



Youth Wiki national description

Youth policies in North Macedonia

2021

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Republic of North Macedonia

Youth Policy in Republic of North Macedonia

The main decision – making processes regarding youth policy is being made by the Government of the Republic of North 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 the 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.

North Macedonia has a 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 the Republic of North Macedonia, also is responsible for the implementation of the youth strategy.

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). But the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies imposes the need for adoption of a new National Youth Strategy as well as a new action plan for implementation of the strategy, which consequently means a new plan for monitoring and evaluation of activities.

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

1. YOUTH POLICY GOVERNANCE

In September 2017, the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia has established [Club on Youth Affairs and Policies](#), based on the trend of the European Parliament and countries' parliaments.

As for the documents, the [National Youth Strategy \(2016-2025\)](#) is one of the main National Youth Policy documents which sets out the basic principles and action guidelines for all actors in society.

In the beginning of 2020, the Macedonian parliament adopted the first Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)).

1.1 Target population of youth policy

The Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) and the [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#) sets out the basic principles and action guidelines for all actors in society.

According to the Law, "young" are people aged 15 to 29. The Law is in compliance with the previously developed National Youth Strategy. 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** [Agency of the youth and sports. National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 (Agency of the youth and sports, 2016), p.7. http://ams.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_mkd.pdf (Accessed

01.11.2018)]]. 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 North Macedonia, and especially to young people from vulnerable categories.

In general, municipalities in the Republic of North Macedonia set this age limit in their Local Youth Strategies with mild exceptions. For example, in the Local Youth Strategy of the Municipality of Kochani 2019-2023 ([Стратегија за млади на општина Кочани 2019-2023](#)), 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.

1.2 National youth law

Existence of a National Youth Law

In 2011, the Agency of Youth and Sport submitted an initiative for developing Law on Youth which addressed youth participation in decision making processes at local and national level and youth organizing. After approval from the Government, the Ministry of Justice formed a working group and drafted a 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 North Macedonia, and therefore, the Government redraw the text to additional revision.

At the beginning of 2018, the issue of drafting the Law on Youth was raised again. The issue was initiated by the Club on Youth Affairs and Policies of the Assembly of North Macedonia. During 2019, a working group of representatives of youth organizations, institutions and youth of political parties drafted the first version of the first Law on Youth.

Nine years after the first initiative, in January 2020, the Government adopted the law, with its full name Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)).

Scope and contents

The subject of regulation of the law are the forms of youth organization, youth participation in the process of creating youth policies and decision-making related to them, strategic documents at national and local level, activities and measures undertaken by state administration bodies and local self-government units for advancing the position of young people in society, as well as informing and joint planning of activities related to and for young people. According to Article 2, the purpose of the law is to provide: 1) creating and implementing youth policy at all levels through a multi-sectoral approach, starting from the needs and interests of young people; 2) strengthening the participation of young people in the processes of creating policies for young people, active information, promotion and protection of the interests of young people, as well as strengthening the awareness of the importance of young people and their social role; 3) promoting intergenerational partnerships to support youth participation in the decision-making and policy-making process; 4) support and promotion of youth organization; 5) encouraging structural dialogue at national and local level; 6) encouraging volunteering, youth activism and youth work and 7) encouraging personal, professional and social development of young people. The law defines in more detail the forms of youth organization and representation (youth organization, youth organization, youth umbrella organizations, national assembly for youth), the forms of youth participation, regulates the establishment of local youth councils, defines youth policies (national strategy for youth, local youth strategy), as well as youth services (youth office, youth center, youth officer).

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 North Macedonia is a strategic public document. In February 2015 the Agency of Youth and Sport (AYS) ([Агенција за млади и спорт](#)) initiated the process of development of new (the second) National Youth Strategy (2016-2025). The first one was for the period 2005-2015 ([Национална стратегија за млади 2005-2015](#)). 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 [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)] 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 North Macedonia, there were reactions from [National Youth Council of Macedonia](#) (the largest and most relevant CSO 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 first 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/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_mkd.pdf.

The National Youth Strategy is followed by one action plan: 2016-2017 Action Plan for implementation of the National Youth Strategy ([Акциски план 2016-2017 за реализација на Националната стратегија за млади 2016-2025](#)).

As of 2020, with the adoption of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, it is necessary to develop a new National Youth Strategy within 18 months of the Law's coming into force. The legal deadline has passed, and there is still no new National Youth Strategy (February 2022).

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 fulfill 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 North 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 Sport (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 programs and in their activities they are fully coordinated by the Agency of Youth and Sport. 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 Sport held the first consultations with youth organizations in order to revise the National Youth Strategy. In late 2018, the Agency conducted consultations with the state institutions in order to analyze the strategic priorities, but up to date (October 2019), there is still no information whether and what will be changed in the Strategy. In July 2019, the [AYS](#) held 2 meetings with representatives from CSOs and state institutions. During that meeting the need for creation of new Action plan was emphasized, as well as alignment of the National Youth Strategy with other relevant documents in the field of youth. In 2020, there were working groups consisting of representatives of institutions and CSOs who were working on

preparations of the new Action plan 2020. More precisely, there were 6 working groups for the following fields: Youth Participations and Youth Services; Education and Employment; Sport and Health; Culture; Youth Standard; and Marginalized Communities, but this process was not finished due to the new law.

The Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies adopted in January 2020 envisages the preparation and adoption of a new National Youth Strategy. The legal deadline for the adoption of the new strategy by the Government was July 2021, but so far (February 2022) the new strategy has not yet been prepared or adopted. At the end of 2021, the Agency for Youth and Sports announced a call for consultants who will conduct research on youth trends, which should provide the basis for the preparation of a new national strategy for youth.

1.4 Youth policy decision-making

Structure of Decision-making

The decision-making process of youth policies includes other institutions / ministries such as: Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Employment Service Agency, Education Development Bureau, National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility, Local Self-Governments etc. Based on the adopted [Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies](#), the Law envisages the establishment of a National Advisory body for youth policies, which is defined to have an advisory and supervisory role regarding youth policies and activities for youth. The structure of this body will be composed of 9 representatives of the youth sector, and no more than 8 representatives of state institutions, based on articles in the Law. According to a [decision of the Government](#), they appointed the following institutions / ministries to nominate a representative: Agency for Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance.

At the 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.

According to the [Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies](#), all municipalities in North Macedonia are obligated to establish Local Youth Councils, as well as adopt a Local Youth Strategy, within a year of its adoption, however there have been delays in the implementation. Following the adoption of the Law, the Agency for Youth and Sports together with the OSCE Mission to Skopje in June 2021 published a [Manual for Local Youth Councils](#), a document aimed to support the creation of Local Youth Councils, as well as inform the Municipalities and the members of the Councils what their roles are.

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. Unfortunately, in the Republic of North Macedonia there is still no national working group for Structured Dialogue and there is no publicly available information whether and to what extent young people in North Macedonia use this mechanism.

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

Main Themes

The priorities set in the [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#) 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](#). In addition, based on the [Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies](#), a new National Youth Strategy is to be developed within 18 months of the adoption of the Law. Unfortunately the timeframe to do so has passed (since July 2021), and there has been no progress towards creation of a new National Youth Strategy in 2021, aside from launching a [call for public procurement for a Youth Trends Research](#).

Specific country programs are designed for employment and education.

Youth Unemployment is the highest priority at country level since according to the Eurostat (2020) [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/yth_empl_100/default/table?lang=en (Accessed February 8, 2022)] 29,5% of the young people in Republic of North Macedonia aged 15 – 29 are unemployed, which, according to the same source, is the smallest percentage in the last 8 years. On the other hand, according to State Statistical Office of Republic of North Macedonia, in the III quarter of 2021 the youth unemployment (aged 15-24) rate was 15.3 % [Active Population in the Republic of North Macedonia, Results from the Labor Force Survey, III quarter 2021 (State Statistical Office, Republic of North Macedonia, 2021), p.4, https://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2021/2.1.21.33_mk.pdf (Accessed February 8, 2022)].

When it comes to NEET people, according to Eurostat (2020) [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/yth_empl_150/default/table?lang=en (Accessed February 8, 2022)], 26.2 % of young people aged 15-29 are NEET (young people neither in employment nor in education or training). For comparison, in 2019 the rate was 24,5%, and in 2019 we had the lowest rate in comparison with the previous 10 years but in 2020 this rate has increased. But, if we compare the rates with other European countries we will notice that we have the third highest rate in Europe, after Turkey and Montenegro.

The Youth Trends Research Report ([Младински трендови во Република Македонија - Извештај](#)) (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. Two years ago, Ministry of Education and Science adopted the [Strategy on Education 2018-2025](#) with Action Plan (more in the chapter for education). In addition, in October 2021, the Agency for Youth and Sports launched an [announcement for a public procurement](#) for a new Youth Trends Research, to be used a basis for the new National Youth Strategy that is to be developed in 2022.

The National Agency for Youth

The Agency of Youth and Sport was established in 2000, after the Parliament adopted the decision to exclude the Ministry of Youth and Sport, which was the main institution for youth development.

The Agency of Youth and Sport (www.ams.gov.mk) is the main public authority at national level in charge of youth. It is a 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 Sport, the Department for

Normative, Legal and Economic Issues, and the Department for Youth. Main tasks of the Youth Department are social development and social integration of youth via quality formal and non-formal education, economic prosperity of the youth via youth entrepreneurship, improving quality of life, active participation of the youth in public life and in decision making processes on local and national level. The Youth Department is divided into two sub-Departments-International cooperation and Youth policy and training.

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). But the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies imposes the need for adoption of a new National Youth Strategy as well as a new action plan for implementation of the strategy, which consequently means a new plan for monitoring and evaluation of activities.

1.5 Cross-sectoral approach with other ministries

Mechanisms and actors

In September 2017, the Parliament of the Republic of North 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 an informal body within the Parliament of Republic of North 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.

According to the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) which was adopted at the beginning of 2020, the government with special decision should form National Advisory Body for Youth Policy as a body for cooperation between youth representatives and representatives of state administration bodies that has an advisory and supervisory role in the implementation of youth policies and activities for youth. Such a body has not yet been established (February 2022).

1.6 Evidence-based youth policy

Political Commitment to Evidence-Based Youth Policy

Occasionally, there are efforts from governmental institutions to support youth policies with knowledge and evidence from research on youth. Thus, the basis for initiating this process of creating the [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#) was the Youth Trends Survey ([Младинските трендови во Република Македонија](#)) conducted by the Institute of Sociological, Political and Juridical Research in the period from September to December 2014. According to adopted Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies must be prepared new National Youth Strategy. For the preparation of the new National Youth Strategy, outlined in the [Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies](#), in October 2021, the Agency of Youth and Sports announced a [call for public procurement](#) conducting research on youth trends which should provide the necessary information and basis for the preparation of the new National Youth Strategy.

In order to reduce the differences between the supplied workforce and the required skills, the Employment Service Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia conducts 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 unemployed, 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 North Macedonia.

Youth Employment as a high priority of the Government is a theme that requires specific scientific research aimed at developing tailored and relevant programs 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 ([Премин на младите жени и мажи на пазарот на трудот во поранешната југословенска Република Македонија](#)), 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 North Macedonia.

In 2021, the Government adopted the [National Employment Strategy 2021-2027](#), which includes the Youth Guarantee. Within the Strategy, it's noted that the action plan of the YG will be adjusted in 2022, taking into account its progress, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth unemployment, as well as to reflect EU's Reinforced Youth Guarantee.

Cooperation between policy-making and research

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

Cooperation between policy-making and research institution/academic communities is on ad-hoc basis. For example, aside from the survey of the Youth Trends in North Macedonia which was ordered by the Agency of Youth and Sport dated back to 2014, and the latest [announced call](#) in 2021 for conducting new research on youth trends for the needs of creating a new National Youth Strategy, there are no other youth-related researches. In addition, the [Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies](#), envisages creation of a Research Center on Youth Topics, within the Agency of Youth and Sports. Unfortunately, the research center still has not been established, despite the fact that the deadline defined in the Law expired in January 2021.

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 (last organized census), the population of North 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 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.

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 a specific budget line in the Governmental Budget.

In 2021 the total budget of the Agency of Youth and Sports is 1.084.142.966 MKD, and it is the largest budget the AYS has had in recent years. In comparison to 2020, the total budget of the Agency of Youth and Sport was 538.760.000,99 MKD (app 872299340 EUR), in 2019, the total budget of the Agency of Youth and Sport was 590.902.000,00 MKD (app. 9.608.249,58 EUR), of which 24.728.000 (around 402.085,00 EUR) were intended for the youth sector, while in 2018, the Agency had a budget in the amount of 484.413.000,00 MKD (app. 7.871.073,00 EUR), of which 31.386.000,00 MKD (509.981,00 EUR) for the youth sector.

According to the [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#), 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 ([Акциски план за вработување на млади 2016-2020](#)), total planned amount for realization of the Action plan was 30.950.000,00 EUR [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)]. Since the Action Plan's expiration, a new Action Plan for Youth Employment has not been adopted.

In the beginning of 2018, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy together with the Employment Service Agency and the National Youth Council of Macedonia started the realization of the pilot project Youth Guarantee which measures are funded through the Operational plan for active programs and measures for employment and services on the labor market (Operational plan) [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)]. In 2018 the total budget for employment measures within the Operational Plan were 1.045.794.835 MKD, while the budget for 2019 was 1.219.789.600 MKD. Operation Plan for 2019 put special emphasis on youth unemployed people up to 29 years of age. (More about the Youth Guarantee in chapter 3.1) The total budget in the Operational plan for 2020 is 1.805.654.260 MKD. For 2021 the budget is increased in comparison with previous years and the total budget in the Operational plan ([Ревидиран Оперативен план за активни програми и мерки за вработување и услуги на пазарот на трудот за 2021 година](#)) is 1.816.690.886 MKD.

The new Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies envisages that: (1) For the implementation of this law, funds in the amount of at least 0.3% shall be allocated annually from the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia. (2) From the budgets of the municipalities, the municipalities in the City of Skopje and the City of Skopje, funds in the amount of at least 0.1% on annual level shall be allocated.

What is funded?

Employment measures for young people were funded in Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016 – 2020 ([Ревидиран акциски план за вработување на млади 2016-2020](#)). This action plan was operationalized into annual plans with specific budget for young people aged 15 – 29, as described in the previous section.

Additionally, the [Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies](#), as mentioned in the previous section, allocates national and municipal budgetary funds for the implementation of the Law. Based on the Law itself, those funds will go towards creation of mechanisms for youth participation (Local Youth Councils), youth policies (National Youth Strategy and Local Youth Strategies) and youth services (Youth Centers, Youth Officers, Youth Offices).

Financial accountability

N/A

Use of EU Funds

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.

In addition, it's worth mentioning the [Western Balkans Youth Lab Project](#), a three-year EU funded (1,5 million EUR) and [RCC](#) implemented project that kicked-off in January 2020, which aims to provide opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making. The project is covering the Western Balkans Six economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia). The Western Balkans Youth Lab (WBLY) Project strives to create a longer-term structured regional dialogue between youth organizations and national administrations focused on jointly devising policies which will increase youth participation in decision-making, to improve the overall socio-economic environment for and mobility of youth in the Western Balkans economies through different types of activities, with focus of policies.

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, North 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 North 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. North Macedonia is represented with 2 representatives (1 from Agency of Youth and Sport and 1 from youth civil society organization).

European Youth Forum: North 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.

In 2018, Greece and North Macedonia, under the auspices of the United Nations, signed the Prespa Agreement, resolving a long-standing dispute between the two countries. Apart from resolving the terminological differences, the agreement also covers areas of cooperation between the two countries in order to establish a strategic partnership

between them. In the '[Action Plan on the Intensification and Enrichment of Cooperation Between the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of North Macedonia, as Provided for in the Prespa Agreement](#)' it's noted, that the parties (referring to the Governments of North Macedonia and Greece) shall support all forms of youth cooperation in order to tighten the

bonds and foster relations between young people in both countries, and to this effect, both Parties will invest efforts to establish a "Greece – North Macedonia Youth Office" as a body/platform that will work on improving ties between young people in both countries, strengthen their mutual understanding and

promote, encourage and facilitate meetings and exchanges between young people. This initiative was launched by the youth sector from both North Macedonia (by Youth Alliance - Krushevo) and Greece, through the '[Cooperation for a Common Future](#)' initiative.

International cooperation

Governmental institutions in North 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 Service Agency cooperate with international organizations in North Macedonia such as OSCE, UNDP, USAID, as well as with the delegation of the European Union in North 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 the Youth Guarantee.

Council of Europe

The Republic of North 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.

North Macedonia also has its own representative in the Advisory Youth Council (CoE) who is coming from the youth CSO [Center for Intercultural Dialogue \[https://rm.coe.int/2016-2017-ac-members-contactlist-with-photo-responsibilites-august-17/1680751877\]](https://rm.coe.int/2016-2017-ac-members-contactlist-with-photo-responsibilites-august-17/1680751877) (Accessed October 30 2018)].

1.9 Current debates and reforms

The new Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) envisages opening of the youth centers in municipalities in the country, in order to prepare and implement programs that improve the well-being of young people, the development of personal, social and professional life of young people, information of important interest to young people and other aspects of young people life.

With the adoption of the law, an obligation was introduced for all municipalities to enable the functioning of at least one youth center within 5 years from the adoption of the law.

Prior to the pandemic, the Agency for Youth and Sports in cooperation with the Union for Youth Work began preparations for the opening of the first youth centers in the municipalities of Veles, Kavadarci, Bitola and Kumanovo, but due to the pandemic the processes was stalled but at the [press conference on the current situation with the opening of youth centers](#) in accordance with the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies held on December 10, 2021 it was stated that until then only the municipality of Kavadarci has successfully implemented all steps of the procedure, while the municipalities of Kumanovo, Veles and Probistip has a space for a youth center, but they have not yet announced a public call for an organization that will manage it.

2. VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES

Volunteering is an activity of interest for the Republic of North 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 North 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 North Macedonia is a small Balkan country which became independent in 1991. Volunteering in North 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 2005-2015 ([Национална стратегија за млади 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 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 Law on Volunteering ([Закон за волонтерство](#)) 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 remedies 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 four amendments. The first one in 2008, ([Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за волонтерство](#)) related to the reimbursement of the costs of the volunteers (about food and travel), the second one in 2015 ([Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за волонтерство](#)), related to the penalty provisions, the third one in 2019 ([Закон за изменување на законот за волонтерство](#)), and the fourth one in 2021 ([Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за волонтерство](#)) related to the changes on monetary penalty. The new amendments do not bring any substantial changes, but aims at terminological alignment with the new Law on Personal Tax.

In 2013, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy proposed amendments to the Law on Volunteering ([Предлог на Закон за дополнување на Законот за волонтерство](#)) 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 never been voted.

Research analysis indicates that a low number of citizens participate in the civil society sector and in other community activities in general. According to the Central Registry of

the Republic of North Macedonia there are more than 15,000 civil society organizations in North Macedonia, 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. [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, Agency of Youth and Sport of Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2016), p. 13 http://ams.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_mkd.pdf (Accessed November 20, 2018)] 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. In December 2021, the Government adopted the new Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for Cooperation with and Development of the Civil Sector 2022-2024 ([Стратегија на Владата на Република Македонија за соработка со и развој на граѓанскиот сектор 2022-2024](#)), together with Action Plan ([Акциски план за спроведување на Стратегијата на Владата на Република Македонија за соработка со и развој на граѓанскиот сектор 2022-2024](#)) 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 Relations ([Закон за работни односи](#)) 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.

2.2 Administration and governance of youth volunteering

Governance

Youth Volunteering in the Republic of North Macedonia is not strictly regulated. There is a Law on Volunteering but it's general and it doesn't emphasize youth as a target group. Three local municipalities from [Tetovo](#), [Bitola](#) and [Kavadarci](#) in cooperation with the non-governmental sector, have adopted Local Strategies on Volunteerism 2015-2018. The processes of adopting of Local Strategies on Volunteerism, were initiated by civil society sector ([Youth Cultural Center- Bitola](#)) and funded by international foundations. Local Strategies expired at the end of 2018 and they are not renewed. The previous Local Strategies aimed to provide sustainable development, promotion and strengthening of volunteerism at local level. They also provided analysis and detailed action plans, adopted measures for all key stakeholders. However, they didn't delegate key staff on monitoring and evaluation of the implementation. Main responsibility for implementation of the Local Strategies remained on Local Self-Government.

In October 2018 in the municipality of Bitola a Local Volunteering Council ([Локален совет за волонтерство](#)) was established. The Volunteering Council consists of 9 members and it was established in order to work on increasing the number of youth participation in the local community through volunteering and to work on the recognition of volunteer work at the local level. Even though the Local Strategies on Volunteerism already expired, the Local Volunteering Council is still active in the Municipality of Bitola.

Volunteering as a subject in the Republic of North Macedonia has a general focus and the Government does not target young people with tailor-made approaches, thus all legal documents are based on 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.

In May 2021, at the initiative of several civil society organizations, with the support of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, an initiative was launched to amend the Law on Volunteering in the Republic of North Macedonia. In June 2021, a [draft Law for amending the Law on Volunteering](#) was published on the ENER platform (Unique Electronic Registry of Regulations of the Republic of North Macedonia).

Main actors

Nationwide, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy is responsible for youth volunteering. In September 2021, a new Strategy for Promotion and Development of Volunteering 2021-2025 ([Стратегија за промовирање и развој на волонтерството \(2021-2025\) и Акциски план за спроведување на Стратегијата за промовирање и развој на волонтерството](#)) (https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/2021/trud/Volonterstvo_2021_2025.pdf) was adopted and based on it, the policies for volunteering in North Macedonia are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

In direction of the fulfillment of the institutional support in the process of volunteering, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy formed National Council for Volunteering Development ([Национален совет за развој на волонтерството](#)) 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 2017), 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 youngsters from North Macedonia and volunteering assignments in N. 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 ([Закон за основање на Национална агенција за европски образовни програми и мобилност](#)) 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 jobs. 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 2021, The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy adopted the new Strategy for Promotion and Development of Volunteering (2021– 2025) and Action Plan ([Стратегија за промовирање и развој на волонтерството 2021-2025 и План за спроведување \(Акциски план\)](#)). It is important to indicate that the Republic of North Macedonia hasn't adopted a 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 (<https://nvsorabotka.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/400>).

In December 2019 the National forum for volunteering was held, as part of the activities of the Youth Cultural Center - Bitola, within the regional project "Road Western Balkans 6". The purpose of the forum was to review and discuss the situation with the legislation on volunteering in the country.

