candidate country status for EU membership. On 18 February 2008 the Council adopted the [Accession Partnership](#) for the country, thus updating the previous European Partnership of January 2006. The main objective of IPA is to assist the countries in their progressive alignment with the standards and policies of the European Union, including where appropriate the *acquis communautaire*, with a view to future membership.

Macedonia has been given the prospect of becoming an EU member state. On its way towards membership, the European Union provides continuous support and financial assistance in order to help the country with the necessary reforms.

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) came into effect at the start of 2007 and provide financial support for the country in the period 2007-2013. Afterward IPA II was created for the period 2014-2020 with financial allocation for Macedonia of € 664.2 million. Young people are a target group of IPA 2014-2020 Action Programme [EU Support for Education, Employment and Social Policy](#) with one of the aims to strengthen evidence-based policy making and support the employability of youth. IPA also funded the establishment of a [Western Balkans Youth Window](#), within the Youth in Actions programme. The main aim of this Programme is to support young people's transnational nonformal learning mobility through cooperation projects and activities.

Other Programmes

Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) is an international organization financed by the governments of the region and it is supported by the EU and other donors. They are supporting different youth mobility programmes which can be found on their web page (<http://www.rycowb.org>)

Legal framework applying to foreign volunteers

Foreign volunteers are subject of the Law on Volunteering as well. Thus, the Law determines the possibilities and conditions for volunteering of foreigner. A foreign individual may volunteer in Macedonia upon issued Consent for volunteering by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and regulated residence in the Republic of Macedonia (article 8, par. 2). After the Consent for volunteering is being issued, the organizer of the voluntary service has obligation to inform the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy about the start of the volunteering activity, within 60 days. The procedures related to the issuing of Consent for volunteering are explained in the [Regulation of the manner, procedure and evidence for issuing of Consent for volunteering of foreign \(non-residential\) individual in the Republic of Macedonia](#).

Visas

Citizens of the following countries are not required to have entry visa for the Republic of Macedonia:

- [EU member countries and signatories of the Schengen Agreement](#) - have right to enter the Republic of Macedonia with a valid ID card.
- [Third countries with permanent stay in an EU member country or signatory country of the Schengen Agreement](#) - may stay in the Republic of Macedonia for up to 15 (fifteen) days upon every entry to the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, and the total amount of the subsequent stays in the Republic of Macedonia must not be longer than 3 (three) months within a six-months period, starting from the date of the first entry.
- [Third countries with multiple entry short stay Schengen visa type C valid at least 5 \(five\) days beyond the intended stay in the Republic of Macedonia](#) - may stay in the Republic of Macedonia for up to 15 (fifteen) days upon every entry to the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, and the total amount of the subsequent stays in the Republic of Macedonia must not be longer than 3 (three) months within a six-months period, starting from the date of the first entry.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Macedonia has published [information about visa entry in the country](#) for the countries and unrecognized territories on its web site in alphabetical order.

A foreigner, with country of residence that requires visa entry in the Republic of Macedonia, might apply for two types of entry visas: [Short-Stay Visa](#) for the Republic of Macedonia, or [Long-Stay Visa](#) for the Republic of Macedonia.

Registration of Foreign Nationals

All foreign citizens, irrelevant whether a visa is necessary for their entry in the Republic of Macedonia or not, are obliged to register themselves in the nearest police station within 24 hours of their entry on Macedonian territory. For the foreign volunteers in Macedonia, the organizer of the voluntary service (the host) can assist the volunteer to register.

Customs Guide

The Republic of Macedonia, according to the legislation, has developed procedures for customs. The customs service of the Republic of Macedonia developed information booklet with title "[What you need to know when you are departing from and arriving in Macedonia](#)". There are no specific custom rules for volunteers.

2.6 Raising awareness about youth volunteering opportunities

Information providers

Information in present times is very important for young people. Information needs to be eligible, factual and reliable in order to provide opportunities that are open for them. In the last few years' big importance is given to the right for information, where CSO's are supported from the government and international foundations, to provide information for young people, including information on volunteering.

National public authorities

Agency of Youth and Sport:

Main governmental body that is in charge of youth in Republic of Macedonia is the [Agency of Youth and Sport](#) that is basically governmental body with its own budget and responsibilities. Although it is not a ministry, it is independent structure that is not under any other particular governmental ministry and responds directly to Prime Minister. The Youth Department is divided into two sub-Departments-International cooperation and Youth policy and training. AYS launched a website <http://www.mladi.ams.mk/> that informs young people about volunteer opportunities, job and study opportunities and provides other relevant information.

Other national public bodies

Other national bodies that are directly involved into dissemination of youth information are the Ministry of Education and Science, Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia, the Ministry of Social Care and the Ministry of Culture, which has activities, connected with youth. On regular basis the mentioned public bodies provide information for youth on their web pages in general, and information on volunteering in particular as part of their providing information.

National agency for European educational programmes and mobility

Important role in dissemination of youth information about youth opportunities and mobility also have [National agency for European educational programmes and mobility](#). This organization is in charge for the European Commission programs such as Erasmus+ (certainly most important for Youth) that are widely spread among youth CSOs.

National Council for the development of volunteering

National Council for the development of volunteering (NCDV) was established by Government in 2012 in order to ensure successful planning and implementation of objectives and measures of the Strategy for development of volunteering. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy provided administrative - technical support for the work of NCDV. National Council for the Development of Volunteering was responsible for the promotion and development of volunteering as a socially useful activity, planning specific measures and monitor the development of volunteering.

But since the mandate of the Council has expired in 2016 it does not currently function.

Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field

In the Republic of Macedonia there are 81 municipalities and only few of them have serious focus on Youth and support youth activities mainly by supporting Youth information centers. Youth information and advisory centers as local tools for dissemination youth information (volunteering, education, trainings, youth mobility, EVS) are present in two municipalities in Prillep and Kavadarci. These youth information and advisory centers are part of the program for decentralized cooperation between Lower Normandy and Macedonia, implemented by the coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA.

The municipality of Skopje, the capital, has a structure within city administration that provides support for CSOs including Youth organizations.

Youth CSOs

Nowadays, the youth sector in the Republic of Macedonia is a combination of associations such as: youth organizations, organizations of different fields with youth target group, youth lead organizations, student associations and student unions, youth political wings, and cultural and artistic youth associations. Youth organizations have active role in dissemination on volunteering information for young people.

The largest youth representative body in Macedonia is National Youth Council of Macedonia. NYCM unites 46 organizations, 19 youth organizations, 16 organizations for youth, 1 union, 6 wings of political parties and 4 associate members, in order to promote and advocate for the rights of the Macedonian youth. NYCM was established on 29 June 2013 by 55 organizations.

Useful websites:

www.mladi.mk is online platform (developed by NYCM) where young people can find volunteering and other opportunities for personal development.

www.mladiinfo.eu, web portal founded by Mladiinfo International (non-profit, independent organization). On the web portal youth can find different international opportunities: scholarships, internships, volunteering etc.

Specific contact point

EURODESK is an international nonprofit association. As support organisation to the Erasmus+ programme (2014-2020) Eurodesk is one of the most comprehensive and most accessible source of free youth information about international learning mobility opportunities.

As of today, Eurodesk is present in 35 countries and it is also present in Macedonia.

Macedonia have three EURODESK contact points: NYCM, AKCIJA PLUS and CREATIVE AND ACTIVE. These organizations provide and disseminate information about volunteering and other youth related opportunities. All information regarding volunteering opportunities, job and study opportunities and other useful information's for youth can be found here.

Key initiatives

Republic of Macedonia is missing state-funded national or regional centers or agencies, that support volunteering organizations. In general, the initiatives for youth policies in Macedonia are coming from the civil sector.

One of the key initiatives that is still the subject of discussion is the initiative of the Youth Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia for the establishment of the Law on Youth. The positive side is that the consultations actively involve civil society organizations as well as all interested young people. In order to inform and increase the involvement of young people in the creation of the law, consultations with young people throughout the cities in Macedonia are continuously organized.

Civic organizations are an important factor in proposing initiatives for concrete youth policies. At the initiative of the Youth Cultural Center - Bitola, and with the support of the US Embassy and the municipalities of Bitola, Tetovo and Kavadarci, as well as with the participation of local organizations from Tetovo and Kavadarci, Local strategies for the development of volunteering in the three cities were adopted. Since they expire at the end of 2018 MKC – Bitola already started the initiative to rebuild the mentioned strategies as well as to make Local strategies for volunteering in municipalities of Sveti Nikole and Strumica.

2.7 Skills recognition

Policy Framework

Nationwide, the skills recognition is regulated with the [Закон за Волонтерство \(Law on volunteering\)](#) within the article 19“The organizer of volunteering is obliged to keep records for the volunteering of all the volunteers. The manner of keeping records referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be prescribed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.” It contains information about the type and duration of the service, as well as for the type of training provided to the volunteer during the service.

The Republic of Macedonia become Erasmus+ Programme Country in 2004. Designated institution for implementation of Erasmus plus programme in Macedonia is the National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility. The National Agency administrates the opportunity for Macedonian young people to volunteer abroad and young people from EU member’s states, to volunteer in Republic of Macedonia.

Concerning the validation and recognition of skills in Republic of Macedonia, the National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility is responsible for implementation of Europass as National Europass Centre regards the acquisition of skills in formal setting, as well Youthpass National Coordinator for implementation of Youthpass regarding the validation and recognition of non-formal learning.

Currently Youthpass does not have the same level of recognition in Republic of Macedonia as in EU member’s states.

Existing arrangements

In Republic of Macedonia, Skills recognition is recognized through [volunteer card](#). The form and content of the volunteer card, is regulated with [Regulation of the form and contents of the volunteer card, issuing and registering of data](#). The organizer issues volunteer card, which is considered as public document. It contains information about the type and duration of the service, as well as for the type of training provided to the volunteer during the service. The organizer of voluntary work is legally entitled to issue voluntary card. The main responsibility for monitoring the functioning of the system of skills recognition is on Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The inspection is performed by the State Labor Inspectorate. In non-formal settings, non-governmental organization provides recognition documents according to their internal procedures and regulations, thus there are differences between the recognition documents provided from various subjects and Republic of Macedonia is lacking of national standardized system for verification or recognition of volunteer assignments, except volunteer card. Currently in Republic of Macedonia there are no possibilities for young volunteers to obtain [ECTS](#) or [ECVET](#) credits through volunteering.

2.8 Current debates and reforms

What is currently moving forward in term of volunteering is coming from the Civil society sector. Namely, the Youth Cultural Center- Bitola already begun consultations to renew the local strategies of municipalities Tetovo, Bitola and Kavadarci for the next 3 years, as they expire by the end of the year.

There are also ongoing discussions held by the Youth Cultural Center- Bitola for creating local strategies in two other cities in Macedonia, Sveti Nikole and Strumica.

3. EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Republic of Macedonia, since its independence is suffering from high rate of unemployment. Unfortunately, most vulnerable category are young people. The rate of youth unemployment since the independence of Macedonia (1991) was constantly over 50% until 2015 when for the first time it dropped below 50%, but we still have high rate of youth unemployment, above 45% (more in the next chapter).

According to the State Statistical Office Macedonia's total unemployment rate decreased to 22.1 percent in the second quarter of 2018 from 22.6 percent in the same period of the previous year.

With aim to achieve higher employability of young people, the Government in recent year is working on new measures through a combination of employment, education and social assistance policies (more in the next chapters).

3.1 General context

Labour market situation in the country

Labor Market and Youth Unemployment

The Macedonian labor market suffers from low activity, low employment rates, high unemployment and (vertical and horizontal) mismatch between supplied labor and demanded skills. Labor force participation rate remains low by international standards, reflecting the low employment coupled with high unemployment rate.

As it was mentioned in the chapter 1.6, in order to reduce the differences between the supplied workforce and the required skills, the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia conduct a survey for analysis of skills needs in the labor market. The purpose of the research is to increase knowledge about the situation and the expected changes in the labor market, by obtaining information from employers for: the needs of new employments in the next 6 to 12 months; the needs of occupations, the planned new employments; the skill needs of candidates for planned new job; the needs of workers with certain occupations, for which employers have experienced a deficiency in filling vacancies.

The unemployment rate, as participation of the number of unemployed in the total labor force was already high at the beginning of the transition in the early 90's, estimated at 20%, but further increased during transition. The unemployment rate continued to grow particularly in the privatization process and in 2005 reached a record rate of 37,3%^[22].

These developments suggest that the emergence of the new private sector was insufficient to absorb the decrease in employment caused by the restructuring of state-owned companies, notwithstanding the effect or pressure of rising working-age population. Some researchers say that "the unfavorable business climate during the transition has not only discouraged new business start-ups, but also promoted the blossoming of the informal economy. To discourage the sizeable shadow economy and spur the development of private, and particularly, small and medium-sized enterprise sector, the authorities substantially reduced the personal-income and corporate tax rates at the beginning of 2007"^[23].

²² Republic of Macedonia. State Statistical Office. "20 Years Independent Macedonia" (Skopje, 2011), p. 19 <http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikaciji/20GodiniRM.pdf> (Accessed November 6, 2018)

²³ Nikica Mojsoska-Blazevski, Jasna Najdova, Aleksandar Stojkov, Ljiljana Asenov, *Labor Market in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; A Study for The European Commission Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities* (Euro – Balkan Institute, 2009), p. 5

The unemployment rate in Macedonia decreased to 21.1 percent in the second quarter of 2018 from 22.6 percent in the same period of the previous year. Although the dynamics of the movement of the unemployment rate are optimistic, we must be careful in drawing conclusions. Considering the fact that the unemployment rate is determined on the basis of the number of persons registered as unemployed in the Employment Agency of Macedonia, we must bear in mind that for unknown reasons there are unemployed people who are not registered within the Agency. So, taking into account the unknown dark figure of the unemployed, the real unemployment rate in Macedonia is certainly higher than the official above mentioned.

It is also interesting to mention that the unemployment rate in Macedonia averaged 31.04 percent from 1993 until 2018, reaching an all-time high of 38.70 percent in the first quarter of 2005 and a record low of 21.10 percent in the second quarter of 2018.

When it comes to youth unemployment, the numbers since our independents are constantly high. Last data from 2017 according to Statista are 46,87%.^[24]

The rate of youth unemployment in Macedonia is continuously high and it is considered that the most important reasons for the high rate are the following^[25]:

- Poor qualification structure (a large number of young people are unqualified or semi-qualified);
- Inequity between the need of the labor market with the education system;
- The strict need for employers to employ people with previous work experience;

Also, a great problem is nepotism, cronyism and political patronage, which, combined with the previously mentioned reasons, make young people discouraged and emigrate abroad.

Youth unemployment and underemployment (workers who are highly skilled but working in low paying jobs, workers who are highly skilled but working in low skill jobs and part-time workers who would prefer to be full time) in the Republic of Macedonia represent a major cost to the country in economic, political and societal terms. The high youth unemployment rate – among the highest in the world – means a loss of investment in education and training, a reduced tax base and higher social costs. At the same time, long periods of unemployment in the early stages of life affect the job prospects across the working-life span of young people. Young, rural and unskilled females are less likely to be active in the labor market.

As a result, political attention has increasingly been focused on boosting the employment of young people in Macedonia through a combination of employment, education and social assistance policies. For that purpose, The Government of Republic of Macedonia in its work program 2017-2020 insert The Youth Guarantee as a measure for increasing the employability of young people. In 2017, Master Plan for Youth Guarantee was adopted. The Master Plan define institutions responsible for implementation of concrete activities for realization of the Youth Guarantee. The Youth Guarantee in Macedonia was mentioned for the first time in the youth program for work of the Macedonian Anti-Poverty Platform for the period 2014-2017, although no specific activities for its implementation have been noticed. Also, in 2015, National Youth Council of Macedonia submitted propose, within the framework of the Objective 2 of the draft version of the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 in Employment and pre-employment support field, to introduce the Youth Guarantee program by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. Such a proposal has been adopted, therefore, in the National Youth Strategy, one of the measures for

²⁴ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/812208/youth-unemployment-rate-in-macedonia/>
(Accessed on November 7, 2018)

²⁵ National Report on Youth Unemployment in the Republic of Macedonia. Youth Cultural Center (Bitola 2015), p. 8
http://www.youseefor.me/images/manuals/macedonia/baseline_macedonia_mcd.pdf
(Accessed November 7, 2018)

increasing youth employment is also the 'implementation of a specific multi sectoral policy for proactively reducing youth unemployment'^[26].

The Youth Guarantee is also part of the [Economic Reform Programme 2018-2020](#) of Ministry of Finance, as a measure to reduce the rate of youth unemployment. In February 2018, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy together with the Employment Agency of Macedonia and the National Youth Council of Macedonia started the realization of the pilot project Youth Guarantee. The Economic Reform Program provides that "With the Youth Guarantee measure, each young person under the age of 29 will be given an adequate job offer, an opportunity to continue education or be included in some of the internship or training measures for preparation for employment. This will be provided within 4 months after completion of education or registration as an unemployed person in Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia."^[27]

Once the unemployed persons are registered in the unemployment register, they are immediately referred to their first interview with an expert from the Employment Agency, who makes the profiling of their employability using a control questionnaire and develops the individual employment plans (IEP). The IEP defines activities that will enable the young unemployed person in the next 4 months to be included again in the educational process (not in regular education) or to be included in some of the measures and services for employment, which will enable him to increase his opportunities for easier employment, i.e. he will be offered adequate employment which corresponds to his education and skills. These activities include group and individual counseling and information; providing job search assistance services; motivational training; inclusion in one of the labor market integration measures (employment, education and training measures).^[28]

According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy this measure has positive results. In the first 3 months of its realization in Skopje, Strumica and Gostivar, 419 people were hired, 196 began to attend training and 160 started their practice in a company. According to latest information from the Government of the Republic of Macedonia the following results were achieved: Total number of young people included: 1,770, of which 855 women and 915 males. 518 of them are already employed, while the rest are involved in other measures such as internships, job training, training requirements for occupations in the labor market, advanced IT skills trainings.

The Youth Guarantee is open to all young people under the age of 29 who are unemployed, have already completed their education and have not been registered within the Employment Agency. The applicants receive a quality job offer, further education or internship. The purpose of this measure is for young people to stay in the country and to work here, and for its realization, the Government has provided 8.8 million euros by the end of the year. In December 2018 it is expected that the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy will publish the results about whole year, i.e. how many young people were successfully covered by some of the Youth Guarantee measures.

At the moment the Government of Republic of Macedonia is working on the first phase of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee. According to the Plan for implementation of the Youth Guarantee the first phase (2018-2019) include appropriate political reforms, mapping young people (NEET) and making assessment for the necessary investment for

²⁶ National Youth Strategy 2016-2020, Agency of Youth and Sport of Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2016), p. 27
<http://strategijazamladi.mk/sites/default/files/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%B3%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BC%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8-2016-2025.pdf> (Accessed November 20, 2018)

²⁷ Economic Reform Programme 2018-2020. Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Finance (January 2018), p. 83 https://www.finance.gov.mk/files/Macedonia_ERP_2018.pdf (Accessed November 12, 2018)

²⁸ Ibid, p.83-84

realization of the Youth Guarantee, enlarge the scope of available programs, making partnerships in order to get in touch with young unengaged people and creating monitoring system. In the first phase it is planned the Youth Guarantee to be implemented in 3 pilot employment centers with taking appropriate employment measures which are matching with the needs of youth who are not employed, neither engaged in education or training.

The second phase is planned to be implemented in the period of 2020-2022 only if the activities from the first phase are already implemented and there is appropriate base for continuing with the activities of the second phase. The main aim of the second phase is to accommodate institutional arrangements and coordination mechanisms in order to strengthen the provision of integrated Youth Guarantee services.

Definitions and concepts

Macedonia follows the definition of International Labor Organization on the recommendations for definitions and concepts – therefore, according to [State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia](#), employed are included persons of 15 years of age and more who:

- During the reporting week have worked for money (in cash or in kind) or for profit at least one hour;
- During the reporting week were temporarily absent from work (because of illness; leaves; studies; break in the activity of the business entity etc.), but were formally employed;
- Are helping on the family estate or in the family enterprise without pay

The classification of the employed according to the economic status is based upon the International Classification of Status in Employment and is worded as follows:

Employers - persons who run their own business entity or owners who work in their shops or owners of an agriculture estate, who employ other people;

Employees - persons who work in state institutions, business entities in public, mixed, collective and undefined ownership or for a private employer;

Self-employed - persons who work in their own business, professional practice or farm for the purpose of earning a profit and who do not employ any other person;

Unpaid family workers - persons who work without pay in a business entity or a farm (owned by a family member).

According to State Statistical Office of Republic of Macedonia, as unemployed are considered the persons between 15-74 years of age who meet the following three conditions:

- During the reporting week they did not work (according to the above-mentioned criteria);
- Have searched actively for a job or have taken concrete activities to find a job;
- Were prepared to accept work in the next two weeks after the reporting week.

The persons that are not included in any of the two categories make up the group of those that are not in labor force.

3.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Employment policies in Macedonia are defined within the Program of the Government of Republic of Macedonia 2017-2020, Program for Employment and Social Policy Reforms

2020, National Employment Strategy 2016-2020 and Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016-2020.

In the Program of the Government of Republic of Macedonia 2017-2020 it is stated that the Government will lead a youth policy that will be the core of employment policies and the main emphasis will be placed precisely on the measures that will improve student life and standard, and young people will find it easier to get first employment.

In the Program for Employment and Social Policy Reforms 2020 one of the goals is to improve youth employment and promote more and better jobs for young people. The foreseen measures for achieving the goal are: further strengthening of the coverage and participation of young unemployed persons in the design and implementation of services and active employment measures. Strengthening the system; Strengthening the system of profiling young unemployed persons when registering them within the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia in order to assess and identify the possibilities for employment and prioritize the interventions and others.^[29]

The National Employment Strategy 2016-2020 is prepared with the support of three international institutions: the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Bank, and the UNDP. It has a general scope and does not apply exclusively to young people, but points out the need to take active employment measures targeted at young people in order to facilitate the transition from education to the labor market, which on average last about 6 years.

In order to overcome the challenge of youth employment at national level, the Government of Republic of Macedonia and the social partners in cooperation with ILO have developed an Action Plan for Employment of Young People 2016-2020. The ultimate goal of the Action Plan is promoting more and better jobs for young people. The specific objectives of the Action Plan are mainly focused on the areas that are key to promoting youth employment such as: 1. Improve the matching of the supply of skills with the requirements of the labor market; 2. Promotion of job creation led by the private sector; 3. Facilitating the transition of young people to the world of work. The MLSP in 2017 has revised the [Action Plan](#) but the objectives remain the same.

Starting from 2007, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy annually creates Operational plans for active programs and measures for employment. The Operational Plan sets out the annual priorities of employment policies through the implementation of active employment programs and services. The holder of the Operational Plan is MLSP, and its implementation is in the competence of Employment Agency of Republic of Macedonia in partnership with other responsible institutions. It is important to note that the Operational Plans do not apply exclusively to young people but they always place special emphasis on young unemployed persons up to 29 years old. In October 2018, the MLSP revised the Operational Plan for active programs and measures for employment, and the revised document can be found [here](#).

In terms of entrepreneurship, the [Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Macedonia](#) is state institution established to conduct Governmental policies for small and medium enterprises as well as other programmes adopted by the Government for supporting the entrepreneurship, competitiveness and innovation. In 2007, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia through the through the MLSP launched the Self-Employment Program in order to stimulate entrepreneurship and support the creation of start-up businesses that will provide sustainable employment. The analyzes show that there is no municipality in the country where small businesses were not established through the Self-Employment Program. The program is jointly implemented by the MLSP, the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia, and in

²⁹ See more Program for Employment and Social Policy Reforms 2020. Government of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2017), p. 84
[http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/word/esrp_dokumenti/ESRP%20Makedonija%20-%20final%20\(MKD\).pdf](http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/word/esrp_dokumenti/ESRP%20Makedonija%20-%20final%20(MKD).pdf) (Accessed November 12, 2018)

cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The Self-Employment Program is part of the Operational Plan for Active Programs and Measures for Employment and Labor Market Services for 2018.

This program is not specifically created for young people, but it also covers them. For the measure of the self-employment the amount of the financial support is from 246.000 to 307.500 or up to 615.000 MK denars (if a legal entity is founded from two partners).^[30]

Main actors

The following public actors are involved in the process of creation and implementation of youth employment and entrepreneurship policies:

- Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (main authority)
- Ministry of education and science
- Ministry of Information Society and Administration
- Ministry of finances
- Ministry of economy
- Employment Service Agency
- Center for Vocational Education and Training
- Center for Education of Adults
- Agency for Promotion of the Entrepreneurship of the Republic of Macedonia
- Centers for social work

Our Governmental institutions also cooperate with UNDP office in Macedonia, USAID office in Macedonia, World Bank, ILO, Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Organization of Employers of Macedonia and others.

Consultation of young people

A key remark for government institutions is that, when youth employment policies are adopted, youth and youth organizations are rarely consulted about the development of such policies.

Occasionally consultations with young people are held whereby they are asked to share their ideas and visions, but there is no information whether the institutions incorporate their ideas when making policies.

Policy monitoring and evaluation

The Employment Service Agency and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy are responsible institutions for monitoring the implementation of the active measures for employment, in order to provide accurate information about their success.

The effectiveness of Active Labor Market Measures (ALMM) in the country is most often analyzed by evaluating the results at the end of the duration of the measures, for example, the percentage of employed young people upon completion of internship.

The National Employment Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia envisages, on an annual basis, a working group led by the MLSP to inform the Government on the progress in the implementation of the Strategy. At the end of the implementation period of the Strategy (2020), a summary evaluation of the strategy will be carried out based on 1) the

³⁰ Operational Plans for Active Programs and Measures for Employment 2018. Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of Republic of Macedonia, p. 5

<http://www.avrm.gov.mk/content/%D0%9E%D0%9F/%D0%9E%D0%BF%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BD%20%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%BD%20%D0%B7%D0%B0%202018%20%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0.pdf>
(Accessed November 13, 2018)

projected outcomes and the fulfillment of the targets, 2) the indicators for monitoring the Strategy.

There are not many studies for evaluation of the effects and generally speaking it is difficult to derive a usual pattern of the impacts, although it is visible that intensification of ALM measures is in line with the unemployment decrease in recent years.^[31] Young people were included in the evaluation process of the youth employment measures by the International Labor Organizations, in accordance with the "[Impact evaluation of active labor market programs in FYR Macedonia: key findings](#)", through survey targeting beneficiaries from the measures (treatment group) and non-beneficiaries (control group). However, the authors reported relatively low response on the survey and got mixed and ambiguous results.

3.3 Skills forecasting

Forecasting system(s)

In order to determine the skills needed in the labor market, the Employment Agency of Macedonia conducts a research study that provides certain short-term indicators of employers' expectations in terms of new employments and the skills needs of persons to be disposed of, as they could be competitive in the labor market. The findings obtained from the survey for skills needs analysis provide the basis for creating active programs and measures for the preparation for employment, aimed at raising the skills of the unemployed, in order to increase their competitiveness in the labor market and faster employment. Also, the findings obtained from the survey research are also the basis for the preparation of local action plans for employment, and they can also serve in the drafting of the enrolment policy, while creating new educational programs for occupations that are in line with the needs of the labor market.

In the period from 1 to 31 October, the EARM conducted the survey on the need for skills in the labor market for 2018/2019. The results are expected to be released early in 2019. The survey is carried out by the employees of the employment centers, and as support in the realization, unemployed persons from the records of the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia are engaged as well. The results are expected to contribute to the creation of conditions for better functioning of the labor market, by matching the supply and demand of a suitably qualified workforce. They will also serve in the education system when conceiving the enrolment policies and creating new educational programs for occupations that are in line with the needs of the labor market.

As a tool for predicting the labor market based on market demand, the HERMAC model was developed under the Twinning Project "Support to the National Employment Policy" MK2007/IB/SO/02 (funded by the European Union). The project envisages making annual estimates by 2025. It is composed of two main parts a demand side and an absorption side and is designed for long-term forecasting of labor market development and policy analysis. The model methodology is based on the original HERMIN model developed by Bradley (2000 and 2005) used mainly for analyzing macroeconomic impact of structural funds. The structure of the HERMIN allows its application also for countries with limited available data which was the case of Beneficiary Country. There is currently no information on whether institutions consult the scenarios in the policy making process.

³¹ Aneta Krstevska and Maja Ilievska. Developments in major labour market indicators and active labour market measures in dealing with unemployment: Evidence from Macedonia (National Bank of the Republic of Macedonia), p. 37 <http://www.nbrm.mk/content/Developments-in-major-labour-market-indicators-and-active-labour-market-measures-in-dealing-with-unemployment-Evidence-from-Macedonia.pdf> (Accessed November, 13, 2018)

Skills development

The Employment Agency of Republic of Macedonia conducts mostly training courses on computer skills and language courses for the unemployed people regarding their age. This training courses are provided for unemployed persons (persons registered in the ESA every 30 days who are unemployed and who actively seek work).

3.4 Career guidance and counselling

Career guidance and counselling services

Career guidance and counselling services are present in the education system and in the measures for youth employment in Macedonia.

All young unemployed persons applying for the first time in the Employment Agency receive career guidance and employment counseling services to improve their capacities for finding employment in the labor market.

According to the Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016-2020, until 2020, it is planned that all students in primary schools, high schools and University students will have career guidance in their educational institutions. The achievement of this outcome is within the competence of Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and Employment Agency.

Starting in 2012, the Ministry of education and science in partnership with the Education Development Center from USA established career centers for career guidance to the students in 52 high schools throughout Macedonia.^[32]

The career advisors organize individual sessions with high school students to provide further guidance based on the competences of the students. In order to enhance the career guidance system in the public high schools, the Ministry of education and science in partnership with USAID developed web application BIPO (Battery Instruments for Professional Orientation - <http://www.bipo.mon.gov.mk/>) that measures the interests of students. This application is available in Macedonian and Albanian language only.

Funding

According to Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016-2020, for achieving the Outcome 1.3 of the Action Plan- Young people have access to career development services, a budget of 2 million euros is foreseen. Ministry of Education is expected to invest approximately 500.000 euros in integrating curriculum guidance in school, while the Employment Service Agency will invest approximately 1,5 million euros for providing information on the labor market and counselling and guidance services for young job seekers.

Career counseling programs for high school students are funded by USAID.

Quality assurance

No specific mechanisms to ensure the quality of services related to career guidance is in place.

³² <http://www.mon.gov.mk/index.php/konkursi/875-baner> (Accessed November 13, 2018)

3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

The Apprenticeship system is regulated in the [Labor Relations Law](#), in articles 56, 57, 58 and 59. These articles refer to the duration of the apprenticeship (maximum one year), performance and cancellation.

The Apprenticeship can last up to one year, unless otherwise stipulated by law. The apprenticeship may be proportionally extended if the apprentice works on a shorter working time than full-time, but for a maximum of six months.

At the end of the apprenticeship, the apprentice must take an exam, which is an integral part of the internship and is taken before the expiry of the internship. For the duration of the internship, the employer must not cancel the employment contract to the apprentice, except in case of an employer's termination procedure.

However, no legal framework on traineeship exists in Republic of Macedonia. Traineeship is included in the Employment strategies and programmes as a measure for increasing the employability of young people.

The training for the unemployed is foreseen in the Operational Plan for Active Programs and Measures for Employment and Services in the Labor Market for 2018. The aim of the trainings is to improve the skills and qualifications of the unemployed persons for their successful integration in the labor market. According to the Operational Plan, the following trainings are foreseen: job placement for a known employer, training for professional qualifications according to employers' request, training for demand occupations and crafts, training in skills acquisition (computer skills, foreign languages, banking, etc.) and traineeship.

The trainings are intended for all unemployed persons registered at the Employment Agency as active job seekers. Exception from the general scope of the target group is training for traineeship intended for unemployed young people up to 29 years of age and unemployed persons up to 34 years of age with a minimum of completed secondary education.

Promoting traineeships and apprenticeships

Information regarding traineeship opportunities are available on the website of the [ESA](#) and in the local employment agencies. Also, specific information on traineeship opportunities is provided in the Operational Plan on Active Labor Market Programs and Measures.

Recognition of learning outcomes

The trainees provide reports to the ESA and the provider of traineeship. In terms of apprenticeship, the apprentice must pass an exam before the end of the apprenticeship. However, not all providers keep sound record books on traineeships or apprenticeship.

Funding

According to the active labor market programs and measures, the providers are not obliged to co-fund the trainee. The amount that the trainees receive is around 150 EUR, including personal tax income and sickness and workplace injury insurance (this amount is paid by the ESA).

The funding for traineeship is provided with the budget of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, within the Action Plan for Youth Employment (and operational annual plans).

According to the [Operational Plan for Active Labor Market Programs and Measures 2018](#), the total projected budget for the realization of the trainings is 99.399.000 MK denars. Most of the funds are provided from the total budget of ESA, while a small part is provided by MLSP and small part is transferred from the unused funds from last year.

The budget allocated for trainings in accordance with the [revised Operational Plan for Active Labor Market Programs and Measures 2017](#) was 184,884,400 denars, and if we make a comparison, we will notice that the training budget for 2018 has been reduced by 85,485,400, which is a big difference, but it must be noted that the scope of the envisaged a measure has been reduced, that is, for the year 2018 it is planned to cover 2538 people, while for 2017 the coverage of persons is 5604. For this reason, the big difference is in the budgets.

Quality assurance

Monitoring and quality assurance for student's apprenticeship is responsibility of the institution (private or state) in which the apprenticeship is performed. It is usually regulated by internal document and no specific qualitative outcomes are available.

The Employment Service Agency of Macedonia conducts monitoring on the apprenticeship but they are measuring only following indicators^[33]:

- Number of young unemployed people up to 29 years, participants in the apprenticeship
- Number of young unemployed people up to 29 years, participants in the apprenticeship- by gender

No specific qualitative outcomes are available.

3.6 Integration of young people in the labour market

Youth employment measures

The Government of the Republic of the Macedonia in 2018 decided to introduce a Youth Guarantee in order to provide young people (15-29) for a period of 4 months, offering employment, continuing education and training, or internship.

At the [53rd session of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia](#) held on 6.2.2018, the Government adopted the following conclusion: The Government reviewed the latest text of the Information with the text of the Plan for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (first phase 2018 - 2019) and the Action Plan for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee in three pilot municipalities in 2018, adopted the Information, and accepted the latest text of the Plan for implementation of the Youth Guarantee (first phase 2018 - 2019).

In 2018, the piloting of the Youth Guarantee is carried out in three employment centers: Gostivar, Strumica and Skopje, by involving young people who are not employed, nor are they involved in education or training (NEET).

The Youth Guarantee provides following services:

- Professional orientation and career counseling
- Motivational trainings
- Individual and group counseling

³³ Operational Plan for Active Labor Market Programs and Measures 2018, Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia (2018), p. 48

<http://www.avrm.gov.mk/content/%D0%9E%D0%9F/%D0%9E%D0%BF%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B7%D0%B0%202018%20%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0.pdf>
(Accessed November 14, 2018)

- Job search training

The Youth Guarantee foreseen the following employment measures:

- Subsidies for employment of young people
- Incentives for hiring young people with disabilities
- A self-employment program

The Youth Guarantee also provides different training courses and practice packages for young people (up to 29 years).

The following institutions are involved in the implementation of the planned activities of the Youth Guarantee: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (as the main coordinative body for the Youth Guarantee), Employment Service Agency, Ministry of Education of Republic of Macedonia, The Bureau for Development of Education Center for Adult Education, Vocational Education and Training Center, Ministry of Local Self-Government as well as the National Youth Council of Macedonia.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy within the Youth Guarantee is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation and specific interventions included in the implementation plan of the Youth Guarantee.

The Ministry of Education and Science within the Youth Guarantee is responsible for accelerating educational reforms already planned at primary, secondary and high level; to introduce second-chance programs for young people and adults that need to acquire recognized qualifications to advance in the education system or to enter the labor market; to establish and upgrade the Education Information System in order to monitor the students' success, to detect early school leavers, and to allow aggregation of administrative data (referring to NEET identification).

The Center for Adult Education is responsible for expanding the opportunities for young beneficiaries of the Youth Guarantee to return to the education system and recognized qualifications.

The Center for Vocational Education and Training is authorized to develop standards of occupations and vocational courses and programs for completion of education.

The Bureau for the Development of Education is authorized to develop general education programs in a short form for the needs of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

The Ministry of Local Self-Government is responsible for coordinating the involvement of local authorities in the implementation of the Youth Guarantee-targeted interventions targeting young NEETs at the local level.

The Employment Agency (ESA) is responsible for collecting and disseminating information on the labor market; employment counseling and career guidance; setting up a job and administering passive and active programs on the labor market. Within the Youth Guarantee, ESA is responsible for providing activation services and measures for integrating the labor market for young people (15-29) that will be registered in the Youth Guarantee.

In the Operational Plan for Active Labor Market Programs and Measures 2018 several employment measures are outlined. The following measure are not exclusively provided for young people, but young people up to 29 are one of the target groups:

- Programme for Self-Employment: The aim of this programme is to support the unemployed to start their own business.
- Support for creating new jobs as a measure that should influence the promotion of the employment of unemployed persons in micro, small and medium enterprises, social enterprises that are primarily targeted towards social/societal goals.
- Support of employment of unemployed persons who are hardly involved in the labor market.