Scope and contents

The main aim of the Strategy for Promotion and Development of Volunteering (2021 – 2025) ([Стратегија за промовирање и развој на волонтерството 2021-2025](#)) is to provide continuous development, promotion and strengthening of the volunteering engagement and culture of volunteering in N. 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 and social enterprises
4. Establishment of a system for institutional support of volunteering.

Responsible authority

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy has the main competence for volunteer policies. The implementation of the new Strategy for Promotion and Development of Volunteering (2021-2025) will be monitored regularly by the National Council for the Development of Volunteering in cooperation with MLSP, MES, and the General Secretariat of the Government – department for cooperation with non-governmental organizations.

In addition, within the Strategy, it is declared that the following actors will work towards its realization: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and its relevant institution in the area of social protection and health; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Justice; Ministry of Education and Science; Agency of Youth and Sports; General Secretariat of the Government; Local Self-Government; civil society organizations, media, educational institutions, etc.

Revisions/ Updates

In September 2021, the new Strategy for Promotion and Development of Volunteering (2021-2025) has been adopted by MLSP.

2.4 Youth volunteering at national level

National Programme for Youth Volunteering

A National Program on Youth Volunteering is still not adopted from the Government of Republic of North Macedonia. Each individual organizer of voluntary work needs to conduct Program on Volunteering according to the Law on Volunteerism ([Закон за волонтерството](#)), which was also [amended](#) in May 2021. 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 ([Правилник за формата, содржината и начинот на водење на регистарот на лица ангажирани со договор за волонтирање](#)), 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 ([Закон за трансформација во редовен работен однос](#)), 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 Cyril and Methodius University, Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research, 'Youth Trends in Republic of Macedonia' in 2014 ([Младински трендови во Република Македонија](#)). 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 the Republic of North Macedonia there is no publicly 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 the Republic of North 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 country, 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 the Republic of

North Macedonia regardless of citizenship, 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.

Monthly reports, on-the-spot visits and direct interviews are the mechanisms used for collecting young volunteers' feedback on their volunteering experiences. Republic of North 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 measures the satisfactory level of the volunteers. There is only a Registry of Volunteers in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, an internal document that collects data for all volunteers that have signed a voluntary contract with the organizer of voluntary work.

Target groups

The legislation on volunteering in North 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. [Law on Volunteering. "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 85, July 9, 2007", Article 5].

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. [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 North Macedonia is the Erasmus + Programme. The decentralized actions of the programme are implemented by the [National Agency for European Education Programmes and Mobility](#).

- In May 2014, [Republic of North Macedonia became Programme Country](#) of the Erasmus + Programme, and following actions are available today: Key Action 1 – [Learning through individuals mobility](#)
- Key Action 2 - [Collaborating on Innovation and Sharing Good Practices](#)
- Key Action 3 - [Supporting Policy Reform](#)
- [Jean Monnet Activities](#)

- [Sport](#)

According to the Erasmus + Project Results webpage, by the moment (last checked on February 2022) [6726](#) Erasmus + project involved Macedonian entities, either as coordinator / beneficiary ether as partner. Just for comparison, the same period last year Macedonian entities were involved in [6023](#) projects. Of those 6726 projects, [4165](#) are in Erasmus + Key Action 1 - Youth Mobility.

European Voluntary Service

At the moment [33 organizations form North Macedonia are accredited EVS organizations](#) (last checked February 2022).

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

In December 2005, North 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.

North 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 provided financial support for the country in the period 2007-2013. Afterward IPA II was created for the period 2014-2020 with financial allocation for North Macedonia of € 608.7 million. Young people are a target group of IPA 2014-2020 Action Program [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 program. The main aim of this Program is to support young people's transnational non-formal learning mobility through cooperation projects and activities.

Currently there is a new [IPA III](#) for the period [2021-2027](#). The general objective of the new IPA III instrument is to support the beneficiaries in adopting and implementing the political, institutional, legal, administrative, social and economic reforms required by those beneficiaries to comply with Union values and to progressively align to Union rules, standards, policies and practices with a view to Union membership, thereby contributing to their stability, security and prosperity.

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 to the Law on Volunteering as well. Thus, the Law determines the possibilities and conditions for volunteering for foreigners. A foreign individual may volunteer in North Macedonia upon issued Consent for volunteering by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and regulated residence in the Republic of North Macedonia (article 8, par. 2). After the Consent for volunteering is being issued, the organizer of the voluntary service has an 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 ([Правилник за начинот, постапката](#)

[и евиденцијата за издавање на согласност за волонтирање на странско лице во Република Македонија](#)).

Visas

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia updated their website recently, and [here](#) is a list of every country in the world with information about the visa requirements.

These are the visa requirements for entering the Republic of North Macedonia:

- Nationals of EU Member States and signatories of the Schengen Agreement DO NOT need a visa to enter the Republic of North Macedonia (and are eligible to enter the Republic of North Macedonia with a valid national identity card).
- Third-country nationals with temporary residence in an EU Member State or a country signatory of the Schengen Agreement may stay no longer than 15 (fifteen) days upon every entry into the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia as long as the total length of stay does not exceed 90 days in any 180-day period.
- Third-country nationals with permanent residence in an EU Member State or a country signatory of the Schengen Agreement may stay no longer than 15 (fifteen) days upon every entry into the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia as long as the total length of stay does not exceed 90 days in any 180-day period.
- Third-country nationals with multiple-entry Schengen visa (type C) valid for at least 5 (five) days beyond the intended stay in the Republic of North Macedonia may stay no longer than 15 (fifteen) days upon every entry into the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia as long as the total length of stay does not exceed 90 days in any 180-day period.

The Government of the Republic of North Macedonia has adopted a decision to extend the visa exemption until 31 December 2020, for foreign national's holders of third country valid passports holding valid British, Canadian or U.S. visa. The length of their stay in the Republic of North Macedonia may be up to 15 days, and the validity of the British, Canadian or U.S. visa should be 5 days longer than the planned stay in the Republic of North Macedonia. The total duration of consecutive stays in the Republic of North Macedonia may not exceed (is limited to) 90 days in any 180-day period, which precedes the days of the stay.

Registration of Foreign Nationals

All foreign citizens, regardless whether a visa is necessary for their entry in the Republic of North 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 North Macedonia, the organizer of the voluntary service (the host) can assist the volunteer to register.

Customs Guide

The Republic of North Macedonia, according to the legislation, has developed procedures for customs. The customs service of the Republic of North Macedonia developed an information booklet titled "[What you need to know when you are departing from and arriving in North 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 North 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, however the platform has been inactive since 2020 (last checked February 2022)

Other national public bodies

Other national bodies that are directly involved into dissemination of youth information are the Ministry of Education and Science, Employment Service Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Ministry of Culture, which has activities connected with youth. On a 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

An important role in the dissemination of youth information about youth opportunities and mobility also has the [National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility](#). This organization is in charge of 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) ([Национален совет за развој на волонтерството](#)) 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 2017 it does not currently function.

Local public authorities with competencies in the youth field

According to the new Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) Municipalities have to establish a youth office, which will coordinate the youth work in municipalities and is the primary point of access for young people at the local level. Beside this, in cooperation with the municipalities, youth centers will be established. Youth centers are places where programs are prepared and implemented that improve the well-being of young people, the development of personal, social and professional life of young people, and also share information of important interest to young people. To establish and open these youth centers the municipalities are required to follow the administrative procedure defined in the Law, as well as the Rulebook on quality standards of the youth centers. ([Правилникот за стандарди за квалитет на младинските центри](#)). Until February 2022, only one youth center has opened following the procedures of the law and is operational, specifically the one in the municipality of [Kavadarci](#). On the other hand, the municipalities of Kumanovo, Veles and Probistip have allocated space for a youth center, but have not yet announced a public call for a (youth)

civil society organization to manage it. [<https://smr.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Soopstenie-za-mediumi.pdf>]

Youth CSOs

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

The largest youth representative body in North Macedonia is [National Youth Council of Macedonia](#). NYCM unites 50 organizations throughout the country, in order to promote and advocate for the rights of the young people on a national level. NYCM was established on 29 June 2013 by 55 organizations.

Useful websites:

www.mladi.mk is an 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.

<https://hajde.media>, is an online platform, founded by [Regional Youth Cooperation Office \(RYCO\)](#), aimed for young people interested in taking part in events, opportunities, and news within the Western Balkans six countries, including North Macedonia.

Specific contact point

[EURODESK](#) is an international nonprofit association. As a support organization to the Erasmus+ programme, EURODESK is one of the most comprehensive and most accessible sources of free youth information about international learning mobility opportunities.

As of today, EURODESK is present in 36 countries and it is also present in North Macedonia.

Key initiatives

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

There is some optimism that things will be changed soon, as at the beginning of 2020 the government finally adopted the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies. One of the goals of the law is encouragement of volunteering, youth activism and youth work.

2.7 Skills recognition

Policy Framework

Nationwide, the skills recognition is regulated with the Law on Volunteerism ([Закон за волонтерство](#)). More particularly, article 19 states that: "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 North Macedonia does not have an institution specialized in identifying and validating prior learning, acquired through non-formal and informal learning. The realization of this activity is necessary from the aspect of the modern tendencies in the field of education and from the aspect of the need for validation of all activities that young people and adults undertake in order to acquire education, especially in the informal and informal sectors.

The Republic of North Macedonia became Erasmus+ Programme Country in 2004. Designated institution for implementation of Erasmus+ programme is [National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility](#). The National Agency administrates the opportunity for young people to volunteer abroad and young people from EU member's states, to volunteer in Republic of North Macedonia.

Existing arrangements

In Republic of North Macedonia, skills recognition is recognized through Volunteer card ([Волонтерска книшка](#)). 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 ([Правилник за формата и содржината на волонтерската книшка, начинот на нејзиното издавање и запишување на податоците](#)). 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 a voluntary card. The main responsibility for monitoring the functioning of the system of skills recognition is the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The inspection is performed by the State Labor Inspectorate. In non-formal settings, non-governmental organizations provide recognition documents according to their internal procedures and regulations, thus there are differences between the recognition documents provided from various subjects and the Republic of North Macedonia lacks a national standardized system for verification or recognition of volunteer assignments, except volunteer card. Currently in Republic of North Macedonia there are no possibilities for young volunteers to obtain ECTS or ECVET credits through volunteering.

Concerning the validation and recognition of skills in Republic of North 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 the Republic of North Macedonia as in EU member's states.

2.8 Current debates and reforms

In May 2021, the Assembly of North Macedonia announced the adoption of the amendment Law on Volunteering ([Указ за прогласување на законот за изменување и дополнување на законот за волонтерството](#)).

In May 2021, at the initiative of several civil society organizations, with the support of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, an initiative was launched to amend the Law on Volunteering in the Republic of North Macedonia. In June 2021, a [draft Law for amending the Law on Volunteering](#) was published on the ENER platform (Unique Electronic Registry of Regulations of the Republic of North Macedonia).

In September 2021, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy presented the new Strategy for Development of Volunteerism 2021-2025 ([Стратегија за промовирање и развој на волонтерството \(2021-2025\) и Акциски план за спроведување на Стратегијата за промовирање и развој на волонтерството](#)).

3. EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Republic of North Macedonia, since its independence, has suffered from a high rate of unemployment. Unfortunately, the most vulnerable category are young people. The rate of youth unemployment since the independence of North Macedonia (1991) was consistently over 50% until 2015 when for the first time it dropped below 50%.

According to the data of the [State Statistical Office](#), in the III quarter of 2021, the labor force in the Republic of North Macedonia numbered 945.158 persons, of which 796.681 were employed, while 148.477 were unemployed persons. The activity rate in this period was 56.2, the employment rate was 47.4, while the unemployment rate was 15.7.

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 Service Agency of the Republic of North 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% [Republic of Macedonia. State Statistical Office. "20 Years Independent Macedonia" (Skopje, 2011), p.19 <http://www.stat.gov.mk/Publikacii/20GodiniRM.pdf> (Accessed November 10, 2020)].

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". [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 North Macedonia decreased to 19.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2018 from 21.9 percent in the same period of the previous year. In the second quarter of 2020 this percentage dropped to 16.7% and in the third quarter in 2021 this percent was 15.7. 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 Service Agency of North 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 North Macedonia is certainly higher than the official above mentioned.

It is also interesting to mention that the unemployment rate in North Macedonia averaged 30.73 percent from 1993 until the beginning of 2019, reaching an all-time high of 38.70 percent in the first quarter of 2005 and a record low of 16.2 percent in the first quarter of 2020 [<https://tradingeconomics.com/macedonia/unemployment-rate> (Accessed on November 10, 2020)]. It is interesting to mention that despite the pandemic in the following quarters in 2020, the unemployment rate decreased and in the [fourth quarter of 2020](#) it was 16.1 percent. In 2021 the unemployment rate continued to decrease, and according to the State [Statistical Office](#) in the third quarter of 2021 was 15.7 percent.

When it comes to youth unemployment, the numbers since our independence are constantly high. Last data from the second quarter of 2019 according to Statista are 34,9% (aged group 15-24). [<https://www.statista.com/statistics/812208/youth-unemployment-rate-in-macedonia/> (Accessed on November 10, 2020)]. There is a slight improvement, compared to the data from the same quarter in 2020, where the youth unemployment is 33.8% (aged group 15-24, State Statistical Office). [http://www.stat.gov.mk/pdf/2020/2.1.20.30_mk.pdf (accessed on November 10, 2020)]. According to the same data source in quarter in 2020 this rate was 34.8% and in the same quarter in 2021 it was 35,4%. [<https://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSoopstenie.aspx?id=98&rbr=13819> (Accessed on February 21, 2021)]. It is considered that the most important reasons for the high rate are the following [7]:

- 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 North 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 North Macedonia through a combination of employment, education and social assistance policies. For that purpose, The Government of Republic of North Macedonia in its work program 2017-2020 insert The Youth Guarantee as a measure for increasing the employability of young people. In 2017, the Master Plan for Youth Guarantee was adopted. The Master Plan defines institutions responsible for implementation of concrete activities for realization of the Youth Guarantee. The Youth

Guarantee in North Macedonia was mentioned for the first time in the youth program for work of the Macedonian Anti-Poverty Platform (**Македонска платформа против сиромаштија**) for the period 2014-2017, although no specific activities for its implementation have been noticed. Also, in 2015, **National Youth Council of Macedonia** submitted a proposal (**Младинска гаранција**), 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 North Macedonia. Such a proposal has been adopted, therefore, in the National Youth Strategy, one of the measures for increasing youth employment is also the 'implementation of a specific multi sectoral policy for proactively reducing youth unemployment' [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 10, 2020)].

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 Service Agency of North 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 Service Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia." [National Youth Strategy 2016-2020, Agency of Youth and Sport of Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2016), p. 27 http://ams.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_mkd.pdf (Accessed November 10, 2020)] [Economic Reform Programme 2018-2020. Republic of Macedonia, Ministry of Finance (January 2018), p.83 https://finance.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Makedonija_ERP_2018.pdf (Accessed November 10, 2020)]

Once the unemployed persons are registered in the unemployment register, they are immediately referred to their first interview with an expert from the Employment Service 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). [Ibid, p.83-84]

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 the information gained from the MLSP, in the first year of implementation (from March to December 2018) the following results were achieved: Total number of young people included: 15,266, most of them only with high school diplomas. Out of the total number of young people who become part of the Youth Guarantee, 4,556 (87%) were provided with certain services within the Program (career counseling and professional orientation, preparation for employment and work, elaboration of an individual plan for employment, information on the labor market, profiling, etc.); Out of the total number of young people included, 1,879 young people are employed in the period of 4 months from the day of entering the program. Of these, 224 persons were employed through the ESA's employment mediation service, 232 are directly employed by participating in some of the active employment measures; 1,387 are employed after their participation in any of the

other services of the Agency); 281 persons were involved in any of the active employment programs and measures that do not lead to direct employment. According to these data, the performance of the Youth Guarantee in 2018 is over 41%. Most of the young people were involved in the internship measure -163, in the measure for subsidized employment - 123 persons, in the measure - Financial support for job creation involved 87 people, trainings for demand occupations on the labor market - 29 persons, in community service - 45 people, advanced IT skills training - 20 people. 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 training.

The Youth Guarantee in 2019 is applied throughout the whole country (unlike in 2018 when as a pilot project it was implemented only in 3 Macedonian municipalities). According to the ESA, in the period from January 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019, 13728 young people become part of the Youth Guarantee, and 3095 of them get a job in the first 4 months after their registration within the Agency. According to the Macedonian Prime-Minister, during 2019, 6004 young people find a job through the Youth Guarantee. [<https://24info.mk/%D0%B7%D0%B0%D0%B5%D0%B2-%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B4-6-000-%D0%BF%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%BA%D1%83-%D0%BC%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%82/>] (Accessed on 16.11.20).

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 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. 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 an 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. The measures that are part of the second phase of Youth Guarantee are described in Operational Plan for employment 2020 ([Ревидиран оперативен план за активни програми и мерки за вработување и услуги на пазарот на трудот за 2020 година](#)), divided in 4 different categories: services, employment, continuous education and internship.

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 the labor force.

3.2 Administration and governance

Governance

Employment policies in North Macedonia are defined within the Program of the Government of Republic of Macedonia 2020-2024 ([Програма за работа на Владата на Република Северна Македонија во периодот 2020-2024](#)), ([revised](#)) [Employment and Social Reform Programme 2022](#), and [National Employment Strategy 2021-2027 with the Action Plan for employment 2021-2023](#). The Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016-2020 ([Акциски план за вработување млади лица 2016-2020](#)) has expired, a new Action plan has not been adopted.

In the Program of the Government of Republic of Macedonia 2020-2024 it is stated that: The main task of this Government will be to restore the confidence of young people in a certain and secure future in our country, by pursuing targeted policies to increase youth employment. In this regard, the program is foreseen following measures:

- Extension of the payment of 3000 denars per month as a youth allowance for employed young people up to 23 years with completed at least secondary education working in production
- Personal income tax refund for all new employees under 30, in the first two years where the funds will be returned directly to their account
- Tax exemption for all newly established private enterprises, formed by young people up to 30 years or women, as long as the turnover is below 3 million denars
- Direct support of youth and women entrepreneurship through grants in the amount of 5000 to 15000 euros for starting their own and new business
- Establishment of a Fund for Young Minds which will include young people who have left the country and have proven and achieved results in science, business, and other fields. They will be engaged as mentors of children and youth from the homeland
- Law on Youth Guarantee, which will institutionalize this form of support for young people to employment
- Establishment of a scholarship fund for young people for the needs of handicrafts
- Intensified practical teaching in secondary vocational schools, through models of cooperation with the unions of chambers of commerce and local self-government, as well as youth competitions for entrepreneurship

- Cooperation of the so-called triple helix, where universities, the business community and the Government together prepare curricula that will be a real response to the needs and demands of the labor market
- Law on Support of Social Entrepreneurship, with a focus on youth and women, and the opening of three centers for support of social enterprises
- Opening the possibility for full-time students to enter full-time employment, a certain number of hours - an option available to students in most European countries.

In the [Employment and Social Reforms Programme 2022](#) 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 Service Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia in order to assess and identify the possibilities for employment and prioritize the interventions and others.[See more **Program for Employment and Social Policy Reforms 2022**. Government of the Republic of Macedonia (Skopje, 2017), https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/dokument_i/2020/1.4_esrp.pdf (Accessed November 10, 2020)]

The National Employment Strategy 2021-2027 is prepared with the technical support of the International Labor Organization (ILO). The National Employment Strategy is accompanied by the Youth Guarantee, the implementation plan of which will be reformulated in 2022 to take into account the progress made, the impact of the pandemic on youth employment and the adjustments introduced in the EU Youth Support Program (or the Reinforced Youth Guarantee). This is also reflected in the three-year Action Plan attached to the Strategy.

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 the Employment Service Agency of Republic of North 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 of age. At the government press conference, the new Operational Plan for Employment for 2021 (**Оперативен план за активни програми и мерки за вработување и услуги на пазарот на трудот за 2021 година**) was presented. The Operational Plan for Employment in 2021 was changed twice. First in July 2021 the Operational plan underwent some changes ([Ревидиран оперативен план за активни мерки за вработување и услуги на пазарот на трудот за 2021 година](#)). Only changes were made in the budget items of the sources of financing but the final budget is unchanged and for 2021 is 1.5 billion MKD. After the second revision in September 2021 ([Ревидиран оперативен план за активни програми и мерки за вработување и услуги на пазарот на трудот за 2021 година](#)) the total budget increased 1.80 billion MKD which is the highest amount so far. The measures focus on further qualification, self-employment, digital skills and internship.

This program is not specifically created for young people, but it also covers them. The Operational Plan for 2021 puts special emphasis on the young unemployed up to 29 years, the long-term unemployed as well as the beneficiaries of guaranteed minimum assistance. All registered unemployed persons and employers have access to the programs, ie employment measures and services. The right to participate is determined based on the conditions and criteria defined for each individual program or measure and service for employment, and as a general rule will strive to achieve equal representation of men and women, in accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. as well as participation of young people up to 29 years of at least 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 North Macedonia
- Centers for social work
- Agency for Youth and Sport

North Macedonia's Governmental institutions also cooperate with the UNDP office in North Macedonia, USAID office in North Macedonia, World Bank, ILO, Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Organization of Employers of North 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. There were several consultations with the National Youth Council of Macedonia on the Operative plan for employment 2018 and 2019 and for the revision of the Action plan for Youth Employment 2016-2020 but other than that, there weren't any other collaborations. It's important to mention that institutions are not obliged to incorporate the ideas from these consultations.

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 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.

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 Service Agency (ESA) conducts a research study that provides certain short-term indicators of

employers' expectations in terms of new employment 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 enrollment policy, while creating new educational programs for occupations that are in line with the needs of the labor market.

In October, the ESA conducted a survey on the need for skills in the labor market for 2020. 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 ESA 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 enrollment 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 the Beneficiary Country. There is currently no information on whether institutions consult the scenarios in the policy making process.

Skills development

According to the results of the above mentioned survey conducted by the Employment Service Agency, ESA is conducting training (for computer skills, language courses, handicrafts etc.) for unemployed people who are registered in ESA as active job seekers.

As digital skills are on high demand, in the Operational Plan for Active Employment Measures 2020 (**Оперативен план за активни програми и мерки за вработување и услуги на пазарот на трудот за 2020 година**) one of the six chapters is focused on development of digital skills. This measure will cover 360 unemployed young people up to 34 years old. A total of 41.088.300 MKD denars are provided for implementation of this chapter. Compared to 2020, for 2021 in this part there are some changes, in Operational Plan for Active Employment Measures 2021 (**Ревидиран Оперативен план за активни програми и мерки за вработување и услуги на пазарот на трудот за 2021 година**) with the measure for development of digital skills will cover 400 unemployment young people up to 34 years old and a total of 47.000.000 MKD are provided for implementation.

3.4 Career guidance and counselling

Career guidance and counselling services

An important and low-cost way of improving youth labor markets is to give guidance and information for young job seekers on education choices and employment opportunities. It helps youngsters to make a good decision when it comes to choosing their future occupations if it is based on information about professions and sectors with the best employment outlook. The Macedonian Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, together with the ILO launched the Occupational Outlook website to provide easy access to this information. Occupational Outlook (<https://zanimanja.mk/>) offers insight into 45

occupations that have positive job prospects in the medium term, such as bookkeeper, home caregiver or baker. By 2021, the tripartite working group producing the information for the website plans to increase the number of available occupations to 72. For each profession, the Outlook provides a job description, conditions of work (pay, work schedule, work environment, work hazards); education, training and work experience requirements, and job prospects. [https://www.ilo.org/budapest/whats-new/WCMS_625307/lang-en/index.htm] (Accessed November 10, 2020)]

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

According to the last adopted document - Action Plan for Youth Employment 2016-2020 (**Акциски план за вработување млади лица 2016-2020**), until 2020, it is planned that at least 30% of the high school students and students enrolled in higher education will have access to career guidance and at least 30% of all youth registered youth in ESA will receive services for career guidance.

As a new employment action plan has not yet been developed, career counseling and guidance is mentioned in all other nationally adopted employment and education documents, but there is no publicly available information on how many young people will receive services for career guidance.

It's important to note that since the expiration of the Action Plan, a new one hasn't been adopted.

Funding

Based on the 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 was allocated. The Ministry of Education and Science allocated approximately 500.000 euros in integrating curriculum guidance in school, while the Employment Service Agency allocated approximately 1,5 million euros for providing information on the labor market and counselling and guidance services for young job seekers. It's important to note that since the expiration of the Action Plan, a new one hasn't been adopted.

Quality assurance

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

3.5 Traineeships and apprenticeships

Official guidelines on traineeships and apprenticeships

The Apprenticeship system is regulated in the Law on Labor Relations (**Закон за работни односи**), 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 the Republic of North Macedonia. Traineeship is included in the Employment strategies and programs 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 2021. The aim of the training 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 handicrafts, training for demanded occupations and trainings for C and D driver license.

The trainings are intended for all unemployed persons registered at the Employment Service Agency as active job seekers. There are some exceptions in the target group for some of the training such as a minimum of primary education and unemployment up to 34 years of age with a minimum of primary 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 apprenticeships.

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 2021 (**Оперативен план за активни програми и мерки за вработување и услуги на пазарот на трудот за 2021 година**), the total projected budget for the realization of the trainings is 101.362.300 MKD with enrollment of 1282 unemployed. For comparison, the budget for training for the previous year was 113.093.338 MKD for enrollment of 1922 unemployed.

Quality assurance

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

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

At the 53rd session of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia (**Записник од 53 седница на Владата на Република Македонија**) 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 was 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). In 2019, the Youth Guarantee was implemented in the whole country with special emphasis on the following regions: Northeastern, Southwestern and Polog region, as one of the most vulnerable regions regarding the NEET youth.

Having in mind the success of the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, in November 2019 a Plan for the implementation of the Youth Guarantee 2020-2022 was adopted ([План за имплементација на Гаранција за млади 2020-2022](#)). In the period from 2020 to 2022, the Youth Guarantee will be implemented throughout the country and will be aimed at all young people in the age group of 15 to 29 who are legally residing in North Macedonia and are not employed and not involved in education or training. Access to the Youth Guarantee will be possible by registering at one of the local employment centers of the Employment Agency. NEET young people who will be identified through field activities will have the opportunity to pre-register online through a dedicated website that will be made available to young field workers.

The Youth Guarantee provides following services:

- Professional orientation and career counseling
- Motivational trainings
- Individual and group counseling
- Job search training

The Youth Guarantee foreseen the following employment measures:

- Subsidies for employment of young people
- Incentives for hiring young people with disabilities

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

Institutional arrangements and partnership approaches that were piloted in 2018-2019 will remain unchanged, as they have proven to be successful during the pilot phase: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (as the main coordinative body for the Youth Guarantee), Employment Service Agency, Ministry of Education and Science, Center for Adult Education, National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility, Agency for Youth and Sports and non-governmental organizations working with youth as well as Employers 'and workers' organizations (social partners).

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 Employment Agency (ESA) will be responsible for providing activation services and labor market integration measures for young people (15-29) registered in the Youth Guarantee.

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 National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility will work on the promotion and implementation of European programs in the field of education, training, youth and sports in the Republic of Northern Macedonia.

The Agency for Youth and Sports and non-governmental organizations working with young people will be responsible for organizing and implementing outreach services for excluded young people and providing assistance with registration in the GM system for providing services.

Employers and workers organizations (social partners) will contribute to the implementation of the country's Youth Guarantee policy framework. Employers' organizations will be responsible for gaining support from their membership to increase employment and training opportunities for young people, while workers' organizations will be responsible for ensuring the quality of offers made to young people within the Youth Guarantee scheme.

In the [Operational Plan for Active Labor Market Programs and Measures 2021](#) several employment measures are outlined. The following measures are not exclusively provided for young people, but young people up to 34 were one of the target groups: Digital Skills Development Program: The aim of this program is to upgrade the skills of youth unemployed in the field of IT technologies; Internship with aim to gain work related skills and knowledge for specific work places; Self-employment program: The aim of this program 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 traineeships.

Flexicurity measures focusing on young people

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

One of the changes they proposed was the 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 CSOs 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 CSOs are demanding a change of the law.

In June 2018, Macedonian government adopted Law on Amending and Supplementing the Law on Labor Relations (**Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за работни односи**), and then in October 2020 new amendments (**Закон за изменување на Законот за работни односи**), 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 Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan for 2020-2022 foresees 30,5 million euros for the implementation of measures for youth employment.

The Revised Operational Plan for Active Programs and Measures for Employment and Services in the Labor Market for 2021 has a total of 1.816.690.886 MKD for funding [Revised Operational Plan for Active Programs and Measures for Employment and Services in the Labor Market 2021, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (Skopje, 2020), <https://av.gov.mk/content/pdf/%D0%A0%D0%B5%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BD%20%D0%9E%D0%9F-2021%20%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%20USVOEN%20NA%20VLADA%20NA%2016.11%202021.pdf> (Accessed February 14, 2021)], which is an increase in comparison with previous year, when the budget for implementation of the measures was 1.805.654.260 MKD [Revised Operational Plan for Active Programs and Measures for Employment and Services in the Labor Market 2020, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (Skopje, 2020), <https://av.gov.mk/content/%D0%9E%D0%9F/REVIDIRAN%20OP%2009%2009%202020.pdf> (Accessed February 14, 2021)]. It's important to mention that this amount is not exclusively intended for youth employment measures, but for employment measures for all populations in the country.

Quality assurance

N/A

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

Programmes and schemes for cross-border mobility

In the Republic of North 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, 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 ([Закон за вработување и осигурување во случај на невработеност](#)), 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 North Macedonia passed the Law on Private Employment Agencies ([Закон за приватните агенции за обезбедување](#)), which also regulates mediation in the employment of a Macedonian citizens 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. [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-%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)]

The Law on Labor Records ([Закон за евиденциите во областа на трудот](#)) prescribes the manner of keeping records of citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia working abroad. Thus, Art. 29 stipulates that in the records for the Macedonian citizens who are employed abroad, data are entered for the Macedonian citizens 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 North 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 Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in 2015 prepared a draft text of the Law on Social Entrepreneurship ([Нацрт Закон за социјално претприемништво](#)). The Law has not yet been entered into the parliamentary procedure.

In the absence of a law, there was an Entrepreneurial Learning Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2014-2020 ([Стратегија за претприемачко учење во Република Македонија 2014 – 2020](#)). 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 was informal and non-formal education. However since the Strategy has expired, a new Strategy has not been developed.

Formal learning

Entrepreneurship is included in North Macedonia's secondary education as a compulsory separate subject. Curricula for 2 compulsory subjects are developed: "Business and entrepreneurship" ([Наставна програма Бизнис и претприемништво](#)) 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 ([Наставна програма Иновации](#)) is included in the 9th grade).

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

Within the Slavic University ([Меѓународен Славјански Универзитет](#)) of Sveti Nikole, Faculty of Economics and Entrepreneurship Organization ([Факултет за економија и](#)

организација на претприемништвото) for the past 14 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 **Department of Entrepreneurship**, 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 terms of entrepreneurship, and some of them also come from CSOs.

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. Since then, these trainings have become an annual activity of the Agency.

In addition to the set of training, the Agency for Youth and Sport, 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 targeting young people aged 19-29 years, citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia, who wants to start their own business regardless of whether they are currently employed or not. Similar measures continued also in 2019. For example, in September 2019, the AYS published an open call for young people aged 18-25 for 2 module training for entrepreneurship and development of the business skills needed to set up and run a business. The [same call](#) was published in January 2020, however in 2021 the AYS did not announce such a call for young people again.

Educators support in entrepreneurship education

According to the Central Registry of the Republic of North Macedonia, currently there are 21 associations and foundations in North 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 Organizations 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 mentioned above, The Government established the Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship of the Republic of North Macedonia (APERNM) for implementation of the Governmental SME policies and other related projects/programs adopted by the Government for support of entrepreneurship, competitiveness and innovation. Additionally, Fund for innovation and technologies is established with aim to support SMEs.

The website of the **APERNM** also serves as a 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 same call was launched once more, at the end of 2019 and was open until March 2020. The practice of announcing the call continued, and in April 2021, the same call was published again.

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 promote start-up opportunities and resource information through their websites and activities. As an example, **Startup Macedonia** is an organization that supports innovation, development, and networking between startups and all the local stakeholders which are part of the ecosystem 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 North 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 March 2020. It is a great opportunity for young people to exchange experiences and to present good practices and success stories.

Access to capital

In the Revised Operational Plan for Active Programs and Measures for Employment and Services in the Labor Market for 202 (**Ревидиран оперативен план за активни програми и мерки за вработување и услуги на пазарот на трудот за 2021 година**), 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, people with disabilities, unemployed marginalized women and other unemployed persons registered with the Employment Agency. In order to realize this measure, ESA in accordance with the Operational Plan has foreseen 634.034.022 MKD.

Self-employment grants are set flexibly from 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 Macedonian Government in 2018 for the first time launched a project for state support of business accelerators in the country. In September 2018, **Fund for Innovations and Technological Development** 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 are 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 a funding opportunity for young people who want to start their own business. Macedonian citizens are usually 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 North 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. 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 Fund is also the institutional patron of the Social Impact Award North Macedonia. The Social Impact Award is a competition and an educational program to support entrepreneurial ideas among young people who have the potential to develop and implement innovative solutions to global problems. The aim is to increase the interest among young people for social entrepreneurship through the award and through it they will be able to understand the possibilities for developing their own career.

[The Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship in the Republic of North 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 2019-2021](#) of the Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship of the Republic of North 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 2019 to 2021 and for this purpose 41.670.000 MKD 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.

In the working program of the Agency for 2021 ([Програма за поддршка на претприемништвото, конкурентноста и иновативноста на малите и средните претпријатија во 2021 година](#)) there are some activities and budget particularly intended for youth. Thus, the program foreseen 200,000 MKD for workshops for promotion of entrepreneurship and raising awareness for entrepreneurship among youth, as well as development of entrepreneurial spirit and culture for opening of the personal business. The program also foresees 250.000 MKD for realization of 8 training courses for young people, for development of a Business Plan.

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 program design.

3.11 Current debates and reforms

Current situation

Since its independence until today, North Macedonia has had a constantly high youth unemployment rate, and for some years (2003, 2004) it reached up to 65%. In 2019 we managed to decrease the rate to 35.55 ([according to the Global Economy](#)) which is lowest ever.

Current reforms

In December 2019, the government adopted the Revised Program for Reforms in Employment and Social Policy 2022 ([Ревидирана програма за реформи во вработувањето и социјална политика 2022](#)). The program addresses success with the Youth Guarantee, and envisages an increase in the number of young people involved in the Youth Guarantee, at 14,000 per year.

The program does not envisage any specific reforms in terms of increasing youth employability, but only confirms the government's commitment to continue with measures and policies that lead to reducing youth unemployment (mostly Youth Guarantee).

The goal is to increase the youth employment rate to 34.5% by 2022 (for comparison, in 2018 it was 30.9%)

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](#).

However, the Strategy has expired, and to date (February 2022) there is still no new 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 North Macedonia should have the opportunity and access to the resources and services that make their life healthier, happier and more productive.

The Republic of North Macedonia is a social, multiethnic and multi-confessional state. [Signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement](#), by the President of North Macedonia and the representatives of the main political parties in 2001, ended the war conflict in the country. This Agreement addresses a 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 North 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 North Macedonia in the field of education is the development of programs 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 North Macedonia are the quality, social inclusion and cohesion and decentralization.

In 2008, North 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 an inherent and key element in preparation of all strategic documents.

The Roma population is the most marginalized in the education system in North 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 ([Стратегија за Ромите на Република Македонија 2014-2020 Национален акционен план за образование 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: [Scholarships for students – children without parents and parental care in the public and private high schools](#); [Scholarship for social categories of Roma secondary school students](#); [Scholarships for Roma students in the public and private high schools in North Macedonia](#);

[Scholarships for full-time students from social categories enrolled in undergraduate studies from the first cycle at public universities and higher education institutions](#), [Scholarships for Roma students enrolled in undergraduate studies from the first cycle at public universities and higher education institutions](#), and others.

In February 2022, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy adopted a new strategy for Roma Inclusion 2022-2030 ([СТРАТЕГИЈА ЗА ИНКЛУЗИЈА НА РОМИТЕ 2022 – 2030](#)) with the main focus in employment, housing, education, health, culture, anti-gypsyism, civil registration, poverty.

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. The state was additionally challenged with the COVID-19 crisis which brought a significant increase of the number of unemployed people.

Young people have low participation rates in the labor market. 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 job seekers 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.

In order to increase the employment rate among young Roma, as one of the most vulnerable categories, the MLSP adopted the new [National Employment Strategy 2021-2027 with Employment Action Plan 2021-2023](#). The strategy sets out three strategic goals to be achieved to promote full, productive and freely selected employment, namely: (i) improving the quality of educational outcomes at all levels; (ii) strengthening the role of economic and enterprise development policies in creating decent jobs; and (iii) strengthening the inclusiveness of labor market policies. It is expected that the implementation of these goals will contribute to reducing skills mismatch with labor market needs, increasing adult participation in training, reducing youth and adult unemployment, reducing the gender employment gap, and reducing the share of persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion.

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

Definitions and concepts

In the Macedonian legislation, there is no definition of 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 determined 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.

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".

On May 2019, Macedonian government adopted a new Law on Social Protection (**Закон за социјална заштита**). The new Law, same as the old one, mentions the term social exclusion in article 2, 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 the Republic of North Macedonia: **Berovo, Pehcevo, Radovis, Lipkovo, Caska, Konce, Studenicani** and **Negotino**). These strategies define social inclusion as "a 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 standards and welfare in their communities. This will enable them greater participation in decision making that positively influences 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 North 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.

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 a decent, socially acceptable level of living standards and well-being.

In the new Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination ([Закон за спречување и заштита од дискриминација](#)), adopted on May 2019, Article 4 defines the following terms:

Discrimination by association is any distinction, exclusion or limitation of one person for affiliation with another person or group on any discriminatory basis; **Discrimination by perception** is any distinction, exclusion or limitation of a person for allegedly belonging to a particular group on any discriminatory 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 and/or discrimination, with less opportunities for achieving protection of their own rights and freedoms.

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), 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.

North Macedonia adopted the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) in January 2020, and one of the aims of the law is encouragement of personal, professional and social development of young people.

The Assembly of the Republic of North 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 risk or facing social exclusion.

The major changes introduced with the Ohrid Framework Agreement were establishment of a decentralized government, and provisions for altering the official languages of the country. According to Article 7 of the [Constitution of the Republic of North 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.

Main actors

- Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations ([Министерство за политички систем и односи помеѓу заедниците](#)) which works on Advancement and protection of the rights of communities;
- Ministry of Labor and Social Policy ([Министерство за труд и социјална политика](#)) 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.
- Ministry of Health ([Министерство за здравство](#)) – responsible for health protection and health insurance of young people and implementation of such programmes.
- Ministry of Education and Science ([Министерство за образование и наука](#)) – responsible for 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 Society and Administration](#) – responsible for development and promotion of information technology;
- [Agency of Youth and Sport](#) – governmental agency responsible for planning, implementation and coordination of youth programme.
- [State Statistical Office](#) – state institution responsible for conducting statistical research.
- [Employment Service Agency](#) – governmental agency responsible for implementation of the employment programmes.
- Social Care Centers ([Центри за социјална работа](#)) – state institutions working under the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy are responsible for implementation of the programmes of social protection and welfare.
- [Association of the Units of 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 the EU to the Republic of North Macedonia](#)
- [UNDP office in the Republic of North Macedonia](#)
- [UNICEF office in North Macedonia](#)
- [USAID office in North Macedonia](#)
- [International Labor Organization – office in North Macedonia](#)

- [World Bank in North Macedonia](#)
- [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 (**Кодекс на добри практики за учество на граѓанскиот сектор во процесот на креирање политики**), civil society representatives are invited in developing policies in the area of social inclusion.

Consultation of young people

The representative bodies of the young people in the country were included in the preparation of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies.

Policy monitoring and evaluation

Social inclusion is a complex subject involving various stakeholders and covering different issues. According to the [National Strategy for Reduction of Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Republic of Macedonia \(Revised 2010-2020\)](#), there is a need for systematic, coordinated and long term cooperation between the centers for social work, the municipalities, the employment centers, nongovernmental organizations, the schools, police stations and other organizations, with a view of resolving the social issues.

Daily work of the centers for social work foreseen regular cooperation with police, courts, units of local self-government, educational institutions and civil society organizations. The lowest level of cooperation centers has with the civil society organizations, while the cooperation is somewhat better with the units of local self-government. Still, there is a need of widening the cooperation between the Centers and the units of local self-government in order to improve the efficiency and expertise in creating programs or local action plans for social inclusion.

There is also cooperation between the ministries and international organizations. For example, in 2017 USAID started the implementation of a project "Social Inclusion Through Technology" (**Социјална инклузија преку технологија**). The aim of the project is to help young people with disabilities to become part of the labor market, especially in the fast-growing IT sector. For the aim of the project, USAID signed MoU with the MLSP and the State Labor Inspectorate.

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 ([Национална стратегија за намалување на сиромаштијата и социјалната исклученост 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 North Macedonia for balancing the degree of inclusion and welfare in all social levels.

Social inclusion policy in North 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 the Government of North Macedonia adopted some strategies dealing with promotion of social inclusion for a concrete category of citizens (ex. Roma people, people with disabilities).

Ministry of Labor and Social Policy adopted Programme for Dealing with the Problems of Socially Excluded Persons ([Програма за справување со проблемите на социјално исклучените лица](#)). The general objectives of the Programme are:

- o Termination of the trans-generational chain of exclusion
- o Strengthening and supporting the beneficiaries of all target groups in the direction of their active engagement in the life of the community
- o 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.

Currently the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy starting from 2018 – 2024 is implementing [The Social Services Improvement Project](#) which is supported by the World Bank. The main objective of the project is to expand the access to social services and improve the quality of social services, including services of childcare and care facilities for vulnerable groups.

The Ministry of Education and Science refers to „promoting the concept of equality and non-discrimination in the education system“ as a priority in its Strategic plan 2020-2022 ([Стратешки план 2020-2022 на Министерството за образование и наука](#))

Scope and contents

[The Strategy on Poverty Reduction and Social Exclusion](#), addresses young people’s needs in 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.

The main strategic objective for poverty reduction and social inclusion in the Republic of North Macedonia is: reduce poverty and social exclusion in the Republic of North 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 of life.

The *Vision of the Strategy* is: The Republic of North Macedonia needs to be a society with reduced 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 North 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 of 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 North 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 and Administration](#)
- [Agency of Youth and Sport](#)
- [State Statistical Office](#)

- [Employment Service Agency](#)

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 citizens 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 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 North 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.
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 North 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 North Macedonia.

Since the beginning of 2016, the Government started with implementation of new project 'Buy a house/Buy an apartment'. 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. Within the [call for application](#)

[for obtaining a subsidized housing loan for 2021](#), the Government will help young people up to the age of 35 years by covering up to 70% of the monthly annuity (principal and interest) in the first 5 years of the loan repayment for buying a new house or apartment.

Aiming to support young people to overcome the negative effects imposed on them by the COVID-19 crisis, in June 2020, the Ministry of Finance issued 87 014 "Domestic cards". These cards were given to young people and could be used for buying domestic goods and obtaining services in the amount of 3,000 MKD. The cards were entitled for persons aged 16 to 29 years that were active participants in the state formal secondary education and higher undergraduate education, as of May 22, 2020.

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.

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 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 the **Annual Work Programme of the Employment Agency for 2021** ([Програма за работа на Агенцијата за вработување на Република Северна Македонија за 2021 година](#)). It's not particularly intended for youth but they are also in the focus. The aim of this measure is to increase the employment rate and employment opportunities for people with disabilities registered within the Employment Service Agency as unemployed persons.

Educational programmes:

- Programme for conditional financial support for high school education

The program "Conditional Compensation for Secondary Education" ([Програма за условен паричен надоместок за средно образование](#)) 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 the Republic of North Macedonia. On a long-term basis, the program aims to increase employment and reduce 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, 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 North 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 North Macedonia (**Стипендии за ученици со посебни потреби од јавните и приватните средни училишта**).

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

In the school year 2021/2022, the Ministry of Education and Science announced a call to award 520 scholarships for social support to students from public secondary schools in the Republic of North Macedonia (**Стипендии за социјална поддршка на ученици од јавните средни училишта**). 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 North Macedonia

The Ministry of Education and Science for the 2021/2022 school year awarded 50 scholarships for pupils - orphans from public and private secondary schools in the Republic of North Macedonia (**Стипендии за ученици- деца без родители од јавните и приватните средни училишта**). The amount of the scholarship is 3.500,00 MKD per month for nine months during the school year.

- Scholarships for Roma students in the public and private high schools in North Macedonia

The Ministry of Education and Science for the 2021/2022 school year awarded 870 scholarships in four categories for Roma students enrolled in the first, second, third and fourth year of public and private secondary schools in the Republic of North Macedonia (**Стипендии во четири категории за ученици Роми запишани во прва, втора, трета и четврта година од јавните и приватните средни училишта**).