- Employment and growth of legal entities. The purpose of this measure is to provide support in creating new jobs in micro, small and medium enterprises, social enterprises and civil society organizations. This measure is intended for unemployed persons registered in the Employment Agency of the Republic of Macedonia, with the preference of young people up to 29 years of age.
- Support of employment of disabled persons.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

The term “flexicurity” is relatively unknown in Macedonia and we cannot say that it is implemented as a full concept.

Last year (2017), the Center for Research and Policy Making was working on initiative for legislative changes of numerous laws and measures to facilitate development of social entrepreneurship.

One of the changes they proposed was change of the Law on Labor Relations. In line with the trend of “flexicurity” that is current and practiced in Europe in response to the financial crisis, and given the nature of the work of CSO’s that have economic activity and socially-owned enterprises, a change in the Law on labor is needed in terms of regulating flexible working hours (for example: the possibility of concluding a working relationship for two hours or six hours and appropriate insurance of the same), as well as more flexible conditions for termination of such employment from the existing one.

Also, the work of civil society organizations engaged in economic activity and social enterprises provides work in the client’s home (for example, care for frail people) or work from home or remotely (for example, people with disabilities who program software for people with disabilities) which is prohibited by the existing Law on Labor Relations, and that’s why some SCO’s are demanding a change of the law.

This year (June, 2018) Macedonian government adopted [Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Labor Relations](#) but the proposed changes are not incorporated in the new law.

Reconciliation of private and working life for young people

Regarding this issue, there are certain provisions in the Law on Labor Relations. Thus, Article 18, item 3 stipulates that the Employer is obliged to provide protection for young persons from economic exploitation and from any work that could have a detrimental effect on their safety, health, physical, mental, moral or social development or they can threaten their education.

Funding of existing schemes/initiatives

The source of funding for the Youth Employment measures and programmes is from the Government budget for Employment Agency Service (which is under the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy).

The amount of funding of the Action Plan for the Youth Employment for 2016-2020 is 30.950.000 EUR for a period of five years, excluding monitoring and evaluation costs.

Master Plan for Youth Guarantee foreseen 40,7 million euros for the implementation of measures for youth employment.

Operational Plan for Active Programs and Measures for Employment and Services in the Labor Market for 2018 have total funding of 1.045.794.835 MK denars. That amount is not exclusively intended for youth employment measures but for employment measure for all target groups.

Quality assurance

The ESA, together with Ministry of Education of Republic of Macedonia, Center for Adult Education, Vocational Education and Training Center, as well as the National Youth Council of Macedonia are responsible for implementation and monitoring of the of the Youth Employment measures under the Youth Guarantee. The monitoring is performed on a quarterly basis, so the produced quarterly report is submitted to the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

According to Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016-2020, the Labor Market Unit (under MLSP) is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Action Plan. The monitoring consists of a regular examination of the inputs, outputs and results of policy interventions.

Although the Action Plan stipulates that the Labor Market Unit should perform an interim assessment in 2018, there is still no publicly available information whether such an evaluation has been done so far.

3.7 Cross-border mobility in employment, entrepreneurship and vocational opportunities

Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

In the Republic of Macedonia, there are no special schemes or programs to support young people working abroad or initiating their own business abroad.

However, several laws regulate the agencies that mediate the employment of Macedonian citizens abroad. But it is important to note that the laws are general, with the scope of all citizens and do not affect exclusively young people.

In terms of vocational opportunities National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility in Macedonia, under the Key Action 1 Programme offers vocational traineeships for apprentices and students in initial vocational training.

Legal framework

Pursuant to the [Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment](#), mediation for employment in the country and abroad is carried out by the "Employment Mediation Agency" registered as a private agency for mediation for employment in the country and abroad.

The Agency shall perform the mediation free of charge and shall be administered impartially, under conditions and in a manner determined by law.

In 2018, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia passed the [Law on Private Employment Agencies](#), which also regulates mediation in the employment of a Macedonian citizen abroad. The law stipulates that mediation for employment abroad is carried out on the basis of a previously concluded agreement between the private employment agency with a license for mediation for employment abroad and the potential employer from abroad. The Employment Mediation Agency organizes an employment interview between the employer and the job applicant who applied for employment through the private employment agency. If certain conditions specified in the contract are not met, the person who is sent to work abroad is entitled to appropriate compensation.^[34]

³⁴ Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 112 dated 25.07.2014), Art. 26a
http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/trud_2017/pravilnici/16,11-

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs issues licenses to agencies for mediation in employment abroad and also maintains a [register of employment mediation agencies](#) in the country and abroad. According to the latest information published on the Ministry's website, there are a total of 12 such agencies in the Republic of Macedonia (November 2018).

The Law on Labor Records prescribes the manner of keeping records of citizens of the Republic of Macedonia working abroad. Thus, Art. 29 stipulates that in the records for the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia employed abroad, data are entered for the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia who went to work abroad with or without mediation of the Agency and data on the workers sent by employers to work abroad for the purpose of performing investment works abroad.

3.8 Development of entrepreneurship competence

Policy Framework

In the Republic of Macedonia, the concept of social entrepreneurship is not properly regulated in the legal system, although the importance of the concept and benefits is recognized in society. There is no legislation that comprehensively regulates this matter, although in several laws and policies there are provisions that contribute to supporting the future development of social entrepreneurship.

Within the project "Encouraging Social Entrepreneurship" co-financed by the EU, the MLSP in 2015 prepared a [draft text of the Law on Social Entrepreneurship](#). The law has not yet been entered into the parliamentary procedure.

In the Republic of Macedonia [Entrepreneurial Learning Strategy](#) of the Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 exists. This Strategy was prepared by the Ministry of education and science with the assistance of the European Training Foundation, through 4 workshops and more than hundred direct contacts with different stakeholders.

One of the priorities in this strategy is informal and non-formal education.

The following framework of reference is used:

- Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe
- EU Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan
- Rethinking Education: Investing in skills for better socio-economic outcomes
- the EU Small Business Act
- South East Europe 2020: Jobs and prosperity in a European Perspective
- Charter for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECCEL)

Main target groups of this strategy are:

- primary school students
- secondary school students (VET Schools and gymnasiums)
- University students (students' organizations)
- current and potential entrepreneurs

No information on the implementation process is available.

Formal learning

Entrepreneurship is included in the Macedonia's secondary education as compulsory separate subject. Curricula for 2 compulsory subjects are developed: "[Business and](#)

[%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%9E%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%B3%D1%83%D1%80%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%9D%D0%B5%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82.pdf](#)(Accessed November, 15, 2018)

[entrepreneurship](#)” for the fourth year in Gymnasium and secondary art education; and “Innovations and entrepreneurship” for first, second and third year. In the primary education, adaptations in 6 subjects are made aimed to integrate entrepreneurship in the curricula (the subject [Innovations](#) is included in the 9th grade).

In terms of higher education, the subject of entrepreneurship is taught at many Universities in Macedonia. Currently there are two Faculties in Macedonia completely dedicated to educate young people in the field of entrepreneurship.

Within the [Slavic University](#) of Sveti Nikole, [Faculty of Economics and Entrepreneurship Organization](#) for the past 13 years educates young people in the field of economy and entrepreneurship. The faculty is accredited for teaching in the first and second cycle of university studies.

Within the [University of Tourism and Management in Skopje](#), there is an [Entrepreneurship Department](#), which aims to connect students with the business community through the organization of scientific debates, trainings and lectures for students. The UTMS Entrepreneurial Business School through the Entrepreneurship Department offers students, through various projects and participation in business meetings, to enrich their knowledge, skills and competencies.

Non-formal and informal learning

There are many non-formal educational opportunities for young people in term of entrepreneurship.

[The Agency of Youth and Sport](#), in order to promote entrepreneurship among youth, in the third quarter of 2018 started with realization of trainings for development of entrepreneurial spirit and business skills.

In addition to the set of trainings, the Agency for Youth and Sports, in the direction of developing entrepreneurship among young people, started with the implementation of a set of measures that will motivate young people for greater inclusion. In this direction is the [public call](#) (November 2018) for young people with the possibility to apply with their own business idea (Business Plan). This measure is targeted exclusively for young people aged 19-29 years, citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, who want to start their own business regardless of whether they are currently employed or not.

[The Institute for Economic Strategies and International Relations - Ohrid](#), with the support of the Agency for Entrepreneurship Support of the Republic of Macedonia, in September 2018 launched a series of trainings for social responsibility and promotion of social entrepreneurship.

The Ministry is entitled to issue accreditations for certification of institutions and organizations that provide training programme on entrepreneurship skills / learning.

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

According to the [Central Register of the Republic of Macedonia](#), currently there are 21 associations and foundations in Macedonia created for education and development of entrepreneurship, but some of them have law activity.

The organizations that have the youth in focus are the following:

1. [Youth Entrepreneurship Support Network \(YES Network\)](#): YES works on strengthening the capacities for networking of youth related Civil Society Organisations and influence policy and programs development for supporting youth entrepreneurship.
2. [PSM Foundation](#) exists for stimulating entrepreneurship and raising the level of employment among young people through strengthening their skills and competencies to start their own business. PSM Foundation stands for supporting them through many

activities and subventions in order to help the local development of the currently most productive sector – SMEs.

As abovementioned, The Government established Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship of the Republic of Macedonia (APERM) for implementation of the Governmental SME policies and other related projects/programmes adopted by the Government for support of entrepreneurship, competitiveness and innovation. The website of the [APERM](#) also serves as resource for entrepreneurs.

3.9 Start-up funding for young entrepreneurs

Access to information

Youth generally receive information about opportunities for financing start-up online.

[The Fund for Innovation and Technology Development](#) is promoting their opportunities on their web site as well as through organizing promotional events. In October 2018 they launched program for co-financed Grants for Newly Established Enterprises "Start-up" and "Spin-off".

The information about active employment measures carried out by the ESA are also mostly available online. But, also unemployed young people registered within the Agency as active job seekers, are receiving phone messages whenever there is some job opportunity that fits their profile.

Interested young people can also be informed in one of the 30 Employment Centers of ESA.

Number of organizations promotes start-up opportunities and resource information through their websites and activities. As an example, [Startup Macedonia](#) is organization that supports innovation, development, and networking between startups and all the local stakeholders which are part of the eco-system in order to build a better startup community.

Another opportunity for promotion is the Startup Europe Week. In 2016 for the first time Startup Europe Week was held in Macedonia and since then every year there is a weekly event in Macedonia. So far, such events have been held in Skopje, Tetovo, Bitola and Strumica. The last event was held in October 2018. It is great opportunity for young people to exchange experiences and to present good practices and success stories.

Access to capital

In the Operational Plan for Active Programs and Measures for Employment and Services in the Labor Market for 2018, one of the measures envisaged is the support for self-employment (entrepreneurship). The purpose of this measure is to support the unemployed to start their own business. The beneficiaries of this measure are unemployed young people under 29 years of age and other unemployed persons registered with the Employment Agency. In order to realize this measure, ESA in accordance with the Operational Plan has foreseen 382.415.418 denars.

Self-employment grants are set flexibly from four to five thousand euros for an individual, up to 10 thousand euros for two co-owners.

The Fund for innovation and technology development encourages and supports innovation activities in micro, small and medium-size enterprises (MSMEs) in order to achieve more dynamic technological development based on knowledge transfer, development research and on innovations that contribute to job creation, and to economic growth and development, while simultaneously improving the business environment for the development of competitive capabilities of companies. The Fund

provides funding opportunities for increasing the capacity of already commenced startups.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia in 2018 for the first time launched a project for state support of business accelerators in the country. In September 2018, [Fond for Innovations of Macedonia](#) signed agreements on financial support for the opening of three business accelerators (elected by the Committee for the approval of investments) for startup companies founded by young entrepreneurs and innovators.

With this project, young people who have creative business plans will be offered the opportunity and support for the development of specific businesses and start-up companies. The total budget for all three projects is EUR 2 million, of which the Fund for Innovation and Technological Development (FITR) in cooperation with the World Bank provides 1.5 million euros, while the three business accelerators invest half a million euros own funds.

In the next three years (till 2021) these three business accelerators should provide financial support to at least 100 startup companies.

Crowdfunding is also funding opportunity for young people who wants to start their own business. Macedonian citizens usually are using this opportunity for humanitarian reasons, and usually they do not have the custom to use these funding opportunities for startups.

3.10 Promotion of entrepreneurship culture

Special events and activities

In Macedonia events and activities for promotion of entrepreneurship are maintained on ad hoc basis. However, in recent years there has been an increase in activities in this field and also entrepreneurship is increasingly integrated into government documents and strategies.

In the Republic of Macedonia there is a wide diversity of measures to support entrepreneurship. Namely, infrastructure for institutional support of entrepreneurship has been established through various initiatives within government ministries and government agencies to support the work of business incubators, regional centers and various networks of entrepreneurship support.

In that direction, the [Fund for Innovation and Technological Development](#) is more frequently organizing info events and workshops in order to promote the current projects and possibilities for financial support for newly founded start-up and spin-off companies.

[The Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship in the Republic of Macedonia](#) is a state owned institution established for implementation of the Governmental policies for small and medium enterprises and other related projects / programs adopted by the Government for support of entrepreneurship, innovation and competitiveness.

[The Strategic Plan \(2018-2020\)](#) of the Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship of the Republic of Macedonia envisages holding regional campaigns for raising the awareness of the availability of financial instruments for small and medium enterprises; promotional activities (fairs, workshops); training; career fairs and other activities. The timeframe for the realization of the activities is from 2018 to 2020 and for this purpose 62.154.900 denars are foreseen. No specific activities to promote youth entrepreneurship in the field of social entrepreneurship are conducted with public funds. Promotion of the concept of social entrepreneurship is made by other non-public organizations and institutions that are active in the field.

Since the Annual Report on the work of the Agency has not yet been released, we cannot see how much of the strategic activities were realized in the first year of its adoption (2018).

Networks and partnerships

[Youth entrepreneurship support network](#) is a European network composed of civil society organizations working to encourage youth entrepreneurship. The network works on building capacities and networking of civil society organizations, promotion of activities and initiatives for strengthening of the youth in order to increase the efficiency of the members of the network.

They help their members fulfill their mission by increasing their capacities for effectively running their organizations. They also provide specialist consultancy services for the members involved in youth entrepreneurship, through development and change processes, which can involve strategy development and programme design.

3.11 Current debates and reforms

Current situation

Since its independence until today, Macedonia has a constantly high youth unemployment rate of over 45%, and for some years (2003, 2004) it reached up to 65%. Such a figure indicates that the reforms so far do not provide an adequate result, and youth unemployment remains one of the worst problems that Macedonia faces since its independence until today.

Current reforms

The main document that defines the various reforms, policies and measures in the field of youth unemployment (aged 15-29) is the actual Action Plan for youth employment 2016-2020.

The Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016-2020 envisages skills forecasting system to be developed to inform both policy design and individuals' choices about education and work. The skills forecasting model will be based on demographic projections, employer and vacancies surveys, education data, employment projections and studies and should be jointly fed with data and used by the MLSP and the MES. The establishment of the forecasting system should lead to the achievement of two outcomes: (i) by 2020, at least 85 per cent of young workers (aged 15-29) will be employed in jobs aligned to their qualifications; and (ii) the occupational and skills mismatch in the Macedonian labor market will be no higher than 15 per cent.

The [Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020](#) states that: with the support of the ILO, in the period 2018-2020 It is planned to implement a number of activities that will contribute to further and continuous capacity building of all relevant stakeholders at local level for more successful design and implementation of employment programs, measures and initiatives that will be tailored to the actual local challenges and needs of young people. Within these activities, particular attention will be given to promotion of engagement and participation of established Local Economic and Social Councils (LESCs) and of other local entities (local government institutions, local employment centers, employers, providers of training, civil society etc.)^[35]. This measure also provides the capacity of local stakeholders to be strengthened for effective analysis and understanding of specific challenges, obstacles and needs, and for obtaining relevant and accurate information on the situation and trends in the local labor market, which could then be used in the design of local youth employment programs and will be needed by young people, in the part of guidance for education, job profiles, promising occupations, opportunities on the labor market and so on. For this purpose, € 236,000 are provided by ILO.

³⁵ The Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020, Government of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2017), p. 117
[http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/word/esrp_dokumenti/ESRP%20Macedonia%20-%20final%20\(ENG\).pdf](http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/word/esrp_dokumenti/ESRP%20Macedonia%20-%20final%20(ENG).pdf) (Accessed November, 18, 2018)

Starting in 2018, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia started implementing the perhaps the largest measure for increasing youth employment - the Youth Guarantee.

Youth Guarantee is an active measure for employment of young people implemented in the European Union countries since 2012. The Republic of Macedonia is the only country in the region that is not a member of the European Union, and it starts with the introduction of a "Guarantee for Youth" as a measure to increase the employability of young people.

In 2018 this measure was piloted in 3 employment centers (Skopje, Strumica and Gostivar) and it is planned in 2019 this measure to be implemented in all 30 employment centers, having in mind the experience of the pilot implementation in the previous year, while in 2020 its planned the Youth Guarantee to be implemented as a regular activity of ESA, also having in mind the experience from the previous years.^[36] Field activities of youth organizations are financed by the Swiss Embassy and USAID.

Having in mind that youth unemployment is declining with an increase in the level of education, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and the Swiss Embassy in Skopje in June 2018 signed a memorandum for the implementation of a new educational project that will raise the employability of young people in the country.

The project is titled "Education for Employment in Macedonia" and starting in 2018 will be implemented in the next 10 years, through several stages, the first of which should be completed in 2022. The focus will be on promoting non-formal and formal vocational education in the technological, service and IT sector, and will include young unemployed and inadequately employed persons aged up to 29 years, VET (Vocational Education and Training) students, with concern for the inclusion of women, Roma, and persons with disabilities.

The project will be implemented by the [Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation](#), the [Macedonian Center for Civic Education](#) (MCEC) and the [Economic Chamber of Macedonia](#), supported by a professional team of the Ministry of Education and Science and other relevant institutions.

The project has a budget of 12.5 million euros and is expected to employ 2,250 young

³⁶ Economic Reform Programme, Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Macedonia (January 2018), p. 84 https://www.finance.gov.mk/files/Macedonia_ERP_2018.pdf (Accessed November, 18, 2018)

4. SOCIAL INCLUSION

[Ministry of labor and social policy](#) is the main executive and coordination body of social inclusion policies and legislation in the country.

A Specific National Strategy on social inclusion of young people is not in place. However, the needs of young people in terms of their social inclusion are addressed in the 2010-2020 Strategy on poverty reduction and social exclusion.

4.1 General context

Main challenges to social inclusion

Social inclusion starts from the fact that everyone in the Republic of Macedonia should have the opportunity and access to the resources and services that make his life healthier, happier and more productive.

The Republic of Macedonia is social, multiethnic and multi-confessional state. Signing of the [Ohrid Framework Agreement](#), by the President of Macedonia and the representatives of the main political parties in 2001, ended the war conflict in the country. This Agreement addressed lot of challenges and disputes, and promotes peaceful and harmonious development of civil society while respecting the ethnic identity and the interests of Macedonian citizens. The Framework provisioned amending and changing of the Constitution of the Country.

Major challenges in Macedonia regarding ethnic minorities, with particular accent to the Roma population, are:

- improving the quality and access to public services in particular health and social services, housing and transportation;
- overcoming the high level of social exclusion and discrimination, especially of certain ethnic groups, as well as Roma, but also other risk groups such as people living in institutions and persons with disabilities;
- Strengthening policies that support family, social networks and the protection of children's rights.

Education

Speaking of social inclusion, the main challenge in Macedonia in the field of education is the development of programmes for continuous education, with focus on the risk groups, and reducing school dropout.

The main priorities in the reforms in the primary, secondary and higher education in the Republic of Macedonia are the quality, social inclusion and cohesion and decentralization.

In 2008, Macedonia introduced obligatory secondary education. The aim is to increase the education of the general population in the country, as well as to ensure wider inclusion of the most vulnerable groups in the education process.

The impact of education on the Ohrid Framework Agreement meant increased focus on priorities for financing higher education in a language spoken by at least 20% of the population.

The educational concept promotes inclusion as inherent and key element in preparation of all strategic documents.

The Roma population is the most marginalized in the education system in Macedonia. The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy adopted the [Strategy for the Roma of the Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 together with the National Action Plan for Education 2016-2020](#).

The strategic goal of this document is to improve the educational structure of the Roma community, especially among girls and Romani women.

In order to achieve this goal, several measures are envisaged: Scholarship for Roma secondary school students, Introduction of new forms of additional support for Roma secondary school students through mentoring and tutoring, Realization of activities for professional orientation of Roma high school students, Inclusion of Roma parents in parents' / school councils boards in secondary schools, Providing scholarships for Roma students, with the priority of students studying in faculties that produce teaching staff, and others.

Employment

Providing conditions for greater integration in the labor market of the long-term unemployed persons and different groups living in poverty and social exclusion as well as ensuring inclusive systems of social protection offering minimum assets for dissent life, but in the same time to debar demotivation of looking for job are the main challenges of the country when speaking of social inclusion in employment processes.

Young people (15–24) have low participation rates in the labor market. Since the independence of Macedonia, the youth unemployment rate is constantly above 45%.

The low participation of youth is due to: i) shrinking employment opportunities and the difficulty associated with the transition from school to work, ii) the unwillingness of employers to bear the costs of on-the-job training for inexperienced youth as the pool of experienced jobseekers is high, and iii) the skills mismatch between employer's needs and the skills produced by the education system. Lower rates of participation can also be explained by increasing enrolments in higher education, following a government policy of extending public education facilities and reducing the cost of higher education.

Being unemployed, young people become potential users of social support benefits that the country offers.

In order to increase the employment rate among young Roma, as one of the most vulnerable categories, the MLSP adopted the [National Action Plan for Roma Employment 2016-2020](#). The strategic goal of the plan is to increase the opportunities for Roma employment in dignified jobs. For this purpose, the following measures are foreseen: Organization of trainings for the employees in the Employment Centers for providing assistance to unemployed Roma in the search for work, Organizing information meetings for the unemployed Roma for promotion of employment opportunities for Roma at the local level, Implementation of programs for vocational training of persons (including Roma) for qualifications for occupations demanded on the labor market, Developing a program for practicing Roma with secondary education and higher education, availability of information on the employment opportunities of Roma, etc.

Competent institutions for undertaking these measures are MLSP in cooperation with EARM as well as with civil society organizations.

Definitions and concepts

In the Macedonian legislation, there is no definition on the term social inclusion. In the [National Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020](#), it is stated that one of the preconditions for combating poverty is determine nationally accepted and adopted definition of social inclusion, based on which the situation will be analyzed, will facilitate methodological procedures and also define policies to be implemented in this area^[37].

³⁷ National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020 (revised), Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2013), p. 47
http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/revidirana_str_siromastija.pdf (Accessed November 18 2018)

However, a wider meaning of the term social inclusion in the Strategy is given and it is understood as a “process of integration of individuals in the society”^[38].

[Law on Social Protection](#), article 2, mentions the term social exclusion, without defining it. The term ‘social inclusion’ was defined in the previous local strategies for social inclusion, social protection and poverty reduction 2011-2015 (adopted in 8 municipalities in Republic of Macedonia: [Berovo](#), [Pehcevo](#), [Radovis](#), [Lipkovo](#), [Caska](#), [Konce](#), [Studenicani](#) I [Negotino](#)). These strategies define social inclusion as “process that guarantees people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, to have equal opportunities and resources needed for their overall inclusion in the economic, social and cultural life, as well as providing them normal living standard and welfare in their communities. This will enable them greater participation in decision making that positive influence their lives, as well as to access their basic rights”.

Strategy for Roma population in the Republic of Macedonia 2014 – 2020, concluding that there is no nationally accepted definition in Macedonia, refers to the definitions given by the European Commission:

Social exclusion is a process where certain individuals are pushed towards the edge of society and are hindered to participate fully in social flows as a consequence of their poverty, lack of basic qualifications and opportunities for lifelong learning or discrimination.^[39]

Social Inclusion is a process that guarantees people who are in a state of risk and social exclusion, that they will acquire the opportunities and resources necessary for their full participation in the economic, social and cultural life, as well as to achieve decent, socially acceptable level of living standard and well-being.

In the [Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination](#), Article 5 defines the following terms:

Discrimination is every unjustified legal or factual, direct or indirect making difference or unequal behavior, that is exclusion, constraint, or giving advantage in relation to individuals and groups based on sex, race, skin color, gender, affiliation to a marginalized group, ethnical background, language, citizenship, social origin, religion, education, political background, personal or social status, mental and physical disability, age, family or marital status, property status, health condition or any other basis.

Equality is principles according to all humans are equal, with equal obligations and rights.

Marginalized group is a group of individuals united by specific state in the society that is subject of prejudices, which have specific characteristics that makes them subject of violence, with less opportunities for achieving protection of their own rights or are exposed on increased possibility for further victimization.

4.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The design of a modern concept of behavior towards the socially excluded individuals required the establishment of a **new social model** which puts the individual and personality first, rather than the reasons for exclusion, the affiliation (ethnic or other),

³⁸ National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010-2020 (revised), Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2013), p. 4

http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/revidirana_str_siromastija.pdf (Accessed November 18 2018)

³⁹ Strategy for the Roma population in the Republic of Macedonia 2014 - 2020, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia (June, 2014), p. 9

<http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/dokumenti.nsp> (Accessed November 27, 2018)

the diagnosis, disability or any other ground for the citizen's social exclusion. This is a huge reform and should be led by all governmental and non-governmental institutions.

It is important to note; that Macedonia choose general approach in defining social inclusion policies. Thus, for the moment, in Macedonia there is no specific legislation related to social inclusion of young people.

The Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia is the main body that adopts the overall legislation. The Government is the main executive body, and has the overall responsibility of planning and implementation of all policies related to social inclusion, as well as to propose legal documents and amendments to the Assembly.

The implementation of social inclusion policies and strategies is related to **coordinated and full cooperation** between the Government, the ministries and the institutions of the system, as well as the cooperation of the state institutions and local government.

Along this, the participation of **civil society organizations** is extremely crucial in the part of expressing the interests of individuals and groups at risks or facing social exclusion.

The major changes introduced with the Ohrid Framework Agreement, were establishment of decentralized government, and provisions for altering the official languages of the country. According to the Article 7, of the [Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia](#), any language spoken by over 20% of the population becomes co-official with the Macedonian language on municipal level.

Members of nationalities have a right freely to express, foster and develop their identity and national attributes. The state guarantees the protection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of the nationalities. Members of the nationalities have the right to establish institutions for culture and art, as well as scholarly and other associations for the expression, fostering and development of their identity. Members of the nationalities have the right to instruction in their language in primary and secondary education, as determined by law. In schools where education is carried out in the language of a nationality, the Macedonian language is also studied.

[Ministry of Labor and Social Policy](#) is the main executive and coordination body of social inclusion policies and legislation in the country. All other state and civil organizations have a role in the policies of social inclusion, in accordance with their competencies.

Main actors

Main public actors involved in policy making on social inclusion

- [Ministry of Health](#) – responsible for health protection and health insurance of young people and implementation of such programmes.
- [Ministry of Education and Science](#) – responsible of organization, financing, development and advancing of the education and science.
- [Ministry of Economy](#) – governmental ministry responsible for overall policies related to economy.
- [Ministry of Transport and Communication](#) – national ministry responsible for overall policies related to transportation and infrastructure.
- [Ministry of Finance](#) – responsible for overall finances and budget management of the Government;
- [Ministry of local-self-government](#) – responsible for monitoring the development and implementation of the governmental programmes at local level;
- [Ministry of Information Technology Society](#) – responsible for development and promotion of information technology;
- [Agency of Youth and Sports](#) – governmental agency responsible for planning, implementation and coordination of youth programme.
- [State Statistic Office](#) – state institution responsible for conducting statistical researches.

- [Employment Agency](#) – governmental agency responsible for implementation of the employment programmes.
- [Inter-municipal Social Care Centers](#) – state institutions working under the Ministry on labor and social policy responsible for implementation of the programmes of social protection and welfare.
- [Local-self-governments](#) – local units of government
- [National Agency for European educational programmes and mobility](#) – national agency responsible for implementation of Erasmus + programme.
- Educational institutions
- Other stakeholders

Non-public actors

- Delegation of EU in Macedonia
- UNDP office in Macedonia
- UNICEF office in Macedonia
- USAID office in Macedonia
- International Labor Organization – office in Macedonia
- World Bank
- International Monetary Fund

Many other national civil society organizations are taking actions in order to foster social inclusion. According to the [Codex of Best Practices for civil society participation in the process of policy making](#), civil society representatives are invited in developing policies in the area of social inclusion.

Consultation of young people

No systematic consultation process with young people is conducted during the design of social inclusion policies and measures.

Policy monitoring and evaluation

Social inclusion is a complex subject involving various stakeholders and covering different issues. Due to this fact, it is complicated to have an overall overview on the implementation of the social inclusion policies in the country.

The ongoing monitoring and evaluation contributes in improving the current policies. For instance, in 2013, one major [revision of the Strategy on poverty reduction and social exclusion](#) (2010-2020) was made. This revision came after evaluating the progress of the implementation with in the first two years.

Regarding the inclusion of young people in different social aspects it is even more complicated to draw conclusions. This is mainly because, young people are included in all the policies in general along with other groups in the terms of social inclusion, and there are no specific social inclusion policies directly and only targeting young people. The Government develops and implements general social policies, and there are no specific policies reflecting only on young people's social inclusion.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy as a main actor in developing and implementation of social inclusion policies, is also responsible for coordination of the monitoring and evaluation of those policies. Within the Sector for Strategic Planning in the Ministry there is [Department for Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation](#) which is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of the current social policies. However, the Department for Analysis, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Implementation of Policies and Programs has not made a concrete evaluation of the policies for social inclusion. The report on the implementation of the Annual Work Plan for 2019 will be published by the Ministry on its website no later than March of the following year. For previous periods, the ministry has no obligation to publish its reports for monitoring the strategic plans on a website and they are not publicly available.

4.3 Strategy for the social inclusion of young people

Existence of a National Strategy on social inclusion

A Specific National Strategy on social inclusion of young people is not in place. However, the needs of young people in terms of their social inclusion, are addressed in the [Strategy on poverty reduction and social exclusion 2010-2020](#) which was adopted by the government.

The Strategy on poverty reduction and social exclusion is a document which reflects the intention of the Republic of Macedonia for balancing the degree of inclusion and welfare in all social levels.

The main strategic objective for poverty reduction and social exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia is:

Reduce poverty and social exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia through a better use of disposable human and material resources, improve conditions for living, working and social conditions for all citizens, system and institutional co-activity in the function of accelerated development, higher standard and better quality life.

Social inclusion policy in Macedonia is formed both on the basis of the need and the opportunity of every citizen finding himself/herself at risk of social exclusion, as well as on the needs of specific vulnerable groups which shall be subject to proposed special measures harmonized with and corresponding to the previously proposed measures and activities. That's why Macedonian Government adopted some strategies dealing with promotion of social inclusion for concrete category of citizens.

Inclusion is one of the principles in the creation of the [Strategy for vocational education and training 2013-2020](#), as well in changing and amending the Laws for [Primary](#), [Secondary](#) and [Higher](#) education.

One of the goal of the Strategy for Vocational Education and Training is to promote top quality and social inclusion, to contribute to greater employability, mobility and security at the workplace, to improve anticipation and management of changes in the labor market and to encourage business competitiveness.

According to the Strategy, vocational education and training is based on several principles, including the principle of inclusiveness and equality. Thus it is required that the VET must be accessible to every person in the state regardless of age, sex, social background, religious affiliation and physical or intellectual disability, political or ideological determination, etc. This implies the exercise of everyone's right to education in accordance with his interests and needs. VET reflects the measures and qualities for better integration of everyone in the economy and society and life in general.^[40]

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy adopted [Programme for Dealing with the Problems of Socially Excluded Persons](#).

The general objectives of the programme are:

- Termination of the trans-generational chain of exclusion
- Strengthening and supporting the beneficiaries of all target groups in the direction of their active engagement in the life of the community
- Application and testing of new practices for social inclusion of target groups

Target groups of this program are: drug users and their family members; street children / street children and their parents; victims of domestic violence and homeless people.

⁴⁰ Strategy for Vocational Education and Training in the context of Lifelong Learning 2013-2020 with Action Plan, Ministry of Education and Science (Skopje, 2013), p.34 https://mk-dizajn.hr/wba4wbl/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2018/07/MK-vet-strategy_mac-final.pdf (Accessed November 27, 2018)

[National Strategy for Equalization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(Revised\) 2010-2018](#), proclaims the greater inclusiveness of persons with disabilities. The Strategy proclaims that in order to achieve greater inclusiveness a team approach is needed and that educational inclusion includes not only physical accommodation of children and youth with special educational needs in the regular school, but also inclusion in the work and life of the school.

Strategy for the [Roma in Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020](#), as mentioned in the previous chapter, shows the determination of state bodies to take steps towards the social inclusion of Roma in Macedonia.

Scope and contents

The Strategy on poverty reduction and social exclusion, addresses young people's needs in the terms of social inclusion as a general public with certain specific measures only for young people.

The structure of the Strategy is established based on the areas and fields in which poverty and social exclusion are observed:

- Employment
- Informal economy and strengthening entrepreneurship
- Labor market
- Poverty and social disadvantage
- Health protection
- Long-term care
- Education
- Social protection
- Transport
- Communications
- Housing
- Child protection
- Equal opportunities for men and women
- Develop public sensibility for social inclusion

In the **first and second part** the vision and objectives of the strategy are presented along with the principles upon which it will be implemented. In the **third part** the conditions, problems and system grounds existing in identified areas are presented. The **fourth part** includes proposing measures, activities and solutions to lead towards social inclusion and poverty reduction by area. The **fifth part** presents the strategy implementation, whereas the **sixth part** includes the assumptions and possible threats. The **seventh and eighth parts** include the proposed further steps and main conclusions.

Key political objectives in the field of social inclusion set by the Strategy

The main strategic objective for poverty reduction and social inclusion in the Republic of Macedonia is:

Reduce poverty and social exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia by a better utilization of the available human resources, improve conditions for life, work and social conditions for all citizens, system and institutional coordinated activity in the function of faster development, higher standard and better quality life.

The Vision of the Strategy is:

The Republic of Macedonia needs to be a society with reduces poverty and social exclusion of its citizens through:

- Providing everyone with access to resources, rights and services which are necessary for equal participation in the society and also take care of the protection and exclusion and combat all sorts of discrimination leading to exclusion.

- Provide active social inclusion of all through promoting equal participation on the labor market and combat against poverty and exclusion.
- Implement policy of social inclusion through well-coordinated programs and measures at all levels of government (central and local) and other relevant factors with efficient and effective public policies including economic, fiscal. Educational and training strategies and projects.

The *Mission of the Strategy* is to implement the following essential and basic processes:

- Promote and increase opportunities which provide that the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia participate in the educational, labor and general social activities;
- Cope with and reduce impediments for solving specific problems of social exclusion of special groups which face these impediments;
- Promote social inclusion with children and young people which will provide conditions for long-term opportunities for the future generation;
- Strengthen vulnerable communities for quality life and ability to overcome impediments in their wellbeing.

Responsible authority

Due to the complex and multi-dimensional element of the problems previously elaborated, the highest management body, the **Government of the Republic of Macedonia** needs to be the main implementer and coordinator in implementing this strategy. Certainly, the ministries will need to be the implementers of the individual strategic goals and measures in line with their obligations.

In line with the determined measures and recommendations for the elaborated area, the **responsible ministries and bodies**, i.e. institutions for implementing the measures and activities proposed in this Strategy on Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion are the following:

- [Ministry of Labor and Social Policy](#)
- [Ministry of Health](#)
- [Ministry of Education and Science](#)
- [Ministry of Economy](#)
- [Ministry of Transport and Communications](#)
- [Ministry of Finance](#)
- [Ministry of Local Self Government](#)
- [Ministry of Information Society](#)
- [Agency for Sport and Youth](#)
- [State Statistical Office](#)
- [Employment Agency](#)

An **Operation Plan of Measures and Activities for Implementing the Strategy** is adopted each year, in the listed ministries, bodies and agencies in order to define the implementers of tasks, obligations and activities within certain time frameworks (short, medium and long-term)

Revisions/Updates

In 2013, one major [revision of the Strategy on poverty reduction and social exclusion \(2010-2020\)](#) was made.

With the implementation of the measures and activities, during the first two years, of the National Strategy on poverty reduction and social exclusion (2010-2020) certain base results are achieved. In specific this progress is reflected in: increasing employment, number of citizen using social welfare rights and protection, as well as in the area of child protection. Major achievements are made in the field of education by: introducing obligatory high school and dispersal higher education; as well as in the field of availability

and usage of information technology. The revision is coming after adoption of new policies that influence on the Strategy itself.

The **main changes** of the Strategy are reflected to:

- amending the strategic goals (to fit to the EU Strategy on development and growth 2020)
- decreasing the number of focus areas from 14 to 7:
 1. Employment and strengthening of entrepreneurship
 2. Adjustment of education to fit to the labor market
 3. Social and child protection, and development of new **social model** (oriented to an individual and his needs)
 4. Advancing health protection and long-term care
 5. Transport, communication and housing
 6. Activation and strengthening of local authorities
 7. Support of vulnerable groups.