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 North 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;
 - 5) to be citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia;
- Scholarships for full-time students from social categories enrolled in undergraduate studies from the first cycle at public universities and higher education institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia

The Ministry of Education and Science for the 2021/2022 school year awarded 1470 social scholarships for students enrolled in undergraduate studies from the first cycle in the Republic of North Macedonia (**Стипендии за студенти од социјални категории запишани на додипломски студии од прв циклус на јавните универзитети и високообразовни установи во Република Северна Македонија**).

- Scholarships for Roma students enrolled in undergraduate studies from the first cycle at public universities and higher education institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia

The Ministry of Education and Science for the 2021/2022 school year awarded 130 scholarships for Roma students enrolled in undergraduate studies from the first cycle at public universities and higher education institutions in the Republic of North Macedonia (**Стипендии за студенти Роми запишани на студии од прв циклус на јавните и приватните високообразовни установи во Република Северна Македонија**).

Child and Social Protection programmes:

- Guaranteed minimum assistance

With the new [revised law](#) on Social protection ([Закон за социјална заштита](#)) on 21 may 2019 the measure [Right to social welfare](#) allowance was changed to [Guaranteed minimum assistance](#), and the amount of 2,871 denars is increased into 4,000 denars. The right to guaranteed minimum assistance ([Гарантирана минимална помош](#)) is intended for a household that is materially unsecured and does not own property and property rights that can be supported. A household whose total average amount of all incomes of all members of the household on all grounds in the last three months before submitting the request for exercising the right and during the exercise of the right is lower than the amount of the guaranteed minimum assistance in accordance with this law.

- Permanent compensation

The right to permanent compensation (траен надоместок) has a caregiver who took care of a person in his family and a parent who took care of a child with a disability

In the sense of the Article 58 of the Law on Social Protection ([Закон за социјална заштита](#)), the right to permanent compensation has a person:

- who has cared for a person in his family for at least fifteen years, after reaching 62 years of life for a woman, ie 64 years of life for a man, who is unemployed and does not use the right to a pension on any grounds.

- a parent who has a child with a disability. The right to permanent compensation has a parent who has taken care of a child up to the age of 26, without using a non-family social protection service, which is unemployed and does not use the right to a pension, after reaching 62 years of life for a woman, ie 64 years of life for a man.

- 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 ([Право на социјално домување](#)) is provided to socially endangered persons - not provided with housing. Socially endangered persons are: beneficiaries of guaranteed minimum 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 North Macedonia envisages social transfers on a regular basis. The [Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia](#) projected social transfers in the total amount of 120,653 million MKD. Just for comparison social transfers in 2020, were 118,504 million MKD.

In addition, based on the **2021 Budget**, 1.4 billion MKD are planned for active policies and measures for employment.

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 **2021 Budget** envisages 10,5 billion MKD for these transfers.

Quality assurance

As for many other policies undertaken by the Governmental institutions, there is no publicly 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 of North Macedonia invest in raising intercultural awareness among the population, but on ad hoc basis.

In 2015, the Government implemented campaign “Multiethnic and multi-religious cohesion”. It consists of 18 videos for encouraging cohesion and mutual understanding among people with different ethnic or religious background. All videos were broadcast 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 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: March, 2019**), 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.

The Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations is formed in 2019, and it performs works and duties related to:

- Functioning of political system;
- Securing and coordination of the support to the Government in realization of the strategic priority related to obligations arising from Framework agreement;

- Securing and realization of financial assets required for successful development of the process of realization of obligations arising from the Framework Agreement within the frames of the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia and donors;
- Advancement and protection of the rights of communities as group of citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia who live on the territory of the Republic of North Macedonia and its representatives have different ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and other specifics and are led by the will for protection and nurturing those specifics;
- Monitoring the implementation of the right to use of languages and alphabets of the communities;
- Guaranteeing the protection of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of the communities;
- International cooperation for issues referring to political life and inter-community relations;
- Cooperation and harmonization of data from the data base in their competence with the State Statistical Office;
- Cooperation and performing professional works for the needs of the bodies of national and local government in diplomatic and consular missions of the Republic of North Macedonia and within other state bodies established in pursuance to the Constitution and law and in institutions that perform activities in the area of public interest as stipulated by law, and organized as agencies, funds, public institutions and public enterprises established by the Republic of North Macedonia or from municipalities, from the city of Skopje, as well as the municipalities in the city of Skopje;
- Monitoring the state of inter-community relations in the Republic of North Macedonia on national level, per regions and in the local self-government units;
- Preparing reports and recommendations to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia, as well as the Inter-Communities Relations Committee;
- Providing support to institutions in accomplishing the obligations stipulated in this Law;
- Promoting and undertaking measures for enhancement of use of the language that is spoken by at least 20% of the citizens of the Republic of North Macedonia;
- Preparation of professional-analytical materials under their authority for the needs of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia;
- Providing support to the Government in securing fair and equal representation of citizens that belong to all communities in the state administration bodies;
- Providing support in preparation of methodology for adoption of actions plans of the Government in the area of equal representation in employment;
- Providing support in coordination of activities with the bodies of state administration and donors and
- Performing other duties as stipulated by Law.

Young people's rights

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

At 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 **Macedonian Confederation of Free Trade Unions** officially started the National campaign "365 workers' rights for youth". The campaign aimed to raise awareness among young people about their labor rights. Through the activities of the campaign, it worked 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" was supported by the Program for decentralized cooperation between the region of Normandy and Macedonia, the Agency of Youth and Sport of the Republic of North Macedonia and the State Labor Inspectorate. The campaign lasted till the end of 2018, and it consisted of debates, workshops, research and an online campaign which was 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 North Macedonia are vulnerable to radicalization. The information shows that the high unemployment rate and the overall poor economic situation of the young people in North 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 easy target for manipulation.

It is believed that the youth are the most targeted demographic in North 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. But, the National Strategy of Republic of Macedonia for Fight Against Terrorism (2018-2022) ([Национална стратегија на Република Македонија за борба против тероризам \(2018-2022\)](#)) doesn't foresee some measure to prevent youth radicalization neither include young people in the description of vulnerable categories of persons.

In January 2021, a project '[Youth Civic Education Platform for Countering Radicalization \(Youth Counter\)](#)' was launched by Initiative for European Perspective (IEP), Center for Intercultural Dialogue (CID) - Kumanovo, NEXUS civil concept, AKVA – Struga and CBM - Mitrovica, financed by the EU. The project goals are to enhance the capacity of local civil society for building resilience against radicalization of the youth population in N. Macedonia, and to develop a [civic education platform for youth](#), designing civic education motivated counter-narratives and alternative narratives, as a means for the prevention of youth radicalization. The project duration is from January 2021 until December 2023.

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, the percentage of young adults (18-34) living with their parents is constantly above 70%. Last data released from Eurostat are from 2019, when 72.3% of young adults were living with their parents. Young people are claiming that they would like to live without their parents, but due to financial reasons they can't afford to live independently. According to the latest research "**Youth Study North Macedonia**" conducted within the project "**Youth Studies Southeast Europe 2018/2019**", 77,3% of the Macedonian youth aged 14-29 are living in their parent's home.

In September 2018, the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia on its 88th session, adopted the National Strategy for Deinstitutionalization 2018-2027

"Timjanik" and Action Plan (**Национална стратегија за деинституционализација во Република Македонија 2018-2027 "Тимјаник" и Акциски план**). The main implementation body of the Strategy is the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. The purpose of the Strategy is to transform the bulky social institutions that offer institutional care for different categories of users in social services in the local community. With the process of deinstitutionalization, which will last in stages over a period of 10 years, institutions such as "11 October", "May 25", "Ranka Milanovic", Banja Bansko, the Infant Home in Bitola, the Special Institution "Demir Kapija" no longer exist. Instead, people and children who are accommodated inside will be distributed in small group homes, that is, in apartments and houses throughout the country. These homes accommodate young people without parental care until their age of 18 years. The MLSP started opening small group homes even before the adoption of the new Strategy, as this program was foreseen many years ago. Young caregivers are in constant 24-hour contact with social workers and psychologist. Also, supervision in small group homes and foster families is carried out by the Institute for Social Activities and the Sector for Inspection Supervision in the Ministry.

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 ([Станови за социјално ранливи категории](#))– 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. In 2021 the Ministry and Transport and Communications [promised](#) that it will build over 660 social buildings all over the country.
- Project "Buy a house, buy an Apartment" ("[Купи куќа, купи стан](#)")– with a model of "75% and/or 50% of the monthly loan installment" support by the Government for building/buying a new house, apartment, in the first five years of mortgage payment – the Government together with the North Macedonian banks are implementing this project through special credit line. The Government is contributing in the monthly loan installment for building or buying a new house or apartment. The measure is available for the general population (including young people) with low income.
- Project "[Buy a house for youth](#)" ("[Купи куќа за млади](#)")– 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).

When it's about homeless people, within the [Red Cross of city of Skopje](#) in the Republic of North Macedonia (**Црвен крст на Република Северна Македонија**) there are two programs to help the homeless, one of which is directed exclusively towards the homeless and 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 (**Пункт за бездомници**) is located in Momin Potok, it's operating since 2008 and is open every working day for a consultation, while bathing, changing dirty clothes, getting a hot meal, receiving medication, doctor's examinations as well as

obtaining personal documentation and a number of other activities are performed twice a week.

The station is regularly visited by homeless people. 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 patrol social workers are engaged to reveal 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

Every year the Government is introducing Programme for subsidizing the electricity costs ([Програма за заштита на ранливи потрошувачи на енергија за 2022 година](#)). The Programme usually offers financial aid to 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 these 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 ([Програма за справување со проблемите на социјално исклучените лица](#)). 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 the application of new practices for social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Health care

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

Still, there are 2 youth centers ([Младински центри](#)) in the city of Skopje offering free gynecological examinations and counseling, psychological counseling, HIF tests,

counseling 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 the Republic of Macedonia 2018-2020 (**Акциски план за сексуално и репродуктивно здравје на Република Македонија 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 gynecological clinic**. 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 gynecological 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, composed of a specialist gynaecologist and nurse. This service is covering youth but also the older population.

National Drug Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2021-2025 (**Национална стратегија за дрога на Република Македонија 2021-2025**), recognizing the vulnerability of young people, put special emphasis on them, even though the Strategy has general focus. The Strategy emphasizes that there is a need to improve 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 (**Извештај за проценка на минимум стандарди за квалитет на програмите за третман на зависност од дрога во Република Македонија**) states that there are no specific programs for young people in health institutions. It 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 the protection of the HIV/AIDS population in Macedonia for 2020 (**Програма за заштита на населението од ХИВ инфекција во Република Македонија за 2021 година**). As many other programmes, this programme also targets the whole population, but as well as Macedonian youth. Main aim of the programme is to maintain the low prevalence of HIV, through universal approach of prevention, health care and support, based on respect of human rights and non-discrimination.

Project Roma Health Mediators (**Ромски здравствени медијатори**) started to be implemented in 2010 by the CSO HERA, supported by the 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 North 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 North 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 the Roma community about their health rights, how important is regular immunization, receiving regular therapy, going to a gynaecologist, possession of personal documents, and 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 of the Ministry of Education and Science.

Aiming to support young people to overcome the negative effects imposed on them by the COVID-19 crisis, in June 2020, the Ministry of Finance issued 87 014 "Domestic cards". These cards were given to young people and could be used for buying domestic goods and obtaining services in the amount of 3,000 denars. The cards were entitled for persons aged 16 to 29 years that were active participants in the state formal secondary education and higher undergraduate education, as of May 22, 2020.

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 the Standard of Profession ([Стандард на занимање](#)) approved by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in 2018, the youth work is formally recognized as separate profession. According the standard, the youth worker plans, organizes, implements, monitors and evaluates activities, prepares instruments and researches; designs programs and youth projects according to their needs; takes care of the quality of youth work and contributes to the development of effective, efficient and ethical practice; trains; teaches; mentors and advises young people in the direction of helping personal and social development and their active participation in the community; informs young people; lobbies and advocates for change which facilitate and assist the personal and social development of young people and enable their active participation in the community, organizes youth exchanges, festivals, campaigns, events, youth education camps within the youth organization, youth cultural centers, youth clubs, non-governmental organizations, etc.

Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) defines youth workers as qualified persons who have the competencies to work with young people by implementing activities that support their personal and social development through informal and informal learning.

National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, in thematic area Local Youth Work emphasizes the importance of youth work and defines it as an organized and systematic process of authentic development of young people with the aim of fulfilling their overall personal, social and civic potential.

Main inclusive Youth-Work programmes and target groups

In addition to recognizing youth work as a special profession in North 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

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

[The Union for Youth Work](#) launched a call [for participants for the training programme dedicated to youth workers](#), in compliance with the National Standard of Profession and first of its kind in North Macedonia. The training cycle took place from December 2020 to April 2021. In June 2021 after the successful completion of the program, [14 Youth Workers](#) were certified in a ceremony organized by Agency for Youth and Sports and Union for Youth Work. A new cohort of Youth Workers will be certified by the end of 2022.

Furthermore, many young people working in youth organizations are participating in training for youth workers abroad.

Financial support

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

N/A

4.8 Current debates and reforms

The process of deinstitutionalization is still taking place. All young people (up to 18) without parental care are already accommodated in small group homes. Currently the Ministry of Labor in Social Policy is working on improvement of services for young people without parental care.

5. PARTICIPATION

In Republic of North 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.

For creation of the first Law on Youth, young people were also consulted for their needs and opinions, but systematic youth participation is still lacking when it comes to local or national youth policies.

5.1 General context

Definitions and concepts

The Law on Youth Participation and Youth policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) stipulates that "Youth participation" is a process that enables young people to participate and joint decision-making on policies and programs that directly or indirectly shape the lives of young people"

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 programs. 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"[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)].

Institutions of representative democracy

According to the **Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia**, Republic of North 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 North 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 North Macedonia**. The Assembly is the representative body of all Macedonian citizens and it is composed of 120 to 123 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."

Republic of North 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.[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)]

The citizens in Republic of North Macedonia through non-compulsory and with guaranteed secrecy by law are electing The President, the Assembly, by proportional representation and the local self-government bodies (Mayor and Municipality Councils).

5.2 Youth participation in representative democracy

Young people as voters

"Voting Right" has every citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia with 18 years of age and working ability. [<https://a1on.mk/macedonia/dzhaferi-da-go-doneseme-svetot-tuka-a-ne-da-ni-zaminat-mladite-vo-svetot/>]. Currently, in the Republic of North Macedonia there are no plans on lowering the voting age limit. According to the Article 22 of the [Constitution of the Republic of North 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." 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.

There are no statistics on the rate of turnout of young people during the elections in the country.

Young people as political representatives

In September 2017, the Parliament of the Republic of North 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 an informal body within the Parliament of Republic of North 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 the youngest female parliamentarian in the assembly.

Within the actual parliamentary structure, elected in July 2020, the club is planned to bring together MPs that are younger than 35 but also all other MPs that can contribute to the efforts for improving the conditions in which young people live.^[1]

5.3 Youth representation bodies

Youth parliament

Structure

The Law on Youth Participation and Youth policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) adopted in January 2020 envisages establishment of a National Assembly of Youth which is planned to be a body of forms of youth organization that elects youth representatives in the advisory body, creates priorities and policies for youth advocacy and coordinates and follows their work.

The Law also regulates Local Assemblies of Youth.

Composition

According to the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies "Youth" are people aged 15 to 29 years. The Assembly of Youth is expected to consist of representatives of the youth organizations, organizations for youth and youth umbrella organizations.

The Assembly of Youth is convened by an initiative board of at least two thirds of registered forms of youth organization. The Initiative Board is obliged to obligatorily inform all forms of youth organization from the Register for holding the sessions of the Youth Assembly.

The Assembly of Youth is held at least once a year.

Members of the Local Assembly of Youth can be organizations for youth, political youth wings, student organizations and other forms of youth association. These organizations do not have to be registered in the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje, but have to have activities on the territory of the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city Skopje in which the Assembly is formed.

Role and responsibilities

The scope of work of the Assembly of Youth consists of:

- election of youth representatives in the advisory body,
- creating policies and priorities,
- monitoring the work of youth representatives,
- reviewing reports from youth representatives and
- other activities in accordance with the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies and the Rules of Procedure.

Funding

The operating costs for organizing the assemblies after previously submitted financial plan, are financed from the funds provided in the Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia by the competent body of the state administration responsible for the affairs of the youth field – the Agency for Youth and Sport.

The Budget of the Republic of North Macedonia funds the implementation of the Law on Youth Inclusion and Youth Policies in the amount of at least 0.3% of its budget on an annual basis.

Youth councils and/or youth advisory boards

Structure

The local youth councils are regulated with the Law on youth participation and youth policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) adopted in January 2020. The article 16 of this Law specifies that:

“The municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje establish local youth councils in their statutes.”

In order to support the creation of local youth councils, the Agency of Youth and Sports, together with the OSCE - Mission to Skopje developed a [Manual for Local Youth Councils](#). The Manual itself provides different steps for establishment of Local Youth Councils, in the event the municipality has never had a council previously; it has had one before, but it's no longer active; and in the event it currently has an active youth council, and needs to be adjusted to the Law's provisions.

According to the same law, the National Advisory Body on Youth Policies, also known as advisory body, is a body for cooperation between youth representatives and representatives of bodies of the state administration which has an advisory and supervisory role in the implementation of youth policies and youth activities.

As of the end of February 2022, the Assembly and the Advisory Body are not yet established.

Composition

According to the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)), "Youth" are people aged 15 to 29 years.

The municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje provide a statutory formation of local youth councils. The number of members of the local youth councils is odd and does not exceed more than one third of the members of the Municipal Council, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje but can not be less than five people.

The National Advisory Body on Youth Policies shall be established by a decision of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. The Advisory Body should be composed of representatives appointed by the government bodies, and youth representatives elected by the National Youth Assembly, one of which is president. The structure of this body will be composed of 9 representatives of the youth sector, and no more than 8 representatives of state institutions, based on articles in the Law. According to a [decision of the Government](#), they appointed the following institutions / ministries to nominate a representative: Agency for Youth and Sports, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance.

Role and responsibilities

The local youth councils have an advisory and advocacy role in the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje within the scope of youth issues and policies.

The representatives of the local youth council have the right to:

- propose items on the agenda of the Municipal Council, the municipalities in the city Skopje and the city of Skopje that affect young people,
- initiate questions for young people from the scope of work of the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje,
- initiate, participate in and provide feedback on the local process youth strategy and other policies,
- submit information to the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje for issues related to youth and
- perform other advisory and advocacy activities in accordance with this law.

Local Youth Councils have the role of advisory bodies of the Municipal Councils, and their objective is to involve the young people in the public life of the municipality and to ensure participation in the decision making processes related to youth.

The National Advisory Body for Youth Policies, has the following competencies:

- provides opinions and recommendations for implementation of youth regulations and policies,
- provides an opinion on the National Youth Strategy and the action plan for implementation of the National Youth Strategy,
- provides an opinion on the budget funds intended for young people as well as proposals, opinions and recommendations for financing youth-related activities,
- initiates consideration of youth issues to the Government and the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia,
- proposes the establishment of mechanisms for evaluation of youth participation and realization of youth interests in social life,
- publishes reports (thematic and periodical) on the rights, opportunities and needs of young people in the Republic of North Macedonia,

- follows the recommendations of the European Union for youth and advocates for improvement of youth policies,
- organizes events and consultations for its work with youth organizations and young and
- performs other activities related to the youth and their interests.

Funding

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

Administrative, financial and logistical support for the work of the National advisory body for Youth policies is provided by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The Republic of North Macedonia funds the implementation of the Law on Youth Inclusion and Youth Policies in the amount of at least 0.3% of its budget on an annual basis.

For the same purpose, the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje should allocate funds in the amount of at least 0.1% per year.

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 statue 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 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.

Composition

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

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. [Ibid]

Funding

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

- (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)

The High School Union works to improve the high school status in education and psychological development of students. The organization, based in Tetovo, currently has branches in six cities - Kicevo, Gostivar, Stip, Kumanovo, Skopje and Debar. They are guided by the strategic plan "From us, for us 2019-2022", with the completion of which they plan to expand the Union in all cities in the country.

The union focuses on solving the problems of high school students. The greatest emphasis is placed on the problem of textbooks, peer violence, establishing contacts with high school unions from the Western Balkans and cooperation with the Belgian and Norwegian Union of High School Students. The union is also working to establish contacts with high schools, school communities and youth organizations.

Other bodies

No official available information on this subject.

5.4 Young people's participation in policy-making

Formal Mechanisms of Consultation

The aim of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) adopted in January 2020 is to ensure: "creating and implementing youth policy at all levels through multi-sector approach, starting from the needs and interests of young people; strengthening the participation of young people in the policy-making processes for youth, active information, promotion and protection of the interests of young people, as well as raising awareness of the importance of young people and their social role; promoting intergenerational partnerships to support youth participation in the decision-making and policy-making process; support and promotion of youth organization; encouraging structural dialogue at national and local level; encouraging volunteering,

youth activism and youth work and encouraging personal, professional and social development of young people.

Actors

Youth Actors

The structure, composition, role and funding of the main Youth actors: National Assembly of Youth, National Advisory Body for Youth Policies; Local Assemblies of Youth and Local Youth Councils are explained in 5.3.

[The National Youth Council of Macedonia](#) is an umbrella organization and representative body of 50 youth organizations in North Macedonia. As such, it has great impact and influence in policy making concerning youth.

Specific target groups

Public authorities

During consultation processes, the key public actors are: The Agency of youth and Sport ([Агенција за млади и спорт](#)), [Ministry of Education and Science](#), Ministry of Labor and Social Policy ([Министерство за труд и социјална политика](#)), [National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility](#), the Units of Local self-Government, [the Assembly of North Macedonia](#) and the Club on Youth Affairs and Policies, Cross-sectoral group on youth within the Ministry of Culture ([Министерство за култура](#)), and the [Government of the Republic of North Macedonia](#)

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

The Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies specifies that:

The scope of work of the National Assembly of Youth consists of:

- election of youth representatives in the advisory body;
- creating policies and priorities;
- monitoring the work of youth representatives;
- reviewing reports from youth representatives and
- other activities in accordance with the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies and the Rules of Procedure.

The local youth councils have an advisory and advocacy role in the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje within the scope of youth issues and policies.

The representatives of the local youth council have the right to:

- propose items on the agenda of the Municipal Council, the municipalities in the city Skopje and the city of Skopje that affect young people,
- initiate questions for young people from the scope of work of the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje,

- initiate, participate in and provide feedback on the local process youth strategy and other policies,
- submit information to the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje for issues related to youth and
- perform other advisory and advocacy activities in accordance with this law.

The National Advisory Body for Youth Policies, has the following competencies:

- provides opinions and recommendations for implementation of youth regulations and policies,
- provides an opinion on the National Youth Strategy and the action plan for implementation of the National Youth Strategy,
- provides an opinion on the budget funds intended for young people as well as proposals, opinions and recommendations for financing youth-related activities,
- initiates consideration of youth issues to the Government and the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia,
- proposes the establishment of mechanisms for evaluation of youth participation and realization of youth interests in social life,
- publishes reports (thematic and periodical) on the rights, opportunities and needs of young people in the Republic of North Macedonia,
- follows the recommendations of the European Union for youth and advocates for improvement of youth policies,
- organizes events and consultations for its work with youth organizations and young and
- performs other activities related to the youth and their interests.

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." [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)]

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

Dialogue with civil society organizations - EU Structural Participation Platform

Integrations ([Дијалог со граѓанските организации – Платформа за структурно учество во ЕУ интеграциите](#)) is an EU-funded project whose aim is to ensure essential and structural participation of the civil society that reflects the views of citizens about key sectoral reforms in the EU process.

This project is implemented by: [Foundation Open Society – Macedonia; Reactor - Research in Action; Center for Civil Communications and Eurothink - Center for European Strategies.](#)

Project implementation started on 1.4.2019 and will end on 31.3.2022. In particular, the project is focused on attainment of three objectives, as follows:

- 1. Establish a platform that will structure participation of civil society organizations in consultations and decision-making process related to the country's accession in the EU**

The project will establish a platform for structural participation of the civil society in institutional consultation mechanisms, thereby increasing availability of information and support for participation in policy-making related to the EU accession process.

2. Enhance formal consultation mechanisms with the civil society

At the same time, the project aims to increase the civil society impact on sector reforms in the EU accession process and will work on all institutional consultation mechanisms between the Government and civil society.

3. Increase the civil society impact on the country's accession in the EU

The project strives to increase the civil society impact on policies related to the EU accession process by means of evidence-based policy creation, development of policy documents (shadow reports, policy briefs, position statements) in key sectors and reform policies under the EU accession process.

Western Balkans Youth Lab Project is a three-year EU funded (1,5 million EUR) and [RCC](#) implemented project that kicked-off in January 2020, with aims to provide opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making. The project is covering the Western Balkans Six economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia). The Western Balkans Youth Lab (WBYL) Project strives to create a longer-term structured regional dialogue between youth organizations and national administrations focused on jointly devising policies which will increase youth participation in decision-making, to improve the overall socio-economic environment for and mobility of youth in the Western Balkans economies through different types of activities. The project goal is strengthening formal and informal mechanisms of youth participation, with expected outcomes to increase mobilization of youth in policy making, and to increase co-creation of relevant policies with youth.

The project utilizes the structured dialogue methodology and addresses different topics on annual basis, notably youth unemployment in 2021, and youth and mental health as of 2022.

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 North Macedonia, there is a **National Youth Strategy 2016-2025**, where one of the nine thematic areas is Youth Participation. The document had a wide consultation process authentic for South East Europe and provided inclusion of a large number of young people. It was adopted in January, 2016. The Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies adopted in January 2020 envisages the preparation and adoption of a new National Youth Strategy. The legal deadline for the adoption of the new strategy by the Government was July 2021, but so far (February 2022) the new strategy has not yet been prepared or adopted. At the end of 2021, the Agency for Youth and Sports announced a call for consultants who will conduct research on youth trends, which should provide the basis for the preparation of a new national strategy for youth. [<https://skopje.gov.mk/media/6163/javen-povik-za-izработка-na-strategija-za-mladi-2021-2025.pdf>] (Accessed December 11, 2020)]

In January 2020, the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies was adopted. ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) The aims of the law are:

- 1) creating and implementing youth policy at all levels through multisectoral approach, starting from the needs and interests of young people;
- 2) strengthening the participation of young people in the youth related policy-making processes, active information, promotion and protection of the interests of young people,

as well as strengthening awareness of the importance of young people and their social role;

- 3) promoting intergenerational partnerships to support youth participation in the decision-making and policy-making process;
- 4) support and promotion of youth organization;
- 5) encouraging structural dialogue at national and local level;
- 6) encouraging volunteering, youth activism and youth work and
- 7) encouraging personal, professional and social development of young people.

According to the same law, National Youth Strategy is a strategic document that sets out medium-term goals and priorities for the development of youth policies and the promotion of the interests of young people and determines organizational, financial and administrative measures for their realization. The Law also underlines that the National Youth Strategy is developed by the Agency for Youth and Sport through consultative, inclusive and transparent process and after previously obtained opinion from youth advisory body and submits it to the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia.

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; “The key challenges in the area of youth participation are related to the opinion of young people that they are only partially involved in policy creation and that they are more involved in helping their peers and friends with school assignments than in volunteer work for non-governmental organizations. Those young people who are members of civil society organizations consider that only a small percentage of young people are members of any organization and that a significant percentage are not interested in politics at all.” [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)]

The law on Youth Participation and Youth policies regulated few bodies that are intended to increase the youth participation in the policy-making processes such as: National Assembly of Youth; National Advisory Body for Youth policies; Local Assembly of Youth and Local Youth Councils.

Strategic Priorities of the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 are:

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.

The Strategy is targeting all young people aged 15-29, but is also emphasizing the importance of promotion of youth activism to young people with fewer opportunities. [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)]

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 4nd 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. [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)]

Revisions/Updates

According to information received from the 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. In November 2019 there were 6 working groups, working on preparation of the new Action Plan 2020 for the National Youth Strategy, but with the adoption of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, it is necessary to develop a new National Youth strategy, and thus this process is not relevant and has not been realized.

5.6 Supporting youth organisations

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

The Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) adopted in January 2020 provides the legal framework for the youth organizations.

The Law provides definition and explanation of the structure of different types of organizations that are active in the youth area such as: youth organizations, organizations for youth and youth umbrella organizations.

Therefore, a youth organization is any organization that is registered in accordance with the Law on Associations and Foundations ([Закон за здруженија и фондации](#)), in which the highest decision-making body is composed of at least two thirds of young people aged 15 to 29 and whose goals and activities are defined and aimed at promoting the interests of young people.

An organization for youth is any registered organization in accordance with the Law on associations and foundations, which is not run by young people or is a youth wing of a political party, youth section of a trade union organized as part of another legal entity, part of which the program goals and activities are aimed at promoting the interests of young people.

Youth umbrella organizations are organizations in which the forms of youth organizations that unite to achieve common goals in specific areas of interest to young people.

Youth umbrella organization should:

- has at least ten members from at least five planning regions [out of total of 8] of the Republic of North Macedonia,
- there are two thirds of young people in the highest governing body and
- to be registered in accordance with the Law on Associations and Foundations.

Youth umbrella organizations can:

- participate in the process of creating laws, policy documents and others strategic documents in the field in which they operate,
- participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth policies in the areas in which they operate,
- support youth organization and association in the Republic of North Macedonia,
- represent common goals in specific areas in which they act in the interest of young people,
- propose measures to decision makers in the areas in which they operate,
- conduct analyzes and research regarding the development of young people in society and
- carry out activities provided by this Law, other bylaws and their statutes.

General overview of the civil society organizations is provided 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 North Macedonia, the property in their disposal, the supervision, status changes and status of the organizations of public interest. [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 support 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.

In March 2021, the [Government of the Republic of Macedonia](#) announced [a call for providing financial support to associations and foundations](#). Funds were allocated for 20 projects of associations and foundations, in a total value of 20.000.000,00 MKD [<https://vlada.mk/node/24220> (Accessed February 24, 2021)]

In November 2021, The Agency for Youth and Sport ([Агенција за млади и спорт](#)) provided financial support in the total amount of 1,200,000.00 MKD for financing the program activities of the associations and foundations in the following priority thematic areas: Youth participation, Youth work, Youth information, Quality of life, Employment and support before employment, Health and Culture. [<http://ams.gov.mk/%D0%BE%D0%B3%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%81-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D1%84%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%B8%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B4%D1%80%D1%88%D0%BA%D0%B0-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D0%B7%D0%B4%D1%80%D1%83%D0%B6/> (Accessed February 24, 2022)]

Agency for 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'. 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. However, since the renovation of their website, the Rulebook is no longer available there.

European funds are available through [National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility](#) responsible for the Erasmus plus program as well as the [Delegation of the EU to the Republic of North Macedonia](#). Also, some foreign Embassies in North Macedonia (mainly [British Embassy in Skopje](#), [US Embassy in North Macedonia](#), [Netherlands Embassy in Skopje](#), [Embassy of Switzerland in North Macedonia](#)) are supporting Macedonian youth CSO's 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 the Republic of North Macedonia there is no specific national strategy that applies on social and civic competences and their development.

Formal learning

The subject of Civic Education in the Macedonian Education System has been taught since 2002. The new Civic Education Curricula in the first year of vocational secondary education has begun to be implemented in September 2020, while in the IV year secondary vocational education, the old programs are still applied. The new concept of Civic Education implies systematically preparing young people for their active role in society and acquiring modern civic competences in line with the recommendations of the European Commission.

Civic Education is a separate subject that is teaching in I year at the vocational high schools (new program) with 2 classes per week and 72 classes in total throughout the year; as well as in 4th year vocational high schools (old programs) with 2 classes a week and 66 classes in total throughout the year.

The main learning objectives according the Curricula for I year vocational high school ([Граѓанско образование за I година, сите струки](#)) are: to enable the student to act as a responsible citizen and to participate fully in civil and social life; develop student interest in social and political developments; the student to respect human rights; the student to be able to critically understand and use traditional and new forms of media; to identify European common values and so on.

There are 2 different Curricula's for vocational high schools, one for economic-legal and commercial profession ([Граѓанско образование за економско-правна и трговска струка](#)) and one for all other professions except economic-legal and commercial profession ([Граѓанско образование за сите струки освен за економско правна и трговска струка средно стручно образование](#)). The Curricula for Civic Education in economic-legal and commercial profession 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. The aim of the Curricula for other vocational high schools is to enable students to understand the development of basic structures, phenomena and processes in society; to behave and act as positive people and citizens with social responsibilities and rights; to apply their professional and professional qualifications in social life and interpersonal relationships through critical, creative, cooperative behavior and tolerance.

Material related to the civic competence is often covered within some other subjects in the Elementary schools, such as:

- **Society.** The topics covered by the subject Society are the basis for study of civic education, and include content related to the rights of children, local community, social groups and roles, etc.;
- **Ethics.** In the subject Ethics most goals and contents are in line with the civics competencies that students need to develop;
- **Elective subjects: Introduction to Religions, Classical Culture of European civilization and the Ethics of religions,** have goals and contents that are in the spirit of civic education, relate to getting to know others, respecting diversity, respect and cooperation with others, gaining tolerance skills and non-discrimination, dialogue, acceptance and respect for human behavior, development of personality and human values;
- **Life Skills Programme.** In the Life Skills Education program, almost all program topics contain goals and content that should encourage the development of civic competencies and other subjects. [<https://www.bro.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/%D0%9A%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%BF%D1%82-%D0%B7%D0%B0-%D0%93%D1%80%D0%B0%D1%93%D0%B0%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE-%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5-MK.pdf> (Accessed February 24, 2022)]

Non-formal and informal learning

Participative structures within formal education settings are not practiced in the Republic of North 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 Secondary Education (**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. Even though the Law on Secondary Education (**Закон за средното образование**) has been modified in September 2020, all adopted amendments were related only to the education in time of state of emergency.

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 projects based, implemented by CSO's.

In 2020 the [National Youth Council of Macedonia](#) develops the Youth Strategy of the [City of Skopje](#) for the period 2021-2025. One of the goals of the Strategy is: "Encouraging young people to actively participate in society through affirmation and support of youth activities, youth work and non-formal education in the area of the city of Skopje."

[<https://skopje.gov.mk/media/6163/javen-povik-za-izработка-na-strategija-za-mladi-2021-2025.pdf> (Accessed December 11, 2020)].

Within the Macedonian Government, there is Unit for Cooperation with NGOs of the General Secretariat of the Government (**Одделение за соработка со невладините организации во Генерален секретаријат**). The Unit was established as a result of the efforts of the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia to institutionalize cooperation, promotion, support and enhance partnership relations with the civil sector in general, and thus, with youth organizations as well. Partnerships between formal education providers, youth organizations and youth work providers exist, however it is not standardized or promoted by the public authorities, and most of the initiatives are coming from the CSO's.

Quality assurance/quality guidelines for non-formal learning

The Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies (**Закон за младинско учество и младински политики**) adopted in January 2020, features definitions of Youth work and Youth workers: "youth work" is an organized and systematic process of education and support for authentic youth development in order to achieve the whole personal, social and social potential of the young people and their active involvement in the community and "youth workers" are qualified persons who have competencies for work with young people who carry out activities that support you as a personal and social development through informal and informative learning."

In the Standard of Profession (**Стандард на занимање**) approved by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (**Министерство за труд и социјална политика**) in 2018, the youth work is formally recognized as separate profession. According the standard, the youth worker plans, organizes, implements, monitors and evaluates activities, prepares instruments and researches; designs programs and youth projects according to their needs; takes care of the quality of youth work and contributes to the development of effective, efficient and ethical practice; trains; teaches; mentors and advises young people in the direction of helping personal and social development and their active participation in the community; informs young people; lobbies and advocates for change which facilitate and assist the personal and social development of young people and enable their active participation in the community, organizes youth exchanges, festivals, campaigns, events, youth education camps within the youth organization, youth cultural centers, youth clubs, non-governmental organizations, etc.

The youth workers' curriculum is certified by the [Adult Education Center](#).

Educators' support

According to the Law on Teachers in Primary and Secondary Schools (**Закон за наставници во основните и средните училишта**), Article 21, teachers are required to devote continuous professional development to at least 60 hours over three academic years, and every teacher, within three years, spends 10 hours training on priority programs set by the Minister for which funds are provided in the budget of the Bureau for Development of Education.

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

Regarding the training for civic education, in November 2018, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Bureau for Development of Education and the Macedonian Center for Civic Education started to provide teacher training on civic education. The four-day training cycle covered all teachers teaching civic education from all primary schools throughout North Macedonia. The trainings are part of the reforms that offer a new concept of civic education and are aimed at enhancing teachers' skills for the implementation of the new eighth grade civics curriculum. Through the training, teachers are also introduced to a new approach to civic education teaching and learning which involves actively engaging students and implementing student initiatives within the subject.

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 North 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 each election and referendum, the State Election Commission conducts an election campaign in order to inform the citizens about the elections and their right to vote.

According to the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) adopted in January 2020,

The bodies of the state administration, the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje are obliged to appoint a youth officer, a person responsible for the operation of Youth Office to coordinate, implement and monitor issues of interest of young people within the competence of the institution. Based on a publicly available list of youth officers ([Службеници за млади - Институции и општини](#)) on the website of the Agency of Youth and Sports, 95 municipalities and state institutions have appointed youth officers, out of a total of 120. It's important to note that the Law specifies that they should be appointed by January 2021, within a year of the Law's adoption.

Youth centers are places where programs aimed to improve the well-being of young people, personal, social and professional development of youth life, information of important interest to young people and other aspects of life of youth are prepared and implemented. The youth centers are established in cooperation between the municipalities, the municipalities in the city of Skopje and the city of Skopje and the forms of youth organization. Within five years (by January 2025) from the adoption of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, each municipality should enable the functioning of at least one youth center on its territory.

This laid the foundations for the opening of youth centers in cooperation between the Agency for Youth and Sports ([Агенција за млади и спорт](#)), the municipalities of Bitola, Veles, Kavadarci and Kumanovo, and the Union for Youth Work. In accordance with the signed memorandum of cooperation, the four municipalities undertook to provide space for the youth centers and to cover the running costs of their work, while the AYS undertook the obligation to equip the centers with the necessary equipment and materials. The Union for Youth Work, through local member organizations, will provide youth work programs to be implemented by youth workers.

In December 2021, the Union for Youth Work, the National Youth Council of Macedonia and the Agency of Youth and Sports held a [press conference](#) on Youth Centers, and one of their main conclusions was that only the municipality of Kavadarci has successfully implemented all steps of the establishing procedure as defined in the Law, while municipalities Kumanovo, Veles and Probistip have designated space for a youth center, but have not yet announced a public call for an organization that will manage it. In 2021, support was provided for the first four centers, and in 2022, support is planned for another 20 youth centers in the municipalities that will fulfill the legal obligations.

[1]<https://smr.org.mk/%D0%BC%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B8-%D1%86%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%82%D1%80%D0%B8/> (Accessed December 9, 2020)

[2]<https://smr.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Soopstение-za-mediumi.pdf>

(Accessed February 15, 2022)

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 North Macedonia should use their right to vote. [<http://www.sec.mk/edukacija/> (Accessed December 16, 2018)]. Beside the State Election Commission, also the CSO's are making most of the campaigns for democratic rights and democratic values in Republic of North Macedonia.

Promoting the intercultural dialogue among young people

The Ministry of Political System and Inter-Community Relations (**Министерство за политички систем и односи помеѓу заедниците**) was established in 2019. The Ministry is responsible for ensuring smooth implementation of the [Ohrid Framework Agreement](#).

Starting from July 2015 The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of North Macedonia ([Министерство за култура на Република Северна Македонија](#)) 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.^[1] 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 was implemented in 2014 and it's still ongoing. The purpose of the Fund is to ensure multi-ethnic experiences for all children and students from the earliest ages, thus contributing to building a society that cherishes and takes pride in its diversity, as well as in knowing the richness of shared values.

Promoting transparent and youth-tailored public communication

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

5.9 E-participation

In December 2020, the [Ministry of Information Society and Administration](#) launched the [Open Government Partnership online platform](#). Open Government Partnership (OGP) is an international initiative that aims to provide concrete commitments by governments aimed at promoting transparency, support civic participation, fight corruption and use new technologies in public administration and beyond in order to support innovation. The electronic tool launched in December 2020 is a central point for consultation, monitoring, involvement, networking and reporting to all stakeholders and stakeholders in the process. The OGP portal aims to serve as a platform for interaction and exchange of information in four segments: consultations for the preparation of the National Action Plan (NAP), monitoring the implementation of the NAP, as well as monitoring the work of the OGP Council and the Network of civil society organizations for OGP. [<https://mioa.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/3203> (Accessed December 10, 2020)].

In June 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Information Society and Administration provided vouchers for digital skills training for young people not older than 29. The candidates should apply for the vouchers via the National Platform for e-services: <https://uslugi.gov.mk/>. [<https://www.mioa.gov.mk/?q=mk/node/2955> (Accessed December 10, 2020)]

In the Republic of North Macedonia there is no legal framework which enables and encourages young people to participate in political processes electronically. There are

certain measures adopted in order to ease the access to some information or to ease the interaction with state institutions. For example, the [Ministry of Education and Science](#) has launched online platform e-books ([е-учебници](#)), which is a type of digital library where students in primary and secondary school (and any other interested citizen) can have free access and free download e-version of books which are studied in primary and secondary education.

There are also some other measures aimed to facilitate the contact with the state administration in North Macedonia, such as [e-Personal tax](#) (electronic filing of annual tax return); or aimed to consult the citizens about certain public state's initiative, for example, in the end of July 2019, the Major of the [City of Skopje](#) launched online survey where Macedonian citizens were able to propose new names of some streets, bridges, squares and parks. These and similar measures have a general scope and do not apply exclusively to young people.

Young people are often using the internet for different reasons. According to the [State Statistical Office](#), in the first quarter of 2021, 83.7% of the households had access to the Internet at home. The participation of households with broadband connection in the total number of households was 87.1% in 2021.

In the first quarter of 2021, 81.4% of the total population aged 15-74 used the Internet, and 86.4% used the Internet every day or almost every day [www.stat.gov.mk (Accessed February 24, 2022)].

99.5% of the people 14 to 24 have used the Internet at some point, while 98.8 % of them use the Internet every day or almost every day. Young people (14-24) were using internet for following purposes:

- Sending and receiving messages via Viber, Messenger, Skype, WhatsApp and similar: 87.6%
- Telephoning over the internet / video calls (via webcam) over the internet: 91.1%
- Participating in social networks: 88.3%
- Sending or receiving e-mails: 70.6%
- Finding information about goods or Services: 76.4%
- Reading online news sites/newspapers/news magazines: 64.1%
- Seeking health-related information: 55.2%
- Internet Banking: 21.1%
- Selling of goods or services: 7.8%

Expressing opinions on civic or political issues on websites or in social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube): 25.9%

Taking part in online consultations or voting to define civic or political issues (e.g. urban planning, signing a petition): 9.5%

Looking for a job or sending a job application: 9.2%

5.10 Current debates and reforms

In November 2020, the Minister of Education and Science, when presenting the citizens' budget of the [Ministry of education and Science](#) claimed that the Ministry is working intensively on reforms in primary and secondary schools and they are developing a completely new concept of curricula and teaching materials. "We are abandoning the traditional way of learning and moving to an education that creates citizens who think critically and logically and draw conclusions based on facts, evidence and analysis," [<http://mon.gov.mk/en/>].

In September 2020 the e-conference "Open Government Partnership - Dialogue for the National Action Plan 2021-2023" was held. The purpose of the event was to promote the Open Government Partnership (OGP) initiative among civil society organizations, to inform them in a more detailed manner about the benefits and progress made and to create space for discussion on the next steps in co-creating the new action plan.

At the Conference, the interested parties had a chance to discuss: What are the benefits of the OGP process; Why is involvement in this process important; What are the next steps for preparing the OGP for 2021 - 2023 and which priority areas will be worked on.

[The new National Action Plan 2021-2023](#) is published and is aimed at advocating for access to justice; legal empowerment of citizens and promotion of legal protection especially of young people, marginalized groups and women; improving the delivery of public services; continuation of activities related to public disclosure of information about the real owners; opening of new data as well as activities for prevention of corruption and protection of the environment and air pollution.

6. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The education system of Republic of North 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

The Republic of North Macedonia is a country with a high level of young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training). According to the data from the [Eurostat](#) in 2021, 27,6% young people (aged 15-29) from North Macedonia were not part of the education system nor employed neither in training. This is the second lowest rate in the last 10 years in North Macedonia, but it's the third highest in Europe next to Turkey and Serbia.

According to the Research on Youth Trends in Macedonia from 2014 ([Младински трендови во Република Македонија](#)) 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 common reason for termination of education after secondary school is the limited finances.