4.4 Inclusive programmes for young people

Programmes specific for vulnerable young people

Housing programmes for vulnerable young people:

According to the Programme for construction and maintenance of apartments owned by the Republic of Macedonia, the [Ministry of Transport and Communications](#) carries out the distribution of social housing for several categories of citizens:

1. Children without parents or parental care - persons over 18 years' old who until their eighteenth year were taken care of in institutions and other forms of care for orphans.
2. Users of social or permanent financial assistance.
3. Persons affected by natural disasters, regardless of the legal status of their existing (primary) habitats.
4. Persons with disabilities and persons in need of assistance and care from another person and families with disabled persons.
5. Persons belonging to the Roma community are socially endangered (in accordance with the Strategy for the Roma of the Republic of Macedonia)
6. Single parents with minor children and
7. Blind person's beneficiaries of social or permanent financial assistance

In order to apply for subsidies, the person must meet the following criteria:

- citizen of the Republic of Macedonia;
- with a permanent place of residence in the municipality where the social housing is built and
- without an apartment in personal ownership, of the spouse and of the adult members of his / her common household on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia.

Since the beginning of 2016, the Government started with implementation of new project 'Buy a house'. This project applies to all young people under 35 years of age.

The subsidies refer for a person up to and with the age of 35 years, that is, a married person in which at least one spouse is aged up to or 35 years. Youth up to 35 years of age could get 33.000 euros from the Government for construction or purchase of a new house.^[41]

⁴¹ <https://silkroadbank.com.mk/Loans?Type=1&Cat=HousingLoans&SubCat=SubsidizedHousingLoan> (Accessed November 28, 2018)

Health protection programmes:

At a [Government session](#) held in March 2018, the Government adopted a decision on exemption from participation in the use of health services for children under the age of 18, whose families are beneficiaries of the right to social financial assistance.

This program expects to increase the availability of health services and to spare this vulnerable group of additional financial costs in exercising the right to health care. These young people will receive treatment free of charge in all public health institutions, specialist consultative and hospital activities. For the purpose of this program, 20 million MKD have been allocated and it has an estimated coverage of 20,000 people. The responsible institution for its implementation is the Ministry of Health. It is important to mention that this program was initiated by the civic organization "Lil".

Employment programmes:

Some of the active employment programmes are:

- Youth Guarantee

Youth Guarantee is a Government programme that enlarges the scope and engagement of young unemployed persons on the labor market. The objective of this measure, for which EUR 8,8 million have been earmarked in 2018, is for young people to stay in the country and work here. Youth Guarantee is open to all young unemployed people up to the age of 29, who have already completed their education and are not registered in the Employment Service Agency. Applicants get quality offers for employment, further education or internship, thus successfully integrating the youth in the labor market and reducing brain-drain from the country.

- Subsidized workplaces for people with disabilities

This measure is foreseen in Operational Plan for Active Programmes and Measures for Employment 2018. It's not particularly intended for youth but they are also on the focus. The aim of this measure is to increase the employment rate and employment opportunities for people with disabilities registered within the Employment Agency as unemployed persons.

- Programme for municipal-useful work

This measure is also foreseen in the Operational Plan for Active Programmes and Measures for Employment 2018. Same as the measure mention before, target group of this measure are not young people in particular but it also covers them. This measure is interested because it gives priority to vulnerable categories of the population.

Educational programmes:

- Programme for conditional financial support for high school education

The program "[Conditional Compensation for Secondary Education](#)" aims to improve the access and quality of education, increase the number of students enrolled in secondary education from household's beneficiaries of social financial assistance, and encourage the implementation of compulsory secondary education in Republic of Macedonia. On a long-term basis, the program aims to increase employment and poverty, as well as to create a better workforce.

This program is implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Centers for Social Work, the Ministry of Education and Science, the secondary schools and the Ministry of Finance, in accordance with the Manual for Administration of the Conditional Compensation for Secondary Education Program.

- [Free school books for all students in the primary and high schools](#)

In order to scarce the parents' budget, the Government decided from the school year 2009/2010 to start distributing [free textbooks](#) for all students in secondary and elementary education. After the end of the school year, the students have an obligation to return the textbooks.

- Scholarships for students with special needs in the public and private high schools in Macedonia

The Ministry of Education and Science awards 100 (one hundred) scholarships for students with special needs from public and private secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia. Criteria for granting scholarships are the achieved success, with one student gaining up to 100 points.

- Scholarships for social support of students in the public and private high schools in Macedonia

In the school year 2018/2019, the Ministry of Education and Science will award 400 scholarships for social support to students from public and private secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia.

The criteria for awarding these scholarships are: the achieved success, the material condition of the immediate family of the student, the awards won in international / state competitions won during the previous two school years for the students from the first year, i.e. during the previous school year for the students from II, III and IV year and the social position of the immediate family of the student.

- Scholarships for students – children without parents and parental care in the public and private high schools in Macedonia

The Ministry of Education and Science for the 2018/2019 school year will award 50 scholarships for pupils - orphans from public and private secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia. The amount of the scholarship is 2.750,00 denars per month for nine months during the school year.

- [Scholarships for Roma students](#) in the public and private high schools in Macedonia

The Ministry of Education and Science for the 2018/2019 school year will award 880 scholarships in five categories for Roma students enrolled in the first, second, third and fourth year of public and private secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia.

Criteria:

- 1) to be regular students enrolled in the first, second, third and fourth year in public and private secondary schools in the Republic of Macedonia;
- 2) not to repeat in the previous school year;
- 3) they are not beneficiaries of scholarships from other institutions / companies or firms;
- 4) to be members of the Roma community; and
- 5) to be citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

Child and Social Protection programmes:

- [Right to special financial support](#)

For a child with specific needs that has physical or mental disabilities or combined developmental disabilities up to 26 years of age, a special allowance is provided as a monetary compensation. Finding, assessment and opinion on the need for a special allowance is provided by an expert body for assessing the type and degree of disability of persons in the mental or physical development.

A child with developmental disabilities and with specific needs, in the sense of the Article 33 of the Law on Child Protection, is a child with:

- severe, severe or severe difficulties in physical development,
- moderate, severe or profound mental disability,
- the most difficult forms of chronic diseases,
- the most severe degree of visual, hearing or speech impairment (blind person and practically blind person, practically deaf and totally deaf person, person with complete absence of speech, person with severe impaired speech due to polio, person with autism and person with impaired or lost earlier acquired speech),
- Down syndrome and

- multiple types of obstacles (combined) in development.
- [Right to social welfare allowance](#)

The right to social financial assistance is intended for a person capable of working and a household (a family of family members and other relatives, among which there is no legal obligation for mutual support, which they jointly contribute, manage and spend). The applicant, ie the holder of the right to social financial assistance, is an unemployed person who actively seeks work in accordance with the Law on Employment and Insurance in Case of Unemployment, materially unsecured and which according to other regulations can not provide means for existence. Materially unsecured is considered a person and a household that generates income on all bases lower than the amount of social financial assistance and which does not own the property and property rights from which it can be supported.

- [Permanent financial assistance](#)

The right to permanent financial assistance has a person incapable of work and materially unsupported, who cannot provide funds for his / her existence on the basis of other regulations.

Inability to work, in the sense of the Article 58 of the [Law on Social Protection](#), is considered a person:

- with moderate, severe and profound mental impediments and a person with combined and other developmental disabilities, which due to the degree of disability can not acquire education, as well as a person with physical disability, because of which he is incapable of work,
- a person with mental illness and a person with permanent changes in the health condition, because of which he is incapable of work,
- single woman during pregnancy one month before childbirth and single parent in accordance with the Family Law for up to three years of age of the child,
- a child without parents and without parental care that is not protected on the basis of the right to accommodation, which does not have income on the basis of property and property rights, and does not realize funds on the basis of other regulations, but up to the age of 18 years;
- a person older than 65 years.
- Right to financial support of a person which had a status of a child without parents and parental care by the age of 18

Main aim of this measure is to help the person who until the age of 18 had the status of a child without parents and parental care and who has no income and assets from which he can sustain up to the age of 26 years. The Center for Social Work is the competent body for the implementation of this measure.

- Financial support for university studies of a person which had a status of a child without parents and parental care by the age of 18

The right to financial assistance for studies is provided by persons who have had the status of a child without parents and parental care until the age of 18, provided they are enrolled as full-time or part-time students at public higher education institutions (first and second degrees of studies and doctoral studies). The amount of the financial assistance for studying is 18,000 MKD, or 24,000 MKD, depending on whether the person uses a social apartment for rent.

- Right to financial support for housing of a person which had a status of a child without parents and parental care by the age of 18, or/and after termination of custody, maximum to the age of 26

The right to financial assistance for social housing is provided to socially endangered persons - not provided with housing.

Socially endangered persons are: beneficiaries of permanent financial assistance and a person who, by the age of 18, had the status of a child without parents and without parental care, that is, after the termination of the guardianship, and up to the age of 26.

Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

- [IPA Component IV: Human Resources Development \(HRD\)](#)
 - Priority axis 3: Social Inclusion – Promoting an inclusive labor market
 - Responsible authorities: Central Financing and Contracting Department (CFCD) within the Ministry of Finance, represented by the Head of CFCD, acting as Head of the Operating Structure; Relevant departments/ units within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Ministry of Education and Science.
 - Target groups: unemployed people particularly young unemployed people lacking working skills; Professionals working with vulnerable groups (both governmental and CSOs)

Funding

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia envisages social transfers on regular basis. The [Budget of the Republic of Macedonia for 2018](#) project social transfers in the total amount of 100,733 million MKD (approximately 1,636 million euros). Just for comparison social transfers in [2017](#) were 99,794 million MKD (approximately 1,621 million Euros).

[Draft version of the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia for 2019](#) foreseen social transfers in total amount of 107,679 million MKD, which in comparison of 2018 is an increase of 6,9%.

In **2018**, 1.237 million MKD are planned for financial support in cases of unemployment for unemployed people (including young people). While 987,5 million MKD are projected to support active policies and measures for employment. 28.258 million MKD are projected for health protection.

For comparison, in the budget for **2017**, 885 million MKD were projected to support unemployed people, 555 million MKD were foreseen for support of active policies and measures for employment, while 26,377 million MKD were projected for health protection.

In draft Budget for **2019**, Funds in the amount of 1.4 billion MKD are planned for payment of unemployment benefit to the unemployed, funds for active measures and employment policies amount to 1.095 million MKD, while funds in the amount of 30.2 billion denars are planned for health care.

The Government considers securing appropriate level of social protection of the most vulnerable categories of the population is of crucial importance in achieving sustainable economic development and higher level of social justice. Thus, the **2018** Budget envisages 8.001 million MKD for these transfers. The amount for same purpose in the budget for **2017** was 7.801 million MKD, while the budget for **2019** foreseen 10,3 billion MKD for providing an adequate level of social protection to the most vulnerable strata of the population.

Quality assurance

As for many other policies undertaken by the Governmental institutions, there is no public available information about evaluation processes and measurement of the quality of inclusive programmes and policies.

4.5 Initiatives promoting social inclusion and raising awareness

Intercultural awareness

The Government of the Republic Macedonia invest in raising the intercultural awareness among the population, but on ad hoc basis. As Macedonia is multicultural country, in which different nationalities live, there is a lack of state initiatives for promotion of social inclusion and raising awareness.

In 2015, the Government implemented campaign "Multiethnic and multi-religious cohesion". It is consisted of 18 videos for encouraging cohesion and mutual understanding among people with different ethnic or religious background. All videos were broadcasted on National TV stations. The videos are published on the YouTube channel "Кампањи на Владата на РМ" (Campaigns of the Government of the RM) in specific playlist.

CSO's are usually the ones who are initiating different projects and camping's for promotion of social inclusion. Thus, [Macedonian Center for Civic Education](#) in April 2017 started with implementation of 5- years long project for interethnic integration of youth in education. The aim of this project is to help ensure positive interactions among young people of different ethnic backgrounds at school and community level, while enhancing civic education, behavior and youth volunteer skills. The project is financed by USAID.

So far ([Last updated: August 27, 2018](#)), the project has enabled more than 85 youth initiatives and joint student activities with the participation of over 1,300 students from different ethnic communities; over 300 creative workshops and theater forums with around 160 students in eight high schools; 9 public discussions were organized in all the municipalities involved in the first year of the project, involving more than 800 students, teachers, parents, mayors and municipal representatives.

Young people's rights

There are not many state initiatives for promotion of young people's right. Usually initiatives are coming from international or civic organizations and are later supported by some governmental organizations.

In the end of 2017, the International Labor Organization organized workshop in municipality of Bitola, targeting youth up to 29 years of age. The workshop was intended to provide support to trade unions, employment services, education and science institutions and youth organizations in their initiatives aimed at raising the awareness of young people about their rights at the workplace.

From January 1, 2018, the Youth Information and Advisory Centers INFO SEGA from Prilep and Kavadarci in cooperation with fakulteti.mk and Confederation of Free Syndicates of Macedonia officially started the National campaign "365 workers' rights for youth".

The campaign aims to raise awareness among young people about their labor rights. Through the activities of the campaign, it works to increase the awareness of young people to understand that they have rights in the workplace in which way, where and how to get information about them.

The campaign "365 Labor Rights of Youth" is supported by the Program for decentralized cooperation between the region of Normandy and Macedonia, the Agency of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Macedonia and the State Labor Inspectorate.

The campaign is foreseen to last till the end of 2018, and it consists of debates, workshops, research and an online campaign which is conducted throughout the year with the publication of a single right from the Labor Law on a daily basis.

Key initiatives to safeguard democracy and prevent radicalisation leading to violent extremism

Research shows that young people in Macedonia are vulnerable to radicalization. The information shows that the high unemployment rate and the overall poor economic situation of the young people in Macedonia is one of the reasons for the radicalization. In a situation where young people do not see hope for a better tomorrow, they become an easier target for manipulation.^[42]

It is believed that the youth are most targeted demographic in Macedonia. The vague concept of radicalization often leaves the youth unprotected and unequipped with the needed counter-arguments or understandings for how not to fall into the traps of extremist propaganda.

It seems that the governmental institutions are not taking measure to prevent youth being radicalized. The [National Strategy of Republic of Macedonia for Fight Against Terrorism \(2018-2022\)](#) doesn't foresee some measure to prevent youth radicalization neither include young people in the description of vulnerable categories of persons.

In October 2014, the Ministry of Internal Affairs organized conference with topic "Terrorism: Prevention of Radicalization of the Young Population". The conference was of a closed type and was attended by members of the intelligence and security services of several countries in the region. It did not produce any publicly available output.

No further initiatives were taken.

4.6 Access to quality services

Housing

Low standard of young people and the economic situation in the country makes young people dependent on their parents. Young adults continue to live with their parents, even after getting married.

According to data from [Eurostat](#), since 2010, percentage of young adults (18-34) living with their parents is constantly above 70%. Last data released from Eurostat are from 2016, when 73,3% of young adults were living with their parents. Young people are clamming that they would like to live without their parents, but due to financial reasons they can't afford to live independently.

The Government makes efforts in enabling and encouraging young people's independence when it comes to housing through lot of programmes and projects:

- [Social buildings for socially vulnerable groups](#)– this measure is available for young people users of social welfare. The state is building social flats, that are being awarded to people at social-economic risk through open call. (see more in chapter 4.4)
- [Sale of real estate housing through positive public bidding](#)– measure is available for young people and for the general population as well.
- Project "[Buy a house, buy an Apartment](#)" – with a model of "75% and/or 50% of the monthly loan instalment" support by the Government for building/buying new house, apartment, in the first five years of mortgage payment – the Government together with the Macedonian banks are implementing this project through special credit line. The Government is contributing in the monthly loan instalment for building or buying

⁴² See more Katrina Selimi and Filip Stojkovski. Assessment of Macedonia's efforts in countering violent extremism, view from the civil society (Analitika, 2016), https://www.analyticamk.org/images/Files/extremism-en-updated-FINAL-web_ceb98.pdf (Accessed November 29, 2018)

new house of apartment. The measure is available for the general population (including young people) with low income.

- Project "[Buy a house](#)- for youth" – this measure is particularly intended for young people not older than 35 years of age. In order to apply for the "Buy a house for youth" project, the person should fulfill the following conditions:
 - To be less than 35 years of age
 - To meet the criteria for obtaining a loan for a house prescribed by the bank,
 - The salary of the person who applied and the spouse to be less than 1,300 euros, or if the person is not married the salary should be less than 900 euros,
 - No other apartment or house in its own name or if it is married and on behalf of the spouse
 - No other housing loan was raised
 - The repayment period of the loan should be at least 20 years (with a possibility of repayment after 12 years).
- [Temporary exemption from the obligation to pay compensation and lease of construction land in state ownership](#) – The persons who hold the right to privatization can temporarily be released from paying a rent for the construction land, if they cannot pay the rent. In order to fulfil this right, persons should have the status of users of:

1. social financial assistance or with such status acquired for the duration of the obligation to pay the compensation, that is, the rent, only during the duration of the status of beneficiaries of social financial assistance;
2. users of permanent financial assistance and
3. children without parents and parental care up to 18 years of age, as well as after the termination of the guardianship, and up to 26 years of age if they are on regular schooling as long as they use the right to social protection.

When it's about homeless people, within the [Red Cross of city of Skopje](#) there are two programs to help the homeless, one of which is directed exclusively towards the homeless and to meeting some of their needs through the Homeless Station, while the other covers a wider group of vulnerable people, including the homeless.

1. Station for Homeless is located in Momin Potok and works every Friday. On Mondays, it is only open for hygienic services for users.

The station is regularly visited by 65 homeless people, and on Friday, on average, 45 homeless people are present. Since the establishment of the station in 2008 so far, there are 170 homeless people who use services there. Most of them live in parks, abandoned buildings, railway / bus stations, basements, garages, etc. The persons in the station receive free primary health care and free medications, as well as psychological assistance. The social worker prepares social updates about the new homeless, as well as update of the existing files, realization of expert-advisory talks, extracting personal documents, issuing certificates for all users of the station, assistance and support in writing / filling out documents, forms for illiterate homeless people, free services from donors such as dental, legal services, as well as support for the employment of the working people, organizing regular sale of the street magazine "Face to face". The magazine comes out from September 2012 and promotes the model of social entrepreneurship. Its sellers are representatives of the most vulnerable layers in society, including homeless people, with half of the selling price going directly to the seller, and the second half is used for printing and for activities that improve the lives of marginalized people who are part of the program "Face to face".

2. Patrol social service- In the Red Cross of the City of Skopje three patrol social workers are engaged that reveals people and families at risk, among which is the category of homeless people. Their role is through meetings with individuals and families at risk to recognize the problems they face and then refer them to all existing resources in the community and in the city.

The temporary shelter is always ready to receive a homeless person who is in a serious state of health, and for which there is no urgent solution for accommodation in an appropriate institution. Also for the winter period, a plan for action in extremely low temperatures has been prepared, and when the temperatures are lower than -10 degrees Celsius, there is a 24-hour team of the Red Cross.

Social services

In 2012, the Government introduced a Programme for subsidizing the electricity costs. The programme offers financial aid to the families, including young people and young couples, receiving social welfare support and constant social financial support, in paying electricity bills. Also, through the programme the financial debts upon electricity of this target groups will be deleted by simple request by the families.

In 2004, the Government introduced a [Programme for dealing with the problems of the socially excluded persons](#). This programme is focused on four target groups:

- Drug abusers and their families
- Children on the streets and their parents
- Victims of domestic violence
- Homeless people.

This programme should contribute in ceasing the trans-generation chain of exclusion. Moreover, through the programme it is expected to strengthen and support the target groups in their active participation in the community, through application of new practices for social inclusion of the vulnerable groups.

Health care

Health care programmes in Macedonia are usually targeting general population and not particularly youth.

Still, there are 2 youth centers in city of Skopje offering free gynaecological examinations and counselling, psychological counselling, HIF tests, counselling for drug use prevention. These centers are founded by CSO HERA, but since 2018 they entered in prevention programs of Ministry of Health.

Action Plan for Sexual and Reproductive Health of Republic of Macedonia 2018-2020 have general focus but also covers sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and young people. Targeting youth, the Plan foreseen following goals:

Goal 1: To improve access to information and education for adolescents and young people in terms of sexual and reproductive health

Goal 2: To improve access to services and the quality of care for the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents and young people that are friendly and tailored to their needs

Goal 3: To reduce the rate of unplanned teenage pregnancy and to maintain a low prevalence of STI and HIV in adolescents and young people

CSO HERA in 2013 started with service Mobile gynaecological ambulance for sexual and reproductive health. Its goal is to improve the access and quality of services in the field of sexual and reproductive health among women from hard-to-reach populations (sex workers and drug injectors), as well as women from rural areas who have limited access or do not have access to gynaecological services. Field activities are carried out with a terrain vehicle, appropriately adapted for offering gynaecological services, equipped with gynaecological chair, ECHO apparatus and necessary medical instruments. Gynaecological services are offered by an expert team, comprised of a specialist gynaecologist and nurse. This service is covering youth but also older population.

National Drug Strategy of Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020, recognizing the vulnerability of young people, put special emphasize on them, even though the Strategy has general focus. The Strategy emphasize that there is a need of improving the access to measures for early intervention, especially for young people using drugs.

[The Report on the Assessment of Minimum Standards for Quality of Drug Addiction Treatment Programs in the Republic of Macedonia](#) states that there are no specific programs for young people in health institutions. It's also states that there are many young people who are misusing glue and tramadol, but there is still no special programme for dealing with that issue.

The Government adopted [Programme for protection of the HIV/AIDS population in Macedonia for 2018](#). As many other programmes, this programme also target whole population, but as well as Macedonian youth. Main aim of the programme is to decrease the rate of people (of all ages) through universal approach of prevention, health care and support, based on respect of human rights and non-discrimination.

Project "[Roma Health Mediators](#)" started to be implemented in 2010 by CSO HERA, supported by foundation Open Society Macedonia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. The same year a multisectoral working group was formed composed of representatives from the relevant ministries and non-governmental organizations, for the preparation of the Strategic Framework for the Introduction of Roma Health Mediators in the Republic of Macedonia. On the initiative of the Ministry of Health in 2011, in order to improve the health status of the Roma population, the Strategic Framework was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. The first working engagements of the Roma health mediators were financially supported by the Ministry of Health in 2012. The Ministry of Health provided financial means for engaging the Roma Health Mediators, as well as offices for their accommodation in health centers in several municipalities throughout Macedonia.

Health mediators are a link between the health system and the Roma population. They inform Roma about their health rights, how important is regular immunization, receiving regular therapy, going to a gynaecologist, possession of personal documents, hygiene.

This project is not particularly intended for young people, but it also covers them.

Financial services

The Government offers scholarships and student loans to young high school and university students. All possibilities are published on the web site <http://www.stipendii.mon.gov.mk>.

Social financial support to vulnerable groups is described under section 4.4.

Quality assurance

No available information.

4.7 Youth work to foster social inclusion

Policy/legal framework

In Republic of Macedonia youth work is not formally regulated nor integrated as part of the education system. The profession of youth workers is not recognized in the national classification of occupations.

In January 2014, Union for Youth Work together with Agency of Youth and Sports, and in cooperation with OSCE mission in Macedonia, prepared draft Law on Youth Work. The Law is not yet adopted.

The concept of Youth Work is expected to be defined in the new Law on Youth which is still not adopted.

[National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#), in thematic area Local Youth Work emphasize the importance of youth work and defines few measures in order to achieve recognition of youth work as a key tool for assisting the positive personal and social development of young people. Second objective is formal recognition and regulation of the use and availability of youth work as an integral part of the education system of the country.

Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups

Even though there is no youth work as a special profession in Macedonia, youth organizations are organizing different educational events targeting all young people in the country.

Youth work providers in the field of social inclusion for young people

Macedonian legislation does not define youth work as a professional orientation and profession in general.

CSO's, especially youth organizations are working on promotion of social inclusion among youth. Basically they are the main providers.

Training and support for youth workers engaged in social inclusion programmes

Republic of Macedonia does not define youth work as a professional orientation and profession in general. Yet, within Erasmus+ programme, many young people working in youth organizations participated in trainings for youth workers abroad.

Financial support

As its still unknown concept in Macedonian legal system, there is no specific budget for youth work.

Concrete activities supporting youth in different fields are financed by the budget (ex. Youth Guarantee, active employment measures, educational scholarships) and also from international and national donors. This financial support is for concrete youth policies and not for youth work as a professional orientation.

Quality assurance

As stated above, currently there is no legal framework defining and recognizing youth work as a professional orientation.

It is expected that the new Law on Youth will regulate that field and also will define concrete guides how to evaluate and monitor youth work in order to ensure quality.

4.8 Current debates and reforms

Even though there is a lack of concrete measures fostering social inclusion, occasionally debates are organized, usually by CSO's.

Thus, in September 2018, [Macedonia platform against poverty](#) organized open debate with title "Access to education". The conclusion of the debate was that Roma youth are usually facing discrimination in schools, and there are even situations when non Roma

students don't want to study with their Roma fellows at all. There are still many reforms that needed to be done, especially when its coming to stereotypes and prejudices.

Several reforms are taking place at the moment:

Law on Youth

As mentioned in the previous chapters, debates for new (first) Law on Youth are still ongoing. It is expected that the law will enter into parliamentary procedure by the end of 2018 or beginning of 2019. The law should regulate social inclusion among youth.

Draft Law on changes and amendments of the Law on Social Protection

Proposed changes and amendments of the Law on Social Protection contains the following solutions: advancing the food standards in the institutions for institutional social protection; increasing of social financial support and constant social financial aid for 5%.

- Information for starting the process for preparation of the Draft Law on changes and amendments of the Law on social protection
- Draft text of the Law on changes and amendments of the Law on social protection

Draft Law on changing and amending of the Law for Child Protection

The proposed changes and amendments of the Law on Child Protection aims at improving the standard of financially unsecured persons (users of social financial support and permanent social financial aid) who have children with disabilities and are using the right of special allowance, with increasing the allowance for 25% as well for enabling such support for all children with Down Syndrome.

- Information for the start of the process for preparation of Draft Law on changes and amendments of the Law on child protection
- Draft text of the Law for changes and amendments of the Law on child protection

Draft Law on Social Entrepreneurship

In the Republic of Macedonia, the concept of social entrepreneurship is not properly regulated in the legal framework, although the importance of the concept and advantages are recognized by the society. There is no legal framework which embrace the regulation of this matter, although several laws and polices contain provisions that contribute towards further development of social entrepreneurship.

This Law aims at regulating social entrepreneurship with adoption of specific regulation, which will correspond to the regulation in the EU countries and adjusted to the specific economic and social states in Macedonia.

- Information for the start of the process for preparation of Draft Law on social entrepreneurship
- Draft text of the proposal Law on social entrepreneurship

5. PARTICIPATION

In Republic of Macedonia, there is National Youth Strategy (2016-2025), where one of the nine thematic areas is Youth Participation.

Young people usually participate in consultation processes on the level of defining key challenges they are facing and providing long-term objectives to address the problems. The consultation process specifically for creating of the National Youth Strategy (2016-2025) involved wide variety of youth representatives.

5.1 General context

Definitions and concepts

In the [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#) is stated "Youth Participation is a process of creating opportunities for young people to play a significant part in the democratic processes and to influence the creation and implementation of policies that contribute towards the development of strategies and programmes. These opportunities are created by developing a wide range of formal and informal mechanisms for youth participation, from local youth councils to focus groups, from ongoing consultation on youth policies to projects run by young people"^[43].

Institutions of representative democracy

According to the [Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia](#), Macedonia is a parliamentary representative democratic republic, where the Prime Minister is the head of the government in a multiparty system.

Executive power is vested in the [Government of Republic of Macedonia](#). The Government proposes laws, adopts bylaws, determines the policies of carrying out the laws and other regulations and performs other activities in accordance with the law.

Legislative power is in the hands of the [Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia](#). The Assembly is representative body of all citizens in Macedonia and it is composed of 120 to 140 Representatives. They are elected at general, direct and free elections and by secret ballot. According to Article 5 of Law on Representatives in the Assembly ([Закон за избор на пратеници во Собранието на Република Македонија](#)): "Every citizen of the Republic of Macedonia has the right to be elected a Member of Parliament if: he / she is 18 years of age; has a business ability and is not serving a prison sentence for committing a crime."

Judiciary power is independent of the executive and the legislature and it is exercised by courts.

Article 115 of the Constitution stipulates that "In units of local self-government, citizens directly and through representatives participate in decision-making on issues of local relevance particularly in the fields of urban planning, communal activities, culture, sport, social security and child care, preschool education, primary education, basic health care and other fields determined by law. The municipality is autonomous in the execution of its constitutionally and legally determined spheres of competence; supervision of the legality of its work is carried out by the Republic. The carrying out of specified matters can by law be entrusted to the municipality by the Republic."

⁴³ National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 (Skopje, 2016), p. 13, http://ams.gov.mk/images/dokumenti/mladi/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_eng.pdf (Accessed December 10, 2018)

Republic of Macedonia has 81 local self-governments organized in municipalities, including the city of Skopje that is particular unit of local self-government the organization of which is regulated by law.^[44]

The citizens in Republic of Macedonia through non-compulsory and with guaranteed secrecy by law are electing The President, the Assembly, by proportional representation and the local self-government (Mayor and Municipality Councils). "Voting Right" has every citizen of the Republic of Macedonia with 18 years of age and working ability.^[45] According to the Article 22 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia "Every citizen who attains 18 years of age acquires the right to vote. The right to vote is equal, universal and direct, and is exercised at free elections by secret ballot. Persons deprived of the right to practice their profession by a court verdict do not have the right to vote."

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

Young people as voters

Young people in Macedonia can vote and be voted for representatives from the age of 18 by law^[46]; it also refers in instruments for direct democracy like referendum. Currently in Republic of Macedonia there are no plans on lowering the voting age limit. According the Constitution every Citizen from the age of 18 has the right to vote. Young offenders sentenced to correctional facilities and young people completing their voluntary military service or are part of the military service, have the right to vote one day before official Election Day.

Young people as political representatives

There are not many young people on representative functions in power. Currently, in the [elected members of parliament \(2016-2020\)](#) from 120 representatives there are 2 members of parliament that are younger than 30 years old. In Republic of Macedonia every young person over 18 can be a member of a political party. In the Law for Political Parties ([Закон за политичките партии](#)) there is no specific article that regulates youth wings.

In September 2017, the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia has established [Club on Youth Affairs and Policies](#), based on the trend of the European Parliament and countries' parliaments. The Club on Youth Affairs and Policies is informal body within the Parliament of Republic of Macedonia, composed of members of all parliament parties aiming to accomplish the interests of youth in the country, in collaboration with the youth organizations, informal youth groups and youth political wings. The first coordinator of the Club on Youth Affairs and Politics was elected the youngest female parliamentarian in the assembly.

The current director of Agency of Youth and Sport is below the age of 30.

⁴⁴ http://www.stat.gov.mk/OblastOpsto_en.aspx?id=1 (Accessed December 10, 2018)

⁴⁵ Electoral Law on Republic of Macedonia (Изборен законик на Република Македонија), (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 40/06, 136/08, 148/08, 155/08, 163/08, 44/11, 51/11, 54/11, 142/12, 31/13, 34 / 13, 14/14, 30/14, 196/15, 35/16, 97/16 and 99/16), Art. 2 https://www.sobranie.mk/content/%D0%98%D0%B7%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%B8/%D0%98%D0%97%D0%91%D0%9E%D0%A0%D0%95%D0%9D%20%D0%97%D0%90%D0%9A%D0%9E%D0%9D%D0%98%D0%9A%20-%D0%9F%D0%A0%D0%95%D0%A7%D0%98%D0%A1%D0%A2%D0%95%D0%9D%20%D0%A2%D0%95%D0%9A%D0%A1%D0%A2_%20%D0%9C%D0%90%D0%88%202016.pdf (Accessed December 10, 2018)

⁴⁶ Law on Representatives in the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia (Закон за избор на пратеници во Собранието на Република Македонија), Article 4 and 5, http://www.sobranie.mk/izborni-zakoni-ns_article-zakon-za-izbor-na-pratenici-vo-sobranieto-na-republika-makedonija.nsp (Accessed December 10, 2018)

There is no official and statistical data for young people as candidates in national elections and functions reserved for young people.

5.3 Youth representation bodies

Youth parliament

In Republic of Macedonia there is no official or formal Youth Parliament on local or national level.

Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

Structure

The idea of forming the Local Youth Councils within the Local Self-Governments started to realize in 2010, and according to the official information, currently there are 63 Local Youth Councils (in 63 out of 81 municipalities) in Macedonia^[47], but there is no publicly available information how many of them are still active.

There is no special Law on Local Youth Councils. They are regulated by some of the Statutes of the Municipalities. It's expected that they will be regulated in new Law on Youth which draft version should be published soon.

There is no National Youth Council formally established as a governmental body. Yet, there is a non-governmental [National Youth Council in Macedonia](#) which is the biggest representative body of youth in Macedonia that units 46 youth organization, organizations for youth and youth political wings, and its validity was further confirmed when it became a member of the [European Youth Forum](#) in April 2018. Although its non-governmental organization, NYCM is partner of state institutions in creating and implementing youth policies such as Youth Guarantee, Structural Dialogue and Youth Wiki.

Composition

The composition of Local Youth Councils (where operate) is partially regulated in some of the municipality statutes where Local Youth Councils are included as their youth advisory bodies. It's important to be mentioned that some municipalities, for example Municipality of Centar ([Општина Центар](#)) in Skopje, in 2016 verified the mandates of the members of the LYC in Municipality of Centar, but doesn't include the LYC in its Statute.

There is no unification in the Statutes of the municipalities that regulate youth councils. Thus, the Statute of the municipality of Bosilovo ([Статут на Општина Босилово](#)) states that young people are residents of the municipality aged 15-30 years, according to the Statute of the Resen municipality ([Статут на Општина Ресен](#)), young people are aged 15-29, in the Statute of the Municipality of Aerodrom ([Статут на Општина Аеродром](#)) the age limit is set by 15-24 years old, while the Statute of the municipality Mavrovo-Rostushe ([Статут на општина Маврово и Ростуше](#)) has not defined the age limit of the youth.

The number of members differs from the inhabitants of the municipality and it is always an odd number (usually from 5-9 members). Mandate of the members varies from municipality to municipality and its either 2 or 4 years.

The member's selection method also differs. In some municipalities ^[48] the mayor announces a public call. Candidates for members of the Local Youth Council are

⁴⁷ https://www.nvosorabotka.gov.mk/sites/default/files/dokumenti/predlozi/Odgovor_odAgencija_za_mladi_i_sport_zaNacionalniot_mladinski_sovet_naMakedonija.pdf (Accessed December 11 2018)

⁴⁸ See more: Statute of Municipality of Aerodrom, Article 61e ("Official Gazette No. 20/2012, 21/2014, 23/2014),

nominated by: Non-Governmental Organizations and Youth Associations, Student Councils, Youth Wings of Political Parties and other registered forms of organizing youth.

On the basis of the written proposals from the proposers and on the proposal of the Commission for Mandatory Issues, Elections and Appointments, the Council of the Municipality selects and dismisses the members of the Local Youth Council.

According to the Statutes of some Municipalities who are regulating Local Youth Councils, there are usually holding regular sessions as needed, and at least once every two months.^[49] There is no publicly available information whether this rule is implemented in practice.

Role and responsibilities

Youth Council has the role of an advisory body of the Municipalities Councils, and its objective is to involve the young people in the public life of the municipality and to participate in the decision making processes related to youth. Youth Advisory bodies have the right to take part in discussions in the Municipality Councils but with no right to vote. In general, they propose to the Council of the Municipality decisions, programs and other acts of interest to the young residents of the municipality, give an opinion to the Municipal Council on specific decisions that should be taken, which concern young people, encourage inter-municipal cooperation and exchange of experiences with young people from other municipalities, informs and promotes youth activities and the like.

Funding

Youth Councils by the statute adopted from the municipalities councils receive public funding from the municipality councils and it depends of the municipalities budgets and the financial plans of the Youth Councils respectfully. As a municipality body it is monitored and accountable to the municipality.

As for the National Youth Council of Macedonia, their funding is generally non-governmental, mostly from grants of foundations and different private or international donors.

Higher education student union(s)

Structure

In the previous years the main student union bodies were the student parliaments. They were established the same way as the civil society organizations according to the Law for CSOs. That means they are independent organization but their offices are in the universities or faculties, therefore they are supervised by the faculty they are having an office. However, the legitimacy of the student parliament of the biggest state university was questioned when former representatives broke the statute of the organization, and they continued their mandate without organizing any elections. This was one of the main reasons for the creation of a parallel representative student body - the Student Plenum. The Student Plenum, unlike the parliament had completely different structure, aiming

http://www.aerodrom.gov.mk/Upload/Editor_Upload/stranici/%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%82%D0%B8%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%82/%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%83%D1%82%20%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%87%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BD%20%D1%81%D0%BE%20%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%BC%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%20%D0%BE%D0%B4%2010_2014.doc; Statute of Municipality of Csinovo-Oblesevo, Article 35, <http://cesinovo-oblesevo.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Statut-Nov.pdf>; Statute of Municipality of Bosilovo, Art.40d, <http://opstinabosilovo.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Statut-na-Opstina-Bosilovo-2014.pdf>; Statute of Municipality of Resen, Articles 58,60, http://www.resen.gov.mk/content/Documents/Statut_13.07.2010.pdf (Accessed December 12, 2018)

⁴⁹ Ibid

more towards horizontal management and their main goal was creating changes in the Law on Higher Education ([Закон за високо образование](#)). Some of their requirements were addressed in the Law on Higher Education, that came in force in May, 2018, especially those for the student unions and representation. According to the new Law on Higher Education, the Student Assemblies should be a structure within the higher education institutions, as for the internal organization of the assemblies they should be regulated by the Statutes of each individual faculty. It is important to mention that even though the implementation period for this law was set to last 6 months, these changes are not implemented yet.