In 2020 the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of North Macedonia presented a Concept for developing a distance education system in primary and secondary schools in the Republic of North Macedonia ([Концепт за развивање на далечинско образование во основните и средните училишта](#)) and as part of the concept the Ministry of Education and Science set aside few key challenges:

- Lack of strategic and normative documents on which distance learning can be based and which will provide a standardized approach in its implementation
- Insufficient theoretical and practical pedagogical knowledge for distance learning of all involved in the educational process (teachers, professional associates, principals, advisors, inspectors)
- Insufficient digital competition with most stakeholders in the distance education process (students, teachers, parents, associates, principals, counselors, inspectors)
- Poor ICT equipment (lack or inadequate digital devices, insufficient or no internet access) of schools, teachers and students' families.

Organisation of the education and training system

With the amendments of the Law on Secondary Education ([Закон за средното образование](#)), from 2008, for the first time in the Macedonian society 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 percentage of students enrolled in a vocational programme is one of the highest among countries and economies participating in [PISA](#). (58.7 %, rank 6/77, 2018). The education system of the Republic of North 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).

In 2020 because of the Covid-19 crisis there are added technical amendments that the teaching could be provided online through specific channels.

The Law on Vocational Education and Training ([Закон за стручно образование и обука](#)) 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. 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 ensuring legal basis for expanding 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 North 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. Adult education encompasses formal, non-formal and informal education. The activities of the adult education are regulated with the Law on Adult Education ([Закон за образование на возрасните](#)) and Law for Vocational Education and Training ([Закон за стручно образование и обука](#)).

Main concepts

Main concepts regarding education are described in appropriate chapters.

6.2 Administration and governance

Cross-sectorial cooperation

Process of decentralization in the Republic of North 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 the responsibility of the municipalities, except for the secondary schools in the capital Skopje which are under responsibility of the City of Skopje. There is also one more exception when the Government is establishing primary schools 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).

The State provides financial resources for the education in the municipalities in a form of Block Grants. According to Art. 153 of the Law on Primary Education ([Закон за основното образование](#)), i.e. Art. 101-a of the Law on Secondary Education ([Закон за средното образование](#)), 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 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.

Non-public actors

Independent Syndicate for Education, Science and Culture ([Независен синдикат за образование, наука и култура](#)) 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 ([Статут на Самостојниот синдикат за образование, наука и култура на Република Македонија](#)), 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 North 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.

Governance

Main public actors and their responsibilities

The Ministry of Education and Science ([Министерство за образование и наука](#)) is the main governmental 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.

Bureau for Education Development ([Биро за развој на образованието](#)) 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 North Macedonia. The Bureau is responsible for monitoring, research, promotion and development of education in the area of preschool, 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 North Macedonia living abroad learning their mother tongue and culture.

Municipalities – With the adoption of the Law on Local Self-Government, Art.22, ([Закон за локална самоуправа](#)) 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.

[Adult Education Center \(Центар за образование на возрасни\)](#) is a public institution for adult education in the Republic of North Macedonia, as a separate legal entity established by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia. Main task of the Center is harmonization and integration of public interests and the interests of social partners in adult education in North 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) ([Центар за стручно образование и обука](#)) 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 vocational education and training.

State Examinations Centre is an independent institution whose responsibilities are determined by the Law on State Examination Centre ([Закон за Државниот испитен центар](#)): 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.

[The National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility \(Национална агенција за европски образовни програми и мобилност\)](#) is a public institution with an aim to promote and implement the European educational programs in Republic of North 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 ([Државен просветен инспекторат](#)) 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.

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

6.3 Preventing early leaving from education and training (ELET)

National strategy

Republic of North 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

According to the [State Statistical Office of Republic of North Macedonia](#), in 2019 7,1% of Macedonian youth (18-24 years old) were registered as early school leavers. According to the last data from [Eurostat](#), percentage of early leavers in 2020 was 5,7%. There is significant improvement regarding previous years (in 2006 there were 22,2% early school leavers), and according to MLSP this situation is primarily a result of the introduction of compulsory secondary education.

It's important to mention that the municipalities do not have accurate data on students who have dropped out of school and do not have the practice of collecting data on a regular basis, nor is such a requirement regulated by law. On the other hand, schools have data on students who dropout of school, but do not follow what happens to them after they leave school.

Many national documents are recognizing the importance of specific measures for preventing early school leavers. [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. Following its expiration in 2020, a new Strategy has not been adopted.

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. Following its expiration in 2020, a new Strategy has not been adopted, however the [consultation](#)

[process for a Strategy for the Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia 2022-2030](#) has begun.

Secondary education:

Reduced criteria for enrollment of Roma students in public high schools

In the Open call for enrollment in public high schools, students of the Roma ethnic community may enroll 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 enrollment 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 the [Revised Employment and Social Reform Program 2022](#) from December 2019 of the MLSP. One of the objectives in the program 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. According to this Strategy, family and family circumstances are most often the main causes of early school leaving by the young women (either because of early marriage, tendencies of poorer families to favor the education of their boys instead of the girls, or the culture and traditions that prevent young women to gain a higher level of education).

In order to reduce the drop-outs, the program envisages the following measures^[4]:

- 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-pupils (awarding scholarships, providing mentors and tutors for Roma pupils, measures for involvement).

The new Law on Primary Education (adopted in August 2019) foreseen engagement of educational moderators for Roma pupils who come from socially disadvantaged families and / or are longer time out of the education system. The role of the educational moderator is to ensure that the information about opportunities and access to school are always available; to have regular cooperation with teachers and other staff in order to improve the achievements of pupils and taking different activities for decreasing the rate of early schools drop-outs. The Law also foresees that in the case of early drop out of school, the parent or guardian of the student who early drop-out is referred to counseling. Primary schools are obliged to keep records for pupils who leave the school and the reason for early leaving.

Secondary education is also obligatory for every citizen, under equal conditions determined by law. According to the Law on Secondary Education ([Закон за средното образование](#)), 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.

The Law on Adult Education ([Закон за образование на возрасните](#)) is another principle document that addresses ELET in the way that allows students who have already left education to finish it as adults. Article 4 stipulates that 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 ([Инклузија на децата што се надвор од училиштата во образовниот систем, Извештај од испитувањето](#)), (supported by the Children's Foundation Pestaloci, implemented by the Ministry of Education an Science 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 [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>]]. Report also states that the researchers on the field identified 481 early school leavers, most of them (59%) were 14-19 years' old, and most of the students left 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.

According to [The Revised Employment and Social Reform Programme 2022 – \(r\) ESRP](#), 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. [(r)ESRP – Revised Employment and Social Reform Programme 2022, <https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/espr-espr.nspx> (Accessed February 15, 2022)]

6.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

Arrangements for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

The Republic of North 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 in the process of establishment and operationalization of the system of validation results of non-formal and informal learning. The Strategy also stressed that the system of validation of non-formal and informal learning in North 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 Center – *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.*

In order to implement the measure "Establishing a system for validation of non-formal and informal learning" from the Education Strategy 2018-2025, a Working Group for Amending and Supplementing the Laws and Bylaws was established with the aim of setting up a national validation system for non-formal and informal learning. This group was established by the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of North 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 North 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.

Overview of the legal and strategic documents containing references to VNFIL

The introduction of VNFIL in North Macedonia is directly related to the development of the Macedonian Qualifications Framework (**Македонска рамка на квалификации**) 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 North Macedonia has adopted a Roadmap for Implementing a System for VNFIL 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.

Validation of the non-formal education for adult and informal learning in Macedonia (**Валидација на неформалното образование на возрасни и информалното учење во Македонија**)

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.

Roadmap for implementing a System for VNFIL (**Патоказ за спроведување на систем за признавање на неформалното и информалното учење**)

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.

Concept Paper for non-formal Adult Education and Informal Learning (**Концепција за неформално образование на возрасните и за информално учење во Република Македонија**)

The concept for informal education for adults and for informal learning in the Republic of North 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 (**Закон за образование на возрасните**)

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 prescribes 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 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 2019-2023 (**Стратегија за образование на возрасни 2019-2023**)

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 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 formal 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 ([Водич за процесите на валидацијата на неформално и информално учење](#)) 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:

- 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

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.

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.

6.5 Cross-border learning mobility

Policy framework

Single public institution responsible for cross-border learning mobility in Republic of North Macedonia is the *National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility*, established by Law adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of North 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 North 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.

The Law for establishing the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility (**Закон за основање на Национална агенција за европски образовни програми и мобилност**) 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.

The Law 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 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.

Main cross-border mobility programmes for students in formal education

Since 2014 North Macedonia is Erasmus+ programme country. Erasmus+ program encompasses European educational programs in North 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:
 1. mobility between Program Countries: 16 or 24 months;
 2. mobility between Program and Partner Countries: 16 or 26 months.
- Eligible participants:
 3. 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.
 4. 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.

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:
 1. 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

2. 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.

On 27 September 2018 the [European Council](#) formally adopted the ESC regulation that had been previously approved by the European Parliament on the 11 September 2018. The new regulation entered into force on 5 October 2018.

On 18 June 2021 the new [European Solidarity Corps programme](#) was launched in Viana do Castelo (PT), within the framework of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU at a hybrid event with an audience of young people and representatives from the EU institutions.

Government of Republic of North Macedonia lunched web page <http://www.stipendii.mon.gov.mk/> where interested young people can find information about scholarship opportunities for studying abroad, but also for attending different courses and seminars. This website from 2018 is taken down for unknown reasons. All the information about scholarships are transferred to the website of the Ministry of Education and Science. ([Министерство за образование и наука - Конкурси](#))

CEEPUS- Central European Exchange Program for University Studies

Republic of North Macedonia is a signatory of the Agreement for promotion and cooperation in higher education through CEEPUS. 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 Macedonian Government. Scholarships are divided in different categories and programs such as academic, professional, and cultural exchange programs which engage youth, students, educators, professionals, artists, athletes, and rising leaders in the Republic of North Macedonia.

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 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 the Republic of North Macedonia.

6.6 Social inclusion through education and training

Educational support

The Constitution of the Republic of North Macedonia as the highest legal act in the state, in Art.44 [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)] 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 North 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 new Law on Primary Education ([Закон за основното образование](#)) which was adopted in July 2019 foreseen children with disability to be enrolled in regular education.

In July 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science adopted a [Concept for inclusive education](#). The concept is a guideline for all stages of the implementation of inclusive education in the country. The Law on Primary Education stipulates that students with special needs should be included in mainstream education and that by the 2022-2023 school year, special schools will no longer enroll students. For that purpose, from November 2018 to July 2019, team from the Bureau for Development of Education conducted special trainings for primary school teachers for better inclusion of children with disabilities in primary school.

[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. [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)]

The following results should be achieved in order to accomplish this objective:

- (1.1) All students of relevant age are enrolled in elementary school and finish elementary school;
- (1.2) Curricula and textbooks are adjusted to the needs of the children with specific needs;
- (1.3) The work of the teachers with children with specific needs
- (2) All students enter secondary school immediately after finishing elementary school and finish secondary school;
- (3) Reduced percent of illiterate population and increase real literacy by training students to read and write with comprehension;
- (4) Increased percent of finished secondary school children who enter university and acquire a university degree;
- (5) Provided conditions for relating secondary education and adult education to the labor market.
- (6) Provided rights for all ethnic communities in an integrated educational system in order to support the development of a coherent society.

Following this national strategy (for the period 2010-2020), there is currently no publicly available information on whether a new national strategy for reducing poverty and social exclusion has been prepared.

Education Strategy for 2018-2025 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 – more precisely from identification of the challenges and priorities to formulation of the final text. Extensive support and contribution were provided by many experts, scholars and academics, public and political figures, representatives of public institutions, the civil sector and other stakeholders interested in development of human resources and education policies in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The inclusion policies of the Ministry – to cover pupils with special educational needs in the regular educational process – are based on [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](http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Strategija-za-obrazovanie-ENG-WEB-1.pdf) (Accessed November 21, 2018)]:

- 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 enroll 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 ([Стратегија за Ромите во Република Македонија 2014-2020](#)). [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)].

In 2021, the consultative process for the development of a new National Strategy for Roma 2022 - 2030 was started. The guidelines for the preparation of the national strategic framework for Roma 2022-2030 define three horizontal goals:

- Prevention of anti-Gypsyism and discrimination;
- Reduction of poverty and social exclusion to close the socio-economic gap between Roma and the general population;
- Promoting participation by strengthening cooperation and trust.

Sectoral goals are also defined within the four priority areas - education, employment, health, housing and civil registration.

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. [See more Ibid, p.129].

According to the [Report on realized activities from the Education Strategy 2018-2025 \(for 2019 and 2020\)](#) 12 educational institutions (4 primary schools, 4 secondary and 4 faculties) across the country will adapt the buildings' infrastructure for inclusion of students with physical disabilities.

The Law on Secondary Education ([Закон за средното образование](#)) 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 enrollment 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.

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.

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 enrollment 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 was 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 North 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.

[<https://www.slobodenpecat.mk/drustvo/predlog-za-studii-po-romski-jazik/>

(Accessed November 21, 2018)

Social cohesion and equal opportunities

The new Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination ([Закон за спречување и заштита од дискриминација](#)) includes education in every provision regarding grounds for discrimination.

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 ([Прирачник за заштита и спречување на дискриминацијата во воспитно-образовниот систем во Република Македонија](#)). In general, 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 North Macedonia adopted Strategy for Innovation of Republic of Macedonia 2012-2020 [Стратегија за иновација на Република Македонија за 2012-2020](#).

The Strategy emphasizes that young people 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 people and companies is to organize innovation competitions, not only nationally but also internationally. A successful example is the Dream Line competition in Turkey. [Strategy for Innovation of Republic of Macedonia 2012-2020, Government of Republic of Macedonia, p. 27 https://fitr.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Strategija-za-inovacii_final_oktomvri20121.pdf]

Ministry of Education and Science with the support of World Bank in 2016 started implementing [Skills Development and Innovation Support Project \(SDISP\)](#). The project closed on 30 of April 2021. [<https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P128378?lang=en&tab=details>]. SDISP objective was to support innovation capacity in North Macedonia, improve transparency of resource allocation and promote accountability in higher education and enhance the relevance of secondary technical vocational education. [The Project](#) supported interventions which foster education and skills relevant to the job market, and enhance the innovation capacity and activity of firms in North Macedonia. It also addressed 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 also helped in improving the absorption of EU funds earmarked for innovation activities. The Project's direct beneficiaries were students, teaching and management staff from technical vocational education and training institutions who received 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 benefited 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 the business community. It is a grant program for non-refundable funds awarded for financing projects of vocational high schools in North 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 a solid vocational base.

The project's 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 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. [\[http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/11/28/wine-in-classroom-training-next-generation-of-vintners-in-macedonia \]](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2017/11/28/wine-in-classroom-training-next-generation-of-vintners-in-macedonia)

[In January 2020](#) the representatives of the Government visited the Municipal Electro-Mechanical Center "St. Naum Ohridski" in Ohrid, one of the technical schools in which the project for dual education of the Delegation of the German Economy is being implemented. The project started in Ohrid and Kavadarci with 4 companies involved, and today the project has expanded.

The Bureau for Education Development in the curriculum the curriculum for Gymnasium secondary education, as part of the project activities includes three different subjects for first ([Наставна програма Иновации и претприемништво I година](#)) second ([Наставна програма Иновации и претприемништво II година](#)) and third ([Наставна програма Иновации и претприемништво III година](#)) year called – Innovation and Entrepreneurship. The Innovation and Entrepreneurship subject (activity) is the only one from the list of proposed project 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 ([Иновации](#)) as a compulsory one.

Fostering innovation through non-formal and informal learning and youth work

According to the [Global Innovation Index 2021](#), The Republic of North Macedonia is in 59th place out of 132 countries featured in the GII 2021.

[The Fund for Innovation and Technology Development](#) was established in December, 2013, with the aim of encouraging innovation by providing additional resources to finance innovation, in view of the need to build a competitive economy based on knowledge. Often, they are awarding grants in order to support innovation activities in micro, small and medium-size enterprises. Currently (March 2022), the Fund, through its financial instruments, co-finances 686 projects with a joint investment of 86 million euros. As much

as 51% of the FITR portfolio, i.e. 326 supported companies are startup companies, mostly founded by young people. With almost 1.5 million euros, the Fund also supports the development of three accelerators in the country: X Factor, Seavus Accelerator and Business-Technological Accelerator UKIM.

The Fund for Innovation and Technology Development has created a program to foster creative thinking, innovation and entrepreneurship among young people, called the "[Fund for Young Minds](#)". The basic objective of the program is to create a platform through which the government, the private sector, international organizations, and civil society jointly contribute to improving opportunities for young people to realize their potential, sharing a common vision of progress. Building on national strategic priorities, grass-root initiatives, positive results and international evidence-based international practices, the Fund for Young Minds will:

- enable young people to participate in intellectually stimulating programs outside of formal education (Challenge for Young Researchers, Upshift, Junior Achievement, etc.)
- equip young people with problem-solving skills in the context of a world of constant change
- support international mobility and international youth initiatives
- encourage synergies between different areas of education and training
- provide a platform that will connect the education sector, the business sector and civil society organizations
- strengthen the voice of young people.

In Republic of North Macedonia the last Strategy on Innovation is for the period of 2012-2020 ([Стратегија за иновации на Република Македонија 2012-2020](#)). Up to date (March 2022) there is still no new strategy created or adopted. In this line we have also the Law on Innovation Activity ([Закон за иновациската дејност](#)), 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'. North 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 \(2013-2020\)](#) which 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. Up to date (March 2022) there is still no new strategy created or adopted.

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 Republic of North Macedonia and European Union, in 2018 the [Foundation for the Development of Small and Medium Enterprises](#) 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.

6.8 Media literacy and safe use of new media

National strategy

Republic of North Macedonia has no specific Strategy for Media literacy and safe use of new media at this time, but the topic of media literacy is covered within other strategies and laws.

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 2016-2018](#). The document aimed to provide directions for the development and promotion of media literacy in the Republic of North Macedonia. In March 2019 the Agency published the [Media Literacy Policy](#). The scope of this document is to illustrate the way forward, after expiring of the abovementioned program. The policy document defines, in particular, the following: The main objectives that should be obtained in the field of media literacy in North Macedonia, by the Agency and other stakeholders; The key domains of primary interest, where efforts would mostly help to achieve those objectives; The media and information literacy competences to be developed in different groups of the society.

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 ([Закон за аудио и аудиовизуелни медиумски услуги](#)), 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 North 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 ([Стратегија за развој на радиодифузната дејност во Република Македонија 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 North 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.

In March 2019 The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services adopted the new Regulatory Strategy for the Development of Audio and Audiovisual Media Activity 2019-2023 ([Регулаторна стратегија за развој на аудио и аудиовизуелната медиумска дејност 2019-2023](#)). The Strategy covers several areas, including media literacy. Regarding the media literacy, the Strategy foreseen following activities and recommendations: "1. In 2019, the Agency will develop a policy document to encourage the development of media literacy in the Republic of Macedonia; 2. Activities to strengthen the Media Literacy Network will continue; 3. The Agency will continue to undertake activities to raise awareness of media literacy among different target groups, as well as to raise the level of professionalism among media workers, in coordination with other members of the network." [Regulatory Strategy for the Development of Audio and Audiovisual Media Activity 2019-2023, Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, (March, 2019), p.61-62 <https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/%D0%A0%D0%B5%D0%B3%D1%83%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%82%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%BF%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%82-%D0%BE%D0%B4-2019-%D0%B4%D0%BE-2023-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0.pdf>]

[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

number of activities such as: initiating the establishment of a Media Literacy Network of the Republic of North 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. [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://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/%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>]

[The Media Literacy Network of the Republic of North 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: Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of 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 ten 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.

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 <https://mediumskapismenost.mk/home/> 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.

In the working program of the Agency for 2021 ([Програма за работа за 2021 година](#)), given that in 2021 parliamentary elections were held, and given the competence of the Agency to monitor the media coverage of the elections, The Agency's priority activity in the second half of the year was program monitoring broadcaster and media coverage services.

The priority of the Agency for 2022 ([Програма за работа за 2022 година](#)), will be monitoring the fulfillment of the program obligations of the broadcasters, as well as the other obligations set out for them in the Law on Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, the Law on Media and in the bylaws arising from these two laws. In addition, the Agency will undertake activities aimed at protecting the pluralism of the property of broadcasters, promoting social inclusion and media literacy, promoting freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

In order to protect the pluralism of media ownership, as well as to encourage the application of new technologies, the Agency in 2020 [prepared a study](#) on the pluralism of the media ownership in the new media environment, and will begin by undertaking

activities to develop a study for determining the possibilities for introduction of digital radio and for preparation of analysis for the possibilities and the need to introduce DVBT-T2.

Media literacy and online safety through formal education

In North Macedonia, as indicated in the Broadcasting Strategy 2013-2017, there have been efforts to introduce media literacy in the mother tongue curriculum, but have not been implemented. In 2010, the Macedonian Institute for Media in cooperation with the Institute for Democracy and the Bureau for Development of Education developed a Handbook on the Study of Media Literacy in the Teaching of Mother Tongue ([Прирачник за наставници за изучување на медиумската писменост во наставата по мајчин јазик – за основно и средно образование](#)). Trainings of more than 1,000 teachers were conducted but - the project stopped in the final phase - before the competent institutions approved its use in schools. [Regulatory Strategy for the Development of Audio and Audiovisual Media Activity 2019-2023, Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, (March, 2019), p.61 <https://avmu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/%D0%A0%D0%B5%D0%B3%D1%83%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%82%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%BF%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%BE%D1%82-%D0%BE%D0%B4-2019-%D0%B4%D0%BE-2023-%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0.pdf>]. After twelve years of this project, media literacy continues to be under-represented in education.

In Republic of North Macedonia 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 relatively new [Education Strategy 2018-2025](#), Media Literacy as a term has not been mentioned at all. Yet, one of the focuses of the Strategy is development of generic and core competencies of pupils (and all learners), in order for them to develop into critical thinkers, active and relevant participants in social life.

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 Secondary Education. [See more <http://bro.gov.mk/?q=sredno-strucno-obrazovanie>]. 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 North 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 North 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.

The School of Journalism and Public Relations in the period 2016-2018 worked on the project "Media Literacy in an Era of Information Flow: Macedonian Coalition for Media and Information Literacy" in order to raise public awareness of the impact of media content, but and encourage citizens to acquire the knowledge and skills to critically perceive information and use the media as a prerequisite for active citizenship. The project was funded by the European Union and it resulted with publication Media Literacy Handbook for Youth, Media and Civil Society Organizations ([Прирачник за медиумска писменост за млади, за медиуми и за граѓански организации](#)). The purpose of the Handbook is to empower students, teachers and professors, civic activists and the media to think critically about the world that surrounds us, to help them navigate the sea of information more easily, and to teach them how to create more effectively and responsibly media content.