Composition

The new law on higher education foresees Faculty Student Assembly and University Student Assembly.

The Faculty Student Assembly is the body of the Faculty in which representatives of the students are members and they are elected in direct, fair and democratic elections by secret ballot. The right to vote, as well as the right to run, has every student enrolled in the Faculty, studying in the academic year in which the Faculty Student Assembly is elected. The mandate, that is, the right to be a student representative is limited to one year with the possibility of re-election. The election of representatives of the Faculty Student Assembly is announced by the dean of the Faculty within 30 days prior to their holding, where a special election commission is formed whose majority is made up of students. The manner of election and the number of members of the faculty student assembly as well as its organs are regulated by the statute of the Faculty.^[50]

The University Student Assembly is the body of the University where students' representatives at the University level are members. It is composed of student representatives appointed from the ranks of representatives elected at the Faculty Student Assembly. This means that after the student representatives are elected in the Faculty Student Assembly, following a system of delegation, two students from the Faculty Student Assembly will be delegated at the University level and they will become representatives i.e. members of the University Student Assembly. The president of the University Student Assembly is elected from among the representatives appointed to the University Student Assembly. His mandate, as well as the mandate of the members or representatives of the University Student Assembly, lasts one year with the right to one more choice.^[51]

Role and responsibilities

The University Student Assembly has the authority to elect student representatives to the Senate and other bodies and bodies of the university, where students, together with professors and other members of the academic community, jointly and equally make decisions. The University Assembly also proposes the Student Ombudsman in front of the University Senate and takes care of the quality of the student and the quality of the process of studying, the student's standard, the achievement of student rights and interests, and student cultural, social and intellectual upgrading. The University Student Assembly may also propose to the governing bodies, such as the rectorate, the dean's administration, etc., to fund student activities. Also, the assembly encourages student activities beyond the teaching process.^[52]¹

Funding

As stated in the Article 34 of the Law on Higher Education, the student parliaments are funded by:

⁵⁰ <https://www.studentskisobranija.mk/fakultetsko-studentsko-sobranie/> (Accessed December 25, 2018)

⁵¹ <https://www.studentskisobranija.mk/univerzitetsko-studentsko-sobranie/> (Accessed December 25, 2018)

⁵² Ibid

- (1) The work of the student assembly shall be financed by means of the higher education institution, as well as from: legates, gifts, testament, attachments and other sources.
- (2) Student assemblies have the means in a way that is determined by their statute.
- (3) Higher education institutions shall be obliged to enable the student assemblies' autonomous disposal of funds for their work in accordance with this law and the general acts of higher education institutions.
- (4) Higher education institutions supervise the targeted spending of the funds allocated to student's assemblies, in a manner determined by their statute.

School student union(s)

In Republic of Macedonia there is no specific law or bylaw that regulates school organizing in Primary and Secondary Education.

Currently in Republic of Macedonia there is no formal school student union. There was one formal school student union, High school Student Union of Macedonia, which was not part of the school, but functioned like CSO and were active up to 2008. The need for school student union again arose in 2015 when the former government wanted to implement changes in the educational system. In that period high school students gathered in an organization called High School Plenum that protested against the educational changes at the time. Meanwhile there were few initiatives from youth organizations, first from the [Youth Educational Forum](#) in collaboration with the coalition [SEGA](#) and the [First Children Embassy - Megjasi](#) to educate high school students about student organizing and how to implement it in their own schools. Latter the youth organization [Youth Can](#) in coordination with the [Konrad Adenauer Foundation](#) created workshops in many public schools for the same topic. As a results from this actions there are currently many student organizational forms in the high schools across the country.^[53]

Other bodies

No official available information on this subject.

5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

In Republic of Macedonia there are no policy guidelines for formal mechanism of Consultation, though, the whole process of development of the National Youth Strategy included a public call for participation in thematic working groups. Civil society organizations, informal groups and individuals had the opportunity to choose in which thematic area they would like to be actively involved, where representative from Public institutions and young people together worked on creation on the [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#).

In March 2018, on a special Governmental session dedicated for youth policies, the National Youth Council of Macedonia proposed a model for establishment of a co-management body for coordination between youth and institutions. Currently Agency of Youth and Sport is working on establishment of that working group.^[54]

⁵³ See more <https://www.radiomof.mk/potrebno-e-novo-srednoshkolsko-organiziranje-za-idni-aktivni-gragjani/> (Accessed December 26, 2018)

⁵⁴ C:/Users/Elena%20Dimovska/Downloads/59_sednica_na_vlada.pdf (Accessed December 28, 2018)

Actors

Youth Actors

[National Youth Council of Macedonia](#) is union of organizations and representative body for youth organizations in Macedonia and as such have great impact and influence in policy making concerning youth.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Local Youth Councils (where operate) are serving as advisory bodies within the municipalities where they are formed, but they do not have any significant role in decision-making processes. There is no evidence based policy whether and how many of the brought decisions concerning youth are influenced by Local Youth Councils.

Specific target groups

No official public information is available

Public authorities

During consultation processes, the key public actors are: The Agency of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Education and Science; Ministry of Social Policies and Labor; National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility; Local self-governments, Club on Youth Affairs and Policies, Cross-sectoral group on youth within Ministry of Culture.

Additional stakeholders

As additional stakeholders involved in the consultation processes are: other government agencies; High Education Institutions; High School Institutions; Media representatives and Civil Society Organizations.

Information on the extent of youth participation

No official public information is available

Outcomes

Main outcomes

In Republic of Macedonia there is no formal mechanism that guarantees that young people will be consulted about matters that concern them.

Young people are consulted ad hoc, but there is no publicly available information on the extent to which the proposals and initiatives of young people are incorporated in public policies. Institutions usually share general information about youth consultations. For example, the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 states: "National Youth Strategy, as a strategic document, was developed with the active participation of young people and representatives of relevant institutions who, in a transparent and inclusive process, expressed their opinions and needs in relation to the nine priority areas identified in the Strategy."^[55]

Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people

[National Youth Council in Macedonia](#) in the beginning of 2018 organized consultative meetings with young people 15-29 years of age in order to promote structural dialogue.

⁵⁵ National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, Agency of Youth and Sport, p.3
<http://strategijazamladi.mk/sites/default/files/National-Youth-Strategy-2016-2025.pdf> (Accessed December 13, 2018)

The main aim was to introduce and promote the process of structured dialogue as very efficient tool for dialogue between young people and decision-makers.

The main impact of this project is that the Government of Macedonia decided to initiate a process of creation of Co-management and structured dialogue body of young people and decision makers that will allow young people to create and shape all youth policies in Macedonia. With the establishment of this body, Macedonia will become the first Western Balkan country to have a national working group for Structured Dialogue that will be directly beneficial for the process of euro integration of country and implementation of European practices on national level.^[56]

Unfortunately, in Macedonia there is still no national working group for Structured Dialogue and there is no based evidence whether and in what extent the young people in Macedonia use this mechanism.

5.5 National strategy to increase youth participation

Existence of a national strategy to increase young people's political and civil society participation

In Republic of Macedonia, there is [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#), where one of the nine thematic areas is Youth Participation. The document had wide consultation process authentic for South East Europe and provided inclusion of large number of young people. It was adopted in January, 2016.

Scope and contents

The National Youth Strategy is targeting nine thematic areas: youth participation; youth information; local youth work; education; employment and pre-employment support; culture; sports; health; quality of life. The strategy aims with its interventions on national level and plans particular attention to vulnerable categories of young people (unemployed, NEET, low level of education, young people with geographical and financial obstacles).

As stated in the strategy the Vision is that in 2025; "Young people are independent, active, equal, informed and progressive participants in all areas of society and they fully develop their potential as responsible citizens who enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms. Young people have equal opportunities irrespective of their differences and they are largely involved in the decision-making process, thus developing their potentials and making active contribution towards the general development and wellbeing of the Republic of Macedonia."^[57]

Strategic Priorities

1. Providing a better standard of living and equal opportunities for a decent life;
2. Creating conditions for effective observance and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, and systematic integration and interaction of different categories of young people;
3. Creating opportunities for the involvement of young people in the monitoring and implementation of policies and decisions that affect them;
4. Equal access to quality education and other forms of personal and professional development.

Each thematic area contains objectives that should be achieved with specific measures nationwide.

⁵⁶ <http://www.nms.org.mk/en/completed-projects/> (Accessed December 13, 2018)

⁵⁷ National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, Agency of Youth and Sport (January, 2016), p. 10
http://ams.gov.mk/images/dokumenti/mladi/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_eng.pdf
(Accessed December 14, 2018)

The Strategy is targeting all young people aged 15-29, but is also emphasizing promoting youth activism for youths with fewer opportunities.^[58]

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

As main responsible authority is the government as a whole and specifically the [Agency of Youth and Sport](#). The main coordination is in the hands of the Agency of Youth and Sport, also responsible for monitoring of the implementation.

Monitoring and evaluation

Within the Strategy there is also monitoring plan which strives to provide: Monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the planned activities and the initial outputs to which they contribute; Monitoring and assessing the effects of achieving the sets of results within the thematic areas; Assessment of the overall impact of the Strategy according to the established strategic priorities. There are no monitoring reports publicly available currently, and it is in the 2nd year of implementation. The National Youth Strategy will have impact assessment after the 5 years of implementation and final impact assessment within six months of the expiry in the 10-year period.^[59]

Revisions/Updates

According to information received from Agency of Youth and Sport (upon prior request for free access to public information by NYCM), during 2018 AYS held a series of consultative meetings with civil society organizations. Currently AYS is conducting interviews with institutions responsible for implementation of the action plan (2016-2017) and the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025. After completing the interviews and taking into account the remarks from the civil society organizations, an analysis of the reports will be prepared, as well as an analytical report with recommendations. Depending on the analysis, further steps will be taken in consultation with civil society organizations.

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

Legal/policy framework for the functioning and development of youth organisations

In Republic of Macedonia there is no specific legal policy or framework for the functioning and development of youth organizations. Youth organizations as civic organizations are subject to the rules stipulated in the Law on Associations and Foundations ([Закон за здруженија и фондации](#)). The Law regulates the manner, the conditions and the procedure for establishment, registration and termination of the associations, foundations, alliances, organizational forms of foreign organizations in the Republic of Macedonia, the property in their disposal, the supervision, status changes and status of the organizations of public interest.^[60]

⁵⁸ National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, Agency of Youth and Sport (January, 2016), p. 13 http://ams.gov.mk/images/dokumenti/mladi/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_eng.pdf (Accessed December 14, 2018)

⁵⁹ See more: National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, Agency of Youth and Sport (January, 2016), p. 39 http://ams.gov.mk/images/dokumenti/mladi/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_eng.pdf (Accessed December 14, 2018)

⁶⁰ Law on Associations and Foundations (Закон за здруженија и фондации), Article 1, ("Official Gazette Nb.52", 16.04.2010), <http://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/623772ADC92FEE42A1DB496E1E190648.pdf> (Accessed December 14, 2018)

Public financial support

Public financial support can be divided in domestic and international, where international is larger in scale and funds available. The government and its ministry departments, as well as municipalities have funds located for CSO's. The procedure and funds available are not standardized nationwide, and differs between municipalities and institutions.

[Agency of Youth and Sport](#) published 'Rulebook of the Agency for Youth and Sports for determining the procedure and setting criteria for granting funds for support of projects in the field of youth' ([Правилник на Агенцијата за млади и спорт за определување постапка и утврдување критериуми за доделување средства за поддршка на проекти од областа на младите](#)). According to this Rulebook, entities that are awarded funds are associations that:

- Work with young people and have youth-related activities and experience in implementing programs or activities with young people on a local, regional, national or international level,
- Implement activities related to the development of the status of youth in the society, the realization of the rights and obligations of the youth, education, promotion of the status of marginalized groups of young people, encouraging the critical thought among the young people, stimulating scientific and research activities in youth and youth work.

European funds are available through [National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility](#) responsible for Erasmus plus program. As other international public financial support the Embassies of other countries have its programs and support civil organizations from Macedonia in general, but also in youth related projects and activities.

Initiatives to increase the diversity of participants

Currently there is no publicly accessible information on this subject.

5.7 "Learning to participate" through formal, non-formal and informal learning

Policy Framework

In Republic of Macedonia there is no specific national strategy that applies on social and civic competences and their development.

Formal learning

Citizenship education is a separate subject that is teaching in 4th year at the high schools (gymnasium^[61] and vocational^[62]) with 2 classes a week and 66 classes in total throughout the year.

The main learning objectives according the curricula for gymnasium (Наставна програма по Граѓанско образование за IV година гимназија) are: students to acquire the necessary information, knowledge and skills for perceiving and behaving in contemporary

⁶¹ Curriculum on Civic Education, Bureau for Development of Education (Skopje, 2002), <http://bro.gov.mk/docs/srednostrucno/nastavni-programi/IV-godina/Nastavna%20programa-Gragjansko%20obrazovanie-IV-site%20struki.pdf> (Accessed December 14, 2018)

⁶² Curriculum on Civil Culture for Secondary Vocational Education, Bureau for Development of Education (Skopje, 2008), <http://bro.gov.mk/docs/srednostrucno/nastavni-programi/IV-godina/Nastavna%20programa-Gragjansko%20obrazovaie-IV-ekonomsko-pravna%20struka.pdf> (Accessed December 14, 2018)

society and its institutions, to master and apply the thorough knowledge base of civil society, to prepare for inclusion in higher levels of education in this sphere, to become familiar with the personal and collective freedoms and rights of the citizen, getting to know the basic legal, political and economic institutions of the EU and the wider international community.

Curricula for vocational high schools (Наставна програма Граѓанска култура- средно стручно образование) emphasize following learning outcomes: students to gain knowledge in the field of civil culture and to form and develop personal attitude toward participation in civic life and public policy, to learn important characteristics of democracy and democratic values, to learn about election processes, human rights and freedoms, the role of the citizen in democratic society, conflict management, as well as to train for critical thinking, assessment of information, capture and defense of attitudes, communication, peaceful resolution of conflicts and reaching an agreement.

Non-formal and informal learning

Participative structures within formal education settings are not practice in Republic of Macedonia, and there are no standards of High school student organizing adopted by law. Currently there are initiatives coming from CSO [Youth Educational Forum](#) who already prepared draft version of new Law on high school ([Предлог Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за средно образование](#)) and Rulebook on student organizing and participation ([Правилник за ученичко организирање и учество](#)). In draft Law different forms of student participation are foreseen. High school organizing has so far been established only in school statutes. Although in practice there are high school clubs and unions in many schools, very few of them have a significant role.

Programs aimed at training school staff and pupils to enhance their skills to participate in decision-making structures, are most of the time on project based implemented by CSO's and not official programs of the public authorities.

There is no official information available on measures to encourage student participation in the local community and wider society. Partnerships between formal education providers, youth organizations and youth work providers exists, however it is not standardized or promoted by the public authorities. The initiatives are coming most of the time from the CSO's in order to work with the target group that most of their time is within the educational institutions. No official public information is available on supporting non-formal learning initiatives focusing on social and civic competences.

Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning

In Republic of Macedonia there is no quality assurance or quality guidelines reform or standard for non-formal learning adopted by the government. Currently there is a Working group formed with aim of setting up a national validation system for non-formal and informal learning - a process that will take effect in 2020.^[63]

Educators' support

In Macedonia there is no specific guideline, neither manual for development of social and civic competences of the educators, but there is a Rulebook for Basic Professional Competences of Primary and Secondary Schools ([Прирачник за основните професионални компетенции на наставниците во основните и средните училишта по подрачја](#)). The basic professional competencies, according to the Manual, include: basic

⁶³ http://lifelonglearning.mk/meeting-the-working-group-preparation-legal-framework?fbclid=IwAR0pub58uVPPpM58fbQK4yaDeHrFSsfIVYGPnsKW9rh_YJCEANjOlVBpzkSq (Accessed December 14, 2018)

knowledge, abilities and skills that the teacher possesses in order to be able to perform the profession well.

There is also a Manual for Monitoring the Work and Planning of the Professional Development of Teachers and Professional Associates in Primary and Secondary Schools ([Прирачник за следење на работата и планирање на професионалниот развој на наставниците и стручните соработници во основните и средните училишта](#)). The Manual was prepared with expert and financial support from USAID project for professional and career development of educators, and implemented by [Macedonian Center for Civic Education](#) and [Bureau for Development of Education](#).

The Manual contains guidelines for:

- Monitoring the work of the educational staff
- Identification of individual needs for professional development and planning of personal professional development
- Planning professional development at school level
- Monitoring the effects of professional development

[National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility](#) is organizing different events, like seminars and trainings where target group are educators.

[Bureau for Development of Education](#) is also organizing trainings for educators. Given that a new concept of Civic Education in schools is under preparation, in November 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Bureau for the Development of Education and the Macedonian Center for Civic Education started training for teachers in the field of civic education, with the support of USAID and Pestalozzi Children's Foundation. Through a cycle of four-day trainings, the goal is to include all teachers who teach the subject of civic education from all primary and secondary schools throughout Macedonia.^[64]

5.8 Raising political awareness among young people

Information providers / counselling structures

The only public authorities that is responsible for disseminating information about the democratic rights for young people and every citizen of Republic of Macedonia is the [State Election Commission](#). Everyone can access a different type of information such as the democratic rights for voting on the website of the Commission. Prior every elections and referendums State Election Commission conducts election campaign in order to inform citizens about the elections and their right to vote.

[Ministry of Information Society and Administration](#) launched the website ener.gov.mk (The only national Electronic Registry of Regulations- [Единствен национален електронски регистар на прописи](#)) with the aim of informing citizens and civil society organizations, business entities and ministries for assessing the impact of the regulation, as well as involving the public in improving the draft laws and encouraging the public participation in the preparation of regulations. On the web site, all ministries regularly update and publish draft laws, by-laws in their jurisdiction and other documents.

There is not relevant information about existing of the youth information and counselling structures by the public authorities. However, in Republic of Macedonia the local self-governments already supported two information and counselling youth centers in Prilep and Kavadarci. There are also youth centers in city of Kumanovo and Skopje- [Krik](#) that are managed by CSO's.

⁶⁴ <http://mk.mcgo.org.mk/news/%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%86%D0%B5%D1%81%D0%BE%D1%82-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%83%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BD/> (Accessed December 15, 2018)

Youth-targeted information campaigns about democratic rights and democratic values

The State Election Commission is the only public authority that is having a campaign for the election right by creating a video material on how the election process is implementing and how the citizens of Republic of Macedonia should use their right to vote.^[65] Beside the State Election Commission, also the CSO's are making most of the campaigns for democratic rights and democratic values in Republic of Macedonia.

Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

Starting from July 2015 The Ministry of Culture of Republic of Macedonia created and published 18 video public campaigns about Interethnic and Interreligious Coexistence where the main target were citizens of the Macedonian, Albanian, Roma, Serbian, Bosnian, Turkish and Vlach ethnicity. In the campaign were included celebrities and young people promoting intercultural values in the areas of sport, education, celebration and everyday life which was also the main objective and outcome of the campaign.^[66] No relevant measures or outcomes are available of the impact of the mentioned campaign.

Another project that promotes the intercultural dialogue among young people is "Building Bridges Fund" by the Ministry of Education and Science and the OSCE Mission to Skopje. The project is implemented in 2014 and it's still ongoing. The grants are used to organize activities that bring together students from all communities, who attend schools with different languages of instruction.

Beside governmental activities in this field, civil society organizations are also organizing different trainings, seminars and summer schools with topic of intercultural dialogue among young people.

Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

There are no guidelines on transparent public communication targeting young people.

5.9 E-participation

In Republic of Macedonia there is no policy measure or document focusing on promoting young people's e-participation. There are certain measures adopted in order to facilitate the contact with the state administration in Macedonia, such as [e-Personal tax](#) (electronic filing of annual tax return), but this and similar measures have a general scope and do not apply exclusively to young people.

Young people are often using internet for different reasons. According to the [State Statistical Office](#), in the first quarter of 2018, 93, 8% of people aged 15-24 (young people) were using the Internet every day or almost every day. Most of the young people, i.e. 91, 8% were using mobile phone or smart phone to access the internet and 58, 2% were using laptops.

Young people (14-24) were using internet for following purposes:^[67]

- Participation on social medias: 89,2%
- Listening to music: 82,4%

⁶⁵ <http://www.sec.mk/edukacija/> (Accessed December 16, 2018)

⁶⁶ <http://www.kultura.gov.mk/index.php/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/2109-kampanja-megjuetnicki-i-megjureligiski-sozivot> (Accessed December 16, 2018)

⁶⁷ Usage of information and communication technologies in households and by individuals, 2018, State Statistical Office Republic of Macedonia, (October, 2018), p. 6
<http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2018/8.1.18.29.pdf> (Accessed December 16,2018)

- Telephoning/video calls through internet: 77,1%
- Searching for products information: 68,7%
- Sending or receiving e-mail: 53,1%
- Watching internet streamed TV: 45,3%
- Playing or downloading games: 43,9%
- Searching for health information: 42,1%
- E-Selling through auctions: 7,9%
- E-Banking: 6,8%

The Ministry of Information Society and Administration is implementing its E-Contents, where the ministry alongside with Intel provided educational contents in 2009 that is used for the school subjects and the students can freely access all the published contents on the portal: www.skool.mk. The contents consist of: learning objects which, apart from the interactive presentation, also have text for self-testing; simulations, where students can get new information and knowledge without direct experiments; and learning notes translated in both Macedonian and Albanian language.

5.10 Current debates and reforms

Currently there is a debate on changing the Law on Secondary Education regarding the school organizing and the participation in decision making within the secondary educational institutions first and insert the lessons learned and practices in Primary Education later on. Some CSO's are organizing roundtables where students and professors can discuss about student organizing. The CSO's already prepared draft Law on Secondary Education ([Предлог Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за средно образование](#)) as well a Rulebook on a high school community ([Правилник за ученичко организирање и учество](#)). It's still uncertain whether these documents will be adopted by the parliament.

The initiative on forming Local Youth Councils is still under discussions and it will probably be implemented in the long-awaited Law on Youth.

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The education system of Republic of Macedonia consists of preschool, elementary education (6-14 years), secondary education (15-17/18 years) and higher education.

The Ministry of Education and Science is the main government authority responsible for education and training, mandated with the realization of education. The strategies and programs of the national institutions foresee cross sector cooperation in implementation of various measures and activities.

6.1 General context

Main trends in young people's participation in education and training

Republic of Macedonia is a country with high level of young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training). According to the data from the [World Bank](#) in 2017, 24,86% young people (aged 15-29) from Macedonia were not part of the education system nor employed neither in training. The rate was lowest in 2013- 24,23% and highest in 2006- 41,3%.

According to the [Research on Youth Trends in Macedonia](#) conducted for the needs of the Agency of Youth and Sport, the key findings of the young people's attitude towards education and educational system are:

- Young people in the research agree that the education is the most important thing in life;
- Majority of young people (45%) have positive attitude towards the education. The most positive attitude has young people aged 15 – 19 years, then follows the age group 25 – 29 and the last is age group 20 – 24;
- Majority of the respondents in the research (41%) think that the education system is good but needs solid reforms;
- The high schools' students agree with the statement that what they learn in high school will be very useful further in their life;
- Majority of high school students (39.6%) have extremely positive perception about the secondary education, and almost 32% have positive attitude;
- In the secondary education chapter of the research, the respondents provide highest average grade of 3.3 for the teachers, and lowest average grade for the discipline (measurement scale from 1- 5 where 1 is the lowest). The textbooks and lectures are evaluated with average grade of 3;
- The most often selected reason for entering tertiary education are getting diploma and increase of the intellectual capacity;
- The majority of the students (40%) have extremely positive attitude towards the tertiary education;
- Almost all aspects of the tertiary education are assessed with grade 8 and 7, the grades 9 and 10 are provided for the safety on the faculties and the Bologna system implemented in the Republic of Macedonia. The grades 5 and 6 are provided for the books and freedom of speech of the students (measurement scale from 5 – 10 where 5 is the lowest), and
- The most often reason for termination the education after the secondary school, are the limited finances.

Organisation of the education and training system

With the amendments of the Law on Secondary Education, from 2008, for the first time in Macedonia the secondary education becomes compulsory for every citizen. That

amendment also means an extension of the age the compulsory education ends, from 14 years of age previously, to 18 years of age with the amendment. That provision is relevant for general secondary education, while for vocational education and training (VET) it is 16, 17 or 18 years of age.

The education system of Republic of Macedonia consists of preschool, elementary education (6-14 years), secondary education (15-17/18 years) and higher education.

The main organization of formal education for the youth covers the following stages:

- Secondary education (ISCED 3): general secondary education (Gymnasium) and art education in duration of four years and vocational education (Vocational Schools) in duration of three (vocational education for professions) or four years (vocational technical education).

The Law on Vocational Education and Training envisages vocational training intended for working with lower requirements which provides practical knowledge and skills for different fields of work. Vocational training depending on the complexity of the occupation lasts up to two years^[68]. Vocational training can be completed by students who have finished primary education, as well as those who do not have completed primary education, but with the obligation, along with the vocational training, to complete the primary education.

The secondary education is compulsory and comprises all children in the age cohort 15 to 18 years for the general secondary education, and for the age cohort 15 to 16, 17 or 18 in the VET depending on the selected track. The tasks and activities of the secondary education are defined and regulated with the Law on Secondary Education and the Law for Vocational Education and Training. The secondary education is free of charge in the public secondary schools. There are three teaching languages, Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish. The pupils also have the legal option to enroll into the private secondary schools which are officially recognized by the Macedonian educational system;

- Higher education (ISCED 5, 6 and 7): implements under-graduate, master and doctoral studies in the higher educational institutions and institutes which are autonomous and independent. The activities are defined and regulated by the Law on the Higher Education that includes provisions on harmonizing the state's higher education with the Bologna process and European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), as well as insuring legal basis for expending teaching personnel and student's mobility. In accordance to the national policy for provision of equal access to the higher education, social cohesion and lifelong learning, the state introduced the Project 35/45, which promotes enrollment of the students from the age cohort 35 to 45 years;
- Adult education is part of the education system of Republic of Macedonia that enables education, specialization, qualification and learning of adults. A student of adult education can be any person that participates in the educational adult programs and has previously fulfilled the conditions regarding prior compulsory education and other persons that bind without a student status. The adult education encompasses formal, non-formal and informal education. The activities of the adult education are regulated with the Law on Adult Education and Law for Vocational Education.

Main concepts

Main concepts regarding education are described in appropriate chapters.

⁶⁸ The Law on Vocational Education and Training ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 71/2006, 117/2008, 148/2009, 17/2011, 24/2013, 137/2013, 41 / 2014 and 145/2015)), Art.18

6.2 Administration and governance

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Process of decentralization in Republic of Macedonia is still ongoing and it remains one of the main priorities of Macedonian government. The governance in the education sector is divided among the Parliament and the Government through the Ministry of Education and Science and the Local Self Government through the municipalities.

The management of the primary and secondary schools is under responsibility of the municipalities, except for the secondary schools in the capital Skopje which are under responsibility of City of Skopje. There is also one more exception when the Government is establishing primary school for the realization of a curriculum and basic education programs for certain students for whom the state has a special interest (schools for students with special educational needs)^[69].

The State provides financial resources for the education in the municipalities in a form of Block Grants. According to Art. 163 of the [Law on Primary Education](#), i.e. Art. 101-a of the [Law on Secondary Education](#), the Municipality can supplement the received block grant, i.e. a dedicated grant for education with own resources, except for the salaries of the employees in the schools

The most common mechanisms for cross sector cooperation in the education are Working groups for development, implementation and evaluation of the strategies and programs. Also, the Ministries, Departments and Agencies cooperate on joint projects by establishing mixed project teams.

Governance

Main public actors and their responsibilities

Ministry of Education and Science – The Ministry of Education and Science is the main government authority responsible for education and training, mandated with the realization of education. It is responsible for structuring and financing of education, founding of public institutions, preparation of the legislation governing education and science, implementation of laws, bylaws and other regulations, adoption of syllabi and curricula, approval of textbooks, development of science and research, enrolment policies, and control over the work of education institutions and quality of education. Ministry of Education and Science also performs the activities related to verification of professions and profiles in education, student standards; technological development, informatics and technical culture; the information system; international scientific and technical cooperation; the supervision of his competence and perform other activities determined by law.

Municipalities – With the adoption of the [Law on Local Self-Government](#) ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 5/2002) the municipalities gained authority for founding pre-school institutions, primary and secondary schools, their funding and administration (in collaboration with the central authorities) and also for the organization of transportation, nutrition and accommodation of students in student dormitories.

Bureau for Education Development – [The Bureau](#) is integral part of the Ministry of Education and Science as a legal entity and conducts expert work of importance for the development and promotion of education in the Republic of Macedonia.

⁶⁹ Law on Primary Education ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 67/2017). Art. 16 http://www.mon.gov.mk/images/%D0%97%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD_%D0%B7%D0%B0_%D0%BE%D1%81%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BE_%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B507.pdf (Accessed November, 19, 2018)

The Bureau is responsible for monitoring, research, promotion and development of education in the area of pre-school, primary, secondary education, art education, general education subjects in vocational education, specialized education and education of adults, education of children with special education needs, education activities in the dormitories and education of children of the citizens of Republic of Macedonia living abroad learning their mother tongue and culture.

Adult Education Center - [Adult Education Center](#) is a public institution for adult education in the Republic of Macedonia, as a separate legal entity established by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. Main task of the Center is harmonization and integration of public interests and the interests of social partners in adult education in Macedonia. It also coordinates the cooperation with international institutions and organizations in the field of adult education. In addition, the role of the center is to provide a quality education system for adults in accordance with European standards and practices through the establishment of standards and criteria that will provide formal and informal adult education and creating high quality and competitive workforce in the labor market with support of social partnership.

Centre for Vocational Education and Training (VET Center) – The [VET Center](#) is established as a public institution that should harmonize and integrate public interests and the interests of the social partners in the vocational education and training and to coordinate the cooperation with the international institutions and organizations in the area of vocational education and training. The VET Center conducts expert work in the area of monitoring, evaluation, examination, promotion, exploration and development of the vocal education and training.

National Examinations Centre – The [National Examinations Centre](#) is an independent institution with the following responsibilities: to support the process of external examination of the achievements of students and teachers in primary and secondary education; to prepare a national program for external evaluation of primary and secondary education in accordance with the European standards; to collect, process and analyze the results of the testing for verifying the achievements of students in primary and secondary education; to prepare rank-order of teachers from primary and secondary schools in accordance with the results of the external examination, self-evaluation and integral evaluation; to prepare rank-order of professional associates from primary and secondary schools in accordance with the results from the professional records, to develop and sustain the information system for evaluating the achievements of students in primary and secondary education; to participate in the preparations of the concept for graduation and final exams in secondary education; to prepare texts for external examination; to conduct training for the members of state subject graduation commissions and school commissions for external evaluation of the achievements of students in primary and secondary education; to secure protection of secrecy of preparation, printing, distribution and storing of the examination materials; to conduct training for the candidates for principals of primary and secondary schools and to conduct the exam and issue certificates for the candidates with passed exam.

National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility - [The National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility](#) is a public institution with an aim to promote and implement the European educational programs in Republic of Macedonia.

By implementing the programs, the agency contributes to development of knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and bigger social cohesion, at the same time providing environmental protection and especially exchange, collaboration and mobility into the areas of education and training.

Program beneficiaries are: learners, students, teachers, professors, educators and other personnel engaged in any stage of educational process, enterprises and other legal bodies including commercial entities, chambers of commerce and other associations of legal bodies in the field of industry, research centers and bodies, as well as citizen associations and foundations.

State Education Inspectorate - [The State Education Inspectorate](#) is a legal entity, with its own budget account as a first-line budget user, independently implements recruitment procedures in accordance with the law and decides on the rights and obligations arising from employment.

The carrying out of educational inspection shall include monitoring the quality of the educational process and the effectiveness through evaluation of the work of the educational institutions in primary and secondary education and supervision over the application of laws, other regulations and general acts in the field of education and upbringing.

Educational inspection is carried out in: primary schools, secondary schools, kindergartens, adult education institutions, educational institutions and training of students with special educational needs. In higher education and scientific institutions, inspection supervision is carried out over the application of the laws regulating higher education and scientific activity.

Administration for Development and Promotion of Education in Languages of Members of Communities – The Administration operates as part of the Ministry for Education and Science. There are two departments in the Administration:

- Department for Albanian, Serbian, Roma, Vlach and Bosnian language and
- Department for peace and children's rights of all communities

Non-public actors

Independent Syndicate for Education, Science and Culture – [The syndicate](#) is an autonomous, democratic, independent organization of workers where they participate on voluntarily basis for advocating, implementing, protection and promotion of their economic, social, legal, professional, educational, cultural and other individual and collective interests. According to Art. 7 of the [Statute of the Independent Syndicate for Education, Science and Culture of the Republic of Macedonia](#), the aim of which this union exists is: raising the socio-economic status of the members; protection of their working rights; social dialogue in accordance with international standards; collective negotiating and contracting branch and employer collective contracts; participation in creating the educational, scientific and cultural policy in the process of promulgation of laws; continued improvement of work conditions; higher rights for social, health, pension and invalid insurance, higher rights of daily, weekly and annual leave; more efficient preventive health protection; realization of international syndical cooperation.

CSO sector – There is quite a big number of CSO's in Macedonia that are specialized in youth and education, either as an exclusive area of their expertise or as one of the areas that they cover with their activities. The youth CSO sector includes: youth organizations, organizations of different fields with youth target group, youth lead organizations, student associations and student unions and cultural and artistic youth associations.

6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

National strategy

Republic of Macedonia has no comprehensive Strategy for preventing early leaving from education and training. Separate policies and measures about ELET can be found in many different strategic documents.

Formal education: main policy measures on ELET

[Strategy for Vocational Education and Training in a Lifelong Learning Context 2013-2020 and Action Plan](#), in the Chapter 4.1. VET in the function of strengthening social cohesion

and social inclusion, recognizes that decreasing the number of early school leavers is an important measure for enhancing the skills of the population, increasing the employment rate and promoting social inclusion. It is noted that there has been a decrease in early leaving, but the decrease is not due to some specific measures or strategy undertaken to tackle early leaving but as an added value of the changes in the education system, the extension of the duration of compulsory primary and introduction to compulsory secondary education.

The Strategy foresees the following goals and measures to be implemented to prevent ELET:

A1: Strengthening the monitoring of secondary VET early leavers

- By 2015 introduce a system for monitoring VET students;
- By 2015 establishing school-based mechanisms and practices for detection of students under risk of leaving school early.

A3: Preventing early leaving

- By 2015 link social welfare to the obligation for regular attendance and completion of compulsory education;
- By 2014 strengthen scholarships to students from socially vulnerable groups;
- By 2015 introduce educational mediators as additional assistance in primary education to ensure Roma students stay at school and graduate and transition into secondary education;
- By 2015 introduce educational mediators as additional assistance in secondary VET to ensure Roma students stay at school and graduate and transition into higher education or the labor market.

In the [Strategy for the Roma in Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020](#), under the strategic orientation – Increasing the level of education of the Roma community, there are a number of planned activities and projects to be undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Science that directly impact the early leaving from education of Roma students.

Secondary education:

Reduced criteria for enrolment of Roma students in public high schools

In the Open call for enrolment in public high schools, students of the Roma ethnic community may enrol in certain public high school if they have up to 10% less points than the number of points provided in the Open call in accordance with the relevant curricula and if they meet additional criteria for the knowledge exam and skills in the appropriate school.

Project for scholarships, mentoring and tutoring of Roma students

The Administration for Development and Promotion of Education in Languages of Members of Communities, for five years continuously is carrying out the project for scholarships, mentoring and tutoring of Roma students. The project takes place in three stages: i.e. scholarships, mentoring and tutoring.

Free books, transportation and accommodation in dormitories

The Government through the Ministry of Education and Science for several years is implementing the project for free books which is also followed with free transportation and accommodation in dormitories.

University education:

Quotas for enrolment of Roma students in the institutions of university education

This practice functions for years as an affirmative measure for easier access of the Roma students in the institutions of university education.

The [National strategy on alleviation of poverty and social exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia 2010-2020](#) covers a section of education that encompasses a number of goals

and measures regarding ELET. Although its' definition does not mention ELET specifically, the following measures impact ELET:

General measures:

- Extend and restructure the network of secondary schools in a way to make it adjusted to the needs at local level, which will offer the students a better possibility for selecting secondary school which will be closer to their place of living;
- Provide mechanism to monitor the number of children who entered secondary school after finishing elementary school;
- Provide compatible curricula and programs from among the various types of secondary school in order to provide for the horizontal mobility of the students.