[Metamorphosis Foundation](#) and [Eurotink - Center for European Strategies](#) with the financial support of the European Union through the IPA Civil Society and Media Program implemented the project "Critical Thinking for Citizens with Media Skills - Critink". The aim of the project is to promote media literacy as a basis for safeguarding the right of citizens to have different opinions, by stimulating a culture of critical thinking, pluralism of opinions and democratic values. The overall goals: Promoting a culture of critical thinking by educating the general public about the detrimental effects of media manipulation on democracy and European values; Increasing the capacity of CSOs and the media to address media manipulation (including hate speech) by improving the levels of media literacy through joint engagement with state institutions; Increasing the civic demand for accountable media through public education, promoting professional standards and international practices that protect freedom of opinion and expression. The project started in January 2018 and ended in December 2020.

[Metamorphosis Foundation](#) also under the program [MEDIA FOR DEMOCRACY](#) is implementing two more projects [The Media Reforms Observatory project](#) and [Fact-checking of Facebook content project](#).

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. In July 2019, The Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the OSCE Mission to Skopje on the basis of which joint activities will be taken up towards raising the awareness about media literacy in the country. The cooperation involves conducting of a research into the level of media literacy among the adult population in the Republic of North Macedonia and a media campaign, which will be carried out with the support from the OSCE Mission to Skopje. [<https://avmu.mk/en/2019/07/09/aaavms-and-osce-mission-to-skopje-will-be-working-together-on-raising-media-literacy-awareness/?print=print>]

But still, media literacy is not a common topic in public discourse in North 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 2021, where North Macedonia is at the last, 35th place. [<https://osis.bg/?p=3750&lang=en>]

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 a 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.

Main information provider for non-formal and informal education funded by the state budget is **National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility**. The Agency is publishing information and open calls on their web page. Occasionally, the Ministry of Education and Science is also publishing some information for non-formal educational opportunities for youth, but most of the information providers are coming from the CSO sector and are not funded by the Government.

Awareness raising initiatives

In North Macedonia there is not systematic approach aiming to raise awareness about the importance of non-formal and informal learning.

Yet, in the past few years' state authorities started to support some concrete initiatives. Thus, in March 2018 started the first phase of the project "[Education for Employment](#)" which will last at least till February 2022. The project is implemented by the **Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation**, [Macedonian Civic Education Center](#) and [Economic Chamber of Macedonia](#) in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy as well as other relevant ministries, state institutions, high schools, municipalities, private companies and CSO's. General aim of the project is to increase the number of young people who will find good job as a result of strengthening formal vocational education and non-formal education. Main target groups are: under and unemployed youth aged 15-29 including vocational education and training students, as well as reaching out to women, Roma and persons with disabilities.

The latest, 48th edition of the magazine "[Face to Face](#)" is for development partnerships and positive change, but the 42nd edition together with the social network campaign was for the perspective of education that will create generations of values, in which teachers will continuously develop professionally and will create classes that will stimulate students' curiosity, motivate and build them into individuals, human capital that will move society forward towards sustainable development.

In 2020 magazine "Lice v Lice" inspired by the COVID-19 crisis organized an online conference where as the main speaker was the Minister of Education and Science, Mila Carovska where the participants directly suggested how important is to adapt the methodology from non-formal education into the formal educational system.

6.10 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

Currently there is a working group who is drafting the new Law on Youth Standard. The work of the working group was delayed during the pandemic, and as of 2022, no progress has been made towards this.

Ongoing debates

The Ministry of Education and Science [has shared that there is a need for a thorough reform and design of such an education system that will be adaptable enough to survive future global critical events](#). The Minister also stressed the importance of digital literacy among students.

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 Health Insurance Fund is responsible for purchasing services from both public and private providers on behalf of users.

The Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2030 ([Стратегија за здравство на Република Северна Македонија 2021-2030](#)) 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 North 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.

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 the health status of youth in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Main concepts

Health is defined in accordance with World Health Organization 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 Organization 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 organized 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 ([Министерство за здравство](#)) 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;
- supervision under his jurisdiction and
- perform other activities determined by law

The [Health Insurance Fund of Republic of North Macedonia](#) is established with the Law on Health Insurance ([Закон за здравственото осигурување](#)) 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 Centers 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 programs of the Ministry of Health.

The State Sanitary and Health Inspectorate ([Државен санитарен и здравствен инспекторат](#)) 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 ([Агенција за лекови и медицински средства](#)) of the Republic of North Macedonia was established in September 2014, on the basis of the Law on Medicines and Medical Devices ([Закон за лековите и медицинските помагала](#)), 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 North 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 North 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 intersectionality 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 North Macedonia, there is no special strategy that only applies to the sport and physical activity of young people.

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 North 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 an 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'.

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.

In 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.

From 2020, the European Youth Card ([Младинска Европска Картичка](#)) its active again and implemented by Agency of Youth and Sports. This card has the purpose to give discounts to youth in stores across Europe and also is promoting a healthy lifestyle among young people by giving them discounts to gyms, access to swimming pools and other sports facilities.

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 the expressed needs and interests of the students. There is a possibility for establishment of sports clubs within the school itself.

Physical and health education is represented in secondary schools. In 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 (**Спорт и спортски активности**) 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 (**Спорт и спортски активности за II година**) is to acquire habits for regular sports. 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 psychomotor 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 sports gymnasium, the first year includes development of psychomotor 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 2021-2030](#). The strategy defines special attention to be paid to the health education for school children, to contribute to better health for young people 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, 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) (**Акциски план за храна и исхрана во Република Македонија 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 (**Стратегија за сексуалното и репродуктивното здравје во Република Македонија до 2020, со Акциониот план до 2013 година**) 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.

After this National Strategy, for period after 2020 there is no prepared and published National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health.

The National Drugs Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2021-2025 (**Национална стратегија за дрога на Република Македонија 2021-2025**) is also with the coverage of all the citizens of the Republic of North 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 covers 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: [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025, Agency of Youth and Sports of Republic of Macedonia, (Skopje, 2016), p. 33-34 http://ams.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_mkd.pdf (Accessed March 03, 2021)]

1. Regular general medical examinations for monitoring child development.
2. Developing personal programs 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.

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 North Macedonia has participated since 2010, and 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 (**Иницијатива за следење на дебелината кај децата**), 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 North 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 North 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!" ("**Кампања за користење здрава храна и водење здрав начин на живот**") The campaign was aimed at the entire population in North 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 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. [<https://gostivarpres.mk/uchenitsite-jadat-premnogu-chips-i-brza-hrana-polumaturantite-od-ou-gotse-delchev-so-kampana-za-zdrava-ishrana/>]
(Accessed December 15, 2020)

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 the 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 Strategy 2021-2030. 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 of 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).

Sexual and reproductive health and rights are taboo both at home and at school. According to CSO [HERA](#), in our formal education only 13% of students learned about condoms, and barely 2% about oral contraception. The most common reason for poor health among young people is lack of information, especially about their sexual and reproductive health. School is crucial for the development and information of young people, and thus the right place where they should learn how to take care of their health. Lack of adequate information is one of the main reasons for discrimination, violence, hatred and bullying in the school environment. That is why since 2009 HERA advocates comprehensive sex education (VSE) to be part of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools.

In 2018, a working group was formed in the Bureau for Development of Education to prepare models for piloting VSE in formal education.

Finally, in 2020 the pilot program for comprehensive sex education (VSE) started in 4 schools as part of the educational system. On December 4th was held first training for teachers about comprehensive sex education (VSE).

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 effects of such a food and to present what kind of food they should have on the daily menu.

Peer-to-peer education is not the 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 project ends.

Collaboration and partnerships

The Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021 - 2030 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. [Health Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia 2020 Reliable, Efficient and Fair Health System, Ministry of Health of the Republic of North Macedonia, <chrome-extension://efaidnbnmnibpcjpcglclefindmkaj/viewer.html?pdfurl=http%3A%2F%2Fzdravstvo.gov.mk%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2021%2F12%2F19.11.-SZ-posledna-Konechna-Natsrt-Strategija-MKD.pdf&clen=1352330&chunk=true> (Accessed March 3, 2021)].

Also, in the National Youth Strategy 2016 - 2025, 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. [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 of the Republic of Macedonia, Agency of Youth and Sports (Skopje, 2016), p. 12 http://ams.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/National_Youth_Strategy_2016-2025_mkd.pdf (Accessed March 3, 2021)].

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 the absence of a 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.). Funding for such events comes from international donors mainly and organization largely depends on availability of funds that defines the scope and timeframe.

An example of CSO campaign is the one for the Comprehensive sexual education. [<http://seksualnoobrazovanie.hera.org.mk/> (Accessed March 3, 2021)]

7.5 Mental health

National strategy(ies)

On annual basis, the Government of Republic of North Macedonia adopts a **Program for Health Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders in the Republic of North Macedonia**. In January 2021, the Government of Republic of North Macedonia adopted the Program for 2021 ([Програма за здравствена заштита на лица со душевни растројства во Република Северна Македонија за 2021 година](#)). [Program for Health Protection of Persons with Mental Disorders in the Republic of North Macedonia <https://www.slvesnik.com.mk/Issues/91de98bf9b494c3da0e4b3ae4b7d4169.pdf> (Accessed: February 15 2020)] The program has a general focus, targeting all populations in North Macedonia, and not precisely young people, as previous years.

The **National Mental Health Strategy 2018-2025** ([Национална стратегија за унапредување на менталното здравје во Република Македонија септември 2018 - 2025 година со акциски план \(септември 2018 – 2025\)](#)) was adopted and officially presented by the Minister of Health in September 2018. [National Strategy for Mental Health 2018-2025, <http://zdravstvo.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/strategija-za-MZ-2018-2025-170718-pf-1.pdf> (Accessed: February 15, 2022)]

The [Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2030](#) 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 North 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.). Related to Mental health of the population, The Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2030 and the Action Plan outline further development to maintain progress in reconfiguring services and to further deepen efforts for more locally based and community-focused service responses, while recognizing the need to develop more specialized service elements, for example, forensic psychiatry, addiction services, child and adolescent psychiatry. [The Health Strategy of the Republic of North Macedonia 2021-2030, Ministry of health <http://zdravstvo.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/19.11.-SZ-posledna-Konechna-Natsrt-Strategija-MKD.pdf> (Accessed: February 15, 2021)]

Mental health policy in North 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. [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: December 15 2020)]

The Law on Mental Health ([Закон за ментално здравје](#)) developed and enacted in 2006 and amended in 2015 ([Закон за изменување и дополнување на Законот за ментално здравје](#)) regulates the basic principles of mental health protection and promotion, in addition to the rights and responsibilities of persons with mental health conditions. [*Edict for announcing the Law on Mental Health*, (2006) <http://zdravstvo.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/1-ZAKON-ZA-MENTALNO-ZDRAVJE-71.06.pdf> (Accessed: December 15 2020)] [*Edict for announcing of the law and amending the Law on Mental Health*, (2015) <http://zdravstvo.gov.mk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/2-ZAKON-ZA-MENTALNO-ZDRAVJE-150.15.pdf> (Accessed: December 15 2020)] The Law on Mental Health (Article 34) enacted in 2006 stipulates the importance of mental health in 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 a 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 the 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 report by the Center for Public Health (**Извештај на Центарот за јавно здравје**), 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. [Светски ден на менталното здравје 2018, (2018 <http://www.cph.mk/ftp/Informativni%20i%20edukativni/2018/Svetski%20den%20na%20mentalnoto%20zdravje%202018.pdf> (Accessed: December 15 2020))] 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 latest information of the State Statistical Office, in the start of School year 2020-2021 there were 128 high schools in North Macedonia. [Secondary schools in the Republic of North Macedonia at the beginning of the school year 2020/2021, http://makstat.stat.gov.mk/PXWeb/pxweb/mk/MakStat/MakStat_ObrazovanieNauka_SrednoObrazovanie_PocetokUcebna/275_sreducil_reg_poc_t5_ml.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=f2ab74b7-411c-4388-8c13-fdd5ae7ff461 (Accessed: February 15, 2022)]. Not all of them have psychologist.

The most important challenge at present is the introduction of mental health 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 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 North Macedonia there is no psychologist at all, but there are rare exceptions. Thus, recently (2018) University "St. Kliment Ohridski"- Bitola (**Универзитет Св.Климент Охридски Битола**) founded the first psychological counseling center for students. [University "St. Kliment Ohridski" Bitola, <https://uklo.edu.mk/tabs/view/68eb3695171b671a80774c5f59c53efa> (Accessed: December 15 2020)]. 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.

Due to the COVID-19 and its potential reflection on the mental health, professors from the same University provided free call center for all students who would like to discuss with psychologist regarding the situation with pandemic. At the end of 2020, they also organized free webinar on topic "Mental health of students during COVID - 19". This webinar was supported by the National Platform of the Chamber of Psychologists. [<https://fb.uklo.edu.mk/aktivnosti/vebinar-na-tema-mentalno-zdravje-na-studentite-za-vreme-na-covid-19/> Accessed 04.02.2021].

In 2019, NAVANTI Foundation together with the National Youth Council of Macedonia conducted a study "**Cross-Sectoral Youth Assessment in North Macedonia**". One of the findings is that the education, employment and social situation which shape feelings of limited agency and exclusion amongst many young people growing up in North Macedonia have likely contributed to what some consider a mental health crisis in the country. This issue was raised by young people as well as youth experts across the CSYA. University professors described the situation in the country in terms of "collective depression" and blamed it on unfairness in the society.

In the last period the non-governmental organizations are undertaking many different activities related to the mental health of the youth. Some of these organizations are the [National Youth Council of Macedonia](#) [НМЦМ со повик за млади за поддршка при грижата за менталното здравје, Радио МОФ (2021), <https://www.radiomof.mk/nmsm-so-povik-za-mladi-za-poddrshka-pri-grizhata-za-mentalnoto-zdravje/> (Accessed: January 22 2020)], [Youth Can](#), [Psihesko](#) and [S.H.A.R.E.](#) [Менталното здравје сè уште претставува табу тема, сметаат младинските организации, YEF, (2019) <https://www.radiomof.mk/mentalnoto-zdravje-se-ushte-pretstavuva-tabu-tema-smetaat-mladinskite-organizacii/> (Accessed: December 15 2020)].

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 2021-2030 and Law on Mental health, 2006). However, in practice institutional treatment is prevailing in the mental health system.

Prospects are seen in the Health strategy 2020 that envisages 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 counseling 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 2021 ([Програма за систематски прегледи на учениците и студентите во Република Северна Македонија 2021 година](#)) 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.

Stakeholders

The main stakeholders for designating young people at risk are the 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.

The Ministry of Health is the principal entity responsible for monitoring of implementation of Law on Mental Health, Strategy 2021-2030 and Mental Health Strategy, through oversight of activities implementation. Ministry of Education and Science oversees activities that are performed in primary and secondary school and implementation of designed 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 North Macedonia for the Ministry of Health for 2021 is 6.779.816 MKD ([Буџет на Република Северна Македонија 2021](#)). For comparison, the budget for the same Ministry in 2020 was 7.112.872 MKD.

Financing of health in general, including mental health services has seen contrasting trends. In addition to the 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 sustainability of established activities and their continuity and upgrade.

7.7 Making health facilities more youth friendly

In North Macedonia there is no special rule aiming to regulate the interior of health facilities. However, in order to make the surroundings more suitable for children and young

people, medicine staff who work 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 which are later used to make health facilities more youth friendly.

Also, before New Year, there is humanitarian action for gathering Christmas gifts for sick children that are hospitalized in some of the departments within the hospitals.

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 the 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:

- Gynecological examinations and counseling (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 counseling;
- Peer education / education with a pedagogue;
- Distribution of condoms and educational materials;
- Counseling center for the prevention of drug use.

7.8 Current debates and reforms

The Ministry of Health proposed adoption of a National Strategy for E-health. This Strategy is expected to provide better and more efficient protection of a large number of population with the help of information and communication technologies, as well as to provide clear guidelines for the development of the Macedonian E health system in the next 5 years. It's still unknown when and whether these Strategies will be adopted (March 2022).

Due to the COVID crisis and huge number of young unemployed doctors, the Macedonian government decided to engage around 50 young doctors on a paid fellowship base, to work in a Clinic of infective diseases. According to the Minister of Health, this will contribute to further improving the status and working conditions of young doctors.

In addition, as part of the [Western Balkans Youth Lab Project](#), a three-year EU funded (1,5 million EUR) and [RCC](#) implemented project that kicked-off in January 2020, which aims to provide opportunities for youth to participate in decision-making. The project is covering the Western Balkans Six economies. The Western Balkans Youth Lab (WBYL) Project strives to create a longer-term structured regional dialogue between youth organizations and national administrations focused on jointly devising policies which will increase youth participation in decision-making, to improve the overall socio-economic environment for and mobility of youth in the Western Balkans economies through different types of activities. The project utilizes the structured dialogue methodology and addresses youth and mental health as of 2022.

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 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 North Macedonia.

Fostering equality and creating conditions for fostering the freedom and diversity of creativity and cultural identities are the main aims of the 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 North Macedonia does not attend cultural programmes. Those who do, are mostly interested in attending concerts and multimedia 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 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 take the most important place in 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 theater 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 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: [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-21_016-2025.pdf (Accessed December 17, 2018)].

- lack of regular cultural events for young people (concerts, multimedia events) in places 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 the Republic of North 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 also guarantees the protection and affirmation of cultural heritage as well as the contemporary cultural heritage of all people living in North Macedonia. The Constitution also gives right and freedom of all communities living in North Macedonia to express and develop their cultural identity, create cultural institutions or other forms of associations.

Besides National Strategy for Development of Culture 2018-2022 ([Национална Стратегија за развој на културата во Република Македонија во периодот 2018-2022 година](#)), the country has Law on Culture ([Закон за култура](#)) adopted in 1998 which has so far undergone many changes. The Law defines the foundations of culture as a fundamental value of the country, 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 country encourages and helps culture, especially through:

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, i.e. 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 etc;
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 monuments of cultural and historical significance, etc.

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 country.

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 the law .

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 the country, regardless of his/her gender, ethic, religious or political beliefs has equal right to access cultural benefits.

8.2 Administration and governance

Governance

In the Republic of North 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 North Macedonia is responsible governmental body for all questions related to culture on national level. The Ministry proposes laws for development of cultural policies in the country. It is in charge of the implementation of the National programs for culture following the National Strategy for Development of Culture 2018-2022 ([Национална Стратегија за развој на културата во Република Македонија во периодот 2018-2022 година](#)). This Ministry ensures the links between the institutions, local authorities and other stakeholders concerning the culture matters.

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 ([Министерство за труд и социјална политика](#)), educational institutions, cultural institutions on local level, local self-government units, media, the Macedonian Radio Television ([Македонска радио телевизија](#)), the [Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services](#), the [Ministry of Information Society and Administration](#), and the business sector. [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 North Macedonia such as museums, theaters, libraries, cultural centers, opera etc. They are public bodies working on national or local level. They provide cultural offerings for the citizens in different forms. Their activities are mainly funded by the state budget upon presentation of a yearly program of cultural activities.

The municipalities in North 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 a very important role in the creation of cultural offerings in the Republic of North 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 North 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 the state budget. The independent artists are also proposing cultural offers, sometimes organized in independent cultural groups: theater and dance companies, music bands etc.

Cross-sectorial cooperation

There is no information on the existence of standardized mechanisms 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 North 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 ([Акциски план за имплементација на Националната стратегија за развој на културата 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.

The strategic plan of the Ministry of Culture 2021 ([Стратешки план на Министерството за култура 2019-2021](#)) features the following goal: „Support the literary work of young authors“.

[National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#) as a Strategy that applies only to young people, besides other chapters has 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 a clearly defined vision for development of culture in the country. 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 participation in decision making and critical evaluation of artistic and cultural practices. [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/1gfzA76RBOTS1_A00fNn62n352E3nr8kB/view (Accessed December 18, 2018)].

The Strategy notes the current weaknesses of cultural policy in North 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.

As the culture in the Republic of North 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 atypical physical development, persons with developmental disabilities, children and juveniles without parents and single parents.

The Strategy mentions young people in a very obscure narrative. One of the priorities is stated planning of special measures and programs for promotion of cultural participation of youth, as well as persons with disabilities 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 disabilities and elderly needs.

In terms of educational policy in culture, the Strategy foresees 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.

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.

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 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 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

The [National Youth Strategy 2016-2025](#)

is the key policy document for youth development in the Republic of North Macedonia. It 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 ([National Opera and Ballet](#), Macedonian Philharmonic Orchestra...), Universities in North Macedonia, National and local libraries and other.

Information about responsible authority for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 can be found in chapter 1.3.

Revisions/updates

There is still no revision, neither update of the Strategy.

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.

Aiming to not only reduce the obstacles to the audience, but also to keep it safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, many theaters across the country started broadcasting plays online for free.

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 de-metropolisation, dispersion of the culture, to spread it in the local environments, and to enrich cultural offer in different parts outside Skopje, in 2008 the [Ministry of Culture](#) introduced the programme "Hot cultural wave".

Each year, the Ministry offers financial support to municipalities for development of cultural programmes 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, theater plays, exhibitions, debates etc.

Since 2017, the new Government made little changes in the scope of the programme, and gave it the new name "New cultural wave". 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 municipalities in North Macedonia have an important role in the development of cultural offer. Each municipality is devoting one part of the municipal budget for the 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 as well as to support the local development. For example, every summer for the past year, many municipalities are organizing a so called 'Cultural Summer'. Through concerts of various musicians from the country and abroad, outdoor theater performances, folk dances, municipal authorities want to enrich 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 introduced a possibility for reduced price for national public transport. Namely, young people under 27, have 50% discount for traveling by train and the 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). 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. High school students can travel for free by train every Wednesday.

Another extension of the measure was made in 2016. So instead of free public transport in the capital 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.

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 in the theaters across the country 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 a 50% discount (150 MKD) for students.

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

There is no information about the existence of a 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, 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 [<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)].

There are private initiatives for information about cultural offer, mostly through the internet. Namely, there are several websites that regroup the information for cultural offer such as: <http://www.reborn.mk/>; www.time.mk/nastani. These websites provide possibilities to identify all events taking place in North 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. [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)].

Municipalities throughout North 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 North Macedonia, mainly promotional events in their organization target primary school students. [Ibid, p.2-3]. 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 North Macedonia. [<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-%D0%B3%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%B6%D0%B0%D0%BC-%D0%B7%D0%B0/> (Accessed December 18,2018)].