Special measures for children from vulnerable categories:

- Award cash benefits to socially endangered families under the condition that they meet certain criteria related to their children's education (conditional cash transfer);
- Provide additional financial and staff benefits for secondary school with a large number of Roma children;
- Introduce compulsory additional instructions during the whole school year for all students who have problems learning the instruction material;
- Involve the civil society organizations in the coordination of their activities for raising the need of the Roma, Albanian and Turkish parents to educate their children.

The Strategy also states that there is a need of larger scope and reduced rate of early school leave by girls, particularly in rural areas and certain ethnic communities.

In order to help students with financial obstacles, the Strategy provide financial support (scholarships, free-of-charge accommodation in student's dormitories etc.) for graduated secondary school students from socially endangered families who have achieved high results and want to continue to university.

Other document which is covering ELET is [Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020](#) of the MLSP. One of the objectives in the programme is Reducing the drop-outs of pupils and the number of early school-leavers, by improving the coverage, learning conditions, continuity and completion of the education.

In order to achieve this goal, the programme envisages the following measures^[70]:

- • Implementing measures for stimulating inclusion of children from marginalized groups, mainly within primary and secondary education;
- • Continuation and provision of free-of-charge textbooks for primary and secondary school pupils;
- • Providing free-of-charge accommodation in dormitories for students coming from cities where there are no secondary schools (gymnasiums and vocational schools);
- • Intensified monitoring and registration of students who have not regularly attended classes in the school and take timely appropriate (preventive) measures;
- • Intensified and improved work with pupils' parents;
- • Improving integration and interaction among students attending classes in different language;
- • Implementation of specific measures for stimulating and supporting education of Roma-pupils²³ (awarding scholarships, providing mentors and tutors for Roma pupils, measures for involvement

The [Law on Primary Education](#) does not contain specific provisions regarding early school leaving, but it stipulates that primary education is mandatory. Thus, the Article 5 of the Law on Primary Education stipulates an obligation for the parent or guardian of his child

⁷⁰ Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2017), p. 87
[http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/word/esrp_dokumenti/ESRP%20Macedonia%20-%20final%20\(ENG\).pdf](http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/word/esrp_dokumenti/ESRP%20Macedonia%20-%20final%20(ENG).pdf) (Accessed November 20, 2018)

to enable him to fulfill the obligation for compulsory primary education and upbringing. For a parent who will not allow the child to fulfill this obligation, a fine of 300 to 400 euros is envisaged in accordance with Article 172 paragraph 7 of the Law.

Secondary education is also obligatory for every citizen, under equal conditions determined by law. According to the Law on Secondary Education, Article 109, a fine in the amount of 600 to 800 euros shall be imposed on the parent (or guardian) of the juvenile student if the student is not enrolled in a secondary school or irregularly attends the school.

According to the State Statistical Office, in 2017 in Macedonia 8.5% of youth (18-24 years old) were registered as early school leavers.^[71]

There is significant improvement regarding previous years, and according to MLSP this situation is primarily a result of the introduction of compulsory secondary education^[72].

The [Law on adult education](#) is another principle document that addresses ELET in the way that allows students who have already left education to finish it as adults. In article 4 of the Law, the goals and tasks of adult education are explained as follows:

The aim of adult education is to insure a possibility for acquiring an adequate education level for everyone and all age groups and to enable them to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes in accordance with the requirements of the society and labor market.

Tasks of adult education:

- Finishing at least mandatory education;
- Qualification for employment of adults who did not finished first level of education;
- Prequalification and finishing qualification and training of employed and unemployed individuals;
- Enabling education and acquiring knowledge and skills that fit the personal abilities and age of the individuals, and

Acquiring basic skills and competencies as basics for lifelong learning.

Addressing ELET through non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Prevention of early school leaving is not often a topic of non-formal education. In 2017, within the project Inclusion of Children Outside the Schools in the Education System, (supported by the Children's Foundation Pestaloci, implemented by the Ministry of Education and Macedonian Center for Civic Education) a report has been prepared that says the problem of early school leaving is most pronounced among the Roma population^[73]. Report also states that the researchers on the field identified 481 early school leaver, most of them (59%) were 14-19 years' old, and most of the students left

⁷¹ <https://www.stat.ee/57300> (Accessed December 28, 2018)

⁷² Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2017), p. 47
[http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/word/esrp_dokumenti/ESRP%20Macedonia%20-%20final%20\(ENG\).pdf](http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/word/esrp_dokumenti/ESRP%20Macedonia%20-%20final%20(ENG).pdf) Accessed November 20, 2018)

⁷³ Inclusion of Children Outside the Schools in the Education System, Research report, Macedonian Center for Civic Education (Skopje, 2017), p. 5 <http://mk.mcgo.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/%D0%98%D0%BD%D0%BA%D0%BB%D1%83%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%B5%D1%86%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D1%88%D1%82%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%80-%D0%BE%D0%B4-%D1%83%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%B2%D0%BE-%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%BE%D1%82-%D1%81%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BC.pdf> (Accessed November 20, 2018)

school during the first 4 years of elementary school. According to the findings, less than 60% of Roma complete primary educations, while about 25% of Roma students do not continue their education after the fourth grade. [The report](#) also concludes that, according to the school's opinion, the extended stay for students at risk of early school leaving would be part of the solution to the problem, but this requires the consent of the Ministry of Education as well as the provision of additional funds.

From time to time, trainings and workshops are held (usually from the Erasmus + program) where target groups are teachers and professors from elementary and high schools in Macedonia. Such training usually serves teachers to exchange experiences and good practices concerning the prevention of early school leaving. Information for such trainings is usually published on web page on the [National Agency for European Education Programmes](#) and Mobility or is shared internally in the schools.

Cross-sector coordination and monitoring of ELET interventions

The strategies and programs of the national institutions foresee cross sector cooperation in implementation of various measures and activities.

Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020, the state is undertaking a series of measures and activities for further improvement of these conditions and for the prevention or reduction of student dropout rates and further improvement of the situation in relation to early school leavers. Among other things, the cooperation with the parents has also been strengthened in order to gain and strengthen the trust between parents and school employees, so that parents and the community can be involved in school life, but also the school to be involved in community life. In addition, a number of financial incentives have been provided for parents from vulnerable groups through conditional cash transfers for socially disadvantaged families whose children regularly attend classes, scholarships, free-of-charge textbooks, transport, and accommodation and so on. All these measures and activities are giving the expected results and will continue to be implemented in the coming years.^[74]

According to Action Plan of the Strategy for Vocational Education and Training in a Lifelong Learning Context 2013-2020, one of the goals is to strengthen monitoring of secondary VET early leavers. The foreseen measure is establishment of school-based mechanisms and practices for detection of students under risk of early school leaving. The Action Plan envisages undertaking the following activities for achieving the stated objective: Develop manual; Train school support services; Train VET teachers. Responsible institutions are: VET Center, BDE, VET schools. Above mentioned activities, according to the Action Plan, were meant to be taken in the period 2013-2014. Unfortunately, until this day (November 2018) nothing is undertaken.

6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

The Republic of Macedonia, as a candidate country for EU membership, has made continuous and significant progress in the harmonization of its education system with the educational policies and standards of the European Union.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is indicated in the [Education Strategy 2018-2025](#) as one of the challenges, i.e. one of the measures of the Strategy is: Support

⁷⁴ Employment and Social Reform Programme 2020, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2017), p. 47
[http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/word/esrp_dokumenti/ESRP%20Macedonia%20-%20final%20\(ENG\).pdf](http://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/word/esrp_dokumenti/ESRP%20Macedonia%20-%20final%20(ENG).pdf) (Accessed November 20, 2018)

in the process of establishment and operationalization of the system of validation results of non-formal and informal learning. The Strategy also stressed out that the system of validation of non-formal and informal learning in Macedonia is in its embryonic phase, and establishment of a system for Macedonian Qualification Framework (MQF) management and inclusion of stakeholders is yet another open issue. A comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges was adopted with the development of the [Roadmap for Further Development and Implementation of the MQF](#) (2016).

The document produced by the Ministry of Education and Science and Adult Education Centre – *Roadmap for implementing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, from 2016, states the following: It is increasingly widely recognized in the country that the validation of learning outcomes - knowledge, skills and competences - acquired through non-formal and informal learning can play an important role in enhancing employability and mobility, as well as increasing motivation for lifelong learning*^[75].

In order to implement the measure "Establishing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning" from the Education Strategy 2018-2025, on 13.11.2018, the first meeting of the Working Group for Amending and Supplementing the Laws and Bylaws was held with the aim of setting up a national validation system for non-formal and informal learning - a process that will take effect in 2020. This group was established by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia, and consists of representatives of state institutions, public institutions, providers of programs for adult education and civil society organizations. This body will work intensively on establishing the legal regulation for validation of non-formal and informal learning and harmonization with the existing legislation. The functioning, coordination and operation of this body is supported by the Center for Lifelong Learning - Skopje, within the framework of the project implemented by this organization in the Republic of Macedonia in partnership with the PI Adult Education Center, supported by DVV International from Bonn, with the financial assistance of the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany^[76].

Overview of the legal and strategic documents containing references to VNFIL

The introduction of VNFIL in Macedonia is directly related to the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in the country, which is expected to bring benefits to citizens and support life-long learning. The introduction of the NQF as an inclusive framework that integrates all types of qualifications, certification of non-formal and informal learning outcomes, is a potential catalyst for the development of the VNFIL.

Republic of Macedonia has adopted a Roadmap for Implementing a System for VNFIL on the Republic of Macedonia, in 2016, following the adoption of a Concept Paper for Non-Formal Adult Education and Informal Learning in 2015. A Guidance Note on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) processes and Specifications for the Methodology package were developed in 2017, which are also considering the different EU institutional frameworks, VNFIL procedures and instruments. Further on, a training session for potential VNFIL assessors was carried out in December 2017, based on a defined handbook for assessment.^[77]

⁷⁵ Roadmap for implementing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Education and Science and Adult Education Center (2016), p.7 http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/VNFIL-Roadmap_angl-1.pdf (Accessed November 20, 2018)

⁷⁶ http://lifelonglearning.mk/meeting-the-working-group-preparation-legal-framework?fbclid=IwAR0pub58uVPpM58fbQK4yaDeHrFSsfiVYGPnsKW9rh_YJCEANjoiVBpzKsQ (Accessed November 20, 2018)

⁷⁷ <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/news-and-events/events/designing-legal-framework-validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

[Validation of the non-formal education for adult and informal learning in the European Union and Recommendations for Macedonia](#)

This document was adopted in 2016 by the Lifelong Learning Center of the Adult Education Center, with the simultaneous support of the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Association for Adult Education. The aim of this analysis is to contribute to the process of development of the validation of non-formal adult education and informal learning by analyzing the most common models and practices for validation of non-formal adult education and informal learning in Europe with an emphasis on their institutional frameworks, a) Quality assurance practices, and b) Validation procedures.^[78]

[Roadmap for implementing a System for VNFIL](#)

The Roadmap concludes that at the national level, it is increasingly recognized that the validation of learning outcomes - knowledge, skills and competencies - acquired through informal and informal learning can play an important role in improving employability and mobility, as well as in increasing motivation for lifelong learning.^[79]

[Concept Paper for non-formal Adult Education and Informal Learning](#)

The concept for informal education for adults and for informal learning in the Republic of Macedonia was prepared on the initiative of the Center for Adult Education, supported by the European Training Foundation. Its ultimate goal is the integration of non-formal education into the education and training system and the provision of educational results certified within the National Qualifications Framework. This Concept Paper provides guidance for taking further steps within the informal adult education, as well as a vision for its further development.

[Law on Adult Education](#)

A specific Law on Adult Education was enacted in 2008 with the aim of providing for the first time a more comprehensive legal framework to support lifelong learning. The law is prescribing that there are 3 types of adult education: formal, non-formal and informal. Non-formal education is defined under the Article 3 of the same Law, and it means organized learning processes designed to enable adults to work, for various social activities or personal development. In the same Article, the law also defines informal adult learning as an activity in which adults adopt attitudes and positive values, skills and knowledge of everyday experiences and other influences from their surroundings.

Article 23 of the Law states that adults can demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities they have acquired, regardless of the way this acquisition is done, by passing exams. The exams are organized and delivered by the adult education provider which delivers the program for gaining knowledge, skills and abilities, except the State Matura exam, School Matura exam and the Final exam in the secondary education.

[Law on National Qualifications Framework \(NQF\) \(2013\)](#)

Article 3 of the Law on NQF states that one of the principles of the NQF is building a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning. Among the goals of the NQF, the Law stipulates: "To indicate the transfer and progression (horizontally and vertically) through and within all types of education and training (formal, non-formal and informal)".

[Adult Education Strategy \(2016-2020\)](#)

The Strategy emphasizes that the validation of prior learning acquired through non-formal and informal learning is necessary from the aspect of the contemporary trends in

⁷⁸ Validation of the non-formal education for adult and informal learning in the European Union and Recommendations for Macedonia, Adult Education Center (2016), p. 8
<http://cov.gov.mk/mk/2485-2/> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

⁷⁹ Roadmap for implementing a System for VNFIL, Adult Education Center (2016), p. 8
<http://cov.gov.mk/mk/2485-2/> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

the field of education and from the aspect of the need for validation of all activities that young people and adults take in order to acquire education, especially in the informal and informal sectors.

[Strategy for Development of Vocational Education and Training in a Lifelong Learning Context 2013-2020 \(2013\)](#)

The VET strategy is structured in 4 key priorities, in which development of VNFIL finds a visible place.

- Under the first priority (VET in the function of strengthening social cohesion and social inclusion): objective A7 focuses on “Establishing a system for VNFIL”. Key milestones: by 2015 (feasibility and options of a VNFIL system); by 2018 (key mechanisms and procedures in place) and by 2020 (generalization of implementation).
- Under the second priority (Attractive VET), the Strategy emphasizes the importance of VNFIL, in particular in objective B2: “Building diversified and flexible pathways for learning and professional guidance”.

Information and guidance

On February 2017, [A Guidance Note on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning Processes and Specification](#) was developed and adopted by Adult Education Center and [ETF Working Together Learning for Life](#).

According to the Guide, VNFIL processes and procedures are taking place in four stages:^[80]

- Identification of the individual’s competences (i.e. learning outcomes) acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
- Documentation of the individual’s learning outcomes from non-formal and informal learning together with supporting evidence;
- Assessment of the individual’s learning outcomes through an evaluation of the evidence presented, and
- Certification confirming the individual’s achievement of the learning outcomes in question.

In the Guidance is also stresses out that different information systems are needed in order to successfully and fully implement VNFIL, and the Adult Education Center will be responsible for collecting data for participation in the VNFIL with procedures that will be approved by the MoES. These data will need to include:

- Quantitative statistics on the number of people who entered the process, the progress through each phase, and the completion of the VNFIL process.
- Qualitative data on participation in the VNFIL in order to assess how effective the VNFIL process is, what is the access to the VNFIL services for candidates, the level of support they receive, the ease of progress through the phases, the costs, the satisfaction of the services received, etc.

Quality assurance

As above mentioned, in 2018, a Coordination Body and a Working Group have been established for further implementation of validation arrangements. However, the legal provisions for VNFIL are not in place yet.

Still, A Guidance Note on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) processes and Specifications prescribe that external monitoring of accredited institutions

⁸⁰ A Guidance Note on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) processes and Specifications, Adult Education Center and ETF Working Together Learning for Life. (February 2017), p. 7 <http://cov.gov.mk/mk/2485-2/> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

for VNFIL will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Science. Responsibilities can be shared with agencies that carry out specific activities, such as the State Examination Center or the State Education Inspectorate.

This will ensure that the accredited institutions for the VNFIL will provide reports that are necessary to monitor their continuous adherence to the accreditation criteria. It is expected that the accredited institutions report at least once a year on self-assessment of their activities in the field of the VNFIL. The reports will be reviewed and evaluated by the Adult Education Center in their support to the Ministry of Education and Science. If certain issues arise regarding the evaluation of the reports, they would be appropriately investigated^[81].

Also, on-site monitoring and on-site visits are planned, in order to ensure that the institutions that implement the VNI fulfill their obligations. Other quality assurance institutions, such as the State Education Inspectorate, may also be involved in monitoring and on-site visits.

In a Roadmap for the Implementation of the Informal and Informal Learning System, developed by Adult Education Center, it is stated that because the integrity of the VNFIL system will depend on strictly quality assessment, the institutions that perform the assessment and certification should have clearly defined responsibilities for implementing appropriate internal rules for quality assurance, in order to ensure that the VNFIL assessments are based on an accurate understanding of the standards and appropriate conditions for evidence, and to ensure consistency in assessment decisions.^[82]

6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

Policy framework

Single public institution responsible for cross-border learning mobility in Republic of Macedonia is the *National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility*, established by Law adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia in 2007.

The aim of the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility is to promote and implement the European educational programs into the Republic of Macedonia.

Program beneficiaries are: learners, students, teachers, professors, educators and other personnel engaged in any stage of educational process, enterprises and other legal bodies including commercial entities, chambers of commerce and other associations of legal bodies in the field of industry, research centers and bodies, as well as citizen associations and foundations.^[83]

[The Law for establishing the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility](#) was brought in 2007 and has undergone several amendments, of which the latest in February 2018. The Law states the importance of the programs in the way of contributing to developing a community based on knowledge, creating better jobs and improving social cohesion, promotes lifelong learning, improves creativity, competency and the rise of an enterprising spirit, promotes language diversity, contributes in acquiring new skills, qualifications and knowledge in young people through informal learning etc.

⁸¹ A Guidance Note on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) processes and Specifications, Adult Education Center and ETF Working Together Learning for Life. (February 2017), p. 15 <http://cov.gov.mk/mk/2485-2/> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

⁸² Roadmap for the Implementation of the Informal and Informal Learning System, Adult Education Center (2016), p. 30 <http://cov.gov.mk/mk/2485-2/> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

⁸³ <http://www.na.org.mk/index.php/en/en-national-agency.html> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

The Law^[84] also describes *Program for Lifelong learning 2007-2013* consists of subcomponents Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grunting, Jean Monnet and the Transversal subprogram.

The Lifelong Learning program is expired and within the project "Strengthening lifelong learning through the modernization of the vocational education and training system and adult education" the first National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2018-2022 was prepared. The main beneficiary of this project, which is implemented by the British Council and its partners from the consortium, is the Ministry of Education and Science. Currently (November 2018) the National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2018-2022 is in a phase of adoption and it's expected to be adopted soon.

Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education

Since 2014 Macedonia is Erasmus+ programme country. Erasmus+ program encompasses European educational programs in Macedonia, implemented by the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility. Under the key action 1, Erasmus+ Program supports mobility of individuals:

- *Mobility of learners and staff*: opportunities for students, trainees, young people and volunteers, as well as for professors, teachers, trainers, youth workers, staff of education institutions and civil society organizations to undertake a learning and/or professional experience in another country;
- *Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees*: high-level integrated international study programs delivered by consortia of higher education institutions that award full degree scholarships to the best master students worldwide;

Mobility projects in the field of education, training and youth

The following types of mobility projects are supported under Key Action 1 of the Erasmus+ Program:

In the field of Education and Training:

Mobility project for higher education students and staff:

Student mobility:

- A study period abroad at a partner higher education institution (HEI);
- A traineeship (work placement) abroad in an enterprise or any other relevant workplace;
- Duration of project:
 - mobility between Program Countries: 16 or 24 months;
 - mobility between Program and Partner Countries: 16 or 26 months.
- Eligible participants:
 - students registered in a HEI and enrolled in studies leading to a recognized degree or another recognized tertiary level qualification (up to and including the level of doctorate). In case of mobility for studies, the student must be enrolled at least in the second year of higher education studies. For traineeships, this condition does not apply.
 - Recent higher education graduates may participate in a traineeship. Recent graduates must be selected by their HEI during their last year of study, and must carry out and complete their traineeship abroad within one year of obtaining their graduation.

⁸⁴ Law on Establishing the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 113/2007, 24/2011, 24/2013, 41/2014 and 145/2015), Art. 5 <http://www.mon.gov.mk/images/documents/zakoni/zakon-za-osnovanje-nacionalna-2015.pdf> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

*Mobility project for VET learners and staff:**Learners' mobility:*

- A VET traineeship abroad for up to 12 months;
- Duration of project: 1 to 2 years. The applicant must choose the duration at application stage, based on the objective of the project and on the type of activities planned
- Eligible participants:
 - Apprentices or VET students (whose studies typically include work-based learning) resident in the country of the sending organization. Persons accompanying VET learners abroad, and
 - Recent graduates of a VET school or company (i.e. former apprentices) may also participate in the activity. Recent graduates must undertake their training placement abroad within one year of their graduation.

Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees (EMJMD)

The Erasmus Mundus program is intended for students at master level, offering them full degree scholarships for their participation in one of this EMJMD programs. It is a high level integrated international study program of 60, 90 or 120 ECTS credits. The student scholarship is awarded exclusively for a full-time enrolment in one of the Master courses and will cover the entire duration of the EMJMD study program. Eligible participants are students at Master level who have obtained a first higher education degree or demonstrate a recognized equivalent level of learning according to national legislation and practices in the degree awarding countries. The EMJMD student scholarships will include student participation costs (including the tuition fees, full insurance coverage and any other mandatory costs related to student participation in the course), a contribution to student travel and installation cost and a subsistence allowance for the entire duration of the EMJMD study program.

On 27 June EU ambassadors confirmed an agreement between the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council and European Parliament representatives on a legal framework for the European Solidarity Corps (ESC) and a related budget for the period 2018-2020.^[85]

Beside Erasmus+ Programme there are other programmes offering learning opportunities for Macedonian students abroad.

Government of Republic of Macedonia lunched web page www.stiendii.gov.org.mk where interested young people can find information about scholarship opportunities for studying abroad.

[CEEPUS- Central European Exchange Program for University Studies](#)

Republic of Macedonia is a signatory of the Agreement for promotion and cooperation in higher education through CEEPUSIII. The Program enables high education institutions to participate as partners in 36 networks of different fields. In the frames of these networks, students from first, second and third degree, as well as professors, have the possibility to apply for scholarships for study stay abroad.

[Fulbright educational exchange program](#)

Fulbright educational exchange program is a joint program of the U.S. Department of State and the Government of Macedonia. Grants are awarded for a period of one or two semesters (5 or 9 months) for post-doctoral applicants and include limited accident and sickness insurance and maintenance grants provided by the Department of State.

⁸⁵ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/06/27/european-solidarity-corps-from-pilot-project-to-reality/> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

Promoting mobility in the context of non-formal learning, and of youth work

The Erasmus+ program entails a component in the field of youth, specifically designed for young people and youth workers.

Mobility project for young people and youth workers:

Two types of projects can be supported under this Action:

- Mobility projects for young people and youth workers that can include Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service and/or Youth Workers activities, and
- Mobility projects for young people focusing on European Voluntary Service activities for experienced EVS Coordinating Organizations.

Mobility of young people:

- Youth Exchanges:

Youth Exchanges allow groups of young people from at least two different countries to meet and live together for up to 21 days. During a Youth Exchange, participants, supported by group leaders, jointly carry out a work program designed and prepared by them before the Exchange. The learning process in Youth Exchanges is triggered by methods of non-formal education.

- European Voluntary Service:

This activity allows young people aged 17-30 to express their personal commitment through unpaid and full-time voluntary service for up to 12 months in another country within or outside the European Union. Young people with fewer opportunities can receive additional support to enable their participation and would also be allowed to go on EVS for a shorter duration of time (from 2 weeks and up).

CSO's are usually the main actors when it's coming to non-formal education and giving mobility opportunities (short or long-EVS) for young people to go abroad for trainings, seminars and conferences, but formal educational institutions are also recognizing the importance of non-formal education and beside Erasmus Mundus programmes they are also offering different non-formal educational opportunities for students (such as summer schools) although in a smaller range than CSO's. information about mobility opportunities can be found on their web pages.

Quality assurance

The National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility has an ISO certificate^[86] and Quality Assurance Policy issued in 2017. The certificate states that the Agency strives to ensure high and consistent quality in promoting and implementing European programs in the areas of education, training, youth and sport in Republic of Macedonia.

⁸⁶ <http://www.na.org.mk/index.php/mk/politika-za-kvalitet.html> (Accessed on November 22, 2018)

6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

Educational support

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia as the highest legal act in the state, in Art.44^[87] stipulates that Everyone has the right to education. Education is available for everyone, on equal terms.

The state is striving to provide education for everyone equally, regardless of sex, race, color of skin, national and social background, political and religious belief, property and social status.

The legislation in the Republic of Macedonia sets good ground for improving the social inclusion through education. Numerous processes have been started which are supposed to build strategies and establish mechanism for using the educational system in this direction.

[The National Strategy on Alleviation of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia 2010-2020](#) is a document which reflects the intention of the country for balancing the degree of inclusion and welfare in all social levels.

One of the 14 areas included in the Strategy is education. In that manner, the Strategy stressed following strategic goal: Provide overall scope of pupils in elementary education, provide overall scope of students in secondary education, raise literacy level of the population, raise educational level of the population to enable education for vulnerable groups and the education system to adapt to the needs of the labor market, to strengthen the market potentials for engaging working-age population at all levels.^[88]

The following results should be achieved in order to accomplish this objective:

(1.1) All pupils and students of the appropriate age should be enrolled in primary school and they should complete their primary education.

(1.2) The curriculums and the textbooks should be adapted to the needs of the children with special education needs.

(1.3) The work of the teachers with disabled children should be improved.

(1.4) Improve the access to education for all children.

(2) All students should enrol in secondary schools immediately after the completion of primary education and they should complete their secondary education.

(3) The percentage share of the illiterate population has been reduced and the real literacy has increased as a result of student training in reading and writing and comprehension.

(4) The percentage share of secondary school graduates that enrol in higher education institutions and acquire higher education diplomas has increased.

(5) Conditions have been provided to link secondary education and the education of adults with the labor market.

(6) The rights of all ethnic communities have been provided in accordance with the Ohrid Framework Agreement in an integrative education system, in order to support the development of a coherent society.

⁸⁷ Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia („Official gazette of Republic of Macedonia “Nb. 49/11), Art.44, <http://ustavensud.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Ustav-na-RM.pdf> (Accessed November 22, 2018)

⁸⁸ National Strategy on Alleviation of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia 2010-2020, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, revised, (Skopje, 2013), p. 28 http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/revidirana_str_siromastija.pdf (Accessed November 21 2018)

- (7) Increasing the number of new jobs and creating conditions for equal access to the labor market for the members of the ethnic communities.
- (8) Formation of an inclusive labor market.
- (9) Reduction of the unregistered work force.
- (10) Improvement of the position of women on the labor market.

In order to achieve the objectives, the Strategy envisages a wide range of *measures*, such as: In addition to the principle of zoning, the schools should be stimulated to receive students from socially vulnerable families living close to the school, but belong to a different zone; Stimulate regular class attendance by: non-violence in school campaign, student and parent advisory, free textbooks, free transportation, financial assistance for disabled persons (transport for the student and the accompanying person); Teacher training; Employment of psychologists, pedagogues and defectologists; Social assistance for vulnerable categories; Improvement of the infrastructure (repair of the toilets, reconstruction, procurement of teaching aids, access ramps for disabled children); Studying the language of the communities; Include children with developmental impediments in the special classes and schools only when this would serve the best interest of the child (only if it is absolutely necessary for the child's overall development); Adapt the computer software to the children with disabilities in all the schools where this is necessary, and other measures.^[89]

The Strategy also provides some special *measures* for Roma youth as vulnerable category, such as: awarding monetary assistance to socially vulnerable families if they fulfill certain criteria with respect to the education of their children (conditional cash transfers), provision of additional financial and staffing benefits for the schools with a significant number of Roma children, increase the enrolment quotas and provision of scholarships for Roma to study teaching faculties, in particular faculties that prepare primary school teachers, reduced criteria for enrolment of Roma children in the public secondary schools, provision of scholarships for Roma students, provision of mentoring and tutoring for all students/scholarship recipients, as well as other students from the Roma ethnicity in the school they attend, and other measures.^[90]

Education Strategy for 2018-2022 and Action Plan were developed with financial and technical support of the European Union through a wide consultation and participatory process which was implemented by means of a large number of meetings, discussions, debates and conferences at different stages of the Strategy development. This first *draft* of the Strategy was produced in June 2016 and disseminated among the key stakeholders including national authorities, public institutions, social partners, educational institutions, development partners, experts and other players in the field of education. Based on their recommendations, the Strategy was reviewed, further improved and the final version was presented in the late 2017.

The Education Strategy stressed out that children with special educational needs are not sufficiently included in regular primary education. Their inclusion in regular schools is not properly regulated and appropriate mechanisms have not been introduced. In addition, there are prejudices toward these children among parents, teachers and students. Teachers also do not possess enough competences to work with this category of learners.

⁸⁹ See more National Strategy on Alleviation of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia 2010-2020, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, revised, (Skopje, 2013), p. 29-30 http://mtsp.gov.mk/WBStorage/Files/revidirana_str_siromastija.pdf (Accessed November 21, 2018)

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 32

The inclusion policies of the Ministry – to cover pupils with special educational needs in the regular educational process – are based on:^[91]

- preparation of individual subject programmes;
- forming an inclusive team in secondary schools;
- equipping the expert services with pedagogists, psychologists and special educators;
- using assistive technological devices and building access ramps to the school buildings.

Pursuant a Government decision in 2015, MES via the Directorate for Development and Promotion of Education in the Languages of the Ethnic Communities started awarding scholarships for Roma students. The goal of this measure is to stimulate the Roma to enrol at universities that produce teaching staff. This measure is in line with the Action Plan for Education 2014-2020 which is part of the [National Strategy on Roma Inclusion in the Republic of Macedonia](#).^[92]

The Strategy also notes that focus is on people (pupils) with special education needs when it comes to improving inclusion, which as a topic is featured in almost all pillars. In the Strategy, according to special education needs, the needs are implied of persons who independently and without educational interventions and support by educational factors can't achieve learning standards anticipated for their age. A characteristic for persons with special education needs is the need to provide them with additional assistance in education in order to achieve the learning standards.

When it comes to inclusion of students with physical disabilities, the Action Plan of the Strategy envisages adapting the buildings of the Universities (faculties) for inclusion of students with physical disabilities. Responsible institutions for implementation of this measure according to the Action Plan are the Ministry of Education and Science and Universities, and it should be realized by the end of 2020.^[93]

The Law on Secondary Education includes a number of provisions regarding education for children with special needs. Provisions include: the existence of special curricula, formation of inclusive teams (consisting of pedagogue or schools' psychologist, teacher, parent or guardian of the student for developing individual education plans) and arranging, free of charge, everyday transport to school and back, as well as, for breaks and weekends (for students residing in dormitories). The age limit for enrolment in first year of secondary education, for students with special needs is extended to 25 years of age (for regular students it is 17).

The [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#), in the section: Social integration of disadvantaged groups through education and by developing working and learning conditions, under objective 9: to achieve significant inclusion and integration in the education system of children and youth with special needs, foresees the following measures:

- Train existing teaching staff and professional departments and hiring additional staff where necessary;
- Cross-institutional cooperation and coordination and cooperation with CSOs;
- Analyzing the current situation concerning the availability and application of assistive technologies;
- Needs analysis;
- Cooperation between institutions and CSOs in the implementation of projects;
- Staff training in the use of assistive technologies.

⁹¹ Education Strategy for 2018-2022 and Action Plan, Ministry of Education and Science, (Skopje, 2018), p. 38 <http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Strategija-za-obrazovanie-ENG-WEB-1.pdf> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

⁹² Education Strategy for 2018-2022 and Action Plan, Ministry of Education and Science, (Skopje, 2018), p.48 <http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Strategija-za-obrazovanie-ENG-WEB-1.pdf> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

⁹³ See more Ibid, p. 129

Objective 12, of the Strategy: to improve the availability of non-formal education for specific groups of children and youth, foresees the following measures regarding non-formal education:

- Establishing cooperation between CSOs and institutions;
- Needs analysis;
- Developing and implementing programmes;
- Opening education centers;
- Hiring appropriate staff

As already mentioned above, Roma population is one of the groups targeted with policies for social inclusion. Therefore there are a number of policies for social inclusion for Roma students through education and training included in official documents regarding Roma people.

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in collaboration with the National Coordinator of the Decade and Strategy of Roma have developed – [Strategy for the Roma in Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020](#).

This strategy focuses on several areas and the purpose of this Strategy is to improve the standard and quality of life of the Roma population in Macedonia. The education as an important segment and as a condition to achieve the objective of this strategy occupies a significant place in the same document.

Roma population is particularly affected by poverty and social exclusion influenced by a range of factors, and beside unemployment, discrimination and other issues, one of the main factor is lack or low level of education. In order to increase the rate of Roma students at Universities, the Government introduced quotas for enrolment of Roma students in higher educational institutions. This practice functions for years as an affirmative measure for easier access of the Roma students in the institutions of university education. During the academic year of 2011, for the first time the subject Romani language and culture is introduced as an elective subject at the Faculty of Philology in Skopje.

In 2017, the Minister without Portfolio in charge of the implementation of the Strategy for improving the situation of the Roma in the Republic of Macedonia, together with the Minister of Education and Science and the founder of the Department and professor of Romany at the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, discussed the initiative for introducing the Bachelor Degree Roma language, and studies for Roma teachers as a new department of the Pedagogical and Philology faculty. The initiative was launched by the Minister without Portfolio and it was positively assessed by the Minister of Education and Science, but to date it has not received its implementation.^[948]

The specific strategic objectives and expected results in the area of education outlined in the Strategy for the Roma in the Republic of Macedonia are:

- To increase the transition from primary education to secondary education, to improve the performance and to significantly reduce the withdrawal of Roma students by 2020.
- To increase the number of Roma university graduates by 2020.
- To increase the number of Roma students enrolled at pedagogical faculties and other faculties that produce teaching staff.
- Completion of primary and secondary education by Roma adults that because of various reasons did not finish in time, in order to gain the opportunity for subsistence, personal development and other needs.
- Decreased number of Roma pupils enrolled in schools for children with special needs by 20% by 2020 year.

⁹⁴ <https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/drustvo/predlog-za-studii-po-romski-jazik/> (Accessed November 21, 2018)

Social cohesion and equal opportunities

The [Law on prevention and protection against discrimination](#) includes education in every provision regarding grounds for discrimination, application of the Law and definition of discrimination.

The [Law on equal opportunities for women and man](#) also includes the area of education in provisions regarding the establishment of equal opportunities for women and men regulated by the Law and application of the Law (Article 3, (3) Discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment on the grounds of gender shall be prohibited in the public and private sector in the spheres of employment and labor, education, science and sports, social security, including the social protection, pension and disability insurance, health insurance).

The Administration for Development of Education of the Languages of the Communities in collaboration with the NGO National Roma Centrum from Kumanovo and other departments in the Ministry of Education and Science, in 2010 developed a [Handbook for protection and prevention from discrimination in the educational system Republic of Macedonia](#). In general or the overall objective of this manual is to achieve cooperation and coordination between all institutions and individuals involved in the educational system in order to provide equal conditions and opportunities for quality education for all children regardless of religious, ethnic or any other basis and to establish a monitoring system that will allow uninterrupted and quality education for all children, through the cooperation and involvement of all stakeholders.

The [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#), in the section: Social integration of disadvantaged groups through education and by developing working and learning conditions, under objective 10: to improve the support of children and youth who are neglected in terms of education and upbringing, foresees the following measures:

- Analyzing the current situation;
- Developing and implementing a programme for socially excluded children and youth;
- Monitoring and evaluating the programme for socially excluded children and youth;
- Analyzing the current situation of children and youth whose age does not correspond with the patterns of the existing education system;
- Establishing inter-institutional cooperation;
- Developing and implementing a programme for so-called 'phantom' children;
- Monitoring and evaluating the programme for 'phantom' children

6.7 Skills for innovation

Innovation in formal education

Government of Republic of Macedonia adopted Strategy for Innovation of Republic of Macedonia 2012-2020.

The Strategy emphasize that young minds are often abundant with intellectual capabilities from which potential ideas can emerge with commercial potential. What is needed for the realization of ideas is to create a mechanism that will encourage creativity among the young population, while at the same time animate the business community about the availability of ideas that can enhance their products, services or processes. One way to establish a link between young minds and companies is to organize innovation competitions, not only nationally but also internationally. A successful example is the Dream Line competition in Turkey.^[95]

⁹⁵ Strategy for Innovation of Republic of Macedonia 2012-2020, Government of Republic of Macedonia, p. 27 <http://www.fitr.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Strategija-za-inovacii-final-oktomvri20121.pdf> (Accessed November 22, 2018)

Ministry of Education and Science with the support of World Bank in 2016 started implementing [Skills Development and Innovation Support Project](#)(SDISP). The project is still ongoing and it will be closed on 31 of May 2019.^[96] SDISP objective is to support innovation capacity in Macedonia, improve transparency of resource allocation and promote accountability in higher education and enhance the relevance of secondary technical vocational education.

The Project supports interventions which foster education and skills relevant to the job market, and enhance the innovation capacity and activity of firms in Macedonia. It also addresses key missing elements of the Macedonian innovation system and ailing aspects of the research sector that are likely to be vital for improving the competitiveness of the enterprise sector and Macedonia's longer term economic growth prospects. It will also help improve absorption of EU funds earmarked for innovation activities.

The Project's direct beneficiaries include students, teaching and management staff from technical vocational education and training institutions who would receive a new curriculum and practical training facilities, as well as training on management, planning, and process improvement capacity; students and staff of universities, research institutions and enterprises will benefit from:

- Implementation of quality assurance mechanisms and financing reform in higher education;
- Grants promoting R&D and innovation; and
- Technology commercialization, global know-how absorption, and industry - university collaboration

The Ministry for Education and Science marked the implementation of SDISP by implementing a simulative activity for connecting high schools with business community. It is a grant program for non-refundable funds awarded for financing projects of vocational high schools in Macedonia, in partnership with business companies.

The aim of the grant program is to improve practical skills and knowledge of students and create quality personnel, ready for the labor market right after finishing high school or further education with solid vocational base.

The projects objectives are strengthening the cooperation between high schools and companies while improving the vocational education and skills for employability of the students. The project activities should include practical education in schools, organizing camps for technical training during summer breaks, courses for practical training in schools, practical trainings in the companies – right on the post, establishing school companies etc.

As part of this effort, the TVET High School has a built a new laboratory for oenology and soil science, made possible by a grant from the World Bank-supported Skills Development and Innovations Support Project. The project provides financial incentives to encourage enterprises to work with TVET schools - providing on-the-job training for students. Students also have access to a soil laboratory, allowing them to analyze samples they have taken. This process benefits the school as well as the region as a whole – improving the organic production of wine, in accordance with European Union (EU) standards.^[97]

The Bureau for Education Development in the [curriculum for Gymnasium](#) secondary education, as part of the project activities includes three different subjects for first, second and third year called – Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The Innovation and Entrepreneurship subject (activity) is the only one from the list of proposed project

⁹⁶ <http://projects.worldbank.org/P128378/skills-development-innovation?lang=en&tab=details> (Accessed November 22, 2018)

⁹⁷ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/11/28/wine-in-classroom-training-next-generation-of-vintners-in-macedonia> (Accessed November 22, 2018)

activities for Gymnasium that is compulsory for students of the first three years. All of the other subjects (activities) are optional.

Also, in order to develop the creativity and the innovative spirit of young people, starting in 2015, and students in the ninth grade in elementary education study the subject [Innovation](#) as a compulsory one.

The teachers who teach Innovation and Entrepreneurship attend trainings organized by the Bureau in cooperation with non-public associations and organizations.

In the Medium-term program of Fund for Innovation and Technology Development for 2018-2020 an Instrument for the Application of Innovation in the Public Sector is foreseen. The Fund has already piloted this instrument through innovative competitions to find a technological solution to reduce air pollution- O2 Challenge, organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and the Challenge for Young Researchers - Public Call for Financing Research Projects in Primary and in secondary schools, organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science.^[98]

Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

Non-formal education is undoubtedly one of the most productive ways to further improve and educate young people outside the formal educational institutions - and recently, with constant changes in business, is promoted in one of the most effective ways to quickly qualify for a new job.

In Republic of Macedonia there is Strategy on Innovation 2012-2020, as well as the Law on Innovation Activity, but none of the documents mentions informal or informal education. In the past, there was almost no promotion of the benefits of non-formal education by state institutions, but in recent years, recognition of informal education slowly enters a small door. In November 2017, the Minister of Education and Science stated that 'The support and development of the creative and innovative potential of the individual is an essential foundation for building a knowledge-based society, entrepreneurship and innovation, and for creating a stable and competitive economic system'^[99]. Macedonia is currently in a process of validation of non-formal and informal learning.

[The Strategy and Action Plan for vocational education and training in the context of lifelong learning \(2013-2020\)](#) recognized the importance of non-formal and informal education and includes the need of improving skills for innovation as a basis for further reforms. The Strategy foresees a number of measures for reaching strategic goals that refer to developing and strengthening skills for innovation.

Organizations offering non-formal education have a key role as they dictate the quality of the trainings they organize. Usually CSO's are leaders in promotion and organization of non-formal and informal education, but as mentioned above, the Government also recognizes the importance and benefits of it. Thus, with support of Ministry of Finance of

⁹⁸ Medium-term program of the Fund for Innovation and Technology Development for financial support to micro, small and medium enterprises for 2018-2020, Fund for Innovation and Technology Development (Skopje, 2018), p. 18 <http://www.fitr.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/%D0%A1%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BE%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%A4%D0%98%D0%A2%D0%A0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-2018-2020-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0.pdf> (Accessed November 22, 2018)

⁹⁹ <http://www.fitr.mk/%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%BA-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BC%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8-%D0%B8%D1%81%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B6%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%87%D0%B8-%D1%98%D0%B0/> (Accessed November 22, 2018)

Republic of Macedonia and European Union, in 2018 the [Foundation for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises](#) (FMSM) started with the implementation of the project "[Innovation Center: Comparative Advantage for Greater Competitiveness](#)", which envisages cooperation of the private sector with representatives from universities, which will help in the implementation of measures for increasing the innovation and competitiveness in the target regions and beyond.

It is expected that by finalizing the process of validation of non-formal and informal education, there will be many more state projects that will be aimed at fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work.

6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

National strategy

Republic of Macedonia has no Strategy for Media literacy and safe use of new media at this time.

The [Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services](#) is responsible for development and promotion of media literacy and safe use of new media. In that direction in 2015, the Agency developed a document – [Program for Promoting Media Literacy in the Republic of Macedonia](#). The document aims to provide directions for the development and promotion of media literacy in the Republic of Macedonia.

Media literacy entered media policy during the process of harmonization of media-related laws with the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. The [Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services](#), which entered into force in early 2014, vested the Agency with a direct obligation to promote media literacy, cooperating with all the relevant stakeholders, and to report on its activities in the annual work reports it submits to the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia (Article 26).

The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services first tackled the issue of media literacy while working on the previous [Strategy for the Development of Broadcasting Activity, 2013-2017](#). The Strategy contains a short assessment of scarce evidence of the characteristics of the context for media literacy development in the Republic of Macedonia. Namely, until that moment, the most active factor was civil society as most of the projects were conducted by citizen organizations and referred to the fields of education and safe usage of the Internet and the social networks.

The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services in 2017 started with preparation of new Strategy for the Development of Broadcasting Activity 2018-2022. The Agency considers that the Strategy for the Development of Audio and Audiovisual Activity 2018-2022 should focus on [six areas](#), including the development of media literacy by encouraging the critical reception and understanding of media content among citizens and increasing the role of the media in the development of media literacy. In the Working Programme 2018 of the Agency it is stated that the Agency's priority activity in 2018 will be the development of the Development Strategy for the Development of Audio and Audiovisual Activity. The work plan foresees the activities for the preparation of the Strategy to be completed in the first half of 2018, but it has not yet been adopted.^[100] The agency is still working on the Strategy and it is expected that the draft version will be put on public debate in December.

The Report for the work of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services for 2017 stipulates that the Agency, in order to encourage media literacy in the country, realized a

¹⁰⁰ Working Programme 2018, Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services (2017), p. 5 <http://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/%D0%9D%D0%B0%D1%86%D1%80%D1%82-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%88%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BC%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B0-2018.pdf> (Accessed November 22, 2018)

number of activities such as: initiating the establishment of a Media Literacy Network of the Republic of Macedonia, which has 35 founding members (ministries, state institutions, higher education institutions, civic associations and organizations); together with some of the members of the Network, prepared educational material on media literacy for primary schools in the country; finalized the development of a separate web page dedicated solely to media literacy; print a leaflet which explicitly explains the basic principles of media literacy; adapted and promoted a video clip from EAVI for raising awareness about media literacy, and more.^[101]

The Media Literacy Network of the Republic of Macedonia was established on the initiative of the Agency launched in early 2017 and was launched on April 27, 2017. The goal of establishing the Network was to facilitate the communication and consultation between the various subjects in the country working on raising the level of media literacy in both children and adults. It has 35 founding members, including two ministries: education, labor and social policy; and from the state institutions, besides the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, founders are also the Directorate for Personal Data Protection and the Agency for Film. There are also two private higher education institutions - the School of Journalism and Public Relations and the Institute of Communication Studies. The most numerous are the civil associations and organizations - there are 18, and nine media are also founders of the Network. The network remains open for new members, and everyone can access it by accepting the Act on Establishment and completing the Registration Form, which is available on the [website](#) of the Agency.

In December 2017, within the activities of the Media Literacy Program, the Agency finalized the development of a special web site dedicated exclusively for media literacy www.mediumskapismenost.mk where research, analyzes, information on conferences, projects, videos and other materials are published. The creation, maintenance and administration of the website is financed by the Agency, and it is common to the regulator and members of the Media Literacy Network. The website operates in Macedonian, Albanian and English and is available for people with daltonism and weakness. It is a great opportunity for the concept of "media literacy" to reach all parts of the Macedonian society, but also to introduce the world to the Macedonian activities in the field of media literacy.

Media literacy and online safety through formal education

In the sphere of education, there is no single document law, strategy, program for development of education, in which media literacy is incorporated, in spite of the numerous reforms in the curricula and subjects and in their content, both in primary and secondary education.

Even in the new Education Strategy 2018-2025, media literacy as a term has not been mentioned at all.

There is no separate study program for media literacy that is taught in schools, but certain segments of the media (their characteristics, differences between false and real news, as well as education for recognizing information sources and assessing their quality) are present in the curriculum on the subject Civic Education in Primary and

¹⁰¹ Report on the work of the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services for 2017, Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, (March, 2018) p.6
https://cdn.epra.org/organisations/second_documents/54/original/%D0%93%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%88%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%B8%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B0%D1%98-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%90%D0%92%D0%9C%D0%A3-%D0%B7%D0%B0-2017-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0.pdf?1535034532 (Accessed November 22, 2018)

Secondary Education.^[102] But the total fund of classes where these topics are discussed is almost negligible, which makes it difficult to talk about the acquisition of comprehensive knowledge in this field.

Promoting media literacy and online safety through non-formal and informal learning

The CSO sector in Macedonia is much more active in the area of media literacy. A number of researches have been conducted by citizen's organizations concerning media literacy.

The civic organizations have the largest role in promoting media literacy in Macedonia through non-formal education. There are many trainings and seminars where young people through different non-formal educational methods (scenarios, role playing games, workshops) can learn and become aware for the wide sea of false information present around us.

In December 2017, National Youth Council of Macedonia in cooperation with Radio MOF, organized a series of free trainings with young people between the ages of 15 and 25 (from Skopje, Veles and Tetovo) in order to learn how to recognize the false news, the manipulative content in the media, and the propaganda techniques through theoretical and practical work.

The project was implemented with the help of a grant awarded through the project "Media Literacy in an Information Dive: Media Literacy Coalition" conducted by the School of Journalism and Public Relations, in collaboration with the Institute for Media Diversity in London and the newspaper "Nova Makedonija" with financial support from the European Union.

In October 2018, the Association Ganimed Bitola started to implement the project "Subject for Dilemma" within the CRITINK project - "With critical thinking to citizens with media skills", which is financially supported by the European Union and in the next three years will be implemented by the Foundation for Internet and Society "[Metamorphosis](#)" and the [Center for European Strategies - Eurotink](#). The project is scheduled to last 6 months from 01 October 2018 to 31 March 2019, and the media partner in this project is TV 21. The goal of the project is to promote media literacy by stimulating critical thinking, pluralism of opinions and democratic values. The target groups of the project are students from 7 high schools from Bitola.

Raising awareness about the risks posed by new media

As above mentioned, in the recent years CSO's and Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services through Media Literacy Network, are trying to improve the situation and contribute to medially-conscious youth who will critically evaluate the information. Occasionally there are trainings and conferences aiming to raise awareness about the risk posed by new media, targeting mostly youth, but also educational workers, journalists and general public.

But still, media literacy is not a common topic in public discourse in Macedonia, and young generations do not know how to check and verify information that is shared daily by mass media. That this is so, is confirmed by the media literacy index published in March 2018, where Macedonia is at the last, 35th place.^[103]

¹⁰² See more <http://bro.gov.mk/?q=sredno-strucno-obrazovanie> (Accessed November 22, 2018)

¹⁰³ Marin Lessenski, *Resilience to 'Post-Truth' and its Predictors in the New Media Literacy Index 2018* (Open Society Institute – Sofia, 2018), p. 3
http://osi.bg/downloads/File/2018/MediaLiteracyIndex2018_publishENG.pdf (Accessed November 23, 2018)

6.9 Awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning and quality youth work

Information providers / counselling structures

As part of the awareness-raising about non-formal and informal learning the Center for Lifelong learning organizes the manifestation "[Days of lifelong learning](#)" on regular basis since 2002. The manifestation encompasses activities like public debates, trainings, conferences and cultural events, with the aim to promote the concept of lifelong learning and raise the awareness of the citizens about its importance. "Days of lifelong learning" is also a national education campaign that aims at fostering the realization of the idea for lifelong learning. The event is not particularly intended for young people, and it target all persons over 18 years of age.

Awareness raising initiatives

In Macedonia there is not systematic approach aiming to raise awareness about the importance of non-formal and informal learning.

Raising public awareness of non-formal education can be successfully achieved only through stakeholder co-operation. Real results can be achieved by mutual action of the state, business and civil society sector.

In the Roadmap for implementing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning in the Republic of Macedonia, it is stated that there is a need for public awareness raising campaign about VNFIL opportunities and benefits^[104]. But as the working group for establishing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning, recently had the first meeting (November 2018), there is still no public available information about any initiative.

CSOs are the only actor to undertake concrete initiatives. Thus, the European Youth Forum for the purposes and needs of the [National Youth Council of Macedonia](#) (NMSM) in 2016 organized training in order to introduce the participants to the Quality Assurance of NFE concept and to encourage discussion on the quality of non-formal education.

Also, youth organization [Youth Can](#) in 2016 organized training in order to raise awareness among young people about the benefits of non-formal education and personal development.

6.10 Current debates and reforms

With the election of the new Government in the Republic of Macedonia the education sector entered the reforms. External examination has been terminated as well as part of dispersed studies. In addition, the Cambridge program for high schools was postponed since there were not sufficient conditions to start the program in this school year.

Currently there is an ongoing process for reforming the Law on Secondary Education. Within the reforms in secondary education changes are expected in decreasing the number of classes and administrative obligation of the teachers. The Law is attached to the [Unique Electronic Registry of Regulations of the Republic of Macedonia](#) and is still marked as open.

¹⁰⁴ Roadmap for implementing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning in the Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Education and Science and Center for Adult Education (2016), p.40 http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/VNFIL-Roadmap_angl-1.pdf (Accessed November 23, 2018)

There is an ongoing debate about the youth participation in high school and universities an issue that has been facilitated by three youth CSOs (Coalition SEGA, Youth Educational Forum and the First Children's Embassy in the World- Megjashi). The aim of the debate is to amend the respective laws on Secondary Education aimed to integrate the right to participation and organizing in the educational system. In June 2018, the last panel discussion on the topic "New high school organization 2018-2019" was organized^[105]. These organizations prepared a Draft Law on Secondary Education, as well as a Draft-Rulebook on student organization and participation. Draft versions of both documents are not adopted.

In January on the proposal of MES, and under the coordination of the Director for the Bureau for Development of Education, a procedure was initiated for the [revision of the textbooks on Civic Education](#) in primary and secondary education.

For that purpose, an expert team was established to promote civic education in primary and secondary education for the promotion of students' civic competencies in accordance with the recommendations of the European Commission. The expert team is comprised of representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Bureau for Development of Education, the Center for Vocational Education and Training, teachers who carry out teaching in the subject Civic Education, university professors and representatives from the civil sector.

The process of revision is still ongoing.

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.radiomof.mk/novoto-srednoshkolsko-organiziranje-vo-fokus-na-panel-diskusija-vo-javna-soba/> (Accessed October 30 2018)

7. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The two central institutions in the health care system are the Ministry of Health and the Health Insurance Fund. The Ministry of Health is responsible for health policymaking, organization of the health care system and the enforcement of health legislation, and the HIF is responsible for purchasing services from both public and private providers on behalf of users.

The Health Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2020 is the overarching strategy for improvement of health status of the population, including mental health, and sets out the vision for improvement of the health and of the health care system, which will be responsive to the needs of the population.

7.1 General context

Main trends in the health conditions of young people

Since the independence in 1991, Republic of Macedonia has made important progress during its transition from a socialist system to a market-based system, particularly in reforming the organization, financing and delivery of health care and establishing a mix of private and public providers. Although total health care expenditure has risen in absolute terms in recent decades, it has consistently fallen as share of GDP, and high levels of private health expenditure remain. Despite this, the health of the population has improved over the last decades, with life expectancy and mortality rates for both adults and children reaching similar levels to those in ex-communist EU countries, though death rates caused by unhealthy behavior remain high.

However, general health indicators have shown an improving trend since 2005 – in particular mortality due to non-communicable diseases, which has caught up with the EU13 level^[106] in addition to improvement in life expectancy and infant mortality rates, reflecting continuous policy efforts. According to the latest WHO data published in 2018 life expectancy in Macedonia is: Male 73.8, female 78.0 and total life expectancy is 75.9 which give Macedonia a World Life Expectancy ranking of 63.^[107]

Data on health conditions of young people is not systematically collected, particularly on behavior related variables. However, there are numerous studies done in the past that can provide an insight into health status of youth in the Republic of Macedonia. The latest behavioral study done in 2008^[108] showed that students in Macedonia face a number of health problems related to behaviors, e.g. dietary behavior, tobacco use, use of alcohol, sexual behavior, violence and injury risk behavior. The survey also showed that such behaviors are not simply the actions of individuals, but take place in a social context, such as lack of education about prevention in schools. The survey highlights health issues that were known but insufficiently studied and acted upon, but has also brought other problems to light, such as mental health problems of adolescents requiring urgent attention, more prevention and more support efforts.

¹⁰⁶ Neda Milevska Kostova, Snezhana Chichevalieva, Ninez A. Ponce, Ewout van Ginneken and Juliane Winkelmann. *The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Health system review*, (Health Systems in Transition Vol. 19 No. 3, 2017), http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/338955/Macedonia-HiT-web.pdf?ua=1 (Accessed November 24, 2018)

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.worldlifeexpectancy.com/macedonia-life-expectancy> (Accessed November 24, 2018)

¹⁰⁸ Global School Based Student Health Survey Results, Republic of Macedonia. (2008) (http://www.who.int/ncds/surveillance/gshs/Macedonia_GSHS_2007_Report_English.pdf Accessed November 24, 2018)

According to the data of the Public Health Institute of the Republic of Macedonia in 2016, boys aged 15 to 24 who are victims of unintentional injuries are most often injured due to use of alcohol and loss of control over behavior.^[109]

According to the Report of the Health Care Department for School Children and Youth 2016, the most common cause of youth morbidity is respiratory diseases (44.9%).^[110]

Main concepts

Health is defined in accordance with World Health Organisation definition as a state of complete physical and mental wellbeing and not merely absence of disease or infirmity. It is considered to be influenced by many external factors such as environmental, social and economic factors, and by factors related to lifestyles and to other sectors in the society.

A **health system** definition fully complies with the World Health Organisation definition, as including all the actors and activities the primary purpose of which is to promote, improve or maintain the health of the citizens. It includes organised health services, i.e. the health care system, as only one of the many factors for maintaining good health, recovering from ill health, or making the life with chronic illness easier.

7.2 Administration and governance

Governance

The most important actors in the establishment, governance and operationalization of the health care system in the country are the Parliament, the Government, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance, the Health Insurance Fund, the Institute of Public Health, the State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate and the Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices. The two central institutions in the health care system are the Ministry of Health and the Health Insurance Fund. The Ministry of Health is responsible for health policymaking, organization of the health care system and the enforcement of health legislation, although all policies go through a process of consultation and agreement with the relevant ministries and agencies within regulated legal procedures. The HIF is responsible for purchasing services from both public and private providers on behalf of users. Relations between the HIF and various providers at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels are regulated through performance-based contracts negotiated and signed for a predefined period of time.

The Ministry of Health performs the activities related to:

- health care and health insurance of the population;
- pollution of air, water, land and animal products;
- organization and development of healthcare;
- monitoring the health status of the population;
- the protection of the population against infectious diseases, the harmful effects of gases, ionizing radiation, noise, air pollution, water and land; 3
- objects for general use;
- hygiene-epidemiological condition;
- medicines, auxiliary medicines, medical devices, medical equipment, sanitary devices and materials;
- poisons and narcotic drugs;

¹⁰⁹ Report on the health of the population in the Republic of Macedonia for 2016, Institute of Public Health of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2017), p. 48 <http://iph.mk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Izvestaj-za-zdravje-2016-so-cip-brojce.pdf> (Accessed November 24, 2018)

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 96 <http://iph.mk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Izvestaj-za-zdravje-2016-so-cip-brojce.pdf> (Accessed November 24, 2018)

- supervision under his jurisdiction and
- perform other activities determined by law

The Health Insurance Fund of Macedonia is established with the Law on Health Insurance for the purpose of implementing mandatory health insurance, as an institution that performs activities of public interest and public authorizations determined by the Law.

The main activity of the [Institute of Public Health](#) of the Republic's health care is prevention through monitoring, researching and studying of health condition, the causes and spread of communicable and non-communicable diseases of social and medical importance, the impact of environmental factors and taking measures for protection and promotion of health.

The 10 regional Centres of Public Health have similar functions as the Institute of Public Health, but at the regional level, with the exception of research, education and policy advising roles. The Centre of Public Health's role is disease prevention and health promotion, based on earmarked funding from the state budget-funded programmes of the Ministry of Health.

The [State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate](#) (SAI) carries out inspection supervision over the implementation of health regulations in the area of health care, protection of the population against contagious diseases, health insurance, protection of patients' rights and rights in the field of mental health.

The [Agency for Medicinal Products and Medical Devices](#) of the Republic of Macedonia was established in September 2014, on the basis of the [Law on Medicines and Medical Devices](#), as an independent body of the state administration. The agency's authority is to issue approvals for the production and trade of medicines and medical devices; maintains Register of medicines, drug manufacturers and Register of manufacturers of medical devices in the Republic of Macedonia; issue approvals and / or notices for clinical trials of medicinal products; makes an evaluation of the expected benefit in relation to the potential risk for the health of the subjects for the medicinal product that is subject to a clinical trial; makes the classification of products as medicines or medical devices; prepares an annual report on reported adverse drug reactions in the Republic of Macedonia; carries out inspection supervision over medicines and medical devices; and other.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Today, the Ministry of Health assumes the main coordinating role with other government agencies in committees where intersectoral consultation and policies affecting youth are needed. In July 2013, the Committee for Health and Environment was established, led by the Prime Minister and co-chaired by the Minister of Health, in addition to development of regulations and policies through intersectoral consultations and public hearings. Inclusive participatory processes were used in the development of strategic health documents, but are still not part of regular procedures, an example being the establishment of the Committee for Advancement of the Health System in 2009. The Ministry of Health led this participatory process, which resulted in the development of the Green book in health, which serves today as a roadmap for health sector reforms (health care system management, administering health care, financing, pharmaceutical care and patients' rights protection). The process is based on consensual agreement and acceptance among most stakeholders involved in the process, including citizens, professional associations, academia, civil society and private sector stakeholders

However, the whole of society approach that engages multiple stakeholders in public health policies across contexts is still not a regular practice, although highly recognized as an approach to provide a fair process in policy development and better results in policy implementation. Other initiatives for intersectorality are driven by international actors, such as WHO and the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria

discussion on the institutionalization of a National Health Account to provide the Ministry of Health with clear tracking of funds in specific health areas.

7.3 Sport, youth fitness and physical activity

National strategy(ies)

In Macedonia, there is no special strategy that only applies to the sport and physical activity of young people. At the beginning of 2018, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia announced the adoption of the ten-year National Strategy for Sport, but it has not yet been adopted or has any data on the process of its preparation.^[111]

Sport is covered as a thematic area within the framework of the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025.

[National Youth Strategy](#) developed and endorsed in 2016 for the period 2016-2025 is based on the fundamental values of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the European Convention on the Protection of Fundamental Human Freedoms and Rights, the European Social Charter, the European Cultural Convention, the UN, European Union and Council of Europe policies in the sphere of youth-related issues.

National Youth Strategy defines sports as 'any form of physical activity undertaken, either occasionally or in organized participatory manner, with the aim of expressing and improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, and of establishing social links or achieving results in competitions at all levels'^[112].

In the thematic area sport, it envisages investigation of the existing conditions in which young people can practice sports and access to objects, with foreseen inclusion of 70% youth. Measures include preparation and analysis of the use of facilities for sport in the ownership of Republic of Macedonia and ownership of local self-government, analysis of the program of the national sports federations for realization of mass sports activities and a survey of students in secondary schools in relation to their attitudes, interests and need for sports. A program has been prepared for sport-recreational activities of young categories 13-18 (middle school students), 19-23 (embedded in high education and who did not continue) and 24-29 (young, unemployed and employed).

Aimed at comprehensive cooperation among all institutions in the country that contribute to sports and promotion of "Sport for All", necessary regulatory documents have been prepared for cooperation at the local level, with defined set of indicators for preparation of programs for inclusion and examination of needs through public debates, meetings of municipal councils and regional cooperation for capacity building.

Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

The Agency of Youth and Sports has the main role at the national level, for the promotion of sport and sports activities among young people. On a continuous level, the Agency implements projects and initiatives aimed at creating healthy and physically active youth.

¹¹¹ <https://www.pravdiko.mk/se-podgotvuva-nov-zakon-za-sport-i-desetgodishna-natsionalna-strategija-za-sport/> (Accessed November 25, 2018)

¹¹² National Youth Strategy (2016-2025), Agency of Youth and Sports of Republic of Macedonia, (Skopje, 2016), p. 30 <http://strategijazamladi.mk/sites/default/files/National-Youth-Strategy-2016-2025.pdf> (Accessed November 25, 2018)

This year (2018), the Agency for Youth and Sports was the bearer of the European Commission project "European Sports Week", which took place in the period from 23 to 30 September in the territory of whole Europe, as well as in our country.

The European Week of Sports titled #BeActive contributed to the development of sport in terms of active involvement of citizens, individual and institutional improvement, and promotion of styles for taking care of a healthy life of every individual.

In order to attract more and more young people to the sport (professional or recreational), the state, through the [Agency of Youth and Sports](#), opened a number of open-air fitness zones as well as gyms in several municipalities throughout the country, organized and sponsored various sporting events and athletics racing and the like.

For the purpose of inclusion of young people with disabilities (aged 15-29 years), the National Federation of Sport and Recreation of the Disabled of Macedonia last year promoted and started implementing the Change Your Mindset-Sport4Everyone project within the Erasmus + sports program, which aims to promote the need for sports and physical activity for people with disabilities.

Recently, women's sport has been increasingly promoted in Macedonia. Thus, in October 2017, the civil sports organization TACT, with the support of the Embassy of the Netherlands in Macedonia and the Agency of Youth and Sports, [promoted a sport](#) video aimed at promoting women's sport and the numerous benefits of sports. The video shows prominent athletes from eight different sports that are recognized in the Macedonian public by their results.

Physical education in schools

In primary schools, the time for physical and medical education is three-hour time-lag (progress in relation to the previous two hours). Each program and plan is based on expressed needs and interests of the students. There is a possibility for establishment of sports clubs within the school itself.

In secondary schools, physical and health education is represented by 2 + 1 (2 hours of physical + 1 hour sports activity). In the part of the secondary school there are also fitness clubs that students can use, including compulsory elective programs for music and fine arts. Sports and sports activities are defined in curricula with elective character. [Sports and sports activities](#) are aimed to allow students to express their skills and competences in the field of fitness, swimming, hiking, skiing, cycling, table tennis, sports day etc.

In the first-year secondary vocational education, [sports education and sports activities](#) are mandatory elective subject aimed to satisfy the needs of the students for securing and applying the acquired psychomotor knowledge of basic education in the field of sports in the function of maintaining and improving health, physical and working abilities, to help students to recognize the values of sport and sports activities, their positive influence on the organism, the cultural and spiritual enrichment of the person; to create habits for regular sports, maintaining the physical, health and working skills that will be used for active rest in everyday life and his future occupation; to acquire a culture of cheerleading and positive development of psycho-social-communication relations before, during and after the sporting competition.

The purpose of [sport and sports activities in the second year](#) is to acquire habits for regular sports. The volleyball is listed as a dominant discipline, to be in the function of an active holiday. The other disciplines are athletics, gymnastics, fitness, basketball, tennis, dancing, sports games, swimming and hiking activities.

In the [curricula of the sports gymnasium](#), physical activity is represented by 4 sports: football, basketball, handball and tennis. In the first year, it includes development of psychomotorical skills, the theoretical basis of all sports and training of various sports

(the goal of all trainings is to improve the physical abilities, acquire new meanings and skills from the various sports for the purpose of achieving high sports results.

In gymnasium education sport and sports activities for the third and the fourth year are 3 hours per week and for the first and second 2 classes and 1 for project tasks.

In vocational schools, sports education and sports activities as mandatory elective subject are 2 hours per week and 72 hours per year

In the sport gymnasium, the first year include development of psychomotoric skills with 72 classes and theoretical basics of different sports with 28 classes. Practical training-include 650 classes per year. General and specific physical preparation includes 150 classes, development of technical-tactical skills in attack – 250 classes, development of technical-tactical assault in defense – 250 classes and 34 classes for psychological preparation.

Collaboration and partnerships

The main stakeholders supporting the collaboration and formation of partnerships between schools are line ministries of health and education and science, within their mandates to regulate health and educational sectors. Relevant entities in sport include: Agency of Youth and Sports, Faculty of Physical Education, Sport and Health, Institute of Sport, Sport Federations, Units of local self-government, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Bureau for Development of Education, Institute of Public Health, primary and secondary schools, Federation for School Sport and civil society organizations.

Financial support is secured through the Agency of Youth and Sport annual budget, through block-donations to state institutions and a competitive process of publishing open calls for proposals for CSO sector.

7.4 Healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition

National strategy(ies)

There is no separate strategy related to nutrition and healthy lifestyles, but some issues are incorporated in Health Strategy 2020. The strategy defines special attention to be paid to the health education for school children, to contribute to better health for young people (target 4), considered as especially important for the adoption of healthy lifestyles, such as proper nutrition, sufficient physical exercise, prevention of addiction to tobacco, alcohol and psychoactive substances (target 12), and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and mental health problems.

In 2016, an [Action Plan on Food and Nutrition in the Republic of Macedonia \(2016-2025\)](#) was adopted. The plan envisions action to encourage healthy eating for children, adolescents and young people to be strengthened and become sustainable by promoting a healthy diet throughout their lives.

Based on previous research and behavioral studies, the Ministry of Health initiated preparation of the [National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health](#) that was enacted in 2009 for the period 2010–2020. With financial support from the United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund and United Nations Population Fund, the Strategy was developed by an interdisciplinary team of representatives of the Ministry of Health and civil society organizations, and with contribution from other line ministries and agencies, including Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Agency for Youth and Sports, and the Health Insurance Fund. With regard to the low prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country, the Ministry of Health initiated a process of building a coordinated national response to prevent a major HIV/AIDS epidemic in 2003. Through multi stakeholder cooperation, the country received

funding through the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, amounting to nearly US\$ 21 million since 2003. This funding has been used to successfully contain any major outbreak of HIV/AIDS epidemics.

The [National Drugs Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020](#) is also with the coverage of all the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, but a special emphasis is placed on young people knowing their vulnerability to the mentioned issues. The Strategy was adopted in cooperation with the Agency of Youth and Sport and it foresees improvement of access to early intervention programs (measures), especially for young people with experimental use of psychoactive substances.

[National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#) also cover healthy life-style. Thus, Objective 3 emphasizes the importance of establishing healthy eating habits among young people aged between 15 and 19. To achieve this, the Strategy foreseen following measures:^[113]

1. Regular general medical examinations for monitoring child development.
2. Developing personal programmes for every child in secondary school.
3. Promoting healthy life-styles.
4. Introducing continuous medical education on topics in this area.
5. Involving health workers in training for the prevention of obesity, anorexia and bulimia.

The [Youth Strategy of the City of Skopje](#) (2014-2018) does not refer exclusively to the health and promotion of healthy lifestyles among young people, but one of the specific goals of the Strategy is to encourage and promote healthy living habits. Recognizing the importance of a healthy lifestyle, the Strategy also recommends schools to introduce additional education about the importance of the sport for the healthy development of the young person to promote sports venues and facilities that young people can use. Also, the Strategy recognizes the need for local self-government in cooperation with local medical institutions to prepare annual plans for educating young people on various health-related topics.

Encouraging healthy lifestyles and healthy nutrition for young people

The Public Health Institute is the bearer of the activities to implement the Children's Initiative for Children's Obesity in Europe (COSI). The World Health Organization's research is conducted in most countries in Europe to explore the trends in weight gain and obesity among school children. The initiative is implemented in accordance with the adopted protocol, every 3 years. The Republic of Macedonia participates since 2010, and in 2019, the Institute and the Centers for Public Health will implement the 4th round of data collection in Macedonia. The activities for implementing the initiative are financed by the National Annual Public Health Program of the Ministry of Health.

According to the [Initiative for monitoring obesity in children](#), school diets and conditions for physical activity can be improved in order to reduce the high rates of obesity among children in the Republic of Macedonia. A plan for better nutrition and greater physical activity in schools could be used as a helpful tool in the conduct of such activities, which will be agreed with all stakeholders. Government policies are currently not being implemented in this field.

In 2014, the Government of Republic of Macedonia launched a campaign for using healthy food and keeping a healthy lifestyle under the slogan "[Health is the Choice! Healthy food and a healthy lifestyle mean a long life!](#)" The campaign was aimed at the

¹¹³ National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, Agency of Youth and Sports of Republic of Macedonia, (Skopje, 2016), p. 33-34 <http://strategijazamladi.mk/sites/default/files/National-Youth-Strategy-2016-2025.pdf> (Accessed November 25, 2018)

entire population in Macedonia, including young people, and aimed at raising awareness among citizens about the importance and the need to use healthy food and a healthy lifestyle as well as increased physical activity. There is no measurable outcome about the success of the campaign.

In the past there were also some campaigns but for preschool pupils, but the promotion of healthy eating among young people (15-29) is not high on the list of government policies.

Nevertheless, it seems that there is still awareness among young people about the need for healthy lifestyles, and in May 2018, semi-graduates from a primary school organized a campaign for healthy eating. They delivered lectures and presentations about the importance of nutrition to the health of the organism before students from other departments.^[114]

Health education and healthy lifestyles education in schools

In line with the Laws for primary, secondary and higher education, health promotion is carried out in each educational institution, within close collaboration among Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Health. Health promotion is included in the teaching curricula, but there is no separate National Strategy for health promoting schools. National Bureau for Educational Development (BDE) is an entity under MES and is responsible for designing the school education curricula, monitoring and evaluation.

Health promotion and health education are the main priorities within the Ministry of Health policy, as one of the important subjects in the frame of the National Health 2020 Strategy. National Institute for Public Health (IPH) with 10 Centers for Public Health (CPH) are the main institutions involved in planning, implementation, coordination and monitoring of health prevention programs for the whole population, including children and young people, in collaboration with the BDE's regional offices and with the municipalities and schools.

School programs include variety of activities, such as:

- "Life skills" as a new subject, introduced in the primary schools with lectures for healthy lifestyle, prevention of HIV, STIs and drug addiction, reproductive health/pregnancy, smoking prevention, physical activity and healthy diet, violence in schools, oral health and hygiene etc.;
- Increased number of classes for the subject "Physical education";
- Comprehensive health promotion materials distributed regularly among students;
- Active involvement of students in preparation of projects for health and
- Organization of workshops for teachers in terms of better promotion of health and health behavior;
- Training courses for teachers for implementation of the new educational curricula prepared in collaboration with Cambridge International Examinations
- Involvement of schools in governmental and international projects and campaigns for improvement of the relationship among pupils from different ethnical groups, etc
- Improvement the physical capacities of schools (new and renovated schools with new gyms, new equipment, new laboratories, ecological school yards, etc)

Main challenges for the nearest future are development of "Strategy for health promoting schools" with WHO and SHE support, increase of public financing for healthy lifestyle programs for adolescents and youth and development of a manual for the implementation of the whole school approach as it is developed in the Netherlands (for example).

¹¹⁴ <https://gostivarpres.mk/uchenitsite-jadat-premnogu-chips-i-brza-hrana-polumaturantite-od-ou-gotse-delchev-so-kampana-za-zdrava-ishrana/> (Accessed November 25, 2018)

Peer-to-peer education approaches

Positive example for peer-to-peer education is the one mentioned above. In May 2018, semi-graduates from a primary school “Goce Delcev” from municipality of Gostivar organized a campaign for healthy eating. The motto of the campaign was [‘No for fast food and carbonated drinks. Yes for more fruits and vegetables and developing healthy habits.’](#)

They delivered lectures and presentations about the importance of nutrition to the health of the organism before students from other departments. The students decided for such a campaign because of the knowledge that their classmates often eat chips, burgers, and drink carbonated juices. Due to the fact that their classmates do not have healthy habits, they decided to inform them about the harmful effect of such a food and to present what kind of food they should have on the daily menu.

Peer-to-peer education is not usual method used in education and is mainly implemented by CSOs when establishing activities at school. One example is NGO HERA who has trained a network of educators in sexual and reproductive health that now serve as peer educators in school. Peer education was also promoted by the HIV/AIDS prevention project funded by Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria with 20 peer educators trained in prevention, but there is no system for regular monitoring of activities beyond project closure.

Funding of such activities is largely donor based, making their monitoring and long-term evaluation almost impossible when the projects end.

Collaboration and partnerships

The Health Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2020 stipulates that the pursuit of better health determinants for all will be achieved through the partnership of individuals, groups and organizations from the public and private sectors and civil society.^[115]

Also, in the National Youth Strategy, in the area of cooperation and partnership it is stated that the challenges facing the young are complex, and involve many sectors of society and the economy. That is why the only model that can enable these challenges to overcome is through cross-sectoral cooperation with the complementarities of the efforts in implementing the proposed solutions. It is necessary to build partnerships between institutions and civil society organizations and organizations working with young people in order to ensure active participation of young people and appropriate representation of their opinions in solving problems.^[116]

There is no available information whether such a partnership is created.

Raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and on factors affecting the health and well-being of young people

In an absence of National health promotion strategy, there is no systematic way of counseling and information campaigns related to raising awareness on healthy lifestyles and factors affecting the health and well-being of young people.

Awareness raising campaigns are organized usually on the designated day, mainly by CSO sector, in collaboration with line ministries (World Food Day, world AIDS day, etc.).

¹¹⁵ Health Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2020 Reliable, Efficient and Fair Health System, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2007), p. 62 http://www.nationalplanningcycles.org/sites/default/files/planning_cycle_repository/the_former_yu_goslav_republic_of_macedonia/health_strategy_2020.pdf (Accessed November 25, 2018)

¹¹⁶ National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 of the Republic of Macedonia, Agency of Youth and Sports (Skopje, 2016), p. 12 <http://strategijazamladi.mk/sites/default/files/National-Youth-Strategy-2016-2025.pdf> (Accessed November 25, 2018)

Funding for such events comes from international donors mainly and organization largely depends on availability of funds that defines the scope and timeframe.

7.5 Mental health

National strategy(ies)

In January 2018, the Government of Republic of Macedonia adopted [Program for Health Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders in the Republic of Macedonia for 2018](#). The program has a general focus, targeting all population in Macedonia, and not precisely young people.

The objectives of this program are:[¹¹⁷1]

- provision of health care and care for patients with a court of competent jurisdiction pronounced a measure "obligatory treatment and keeping",
- providing health care to nearly 750 patients who are treated in the Mental Health Centers throughout the country,
- developing various forms of non-institutional and voluntary treatment
- Preparation of the National Mental Health Strategy 2018-2025.

National Mental Health Strategy 2018-2025 was adopted and officially presented by the Minister of health in September 2018. According to the strategy, one mental health center needs a population of 80 to 100 thousand. There are currently only six centers, where access has only 20% of the population.[¹¹⁸]

The Health Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2020 is the overarching strategy for improvement of health status of the population, including mental health, and sets out the vision for improvement of the health and of the health care system, which will be responsive to the needs of the population. The strategy is based on the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia which guarantees the right of every citizen to health care, the World Health Organization's "Health for all in the 21st century" strategy for the European region, the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations, the public health policy of the EU, as well as on finished policies and strategies in various fields of health and health care (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, mental health, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, food safety and nutrition, pharmaceuticals etc.). Mental health of the population is targeted in Target 6 - People's psychosocial well-being should be improved and better comprehensive services should be available to and accessible by people with mental health problems.

Mental health policy in Macedonia was developed in 2005 and is based on 11 pillars: developing community mental health services, downsizing large mental health hospitals, developing mental health services in primary health care, capacity building for human resources, involvement of users and their families, advocacy and health promotion, human rights protection, equity in access to services, financing, quality improvement and establishment of monitoring system[¹¹⁹3].

The Law on Mental Health developed and enacted in 2006 and amended in 2015 regulates the basic principles of mental health protection and promotion, in addition to the rights and responsibilities of persons with mental health conditions. The Law on Mental Health (Article 34) enacted in 2006 stipulates the importance of mental health in

¹¹⁷ Program for Health Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders in the Republic of Macedonia for 2018, (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia, No. 17 dated 26 January 2018) <http://www.fzo.org.mk/WBStorage/Files/3.pdf> (Accessed November 26, 2018)

¹¹⁸ <https://tv21.tv/mk/nova-strategija-za-mentalno-zdravje-depresijata-mentalna-bolest-broj-eden-vo-makedonija/> (Accessed December 3, 2018)

¹¹⁹ WHO- AIMS report on mental health system in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (World Health Organization 2009), p. 11 http://www.who.int/mental_health/macedonia_who_aims_report.pdf (Accessed November 26, 2018)

the community and provides legal grounds for establishing a Committee for Mental Health in each unit of local self-government, enabling close monitoring of the implementation and protection of the rights of the persons with mental conditions. However, only few municipalities have established such committees and their work is not publicized or widely disseminated to the public.

All these documents do not specifically address youth, but mental health of the general population.

Health care for persons with mental health problems is provided at 3 levels of health care, the primary health care physician being the first point of entry that recognizes the problem and refers patients to higher levels of care. Secondary health care is provided through neuropsychiatry specialist-consultative outpatients services in Health Centers, in addition to Institutes for Children and Youth located in the cities of Skopje and Bitola. Inpatient secondary care is provided by neuropsychiatry departments within General Hospitals, while most severe cases are treated at tertiary level in psychiatric hospitals. Additional tertiary care is provided by University Clinic of Psychiatry.

Monitoring of implementation of Law on Mental Health and Strategic plan are responsibility of National Mental Health Committee and National Coordinator for Mental Health, both appointed by Minister of Health. Monitoring is done through a set of defined indicators, however, not completely and on regular basis.

Improving the mental health of young people

Mental health of young people is embedded in existing strategic documents of Ministry of Health (Health Strategy 2020, Mental health policy, 2005 and Law on Mental health, 2006). However, programs for mental health of youth are scarce, in addition to being neither sufficient, nor comprehensive.

The [Institute for Mental Health of Children and Youth "Mladost"](#) Skopje operates within the Health Center of Skopje. The Institute, with its main activity - protection and promotion of mental health of children and youth, conducts primary, secondary and tertiary prevention of mental health, i.e. works on preventing the occurrence of mental disorders among children and young people, their early detection and diagnosis, as well as treatment and rehabilitation. Unfortunately, there is no publicly available information or reports of specific measures undertaken by the Office in order to improve the mental health of young people.

According to a statement from previous Minister of health, in 2017 depression was diagnosed in a one-year-old child.

According to a [report by the Center for Public Health](#), half of all mental illnesses begin at the age of 14, but most cases are not detected or treated. In terms of the burden of adolescent disease, depression is the third leading cause. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people aged 15-29 years.

Community health services for children and youth are still underdeveloped, there is a lack of professional staff particularly in schools, as well as lack of child and adolescent psychiatrists, child and adolescent psychologists and social workers.

According to the last information published on [State Statistical Office](#), in the School year 2017-2018 there were 131 high schools in Macedonia. Not all of them have psychologist, but only 99.

The most important challenge at present is introduction of mental health preventive programs for youth in schools, as an opportunity to support young people prior to onset or at the early stage of mental health problems. Mental health prevention in schools is of particular importance, facilitating the process of further professional orientation and psychological adaptation of the student to the workplace activities.

In most of the faculties in Macedonia there is no psychologist at all, but there are rare exceptions. Thus, recently (2018) [University "St. Kliment Ohridski"- Bitola](#) founded the first psychological counseling center for students. The main objective of the counseling center is to promote mental health among students by developing healthy lifestyles, fostering resentment, and assisting in resolving current and developmental problems. Students have the opportunity for individual or group psychological counseling, psycho-educational workshops as well as workshops for the development of life skills. Currently there are 2 centers within the University, one in Faculty of Security- Skopje, and second one in the Kredo center in Bitola.

Student counseling is free of charge and secrecy of the talks is guaranteed.

7.6 Mechanisms of early detection and signposting of young people facing health risks

Policy framework

Signposting of young people at risk is envisaged in all strategic documents listed in previous sections (Health strategy 2020 and Law on Mental health, 2006). However, in practice the institutional treatment is prevailing in the mental health system.

Prospects are seen in the Health strategy 2020 that envisage paying special attention to the health education for school children, expected to contribute to better health for young people (target 4). This is especially important for the adoption of healthy lifestyles, such as proper nutrition, sufficient physical exercise, prevention of addiction to tobacco, alcohol and psychoactive substances (target 12), and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and mental health problems.

Primary health care services are at the moment not well prepared to cope with patients with mental health problems. There isn't any sufficiently developed network of services for counselling and treatment of children and adolescents with such problems either.

The [Program for Systematic Medical examination of Students and Students in the Republic of Macedonia for 2018](#) states that the Classic Method for Screening the Health of School Children and Youth is systematic examinations that are organized in the public health institutions by the services of preventive health care and preventive dental care for school children.

One of the most common causes (among others) of morbidity and mortality among youth is the mental health disorder (depression, anorexia, bulimia), and therefore early detection should be a priority in caring for school children and youth. Thus, the content of the systematic medical examination includes the collection of data for the early detection of signs of depression and other mental health disorders.^[120]

Stakeholders

The main stakeholders for designating young people at risk are Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and Science, and established bodies within the institutions, such as National Mental Health Committee and National coordinator for mental health and health institutions dealing with youth mental health problems.

Ministry of Health is the principle entity responsible for monitoring of implementation of Law on Mental Health, Strategy 2020 and Mental Health Strategy, through oversight of

¹²⁰ Program for Systematic Medical Examination of Students and Students in the Republic of Macedonia for 2018 (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 17 from 26.1.2018), p. 2 <http://www.fzo.org.mk/WBStorage/Files/8.pdf> (Accessed November 26, 2018)

activities implementation. Ministry of Education and Science oversees activities that are performed in primary and secondary school and implementation of designed programs.

There are no bodies established at local level, although such structures are defined in Health Strategy 2020 and should be main focus in the future, to allow for proper addressing of youth mental health issues through prevention and health promotion programs.

Guidance to stakeholders

Specific programs for sensitization of stakeholders are not in place, except work of some civil society organizations working on substance abuse (Healthy Options Project Skopje), sexual and reproductive health (Health, Education and Research Association – HERA), in collaboration with the institutions.

Target groups

The Ministry of Health regularly carries out annual programs targeting different categories of citizens suffering from certain diseases, however general health policies are undertaken for all young people equally, with respect for the right to non-discrimination on any ground.

Funding

According to the Law on Public Health (Article 34), Funds for financing public health are provided by:

- 1) the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia;
- 2) the budgets of the units for local self-government;
- 3) own sources of income;
- 4) donations and
- 5) other sources of income determined by other law.

The [Budget of the Republic of Macedonia for Ministry of Health for 2018](#) is 6.674.765.000 MKD. Recently, Ministry of Finance announce draft [Budget for 2019](#), and the Ministry of Health budget is set at 6.478.053.000 MKD.

Financing of health in general, including mental health services has seen contrasting trends. In addition to Ministry of Health as policy and decision maker, the main funding comes from Health Insurance Fund (HIF), an entity responsible for purchasing health services, including mental health. Ambulatory services are reimbursed using global budgets and a capped fee-for-service payment system. Primary care providers are paid based on a mix of capitation and achievement of preventive health targets.

However, there is no data on specific activities dedicated to mental health of youth.

Funding for CSO activities is donor based, making programs largely dependent on external funding and therefore lack of sustainability of established activities and their continuity and upgrade.

7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

In Macedonia there is no special rule aiming to regulate the interior of health facilities. However, in order to make the ambient more suitable for children and young people, medicine staff who works in children's clinics and paediatric departments in hospitals organize the interior of the children's and youth's offices in order to be more youth friendly.

Occasionally, doctors who have more influential status in society collect charities from companies and embassies and different organizations for gathering resources who are later used for make health facilities more youth friendly.

Also, before New Year, there is humanitarian action for gathering Christmas gifts for sick children who are on treatment for oncology and hematology departments at the Clinic for Paediatric Diseases. Kids are making wish list which is later published online so anyone could "Be a Santa Claus"- which is the motto of this action.

Sexual and reproductive health clinic especially for young people was opened by the CSO Health Education and Research Association ([HERA](#)) in cooperation with Health Home Skopje and with financial support of international donors in 2005, followed by a second in 2006. These are based on the "I want to know" model originally used with Roma youth. The centers offer free and confidential sexual health services to young people, and have had a high uptake. Since January 2018 these centers are also part of preventive programs of Ministry of Health.

Having in mind that young people are not always feeling comfortable to go on a regular psychologist or gynaecologist, in youth centers "I want to know" (one in Vodno and one in Shuto Orizari), in these youth centers they can get the following services for free:

- Gynaecological examinations and counselling (diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections, administration of therapy and contraception, echo examination)
- Dermato- venerological examinations (cryotherapy, diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections, administration of therapy)
- HIV testing
- Psychological counselling
- Peer education / education with a pedagogue
- Distribution of condoms and educational materials
- Counselling center for the prevention of drug use

7.8 Current debates and reforms

Macedonian health faces many problems. Citizens are troubled by basic things such as: paying for co-payments for health services (although they pay health insurance contributions); prescription drugs that can usually be obtained only in the first half of the month; emergency medical assistance that often does not arrive on time as there are few vehicles and crews; duty services in polyclinics that do not have infusions and appropriate therapy so that patients are sent to hospitals or clinics in Skopje. Conditions in hospitals are generally poor; they have not been renovated for years and are in bad condition.^[121]

Poor health policy and poor working conditions, as well as low wages, resulted in a large number of young doctors who left the country or left for private hospitals. Official data from the Doctors' Chamber indicates that 612 doctors left for the state in five years (this number only applies to those who requested a document for their status).^[122]

In order to overcome the problems, the Ministry of Health foreseen several reforms.

Public health has a large deficit of doctor's specialists and nurses, so health is facing a high rate of brain drain. This issue is still a topic in public discourse, but there is no conclusive solution in sight. In January 2018, the Government held a debate with young specialists in order to hear their problems and tries to find a solution. Also, in November 2018, the Ministry of Health announced changes to the Law on Health Care, which foresees nurses who previously worked in private health care institutions and under

¹²¹ Report on the views and opinions of the citizens on the quality of public health services. A field research report. *Center for Change Management*(Skopje, 2018), p. 9

http://www.cup.org.mk/publications/Zdravstvena-zastita_f.pdf (Accessed November 26, 2018)

¹²² Ibid, p. 11

different circumstances in the meantime have been out of work, to be employed in public health institutions.

In order to provide better and more accessible public health for all citizens, recently (September 2018) the [Minister of Health](#) presented the new reform for the dispersion of secondary health care in Skopje by opening City Hospitals at several points throughout the city. Discussions for this reform are still ongoing.

In order to overcome the problems of emergency assistance, the Ministry of Health is considering the idea of establishing a model of public-private partnership in managing emergency medical assistance. At the moment there are ongoing analyzes that should show how this model would function in Macedonia. The Ministry plans to open the debate with the public after completing the feasibility study.

Considering that depression and psychosomatic diseases are gaining momentum, the Macedonian Psychologists' Association is actively proposing the introduction of a parent psychologist. According to psychologists, citizens in Macedonia are increasingly identifying the need for a psychologist and for every dysfunctional behavior they require expert advice.

An important area that requires further reform is the collection of reliable data and assessment mechanisms to evaluate and monitor the performance of the health system and enable evidence-based decision-making. First and foremost, the population census of 2002 as the central reference tool for all types of health care analysis urgently requires an update. There are a number of other areas where data collection is not sufficiently developed. There is a lack of population-level and individual-level data (e.g. health outcomes by regions, age, economic status and ethnicity) as well as of household, consumption and health surveys, which could, for example, assess satisfaction or financial protection. Also, systems to obtain quality data on the management system with reliable indicators are not in place. These could, for example, allow estimation of indicators such as avoidable mortality and evaluation of health service quality. Furthermore, there is an important lack of data that assesses health system efficiency, such as data on health workforce by regions, institutions and professions and detailed data on provider costs and resource utilization. Lastly, there are no reliable data on the shares of health care-related funding by sources of finance outside the HIF (out-of-pocket spending, other government agencies' expenditure etc.).

Ongoing reforms and privatization of primary health care services are not seen to be in favor of introducing and/or integrating specific youth clinics in primary health care settings. New approaches are needed at central and local government levels to better address the sexual and reproductive health needs of young people and to ensure that the new reforms do not negatively influence accessibility to services through decreases in financial support and quality of care. Youth center "Sakam da znam" ('I want to know') established by CSO HERA should be a guiding point and an example for establishment of similar centers in the future, to address the needs and health issues of youth in the country.

8. CREATIVITY AND CULTURE

Cultural events, a number of winter and summer festivals, music events, art exhibitions, theater and poetry evenings are only part of the rich treasury of Macedonian culture.

The National Strategy for Development of Culture in Republic of Macedonia 2018-2022 ([Национална Стратегија за развој на културата во Република Македонија во периодот 2018-2022 година](#)) is a strategic document that determines the mid-term objectives and priorities for development of the culture in Republic of Macedonia.

Fostering equality and creating conditions for fostering the freedom and diversity of creativity and cultural identities are the main aims of National Strategy for Development of Culture 2018-2022. The Strategy underlines the guaranteed right to esthetic, artistic and cultural diversity that should be implemented with the inclusion of marginalized groups and people with special needs in order to avoid social discrimination in culture.

8.1 General context

Main trends in young people's creativity and cultural participation

There are very few data available concerning the trends in young's people's cultural participation. Most of the available information on the question of cultural participation of young people is presented in the publication Youth Trends in Republic of Macedonia ([Младински трендови во Република Македонија](#)). The research was produced in 2014 by the [Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research Skopje](#) and upon agreement with the Agency of Youth and Sport.

The research shows that a quarter of young people in Macedonia does not attend cultural programmes. Those who do, are mostly interested in attending concerts and multi-media events and they show least interest in poetry festival. Most of the events are organized in the capital or some bigger towns and therefore, the youth population from rural areas has more obstacles (financial and geographical obstacles) to attend. There are differences between the different ethnicities in the state. Thus, from the young Albanians, 48.4% reported that they did not attend cultural events at all, while the percentage of Macedonians was 15.1%. It seems that educational status is associated with attending of cultural events. According to the research 73,8% who completed only primary education do not attend any cultural events.

The most visited cultural institution is the cinema (34,5%) while only 1% of the young people are visiting the opera. One quarter of the youth population is not reading books at all. Most of the young people are interested in watching TV. Women are mainly interested in TV serials and men are mostly interested in sport channels. All young people watch a lot of films; most of them (58%) comedies and only 17% watch history movies.

44% of youngsters are listening to pop music, which makes pop music takes the most important place in the youth culture. 24% of the young people are listening to "turbo-folk" music which is a popular folk music in the region of the Balkans. The musical preferences of the young people depend on the age, level of education and ethnical groups.

Related to the cultural needs of the young people, most of them have expressed their willingness for more amusement parks, open-air festivals and concerts (55%). Only 29% consider that theatre plays are more needed. The cultural needs of the young people depend mainly on the place of living. Namely, young people living in smaller towns expressed more the need for cinema compared to the youngsters from the capital.

According to the [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#), the key challenges identified in this area have been identified as follows:^[123]

- lack of regular cultural events for young people (concerts, multimedia events) in venues outside Skopje;
- lack of interest among young people in attending cultural events and cultural institutions;
- lack of interest amongst youth in creative artistic work in organized forms; and
- new media culture that is becoming ever more popular among young people at the expense of literature, but about which there is a lack of media literacy, with many young people unable to recognize the influence of media culture, including the manipulations that engender negative attitudes to foreign cultures.

Main concepts

The [Constitution of Republic of Macedonia](#) states that the cultural rights are one of the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the citizens. Therefore, it guarantees the freedom of any kind of cultural, scientific and intellectual creation. The constitution of Republic of Macedonia also guarantees the protection and affirmation of cultural heritage as well as the contemporary cultural heritage of all people living in Macedonia. The Constitution also gives right and freedom of all communities living in Macedonia to express and develop their cultural identity, create cultural institutions or other forms of associations.

In Republic of Macedonia beside National Strategy for Development of Culture 2018-2022 ([Национална Стратегија за развој на културата во Република Македонија во периодот 2018-2022 година](#)), there is Law on Culture ([Закон за култура](#)) adopted in 1998 but has so far undergone many changes. The Law defines the foundations of culture as a fundamental value of the Republic of Macedonia, the forms of culture, the manner and conditions of its financing, as well as other issues of interest to the culture. Culture, in terms of the law, covers: creation, publication of artistic creation and the protection and use of creation. The Law states that:

The Republic encourages and helps culture, especially through:^[124]

1. favorable conditions for achieving cultural values;
2. special conditions for the establishment and operation of cultural subjects;
3. stimulating tax and customs policy;
4. special rights in labor relations in culture;
5. provision and protection of originals or samples, ie documentation of published works through purchase, compulsory preservation and protection of works of art and publications, provision and protection of films and film materials, documentation for music and stage works, documentation for performed architectural works and the like;
6. determining and awarding republican awards and recognitions in the field of culture;
7. scholarships in the field of culture and
8. insurance especially of prominent artists, rare and expensive instruments, objects and objects of cultural and historical significance, and the like.

¹²³ National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, Agency of Youth and Sport of Republic of Macedonia (2016), p. 28 <http://strategijazamladi.mk/sites/default/files/National-Youth-Strategy-2016-2025.pdf> (Accessed December 17, 2018)

¹²⁴ Law on Culture ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 31/98, 49/03, 82/05, 24/07, 116/10, 47/11, 51/11, 136/12, 23/13, 187/13, 44/14, 61/15, 154/15, 39/16, 11/18 and 11/18 - Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia, U.no.196 / 2007 dated January 16, 2008, published in "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia "No. 15/2008), Article 2 <http://www.kultura.gov.mk/images/stories/2015/1.pdf> (Accessed December 17, 2018)

As cultural heritage is very important for our society and reflects Macedonian tradition, in 2004 the Government adopted Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage ([Закон за заштита на културното наследство](#)). The Law so far has undergone more changes. The law specifies the types, categories, identification, methods of protection and other instruments for protection of cultural heritage, the regime of protection and use of cultural heritage, the rights and duties of the holders and the restrictions on the right to ownership of cultural heritage in the public interest, organization, coordination and supervision, professional titles and other issues that are of importance for the unity and functioning of the system for protection of cultural heritage in the Republic of Macedonia.^[125]

Cultural heritage in terms of the Law are material and immaterial goods which, as an expression or testimony of human creativity in the past and present or as common works of man and nature, due to their archaeological, ethnological, historical, artistic, architectural, urban, ambient, technical, sociological and other scientific or cultural values, properties, contents or functions, have cultural and historical significance, and for the sake of their protection and use, they are under the legal regime in accordance with this and other laws.^[126]

Since the culture is created on the basis of equality of all people, the National strategy for Development of Culture 2018-2022 aims to make culture accessible to all. Therefore, each citizen of Republic of Macedonia, no matter of his/her gender, ethnic, religious or political beliefs has equal right to access cultural benefits.

8.2 Administration and governance

Governance

In Republic of Macedonia, the culture is an important question that is present in different national regulations. The young people are targeted as part of the general public but some cultural events and projects have only youth in the focus. Therefore, the governance of culture and young people is a complex question. Many stakeholders on national and local level participate in the policy-making and implementation of programs for culture and young people.

State actors

The [Ministry of Culture](#) of the Republic of Macedonia is responsible governmental body for all questions related to culture on national level. The Ministry proposes laws for development of cultural policies in Macedonia. It is in charge of the implementation of the National programmes for culture following the National Strategy for Development of Culture 2018-2022. This Ministry ensures the links between the institutions, local authorities and other stakeholders concerning the question of culture.

The bodies responsible for the measures in the area of culture within the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 are: The Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, educational institutions, cultural institutions on local level, local self-government units, media, the Macedonian Radio Television, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, and the business sector.^[127]

¹²⁵ Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage, ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 20/04, 71/04, 115/07, 18/11, 148/11, 23/13, 137/13, 164/13, 38/14, 44/14, 199/14, 104/15, 154/15, 192/15, 39/16, 11/18), Article 1, http://www.kultura.gov.mk/images/stories/2015/_____.doc (Accessed December 17, 2018)

¹²⁶ Ibid, Article 2

¹²⁷ National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, Agency of Youth and Sport of Republic of Macedonia (2016), p. 30 <http://strategijazamladi.mk/sites/default/files/National-Youth-Strategy-2016-2025.pdf> (Accessed December 17, 2018)

Different public cultural institutions are implementing the cultural policies in Macedonia such as museums, theatres, libraries, cultural centers, opera etc. They are public bodies working on national or local level. They provide cultural offer for the citizens in different forms. Their activities are mainly funded by the state budget upon presentation of yearly program of cultural activities.

The municipalities in Macedonia are important stakeholders in the field of culture and youth. Since the decentralization reform in 2005, the local authorities have the culture and youth among their competences. One part of the municipal budget is dedicated to programs for young people and cultural activities. Several municipalities have also adopted Youth strategies on local level.

Non-state actors

The non-state actors have very important role in the creation of cultural offer in Republic of Macedonia. There are associations/CSOs that are organizing festivals and other cultural events of any kind. Moreover, the youth organizations are one of the most important stakeholders that work for implementation of youth policies and creation of possibilities for young people.

The private sector also plays an important role in the development of the cultural scene in Macedonia. For example, most of the concerts and festivals are organized by private companies, some of the cinemas are private investments, big companies are sponsors of some cultural events etc. Some of these initiatives are also supported by state budget. The independent artists are also proposing cultural offers, sometimes organized in independent cultural groups: theatre and dance companies, music bands etc.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

There is no information on existence of standardized mechanism for cross-sectorial cooperation between the stakeholders involved in policy-making in the field of culture and young people.

The latest policy documents were created in a participatory manner and through wide consultation with different stakeholders. For example, during the creation of the National Strategy for Development of Culture in Republic of Macedonia 2018-2022 ([Национална Стратегија за развој на културата во Република Македонија во периодот 2018-2022 година](#)) many subjects were consulted, including national institutions, civil society organizations, artists, independent experts and others.

8.3 National strategy on creativity and culture for young people

Existence of a national strategy

In Macedonia there is one single National Strategy for Development of Culture in Republic of Macedonia 2018-2022 ([Национална Стратегија за развој на културата во Република Македонија во периодот 2018-2022 година](#)). The question of creativity and culture for young people is a cross-cutting issue that is related to two national strategies:

National Strategy for Development of Culture in Republic of Macedonia 2018-2022 was adopted in 2018, followed by one Action plan. The Strategy is continuation of the previous one adopted for the period [2013-2017](#). The previous strategy was also followed by the [Action plan for the Implementation of the National Strategy for Development of Culture 2013-2017](#).

It's important to emphasize that this Strategy does not apply only to young people, but to general population and it also covers youth as part of the general public.

[National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#) as a Strategy that applies only to young people, beside other chapters have thematic area on culture, and as stated, the focus here is only to youth.

Scope and contents

National Strategy for Development of Culture of Republic of Macedonia 2018-2022

The National Strategy for Development of Culture 2018-2022 is a strategic document which starts from clearly defined vision for development of culture in Republic of Macedonia. For implementation of the measures foreseen in the Strategy, the Strategy is complemented with an Action plan.

The strategy is guided by the vision of a democratic, plural, secular, free, dynamic, balanced and sustainable cultural development based on equal access and participation, starting from the belief that the right to culture is a fundamental and inviolable human right. The main mission of the strategy is to encourage and coordinate the development of effective cultural policies for free creation and protection of cultural heritage by establishing sustainable legislative, organizational, financial and staffing conditions, introducing transparency and participativeness in decision making and critical evaluation of artistic and cultural practices.^[128]

The Strategy notes the current weaknesses of cultural policy in Macedonia, such as its reactivity, insufficient transparency, adoption of acts and prioritization without prior analysis and assessment, lack of qualified managers in the culture, absence of initiatives for substantial reform in cultural sector, minimal cooperation with civil society organizations, interference of central government and political parties in cultural institutions, etc.

The Strategy also defines the basic principles of the strategic development of culture: equality, access, participation and rights.^[129]

As the culture in Republic of Macedonia is a set of multiple cultural traditions, the Strategy puts special emphasis on interculturalism and fostering diversity and plural cultural identities. The Strategy points out that in the following period, special attention will be paid to persons with special physical needs, persons with developmental disabilities, children and juveniles without parents and single parents.

The Strategy mentions young people in a very obscure narrative. As one of the priority is stated planning of special measures and programmes for promotion of cultural participation of youth, as well as persons with special needs and elderly people. In the directions for future development it is stated that institutions have to be more open for the needs of every category of people, and especially for kids and young people, persons with special needs and elderly needs.

In terms of educational policy in culture, the Strategy foreseen the culture to be more included in the curricula of primary and secondary education; supplementing the study programs in higher education with subject programs and modules for better qualification of graduates for work on protection of cultural heritage, such as the study programs in architecture, art history, construction, archeology, etc.; establishment of a higher education facility that will offer study programs for the conservation and restoration of cultural heritage; establishment of a scientific institute for realization of research in the area of protection of cultural heritage, etc.

¹²⁸ National Strategy for Development of Culture of Republic of Macedonia 2018-2022 ("Official Gazette of Republic of Macedonia" Nb.81, 08.05.2018), p. 2
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qfzA76RBOTS1_A00fNn62n352E3nr8kB/view (Accessed December 18, 2018)

¹²⁹ Ibid, p. 6

Regarding the publishing activity, and in relation to young people, the Strategy envisages encouraging literary work for children and youth, creating literary magazines intended for presenting young authors and priority support for translating production, and the creativity of young people.^[130]

National Strategy for Development of Culture 2013-2017 ([Национална стратегија за развој на културата](#) 2013-2017) also had general focus with few notes to young people. In the chapter Basic principles and priorities of cultural strategy there was a subtitle Cultural education of citizens of Republic of Macedonia and the role of young generations. The previous Strategy emphasized that institutions in the field of culture in a systematic way will need to explore the cultural needs of young people by designing programs intended for them and projects that young people will independently realize, as well as creating conditions for participation of young people in projects of cultural institutions, developing a critical attitude towards cultural events, innovation and creativity, awareness of cultural pluralism and familiarization of the culture of others will advantageously influence the development of young people and their further professional determination.

There is no publicly available document about the level of implementation of the previous Strategy and its Action plan.

National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 (Национална стратегија за млади)

The National Youth Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia is the key policy document for youth development in Macedonia. Its aims to improve the social and economic situation of young people as well as to create an environment that will enable youth to fulfill their rights, needs and interests. The Strategy is divided in 9 key areas:

- Youth participation
- Youth information
- Local youth work
- Education
- Employment and pre-employment support
- Culture
- Sports
- Health
- Quality of life.

Culture is one of the key areas in the National Youth Strategy. In view of the key challenges identified in the area of culture, this Strategy provides appropriate long-term objectives and specific measures for addressing the respective problems:

- An improved and sustainable system of creative and cultural practices among young people
- Improved quality of cultural life and entertainment of young people
- Equal access for young people to quality cultural events and opportunities for cultural cooperation
- Young people are involved in drafting and implementing cultural policies

Responsible authority for the implementation of the strategy

National Strategy for development of culture 2018-2022

The Ministry of Culture is responsible for implementation of the National Strategy for Development of Culture 2018-2022. Other bodies responsible for the measures listed in the Action plan are: local self-governments, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Information Society and Administration, all national cultural institutions (Macedonian Opera and Ballet, Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra...), Universities in Macedonia, National and local libraries and other.

¹³⁰ Ibid, p. 64

The Strategy foreseen establishment of working group responsible for monitoring of realization of the Strategy. Such a group has not been established yet (December, 2018), and it is expected that it will be established soon.

Information about responsible authority for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 can be found in chapter 1.3.

Revisions/updates

As this is the first year of implementation of current Strategy, there is still no revision, neither update.

The National Strategy for Development of Culture 2013-2017 preceded the current National Strategy for Development of Culture 2018-2022. Both strategies have general focus and are not referring exclusively to young people. When it comes to young people, they are mentioned in both strategies very few times. There are no structural changes when it's coming to youth and culture in given strategies.

8.4 Promoting culture and cultural participation

Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

Access to culture is one of the priorities of the National Strategy for Development of Culture in Republic of Macedonia 2018-2022 ([Национална стратегија за развој на културата во Македонија 2018-2022](#)), i.e. one of the special goals is to enable accessibility and participation in cultural processes.

As stated in the [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#), the challenges of young people for access to culture are lack of cultural offer outside of the capital as well as geographical and financial obstacles for rural youth to be part of cultural events.

In order to provide demetropolisation, deconcentration of the culture, to disperse it in the local environments, and to enrich cultural offer in different parts outside of Skopje, in 2008 the Ministry of Culture introduced the programme "Hot cultural wave" ([Топол културен бран](#)). Each year, the Ministry offers financial support to municipalities for development of cultural programme during the summer period. The aim of the programme is to provide possibilities for cultural events for the citizens in order to raise their cultural awareness and values. The municipalities organize festivals and other cultural events of any kind, for example concerts, theatre plays, exhibitions, debates etc.

Since 2017, the new Government made little changes in the scope of the programme, and gave new name "New cultural wave" ([Нов културен бран](#)). Instead of as it was outlined earlier, when the municipalities were the only organizers and applicants at the competition of the event, the intention is to encourage and activate the independent cultural scene, and in order to achieve such commitments, the right to participate and compete with projects for the event will have associations of citizens, foundations and individuals in the field of culture who should have a quality, aesthetically profiled and value-based offer. In this way, competitiveness, movement and inspiration of new and fresh impulses will be established in the design and improvement of the activity as a whole. The 2018 event took place from September 1 to October 15.

The municipalities in Macedonia have important role in the development of cultural offer in Macedonia. Each municipality is devoting one part of the municipal budget for organization of cultural events on local level. These cultural events offered vary from concerts to food or film festivals. They are organized by the municipalities themselves, civil society organizations or private companies. The aim of these events is to offer leisure activities and entertainment for the local population, provide possibilities for social cohesion and well as to support the local development. For example, every summer for the past year, many municipalities are organizing so called 'Cultural Summer' ([Културно](#)

лето). Through concerts of various musicians from the country and abroad, theater performances on the open stage, folk dances and dances, municipal authorities want to animate the cultural life of all generations, including young people. These cultural events throughout the country are supported by the Ministry of Culture and are free of charge, so they are accessible for those with financial obstacles.

In order to reduce financial obstacles for young people to participate in the cultural events, in 2014 the Government of Republic of Macedonia has introduced a possibility for reduced price for national public transport. Namely, young people under 27, have 50% discount for traveling by train and possibility to travel by train for free every third weekend in the month. Also, the orphans, the young people from social families and the students can travel for free each Thursday of the month (by train and city busses in Skopje).^[131] In 2016 this measure was extended, so instead of one, young people up to 27 years of age have the opportunity to use the services of Macedonian Railways, free of charge, every first and third weekend during the month.^[132] High school students can travel for free on a train every Wednesday.

Another extension of the measure was made in 2016. So instead of free public transport in the capital of Macedonia for students (from state universities) only on Thursday, from 1 January 2016 students can use public transport for free every day in the week during the academic year, i.e. from 1 October till 30 of June.^[133]

In order to bring the theater closer to the students, a free Thursday was introduced in 2014, that is, every Thursday; the students can watch theater plays at the Drama Theater, the Macedonian National Theater and Theater Comedy free of charge. Wednesday, meanwhile, is a day reserved for high school students, while the category of people up to 27 years old, for which the discount of 50 per cent was valid, was extended to persons up to 29 years of age.

However, in 2017, "Theater Comedy" decided to abolish the free Thursday and free Wednesday and instead introduced 50% discount (150 MKD) for students. Today, the free Thursday in principle, still applies to the Macedonian National Theater and the Drama Theater.^[134]

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

There is no information about the existence of national wide program to provide information about culture to young people.

The information about organization of one event is usually shared by the organizers through their means of communication such as website, social media etc. The public cultural institutions are publishing the information for events and offers on their communication channels: websites and social media. The Ministry of Culture is often publishing information concerning projects financed by the Ministry.

The National Institution [Museum of the Macedonian Struggle - Skopje](#), in the frames of the project "Open Museums" and in order to promote inclusiveness, education, social justice and accessibility of museums, in October 2018 organized promotion of a guide for a museum program for children / persons with autism and their families and a seminar for museum workers. The main goal of the project is promotion of cultural heritage,

¹³¹ http://www.radiomof.mk/kako-do-besplaten-bilet-za-voz-za-mladi-i-studenti/?utm_source=daily.mk&utm_medium=daily.mk (Accessed December 18,2018)

¹³² <http://www.mtc.gov.mk/besplatnen-prevoz-za-mladi-lica-do-27-godini> (Accessed December 18,2018)

¹³³ <http://skopska.mk/soopstение2.html> (Accessed December 18,2018)

¹³⁴ <https://www.novamakedonija.com.mk/zivot/kultura/%D1%81%D1%82%D1%83%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D0%B8%D0%BC%D0%B0%D0%B0%D1%82-%D1%81%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%9C%D0%B0-%D0%B4%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%98%D0%B4%D0%B0/> (Accessed December 18,2018)

improving the accessibility of museum contents and initiating future development of museum programs to improve the inclusiveness of vulnerable groups in society - children with autism and their families. The project is funded by the EU Delegation within the celebration of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage.^[135]

There are private initiatives for information about cultural offer, mostly through internet. Namely, there are several websites that regroup the information for cultural offer such as: www.reborn.mk; www.time.mk/nastani; www.skopjeinfo.mk. These websites provide possibilities to identify all events taking place in Macedonia, although most of the information provided is for the capital city.

Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people

One of the goals stated in the Annual Program of Activities of the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage ([Управа за заштита на културното наследство](#)) is to engage young people in the protection and care of cultural heritage, as well as to introduce them to the work of the Directorate and cultural institutions from the field of heritage protection.^[136]

On January 31, 2018, in the premises of the EU Info Centre in Skopje, the annual program for marking the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, prepared by experts in the Cultural Heritage Protection Office, was presented and launched. Under the slogan "Our heritage - European value!" And the motto "Towards shared responsibility for the protection of cultural heritage", the rich national program of the Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage for 2018 contains numerous activities and events for the popularization of the Macedonian cultural heritage, bringing it closer to the wider public through public presentations, promotions and educational events for children, young people and students; publishing important publications on cultural heritage, organizing expert events in the form of workshops and trainings for the employees in the institutions for protection of cultural heritage, but also for the civil sector and the local communities.

Municipalities throughout Macedonia, the Ministry of Culture, the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, as well as other institutions and organizations, organize events aimed at promoting the cultural heritage and bringing it closer to young people. One of the main goals of Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage is to familiarize young population from an early age with the cultural properties of the Republic of Macedonia, mainly promotional events in their organization target primary school students.^[137] Thus, on October 5, 2018, an educational lesson was held in Kursumli An in Skopje on the topic "I love and care for my cultural heritage", organized by the Directorate for the Protection of Cultural Heritage, and in cooperation with the Primary School "Hristijan Todorovski Karpos" from Skopje, within the framework of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. The event is realized with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science and the Bureau for Development of Education of the Republic of Macedonia.^[138]

¹³⁵ <http://www.mmb.org.mk/index.php/en/events/%D0%B0%D0%BA%D1%82%D1%83%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8/466-otvoreni-muzei-3> (Accessed December 18, 2018)

¹³⁶ Annual programme of activities of the Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage, European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018- "Our Heritage – European Value!" (Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage, 2018), p. 3 <http://uzkn.gov.mk/mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/DPCH-Programme-for-EYCH.pdf> (Accessed December 18, 2018)

¹³⁷ Ibid, p. 2-3

¹³⁸ <http://uzkn.gov.mk/mk/%D0%B5%D0%B4%D1%83%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D1%87%D0%B0%D1%81-%D0%B3%D0%BE-%D1%81%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B0%D0%BC-%D0%B8-%D1%81%D0%B5->

There is no information about the existence of specific national wide programme for discovery and appreciation of the cultural and artistic heritage of European countries among the young people.

8.5 Developing cultural and creative competences

Acquiring cultural and creative competences through education and training

Cultural classes are part of the formal educational system of Republic of Macedonia. The educational programs for primary schools (age from 6 to 14) include obligatory art classes: plastic arts and music each year. These classes are also part of the first year of educational programmes in high schools (age from 15 to 18). The schools are often proposing extra-curriculum activities in art and culture: orchestra, choir, dance and fine arts, which are optional activities outside regular classes.

Macedonia also offers formal high-schools in the field of culture (age from 15 to 18). Music, dance and applied art high-schools are offering four-year education in the related fields. The dance and applied art high-school only exist in Skopje and there are several music high-schools in some bigger towns in Macedonia (for example Tetovo, Bitola, Stip).^[139]

According to the Curricula of Music Education for the First Year VET School ([Наставна програма Музичка уметност, I година средно стручно образование](#)), the program objectives are:

- the student acquires knowledge about the history of music;
- To understand elements of the stylistic characteristics of music in every period of its historical development;
- To get acquainted with the life and work of the representatives of those periods;
- to gain the ability to actively listen to and perform musical works;
- to deepen knowledge of musical theory;
- to master and apply the knowledge of musical folklore;
- develop interest in recognizing musical works;
- to develop interest in visiting concerts, opera and ballet performances;
- develop interest in active participation in projects.

According to the Curricula of Fine Arts for first year VET school ([Предметна програма Ликовна уметност за I година](#)), some of the programme objectives are:

- Student to gain visual abilities to perceive fine art's values
- To learn the language of fine art and to gain other theoretical knowledge
- To develop skills for individual artistic expression
- To experience the artwork and to be able to express individual impressions
- To possess knowledge of the cultural heritage of Macedonia, the characteristics of folk culture and cultures of other countries

The highest level of art education can be represented in the art academies. There are several art academies in Macedonia on the level of higher education: Music, Drama, Dance, Theatre and Fine Art. After attending 4-year program, the successful students are awarded with faculty degree. In the [Faculty of Fine Arts](#) in Skopje there are 4 study programmes in first cycle of studies, as follows: study programs in Graphics, Sculpture, Painting and Art Pedagogy. For second cycle of studies students can choose between Painting, Sculpting and Graphic Art.

[%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B6%D0%B0%D0%BC-%D0%B7%D0%B0/](#) (Accessed December 18,2018)

¹³⁹ <http://bro.gov.mk/docs/srednostrucno/Tabela%204.pdf> (Accessed December 19, 2018)

[Faculty of Dramatic Arts](#) offers few study programmes on Bachelor and Master studies and one program for PhD. The undergraduate studies include the following study programmes: Drama Actors, Dramaturgy, Production, Theater Directing, Film and TV editing, Film and TV directing and Cinematography. On the Masters program, students can choose between Production, Theatre Studies and Film Studies.

In the [Faculty of Music- Skopje](#), there are few study programmes for first cycle of studies, as: Music Theory and Pedagogy Composition and Distribution; Solo Singing; Key Instruments; Ballet Pedagogy; Popular Genres; Brass Instruments; String Instruments. For master studies students can choose between Ballet Pedagogy, Music Sciences and Music Interpretation and Composition.

In order to make music education more accessible to students with financial obstacles, in April 2018, on the proposal of the [Ministry of Education and Science](#), the Government at the [64th session](#) adopted the Draft Law on Youth Support for the Purchase of Musical Instruments ([Предлог Закон за поддршка на млади при купување музички инструменти](#)). The Law stipulates that the Ministry will make part of the paid funds for purchased musical instrument in the amount of 75% of the paid funds, but not more than 100,000 denars (around 1627 euros) per instrument, for 25 musical instruments purchased by regular students enrolled in state secondary schools in which plans and programs for musical art are realized and in the amount of 75% of the paid funds, but not more than 100,000 denars per instrument, for 25 musical instruments purchased by regular students enrolled at state higher education institutions where the exercise study programs in the field of music.^[140] In order to qualify for a refund, the student must, inter alia, have an excellent grade in the course of the instrument for which he applies for a refund and the total monthly income of the parents-the guardians of the student to be less than four average paid net salaries per employee for the last three months, determined by the State Statistical Office.^[141]

Specialised training for professionals in the education, culture and youth fields

There is no information for the existence of any public national wide specialized training for development of cultural and creative skills for relevant professionals such as teachers, educators and youth workers.

However, a lot of individual initiatives for cultural education are created by civil society organizations, cultural institutions or youth associations. There are programs for capacity development of professionals in cultural sector offered by cultural foundations and international donors. Most of the European countries have bilateral cooperation with Macedonia in the field of culture and support programs for cultural workers and artists. Many of the youth associations are organizing activities related to cultural education. Some of them are supported by EU programs such as Erasmus plus.

Providing quality access to creative environments

The Ministry of Culture is offering financial support for talented artists in the framework of their National programme for support of culture. Each year, through public call, the Ministry of Culture gives financial support to the young cultural artists to attend education in the field of music, dance, fine arts, architecture and cultural heritage.^[142]

¹⁴⁰ <https://www.akademik.mk/na-predlog-na-mon-vladata-go-prifati-predlog-zakonot-za-poddrshka-na-mladi-pri-kupuvane-na-muzichki-instrumenti/> (Accessed December 19, 2018)

¹⁴¹ See more, <http://mon.gov.mk/index.php/2014-07-23-14-03-24/vesti-i-nastani/2521-2018-2041> (Accessed December 19, 2018)

¹⁴² See more: <http://www.kultura.gov.mk/index.php/konkursi/4876-konkurs> (Accessed December 19, 2018)

Authors have the possibility to apply for funding for realization of cultural projects of national interest (for example in music, art, theatre, literature etc.). Each year the Ministry of Culture launches a public call for cultural projects of national interest.^[143]

In 2015 in Skopje was opened the first multi-functional art space “[Pubic room](#)”. Public room is open for companies, organizations, artistes and individuals as place for exhibitions, concerts, art workshop. It represents place for commercial bazaars, free co-working space for freelancers, concept store, bar etc. it is considered as a space for cultural expression and is often visited by local artists.

8.6 Developing entrepreneurial skills through culture

Developing entrepreneurial skills through cultural activities

The concept of entrepreneurship is becoming very important in the Macedonian educational system. In 2014 the Ministry of Education and Science adopted the [Entrepreneurial Learning Strategy of Macedonia 2014-2020](#). The goal of the Strategy is to transform Macedonia in country with highly developed entrepreneurial culture and spirit that inspires everyone. The Strategy aims to introduce the entrepreneurship learning in formal and non-formal education. Even though young people are not explicitly stated as beneficiary, they are clearly the main target group for the implementation of the Strategy.

One of the priority areas of the Strategy is Macedonia to become a country with highly developed entrepreneurial culture and spirit that inspires everyone. The Strategy recognizes the importance of entrepreneurial learning for development of creativity among young people. One of the objectives of the Strategy is to facilitate the development of free, open-minded, independent and proactive young generations that can explore and express their entrepreneurial potential. The Strategy acknowledges that entrepreneurial skills can support young people in the field of creative industries.

Outside the entrepreneurial study subjects in formal educational institutions, there is no information on national programmes or projects that support the development of entrepreneurial skills by participating in cultural and creative opportunities.

The analysis of social entrepreneurship in Macedonia shows a low level of entrepreneurial culture and a lack of entrepreneurial skills, especially in the areas of management and finance.^[144]

Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

Although there are no specific policies, programmes or projects that target young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors on a national level, there is one yearly event that is financially supported by one local self-government (the city of Skopje) - [Skopje KREATIVA](#). Skopje KREATIVA is a festival that centers the development of creative industries in Macedonia. Since 2012 the festival is organized each year in Skopje and gathers artists, cultural workers, designers from Macedonia, the Balkan Region and

¹⁴³ See more: <http://www.kultura.gov.mk/index.php/odnosi-so-javnost/soopstenija/3536--2018> (Accessed December 19, 2018)

¹⁴⁴ Analysis of policies and measures for development of entrepreneurship and increase of employment in the Republic of Macedonia: with particular reference to the Roma population, *National Center for Development of Innovation and Entrepreneurial Learning* (Skopje, 2017), p. 42 <http://eprints.ugd.edu.mk/19190/1/%D0%A1%D0%BE%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%BD%D0%BE%20%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%82%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%88%D1%82%D0%B2%D0%BE%20%D0%B7%D0%B0%20%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%BA%D0%BB%D1%83%D0%B7%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0%20%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%A0%D0%BE%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5.pdf> (Accessed December 21, 2018)

EU etc. The festival involves exhibitions, workshops, trainings, activities for children and high-school students, design workshops and concerts.

Aside from this, cultural projects initiated by young people could be financially supported by the Ministry of Culture through the National programme for culture. However, the National programme does not specifically make reference to creative industries and young people.

8.7 Fostering the creative use of new technologies

New technologies in support of creativity and innovation

There is no information on a specific policy or national programme for using new technologies to empower young people's creativity and capacity for innovation.

One of the key projects in the previous National Strategy for Development of E-Content 2010-2015 (Национална стратегија за развој на е-содржини 2010-2015), was "Computer for Every Child", launched in 2006 and implemented in all primary and secondary public schools in the country. The project foreseen purchase, installation and maintenance of technological equipment, as well as development of an environment fruitful for creating and using e-content. The project went awry. In many schools there were not enough computers, and where they were, they were not used at all or were used for entertainment instead of education or innovation. There are indications that in some school's computers were stolen, and in part completely destroyed. It was never revealed exactly how much the money cost the state this project.^[145]

The Ministry of Education is preparing the successor of the project "Computer for Every Child". This was announced by the Deputy Minister of Education and Science who says that there is a need of digitalization of the curriculum in order to enable students to learn from modern aids.^[146] In addition to the announced digitalization, no specific measures have yet been taken.

In order to foster the creative and innovative potential of young people in primary and secondary schools, the Fund for Innovation and Technology Development together with the Ministry of Education announced a public call in 2017 to fund research projects "Challenges for young researchers". For the most successful researchers, rewards were provided as an incentive for further successful scientific work.^[147]

Occasionally, the Fund for Innovation and Technology Development organizes other similar competitions, designed primarily for students in primary and secondary schools, in order to develop their creativity and innovation.

In October 2018, the Fund for Innovation and Technological Development started a new initiative 'Friday for Youth' ('Петок за млади'). In order to encourage creative skills and innovation among young people, regular innovative thematic workshops with primary and secondary school students are planned.

¹⁴⁵ http://www.ccc.org.mk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=80:2010-03-08-14-56-22&catid=5:izvestai&Itemid=25&lang=en (Accessed December 21, 2018)

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.publikum.mk/drzhavata-podgotvuva-nov-proekt-kompjuter-za-sekoe-dete-i-digitalizirane-na-nastavata/> (Accessed December 21, 2018)

¹⁴⁷ <https://makfax.com.mk/daily-news/%D0%BF%D0%BE%D1%82%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BA%D0%BD%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%BA%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%B2%D0%BD%D0%BE-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BB%D1%83%D0%B2/> (Accessed December 23, 2018)

Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

There is no information on a specific policy or national programme attracting young interest in culture, the arts and science through the use of new technologies.

There are some projects implemented by non-governmental actors that tackle the question of new technologies and cultural heritage.

Makedonika Foundation is the founder of the project "Makeonija" ("[Македоника](#)"), an Android application and web page for reading e-books in Macedonian language. The application includes free online picture books, which makes it unique in the world. This project targets everyone who understands the Macedonian language.

8.8 Synergies and partnerships

Synergies between public policies and programmes

The questions of creativity and culture are cross-cutting in several Strategies on national level:

- National Youth Strategy 2016-2025
- National Strategy for development of culture 2018-2022 – Национална стратегија за развој на културата во Република Македонија 2018-2022
- Education Strategy 2018-2025
- Entrepreneurial learning Strategy of Macedonia 2014-2020- Стратегија за претприемачко учење во Република Македонија 2014-2020

There is no information on existence of clear mechanism for cooperation in order to ensure synergies in the different policies.

The National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 is a comprehensive Strategy including different national policies that concern young people in one single document. The process for the creation of the Strategy was highly participative and involved the Ministries and other (non) governmental agencies concerned.

The synergy between the national and local policies on youth questions is very important. Many municipalities created local youth policies in order to improve youth development in their community. The creation of these local youth policies takes into consideration the youth strategy on national level while taking into account the local context. Most of these local youth strategies identify the culture as one of the main priorities for youth development.

The Strategy for youth of City of Skopje 2014-2018 ([Стратегија за млади на град Скопје 2014-2018](#)) is one example of Strategy on local level where culture is identified as one of the eight priorities.

Partnerships between the culture and creative sectors, youth organisations and youth workers

In 2018 Ministry of Culture formed intra-sectoral group for realization of youth policies in the field of culture. The group is composed of governmental institution and youth organizations. In December 2018 Intra-sectoral group held first meeting where they discussed about measures proposed by Ministry of Culture which should led to greater involvement of young people in cultural life in Macedonia. Some of the measures are: scholarships for talented students, discounts for high school and university students, international projects in the field of culture (in partnership with AYS) etc. Concrete measures and activities should be taken in 2019.

8.9 Enhancing social inclusion through culture

Fostering equality and young people involvement through cultural activities

Fostering equality is one of the main aims of National Strategy for Development of Culture 2018-2022- [Национална стратегија за развој на културата во Република Македонија 2018-2022](#). The Strategy underlines the guaranteed right to esthetic, artistic and cultural diversity that should be implemented with the inclusion of marginalized groups and people with special needs in order to avoid social discrimination in culture.

In order for this right to be realized, it's important to develop technical and programming conditions for equal inclusion of all people in the cultural life. Public, national and specialized institutions are encouraged to employ people with special needs. The country will develop mechanisms for providing access to cultural content for all citizens, no matter their social status.

The National Union of the Blind of the Republic of Macedonia ([Национален сојуз на слепите на Република Македонија](#)) was founded in the distant 1946 under the name of the Union of the Blind of the Republic of Macedonia and, as of today, it acts as a national, non-governmental, non-partisan, non-profit and humanitarian organization of particular social significance in the Republic. On its website, the National Union of the Blind has published a number of audio books from Macedonian and foreign authors in order to bring literary work closer to the blind. The financing of the current activities and program tasks of the Union is carried out by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia.

The International Drama Festival for persons with and without disabilities "Games without a mask" (Игри без маски)- a theater without discrimination has been organized in Macedonia for the past 5 years. The festival is one of its kinds on the Balkans and has the aim to offer people with special needs a way to express creatively.

Occasionally, other events are organized in order to promote the rights of (young) people with special needs, to encourage them and to foster their creativity. In the past, there were also other projects financed by our governmental institutions, like the project "Inclusive and creative" ([Инклузивни и креативни](#)), which was implemented in 2015 with the aim to create better conditions for development of socially inclusive entrepreneurship and creativity through active participation of users of Centers for the physically and mentally disabled. The project was financed by the Ministry for Culture and Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

Combating discrimination and poverty through cultural activities

In 2010 Macedonia has adopted [The National Strategy for Elevation of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Republic of Macedonia 2010-2020](#). The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is the institution in charge of its implementation. The Strategy foresees a creation of quality approach towards the possibilities provided by the institutions, including cultural opportunities.

Macedonia is multiethnic country and its Constitution guarantees the rights of all communities living in the country. In 2001 was concluded [The Ohrid Framework Agreement](#) which foresees complete respect of the principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment in front of the law of all people. In terms of culture, it suggests further development of media to increase programmes for ethnic minorities.

In 2014 was adopted the [The Strategy for Roma people in Macedonia 2014-2020](#). It foresees actions for development and promotion of Roma culture, language and tradition. It suggests measures for preservation and development of Roma culture through cultural events and initiatives.

In December 2018, on the initiative of the students from the [school SABA](#) in Skopje, a daily center for education, entertainment and socialization for students with special needs from the primary and secondary schools from Skopje was opened. The project won the UPSHIFT Social Entrepreneurship Call, organized by CEED Hub Skopje, supported by the Fund for Innovation and Technological Development and UNICEF. The Center will lead the students from the school together with their mentor and defectologist, and it will work 2 times a week in the afternoon and will allow a large number of children with special needs to come and through various games and methods of informal education to get to know each other, to socialize and learn new things from everyday life.^[148]

8.10 Current debates and reforms

In July 2018, the Minister of Culture put public review on the Draft Law on the Realization of the Public Interest in Culture ([Предлог закон за остварување на јавниот интерес во културата](#)). The Minister of Culture pointed at the public debate on the occasion of the Law that the existing one has turned twenty years old and, according to the cultural public, does not reflect the new requirements in the standardization of culture in Macedonia. The new Law will establish a normative framework that will provide stimulation, assistance and promotion of the country's culture. The Law also foresees funding reforms, within the Ministry of Culture, through novelties in the way of organizing annual competitions, decision making and in all other segments that are important for financing culture. The law is expected to be adopted soon.

¹⁴⁸ <https://lider.com.mk/zivot/druzenje-bez-granici-se-otvora-besplaten-centar-za-inkluzija-na-decata-so-posebni-potrebi/> (Accessed December 24, 2018)

9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

In general, the activities regarding global issues are initiated and implemented by Civil Society Organizations that are targeting youth.

Republic of Macedonia is part of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office ([RYCO](#)) which is a result of Berlin process. RYCO office was established in Tirana and there is a local branch in all Balkan countries part of RYCO, as well as in Skopje. RYCO is aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation between the youth in the region through exchange opportunities and sharing experiences. RYCO is promoting reconciliation, trust, cooperation and dialogue in the Western Balkans through supporting and funding projects which bring youth of the region together.

9.1 General context

Main concepts

Macedonia, as country in development has focus on NATO and EU Integrations, and Macedonia is not focused on global issues from the prism of young people, and does not take concrete actions initiated by the national authorities regarding young people and global issues.

Green volunteering, production and consumptions as subject are still not well promoted among young people, and when they are promoted they have wider audience as target groups, not just young people.

Youth from Macedonia participate and contribute on global issues mostly on international events with their representatives, and rarely on local or national level events that are implemented by national or local authorities.

In general, the activities regarding global issues are initiated and implemented by Civil Society Organizations that are targeting youth. National authorities are providing direct political support towards the initiatives in most of the times, however rarely with financial support.

Youth interest in global issues

Young people in Macedonia are encountering challenges among other field of interests - also on global issues. The research "Youth Trends in Republic of Macedonia" ("[Младински Трендови во Република Македонија](#)"), (published in 2014 for a second time after 2010) is showing young people's interests and attitudes towards social and political processes in Macedonia.

According to the research on youth trends from 2014, regarding global issues, we can mention that young people are most concerned for their employability status (41.5%), poverty (40.7%), incurable diseases (35.9%) and war and terroristic attacks (31.1%). Regarding discussing social and political issues, 20% of young people in Macedonia are often discussing them with their friends and peers, 61.5% of the young people have never discussed social and political issues in public, and 49.4% are discussing them with their parents. Regarding active participation in Human Rights organization, only 11.7% of the young people have been active in the field of human rights and most of them are in the Capital City of Skopje, which it shows the low level of participation regarding Human Rights issues in Macedonia.

Macedonian youth is also interested in volunteering abroad. There are 63 EVS accredited organizations in Macedonia from which 55 are sending organizations.^[149] Beside EVS programme, there are other programmes offered by different organization. For example, student organization [AIESEC Macedonia](#) is offering professional and volunteering internships abroad.

No other information is publicly available regarding youth interest on global issues.

9.2 Administration and governance

Governance

[Agency of Youth and Sport](#) together with [National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility](#) are main actors that are responsible for youth's contribution to global processes of policy making, implementation and follow up, including cooperation on global level. Agency of Youth and Sport and National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility in Macedonia are responsible for nominating youth representatives that are taking part on international events related to global issues with focus on youth.

Not enough public information available on non-public institutions that are involved. However, we can mention that, there are several global youth organizations or International organizations active with their national antennas in promoting youth contribution to global processes like, [AIESEC](#), [ALDA](#), [MLADIINFO](#), [JEF](#), [COSV](#) and [European Youth Forum](#), implementing the programs of their responsible international offices and their local programs.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

There are no publicly available information regarding mechanisms of cross-sectorial cooperation between Ministries, Departments, Agencies involved in defining policies and measures regarding youth's contribution to global processes.

9.3 Exchanges between young people and policy-makers on global issues

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the domestic level

In Republic of Macedonia there is no defined top-level policy, programme or initiative that allows young people to exchange views on global issues with policy makers.

There were some efforts coming from [National Youth Council in Macedonia](#) to introduce Structural Dialogue as efficient tool dialogue between young people and decision makers, but in Macedonia there is still no national working group for Structured Dialogue and there is no based evidence whether and in what extent Macedonian youth use this mechanism.

¹⁴⁹ https://europa.eu/youth/volunteering/evs-organisation_en?country=MK&topic=&field_eyp_vp_accreditation_type=All&town=&name=&pic=&iref=&inclusion_topic=&field_eyp_vp_feweropp_additional_mentoring_1=&field_eyp_vp_feweropp_additional_physical_environment_1=&field_eyp_vp_feweropp_additional_other_support_1=&field_eyp_vp_feweropp_other_support_text=&&op=Apply%20Filter&page=2 (Accessed December 24, 2018)

Global issues exchanges with policy-makers at the international level

Young people with its representatives have been part of the process of Structural Dialog: The mechanism that European Youth Ministers created for consultation, that allows them to stay in a continuous dialogue with young people covering the policies affecting them in particular, and among them, Global issues.

Young people from Macedonia have taken part of the consultation processes with its own nominated youth representatives at [EU Youth Conference Riga, Latvia](#), (March 2015), [EU Youth Conference Luxembourg](#), (September 2015), [Western Balkans Youth Conference Paris](#) (July 2016), [EU Youth Conference Košice, Slovakia](#) (October 2016), [EU Youth Conference Malta](#), (March 2017) and [EU Youth Conference Sofia](#) (April 2018).

During the process of Structural Dialog among other subjects, the focus was also given to solving Global Issues, as a main goal of the process was to ensure that youth policy at European, national and local level is developed with, not for, young people.

Macedonia as program country in Erasmus+ programme, occasionally is giving opportunities to young people to participate in Erasmus+ Key Action 3 projects about Structured Dialogue. These seminars are ad-hoc, and usually are organized in partnership between Macedonian CSO and CSO's from abroad.

9.4 Raising awareness about global issues

Formal, non-formal and informal learning

Curricula Structure in Secondary Education in Republic of Macedonia:

- High school education(Gymnasium)
- Secondary vocational education
- Education for children with special needs
- Student homes

In the context of formal learning, global issues are not covered as a separate subject. The [Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning](#) is implementing the project [GLOBE](#)-Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment, within primary and secondary educational institutions. GLOBE is a worldwide science and education program that coordinates the work of students, teachers and scientists in order to study and understand the global environment. Main goals of the program are: to increase the environmental awareness of individuals around the world, to contribute to the scientific understanding of the Earth and to help students everywhere to achieve higher standards in science and mathematics. GLOBE is an international partnership that involves countries around the world and is managed by the US Government through partnerships with other countries. So far, more than 100 countries with over 10,000 schools have been included in the program. In Macedonia there are currently 14 secondary schools involved in the program but due to lack of funds the program is not as active as in the past.^[150]

Global Issues as Climate Changes and Climate Influence are covered within the subject Geography in High school education (Gymnasium) curriculum ([Наставна програма по Географија](#)) within natural-mathematical area of studies. Climate elements, Climate changes, Air and Water Pollution are covered within the mentioned curriculum. Globalization and its challenges and social changes are covered within the subject Sociology within II year of high school education Curriculum ([Наставна програма по Социологија за II година](#)) as an obligatory subject. Students can also learn about the

¹⁵⁰ http://www.moep.gov.mk/?page_id=1954&fbclid=IwAR27BzYFmJowUSsSeX4uJ4xZ3WEL-723lqqFukP89c4NrUeQ1sM9C2sSxH4 (Accessed December 25, 2018)

global historic development contained in the curriculum of the subject History, which is mandatory for three years in the High School education (Gymnasium) ([Гимназиско образование](#)).

Within Secondary Vocational education curricula, there is no focus on global issues as the learning process is focused on acquiring skills and knowledge on specific vocation and training. Geography, Sociology and History can be found in specific vocational areas, however the number of vocational areas that are including these subjects is not significant.

There are other noticeable and observed initiatives from Civil Society Organizations on global issues, however most of them are donor driven and receive only political support from public authorities.

No other public information available in the context of non-formal learning on global issues, beside local initiatives and project activities from Civil Society Organizations, mostly funded by international authorities.

Educators' support

In Republic of Macedonia other than the above mentioned curriculums in Geography, History and Sociology there are also available several programs and manuals for supporting educators in global issues, targeting young people.

“Guidelines for Global education” ([Упатства за глобално образование](#)) was translated on Macedonian Language by [ADI Macedonia](#). The paper contains concepts and methodologies for global education for teachers and policy creators developed from the week of global education in coordination with the [North-South Centre](#) of the Council of Europe published in Lisbon 2008. There is no publicly available information whether and in what extent this Guideline is used by educators and Macedonia.

Youth-targeted information campaigns on global issues

Having in mind that according to [Maastricht Global Education Declaration 2002](#) Global Education is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education, top level authorities in Macedonia do not run campaigns that target young people. Some of these questions are part of higher educational curricula's, but when it's coming to youth targeted educational campaigns there are usually carried out by CSO's. Very often CSO's are organizing summer schools for human rights education, intercultural dialogue, conflict prevention etc.

Information providers

Regarding disseminating information on global issues among young people, there is no specific delegated public institution that provides information on global issues. The process of providing information doesn't have focus on youth or specific subjects; each public institution provides information from their field of work on general communication channels.

Key initiatives

In general, in Macedonia, key initiatives in disseminating information on global issues are conducted by Civil Society Sector and rarely by governmental institutions. Usually information's has general focus targeting all citizens, but some campaigns are designed exclusively for young people.

On December 10th - International Human Rights Day, the [National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility from Macedonia](#) joined the initiative with 5 other National Agencies (Austria, Finland, Italy, Estonia and Slovenia) when a message storm

was initiated through "Twitter" with the mark #YoungTogether, which touched more than 650,000 people in one day. National agencies have organized simultaneous national events in their countries with more than 200 young people who have joined online with their accomplices from Europe. These activities are part of a major European campaign called the "Aware and Active", which aims to give a new perspective on the situation of refugees and local reactions in Europe, by integrating youth actions on the differences and inclusion of the wider audience.^[151]

When comes to initiatives that are coming from CSO's, CSO Go Green ('[Биди зелен](#)') in 2018 implemented project "Youth for Sustainable Development". Project partners were 3 high schools from Skopje (capital of Macedonia). The overall goal of the project was to promote and raise awareness among young people and the key institutions for green jobs arising from the measures for adaptation and reduction of climate change in the energy sector. Specific objectives of the project were:^[152]

1. Education and involvement of young people in the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns for sustainable development goals, with a special focus on CSR7 (Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency), CSR8 (Decent Jobs and Economic Growth) and CSOR13 (Climate Action);
2. Developing teamwork and inter-disciplinary approach among students;
3. Involving key institutions from the public and private sector and public pressure for the goals of sustainable development and utilizing the potential of green jobs in the energy sector.

The project was supported by the Regional Environmental Center, within the framework of the SEEDLING program - Presentation of the UN goals for sustainable development in schools in Southeast Europe.

9.5 Green volunteering, production and consumption

Green volunteering

Currently there is no national programme that aims to help young people to engage in green volunteering activities.

From 2007 to 2017, previous Macedonian Government organized "The day of the Tree" campaign, supported by Public Enterprise Macedonian Forests ([Јавно претпријатие Македонски шуми](#)) and [Association of the units of local self-government of the Republic of Macedonia](#). Within the re-forestation actions, the government involved children and youth from primary and secondary education institutions as volunteers across the country. "The day of the Tree" was a non-working day in Macedonia and in re-forestation were also included all citizens, as well as employed in the Public Administration.

On the 36th session, in November 2017, the Government canceled the action "The day of the Tree" due to unsatisfactory results.^[153]

Green production and consumption

There are no top-level programmes or action for green production and consumption that target explicitly young people (15-29 years old).

¹⁵¹ <https://www.na.org.mk/index.php/mk/novosti-detalna/items/mladite-go-menuvaat-pogledot-za-migracijata-i-chovekovite-prava-vo-evropa.html> (Accessed December 28, 2018)

¹⁵² <https://www.bidizelen.org/%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B5%D0%BD-%D0%BC%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B5-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%BE%D0%BB%D1%80%D0%B6%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B2-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%98/> (Accessed December 28, 2018)

¹⁵³ <https://vlada.mk/node/13644> (Accessed December 24, 2018)

Most of the actions and campaigns supported by local-self-governments and Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning about green production are targeting primary school students up to 15 years old or whole population.

Most of the campaigns are organized by civil society organizations or companies and some of them are supported by governmental institutions and some embassies. For example, in 2011 the project for waste batteries "[Go Clean](#)" started. It was initiated by Swedish Embassy, supported by the Swedish Agency for Environmental Protection, the Embassies of Norway, Slovakia and the Ministry of Environment of Republic of Macedonia and implemented by CSO Go Green. The aim of the project was to support the implementation of the Law on Batteries and Waste Batteries, to develop the awareness about the harmful effects of the batteries and to initiate a system for collecting waste batteries. The second pillar of the project was the informative educational campaign, which included the municipalities, the schools and the universities to develop awareness among the local authorities and young people about the harmful effects of waste batteries and to encourage responsible behavior.^[154]

9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

Intercontinental youth work cooperation

[The National Agency for European Programmes and Mobility in Macedonia](#) promotes intercontinental youth work cooperation with the administration of the Erasmus+ Program actions like European Volunteer Service that provides opportunities for young people and youth staff to experience learning processes in intercontinental dimension. Erasmus plus programme is funded by the EU and provides opportunities for young people and youth workers. Republic of Macedonia is a Programme Country within Erasmus plus, and have the equal status as other EU countries as a beneficiary.

[US Peace Corps](#) provides opportunities for US citizens that contribute towards intercontinental youth work cooperation. US Peace Corps Mission is still active in [Macedonia](#). The program provides service opportunity for motivated change makers to immerse themselves in a community abroad, working side by side with local leaders to tackle the most pressing challenges of our generation. Target groups are general and support Civil Society Organizations and Educational Institutions. One of the focuses is youth. Main objectives of the programme are:

1. To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

The program is funded by US government.

[AIESEC International](#) provides opportunities for young people all over the world to be part of intercontinental activities through their national antennas. AIESEC is a global platform for young people to explore and develop their leadership potential. Its members are interested in world issues, leadership and management. Main target group of AIESEC are young students willing to explore the world and acquire leadership skills and intercultural competences. AIESEC national antennas are mainly funded by private business sector.

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.bidizelen.org/en/go-clean-3/> (Accessed December 25, 2018)

Development cooperation activities

There is no available information about development cooperation activities organized by top level authority, targeting explicitly young people.

9.7 Current debates and reforms

In 2018, at the initiative of CSO Go Green, a working group for implementation of initiative Green jobs for youth was established. Members of working group are representatives from following governmental institutions: Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Employment Agency, Agency of Youth and Sport, Ministry of Education, Center for Vocational Education and Training.

In 2019 representative from the [Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister in Charge of Economic Issues and Coordination with Economic Resources](#) will be included in the working group.

Currently there are discussions within the working group to include and define the term 'Green job' in some of the existing documents. Center for Vocational Education and Training is proposing 'Green jobs' to be added in the National qualification frame as special category. This proposal should be discussed in 2019.

GLOSSARY

Active Labor Market Measures: measures foreseen in Operational Plan for Active Programmes and Measures for Employments. Operational Plan sets out the programmes, measures and conditions for employments that should ensure the creation of new jobs and increase the employment rate in the country.

Berlin Process is a diplomatic initiative linked to the future enlargement of the European Union. The Berlin Process is an intergovernmental cooperation initiative aimed at revitalizing the multilateral ties between the Western Balkans and selected EU member states, and at improving regional cooperation in the Western Balkans on the issues of infrastructural and economic development.

Block Grants: a grant from a central government that a local authority can allocate to a wide range of services.

Brain Drain: The situation in which large numbers of educated and very skilled people leave their own country to live and work in another one where pay and conditions are better.

Curricula: The aggregate of courses of study given in a school, college, university, etc.

Donor-driven: Implementing activities not under the Organizational Programme and Mission, but under donor priorities in an excessive manner.

E-Democracy: it can broadly be described as the use of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to increase and enhance citizens' engagement in democratic processes.

Games Without Masks: International theatre festival that aims to encourage people with special needs to be active participants in cultural events. The theater unites amateur actors from Macedonia and abroad, and is the only one of its kind in the Balkan.

Individual employment plan (IEP): document created for an unemployed person upon his first registration within the Employment Service Agency in Macedonia. The IEP defines activities that will enable the young unemployed person in the next 4 months to be included again in the educational process (not in regular education) or to be included in some of the measures and services for employment, which will enable him to increase his opportunities for easier employment, i.e. he will be offered adequate employment which corresponds to his education and skills. These activities include group and individual counseling and information; providing job search assistance services; motivational training; inclusion in one of the labor market integration measures (employment, education and training measures).

Macedonian Qualifications Framework (MRC): is a mandatory national standard that regulates the acquisition and use of qualifications in the Republic of Macedonia and an instrument for establishing a system of qualifications acquired in the Republic of Macedonia that provides the basis for visibility, access, passage, acquisition and quality of qualifications.

The Ohrid Framework Agreement: Document that consists of agreed framework for securing the future of Macedonia's democracy and permitting the development of closer and more integrated relations between the Republic of Macedonia and the Euro-Atlantic community. It promotes the peaceful and harmonious development of civil society while respecting the ethnic identity and the interests of all Macedonian citizens.

Youth: According to National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 and having in mind Macedonian society former historical, social, political and ethical practice, and in the absence of internationally recognized definition, the term youth refers to population aged between 15 and 29. These category is seeming as particularly vulnerable to socio-economic changes in the society and also category which hold huge capacity for social progress.

Youth Guarantee: measure which is implemented as pilot measure in 2018 in 3 municipalities in Macedonia and it's open to all young people under the age of 29 who are unemployed, have already completed their education and have not been registered within the Employment Agency. The applicants receive a quality job offer, further education or internship.

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