From 5 to 9 May 2019, the European Week of Cultural Heritage Makers was celebrated in many European countries - a pilot initiative of "European Days of Cultural Heritage", aimed at children and young people. In 2019 North Macedonia is joining this important initiative for the first time. The project, launched as "Creators of Cultural Heritage" in Finland in 2013, and continued as a cross-border activity since 2014, was recognized by the [EDCN](#) assembly as an innovative and sustainable opportunity for active engagement of the youngest. The purpose of this initiative is to give children and young people a genuine and meaningful voice and thus to discover and encourage future European cultural heritage creators. During the European Cultural Heritage Week, young people are encouraged to explore their surroundings, learn about the cultural heritage that surrounds them, find a story of Europe in the heritage they have chosen, and then upload the story to the EDCN portal. The coordinator of this activity was the [Museum of Macedonia](#).

There is no information about the existence of specific national wide program 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).

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.

[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. [<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)]. 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.

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 the cultural sector offered by cultural foundations and international donors. Most 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 program 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. [See more: https://kultura.gov.mk/category/dr_konkursi/ (Accessed March 8, 2022)].

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.

In 2015, the first multi-functional art space “[Pubic room](#)” opened in Skopje. Public room is open for companies, organizations, artists and individuals as place for exhibitions, concerts, art workshop. It represents a 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 educational system. In 2014 the [Ministry of Education and Science](#) adopted the Entrepreneurial Learning Strategy of Macedonia 2014-2020 ([Стратегија за претприемничко учење 2014-2020](#)). The goal of the Strategy is to transform North 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.

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. After the end of the validity period of this strategy, no such strategy has been prepared for the period after 2020, and until now (March 2022) no information is available whether and when a new strategy will be prepared.

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 Ministry of Labor and Science ([Министерство за труд и социјална политика](#)) adopted National Strategy for development of Social Enterprises in North Macedonia 2021-2024 ([Национална стратегија за развој на социјалните претпријатија во Република Северна Македонија 2021-2024](#)) and relevant action plan ([АКЦИСКИ ПЛАН за спроведување на Националната стратегија за развој на социјалните претпријатија во Република Северна Македонија](#)). According to the-strategy "Education plays an important role in developing positive attitude towards the social entrepreneurship and can significantly contribute to fostering an understanding of his specific functioning and role in society. Through the educational process, young people can learn how social enterprises function and how they contribute to social and economic processes"

In December 2020, Skopje hosted the International Forum for Creative Cultural Entrepreneurship. The aim of the Forum was promotion of creative entrepreneurship, education for creative enterprise through interactive workshops, as well as providing networking opportunities to the participants.

The Forum was planned to tackle interest among the policy makers and other key stakeholders to provide resources and invest in policies and funds that can stimulate young people to work in the cultural and creative industries, to create networks and thus, to join their resources and talents which would lead to application of the creative entrepreneurship model. [<http://kultura.gov.mk/zavrshi-megunarodniot-forum-za-kreativno-kulturno-pretpriemnistvo-vo-skopje/> (Accessed February 8, 2021)].

Support young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors

There is also 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 North Macedonia. Since 2012 the festival is organized each year in Skopje and gathers artists, cultural workers, designers from the country, the Balkan Region and EU etc. The festival involves exhibitions, workshops, training, 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.

Due to the crisis imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the national education web platform [eduino.gov.mk](#) was introduced. This platform features video lectures, resources, games and various activities to support the educational process. Eduino aims to grow into a collective platform on which, together with students, teachers and parents, new resources and materials will be created, reviewed and published, building the first national library of digital educational materials in the country. The video lessons on the platform are prepared by teachers across the country, they are content approved by the advisors of the Bureau for Development of Education and are checked by the technical team of EDUINO.

The videos are intended to cover the curricula for elementary and general secondary school. They are divided per school year, semester and subject. However, most of the sections that cover the subjects: arts, music, Business and entrepreneurship do not feature any videos.

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 foresaw purchase, installation and maintenance of technological equipment, as well as development of an adequate environment for creating and using e-content. 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 schools the computers were stolen, and in part of them completely destroyed. It was never revealed exactly how much money the project cost the state. [<https://kultura.gov.mk/%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B4%D0%B8%D1%88%D0%BD%D0%B8-%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%BA%D1%83%D1%80%D1%81%D0%B8-2022-2/>] (Accessed on March 9, 2022)].

The [Ministry of Education and Science](#) 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 digitization of the curriculum in order to enable students to learn from modern aids. In addition to the announced digitalization, no specific measures have been taken yet.

In order to foster the creative and innovative potential of young people in primary and secondary schools, the [Innovation and Technology Development Fund](#) 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. The fund kept this practice and in 2021, 19 primary and secondary schools across the country realized green projects for preservation and promotion of the environment and biodiversity within the public call "Challenge for Young Researchers 4 – green projects". [<https://licevice.mk/doza-vesti/articles/218>] (Accessed on March 9, 2022)].

Occasionally, the Innovation and Technology Development Fund organizes other similar competitions, designed primarily for students in primary and secondary schools, in order to develop their creativity and stimulate innovation.

In October 2018, the Innovation and Technological Development Fund 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 were planned.

Facilitating access to culture through new technologies

In September 2019, as part of the manifestation European Days of Cultural Heritage, the municipality of Prilep organized at the Institute and Museum in Prilep, organized an archeological exhibition and educational-visual workshop for children with special needs. The children were part of the educational workshop and through their multidimensional video applications they became acquainted with the world cultural heritage.

Since 2018, the Ministry of Information Society and Administration, the Ministry of Education and Science and in collaboration with the Metamorphosis Foundation for Internet and Society, have been actively supporting the European Code week, held each year in October at various locations in European countries and beyond. This year (2019) teachers had the opportunity with their students to explore the links between digital innovation, tradition and culture. Regardless of the subject they teach or their programming knowledge, they have learned how to organize a lesson to celebrate cultural heritage and programming in their classroom. [<https://www.etwinning.net/mk/pub/highlights/coding-for-culture-connecting.htm>] (Accessed December 13, 2019)].

As part of the European Code Week 2019, the Metamorphosis Foundation has announced a call for grants of 300 euros from the Meet and Code program for a total of 40 events / projects that can be applied by CSOs and schools. The purpose of Meet and Code is to introduce children and young people between the ages of 8 and 24 to the world of technology and programming. The events are organized to show young people how

interesting and fun programming can be and how it can help revive ideas. They need to learn how technology works and how IT affects everyday life.

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 "Makedonika" ("[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. Another platform like this, is the [Samoglas](#) platform, which offers access to audiobooks and audio publications in 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 matters 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 October 2021, the [Ministry of Culture](#) announced Annual call for financing projects of National interest in certain activities and areas of culture for 2022. The goal of the call was to support projects aimed at development, affirmation and promotion of culture in the Republic of North Macedonia in the following activities and areas:

- visual arts, architecture and design;
- dramatic activity;
- protection of cultural heritage (museum activity and protection of intangible cultural heritage, library activity, protection of immovable cultural heritage and protection of audiovisual goods);

- interdisciplinary projects;
- literature and publishing;
- cultural events and festivals;
- music and music-stage activity;
- international cooperation;
- folklore.

In 2018 the [Ministry of Culture](#) formed intra-sectoral group for realization of youth policies in the field of culture. The group is composed of governmental institutions and youth organizations. In December 2018 Intra-sectoral group held the first meeting where they discussed measures proposed by the Ministry of Culture which should lead to greater involvement of young people in cultural life in the country. 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. There is no publicly available information on other meetings or actions undertaken by this group.

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 North Macedonia ([Национален сојуз на слепите на Република Северна Македонија](#)) was founded in 1946 under the name of the Union of the Blind of the Republic of North 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 country. 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 North 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 North Macedonia for the past 7 years. The festival is one of its kind in the Balkans and has the aim to offer people with special needs a way to express creatively. In 2019 the festival was opened by the president of North Macedonia H.E. Stevo Pendarovski. Due to the pandemic with coronavirus, the festival was not organized in 2020 and 2021.

Occasionally, other events are organized in order to promote the rights of (young) people with atypical development, 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" 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

The “multiculturalism, interculturalism and inclusiveness in the active participation of young people” is one of the fundamental principles of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) adopted in January 2020.

In 2010 the country 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.

North Macedonia is a 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. A new Strategy will be adopted in 2022.

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 atypical development 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 leads the students from the school together with their mentor and special educator, and work 2 times a week in the afternoon and 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.

8.10 Current debates and reforms

According the [Government work programme 2020-2024](#): “We [The Government] will continue to invest in the cultural infrastructure, establishing Youth Cultural Centers in several cities as specialized institutions that will develop the cultural needs of young people, in order to improve the quality of their lives and keep them from leaving the country. Depending on

the needs, these will be multimedia centers with multi-purpose areas: a cinema hall, theater stage, concert stage, showroom, bowling alley, buffet or business-cafes, etc.”

The Youth centers whose establishment was foreseen in the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) adopted in 2020 are also crucial reform in this area. According the Law, Youth centers are places where programs aimed at improving the well-being of young people and their personal, social and professional development are prepared and implemented, and information of important interest of young people and other aspects of life are shared.

According to this law, all municipalities are obliged to enable the functioning of at least one youth center within 5 years from the adoption of the law.

At the beginning of 2020, in cooperation between the Agency for Youth and Sports and the Union for Youth Work, the process of opening youth centers in the municipalities of Bitola, Veles, Kavadarci and Kumanovo began. In accordance with the signed memoranda of cooperation, the four municipalities undertook to provide space for the youth centers and to cover the running costs of their work, while the Agency for Youth and Sports undertook the obligation to equip the centers with the necessary equipment and materials.

The Union for Youth Work, on the other hand, has committed itself through local member organizations to providing youth work programs that will be implemented by youth workers.

9. YOUTH AND THE WORLD

In general, the activities regarding global issues are initiated and implemented by Civil Society Organizations that are targeting youth.

The Republic of North Macedonia is part of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office ([RYCO](#)) which is a result of the 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.

[European Youth Forum](#) - a platform for national youth councils and international youth NGOs in Europe. It seeks to promote the rights of young people in international institutions such as the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations.

The European Youth Forum operates in the field of youth policy and youth work development. The focus of its work is on European youth issues, while through its global engagement, it improves the capacities of its members and also promotes global interdependence. In its day-to-day work, the European Youth Forum presents the views and opinions of youth organizations in all relevant fields and promotes the cross-sectoral nature of youth policy towards different institutional actors. The principles of equality and sustainable development are an integral part of the work of the European Youth Forum.

The forum consists of 44 National Youth Councils and 62 international youth NGOs, with a total of 106 bodies from across Europe including [National Youth Council of Macedonia](#) who became a member in 2015.

[WBYCP](#) stands for Western Balkans Youth Cooperation Platform. WBYCP is a grassroots regional youth platform implemented by Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI), together with the umbrella youth organizations of the six Western Balkans Countries - National Youth Congress of Albania, National Youth Council of Macedonia, National Youth Council of Serbia, High School Students Union of Montenegro, Central Youth Action Council of Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina Association for United Nations -, and with the support of Hanns Seidel Foundation.

With the aim to promote youth connectivity in the Balkans, WBYCP offers a unique and tailor-made space to youngsters from the region where they meet, plan, organize, implement and voice up their action. In WBYCP youngsters can find partners for joint activities, design and implement joint initiatives, exchange ideas, consult a youth library, and built and carry outreach and lobbying action. WBYCP is designed to function as a resource center for youth in the Western Balkans.

In 2018, Greece and North Macedonia, under the auspices of the United Nations, signed the Prespa Agreement, resolving a long-standing dispute between the two countries. Apart from resolving the terminological differences, the agreement also covers areas of cooperation between the two countries in order to establish a strategic partnership between them. In the '[Action Plan on the Intensification and Enrichment of Cooperation Between the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of North Macedonia, as Provided for in the Prespa Agreement](#)' it's noted, that the parties (referring to the Governments of North Macedonia and Greece) shall support all forms of youth cooperation in order to tighten the

bonds and foster relations between young people in both countries, and to this effect, both Parties will invest efforts to establish a "Greece – North Macedonia Youth Office" as a

body/platform that will work on improving ties between young people in both countries, strengthen their mutual understanding and promote, encourage and facilitate meetings and exchanges between young people. This initiative was launched by the youth sector from both North Macedonia (by Youth Alliance - Krushevo) and Greece, through the '[Cooperation for a Common Future](#)' initiative.

9.1 General context

Main concepts

Republic of North Macedonia, as a country in development, has focus on EU Integrations and become NATO member in 2020, and Republic of North 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 North 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 the Republic of North Macedonia are encountering challenges among other fields 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 Republic of North 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 terrorist attacks (31.1%). Regarding discussing social and political issues, 20% of young people in the Republic of North 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 shows the low level of participation regarding Human Rights issues in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Macedonian youth is also interested in volunteering abroad. There are 67 EVS accredited organizations in the Republic of North Macedonia from which 59 are sending organizations. Beside the EVS programme, there are other programmes offered by different organizations. For example, student organization [AIESEC Macedonia](#) or [Youth Center KREAKTIV](#) is offering professional and volunteering internships abroad.

In October 2018, CSO Go Green published the research report "Needs assessment of youth in high schools" ("[Анализа на потребите на младите во средните училишта](#)"). According to the research, most of the respondents have developed environmental awareness and would like to select and recycle the trash in their school, but a very small number of high schools in the country have this opportunity.

In October 2019, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and UNDP conducted an online survey on public opinion about climate change. This survey was not targeting

only youth but the general public. But having in mind that it was distributed online, most of the respondents were young people aged 25-39. According to the respondents, one of the main national issues are lack of clean water and climate change. The youngest respondents (up to 25 years old) consider that the most serious threat to society today are climate changes. Most of the young respondents (around 26%) would like to undertake some activities, but they don't know how, and around 23% believe that the government and industries should take appropriate measures against climate change.

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 a global level. Agency of Youth and Sport and National Agency for European Educational Programmes and Mobility are responsible for nominating youth representatives that are taking part in international events related to global issues with a focus on youth.

There is a certain level of cooperation between governmental and non-governmental organizations. In this regard, at the beginning of March 2021, the Agency of Youth and Sport and National Youth Council of Macedonia signed Memorandum of Cooperation. It aims to strengthen the cooperation between the AYS and the NYCM towards improving the status and position of young people in North Macedonia.

According to the concluded memorandum, the cooperation between AYS and NYCM will refer to joint activities for promotion of youth policies and youth representation in the decision-making processes through: cooperation in the selection of youth representatives in advisory and administrative domestic and international bodies and bodies; joint realization of consultative processes, trainings, trainings, conferences and thematic workshops with youth and youth forms of organization; preparation and implementation of joint initiatives for securing donations and projects and organizing joint activities and events [See more <http://www.nms.org.mk/%d0%bf%d0%be%d1%82%d0%bf%d0%b8%d1%88%d1%83%d0%b2%d0%b0%d1%9a%d0%b5-%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d0%bc%d0%b5%d0%bc%d0%be%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b4%d1%83%d0%bc-%d0%b7%d0%b0-%d1%81%d0%be%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b1%d0%be%d1%82/> (Accessed on 10.03.2022)].

Cross-sectorial cooperation

There is 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 the Republic of North Macedonia there is no defined top-level policy, program or initiative that allows young people to exchange views on global issues with policy makers.

There were some efforts coming from [National Youth Council of Macedonia](#) to introduce Structural Dialogue as efficient tool dialogue between young people and decision makers, but in Republic of North 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.

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 Republic of North 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), [EU Youth Conference Sofia](#) (April 2018), [EU Youth Conference Bucharest](#) (March 2019), [EU Youth Conference Zagreb](#) (March 2020) and [EU Youth Conference Online](#) (September 2021).

During the process of Structured 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.

Republic of North Macedonia as a program country in Erasmus+ programme, occasionally gives 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 Republic of North 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 the Republic of North 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 2021 this program was reactivated with the financial support of the US Embassy and this program currently includes a total of 27 primary and secondary schools in the country.

[<https://www.moep.gov.mk/nastani/%d0%b3%d0%bb%d0%be%d0%b1%d0%b5-%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b3%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%bc%d0%b0%d1%82%d0%b0-%d1%80%d0%b5%d1%81%d1%82%d0%b0%d1%80%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b0-%d1%81%d0%be-%d0%b0%d0%bc%d0%b5/> (Accessed March 10, 2022)]

Global Issues as Climate Changes and Climate Influence are covered within the subject Geography in High school education (Gymnasium) curriculum within the 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 global historic development contained in the curriculum of the subject History, which is mandatory for three years in the High School education (Gymnasium).

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, besides local initiatives and project activities from Civil Society Organizations, mostly funded by international authorities.

Educators' support

In the Republic of North 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 to what extent this Guideline is used by educators and North Macedonia.

In December 2020, UNICEF North Macedonia announced the launch of a new program for children aimed at promoting environmental education and climate change. Including pre-school, primary and secondary education, one aspect of the program is for teachers to gain resources and skills for the realization of interesting content and activities with students in support of environmental education. The program will also establish mechanisms for professional development and collegial learning of teachers. The program will provide children with a wide range of platforms and tools for experiential and practical learning in the field of natural sciences. [<https://www.unicef.org/environment-and-climate-change> (Accessed March 10, 2022)]. As part of one of its projects in 2021, UNICEF conducted a [research on knowledge, attitudes and practices study on climate change and the environment](#) with a main focus on teachers and educators employed in public educational institutions.

The general findings indicate that there is a certain number of teachers who lack motivation for developing climate change and environmental education. Thus, about 34 percent of teachers think that students learn enough about ecology and the environment through the existing educational programs (this answer is preferred by lower primary teachers and men), while 63 percent do not agree with this view. About 23 percent of the teachers surveyed think that teachers do not have a major role in contributing to a healthy environment and clean air (this is the opinion of high school teachers, men and teachers who teach vocational subjects, unlike other groups). [<https://www.unicef.org/northmacedonia/mk/izvestai/istrazuvanje-za-znaenjata-stavovite-i-praktikite-vo-vrska-so-klimatskite-promeni-obrazovanie> p.13 (Accessed March 10,2022)].

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 North Macedonia do not run campaigns that target young people. Some of these questions are part of higher educational curricula, but when it's coming to youth targeted educational campaigns they 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 North Macedonia, key initiatives in disseminating information on global issues are conducted by the Civil Society Sector and rarely by governmental institutions. Usually information has general focus targeting all citizens, but some campaigns are designed exclusively for young people.

On December 10th 2018 - International Human Rights Day, the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility 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.

When it comes to initiatives that are coming from CSO's, CSO Go Green ('**Биди зелен**') in 2018 implemented the project "Youth for Sustainable Development". Project partners were 3 high schools from Skopje (the capital of North 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:

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.

FRIDAYS FOR FUTURE...

[Fridays for future Skopje](#) is part of the global climate strike movement that started in August 2018 by Greta Thunberg.

FFFSkopje maintain the same demands as FFF International and they are:

- Keep the global temperature rise below 1.6 °C compared to pre-industrial levels
- Ensure climate justice and equity
- Listen to the best united science currently available
- Create a safe pathway under 1.5 °C
- Follow the Paris Agreement
- End fossil fuel investments

The Fridays for Future Skopje gathers non-formal every Friday in front of different Government institutions and protest for global or local problems about climate change.

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 reforestation 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 North Macedonia and in reforestation 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. [<https://vlada.mk/node/13644> (Accessed February 22, 2021)].

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).

Most of the actions and campaigns supported by local-self-governments and the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning about green production are targeting primary school students up to 15 years old or the 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 the Swedish Embassy, supported by the Swedish Agency for Environmental Protection, the Embassies of Norway, Slovakia and the Ministry of Environment of Republic of North 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. [<https://www.bidizelen.org/en/go-clean-3/> (Accessed February 22, 2021)].

CSO Go Green in 2019 started by implementing the project "[Youth for climate change and air quality Education](#)" This project is aimed at schools and the education system and will emphasize the importance of energy efficiency of school buildings and the use of solar thermal collectors for heating and electricity. Finally, education on climate change and air quality must be deeply integrated into the education system. The requirements are

supported by detailed research and analysis and awareness-raising and advocacy activities. [<https://www.bidizelen.org/en/youth-for-climate-change-and-air-quality-education/>] (Accessed February 22, 2021)].

9.6 Intercontinental youth work and development cooperation

Intercontinental youth work cooperation

The National Agency for European Programs and Mobility 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. The Erasmus plus program is funded by the EU and provides opportunities for young people and youth workers. The Republic of North Macedonia is a Program Country within Erasmus plus, and has 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 [North Macedonia](#). The program provides service opportunities 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 program 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 people served.
3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

The program is funded by the 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 the private business sector.

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 the working group are representatives from the 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 a special category. This proposal should be discussed in 2019.

To this day there is still no available information about this process.

In 2014 The Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning started with the IPA Project "Preparation of a long-term strategy and law on climate action" ([Подготовка на долгорочна стратегија и закон за климатска акција](#)) [https://www.moepp.gov.mk/?page_id=4749 (Accessed February 22, 2021)] who had the purpose to carry out the necessary analyzes and assessments of the current situation and conditions in the beneficiary country in the framework of the preparation of a long-term strategy and the law on climate action and to support their adoption and implementation by 2020.

This project is finished and this are the results:

- Conducted analysis that includes analytical and technical reports on specific strategic and legal issues that will serve as background data and contribution to the strategy and the law. Reports should be concise, targeted at policy makers, and focused on providing input to the strategy and the law.
- Prepared Report on the assessment of the capacity, administrative and financial needs for the implementation of the strategy and the law, as well as the legal competencies of the government and executive bodies, with a conclusion on the strategy and the law.
- Report on transposition guidelines and implementation of EU climate legislation, with recommendations for the legal framework to be established through the Climate Action Law.
- Prepare a country report on climate change vulnerability, based on available studies, identifying priority adaptation / climate resilience objectives, including the research and decision-making framework, with conclusions relevant to the policies to be included in strategy and law.
- Draft long-term strategy for climate action prepared.
- Draft text of the law on climate action with bylaws prepared.
- Prepared draft action plan for implementation of the initial phase of the strategy and the law.

In addition, there is no public information about when the Law is going to be implemented in the Republic of North Macedonia.

10. YOUTH WORK

In the Republic of North Macedonia, the youth work profession is officially in its infancy, although informally many young people through CSOs have long been involved in youth work.

According to the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)), youth work is defined as an organized and systematic process of educating and supporting the authentic development of young people in order to realize their full personal and social potential and their active involvement in the life of the community.

10.1 General context

Historical developments

In the period when North Macedonia was part of Yugoslavia, youth work was present through the pioneer homes and alliances of the Communist and Socialist youth. The measures and activities implemented by these organizations consisted of scholarships, youth employment programs and housing allocations. The primary values of youth work in that period were: education with a predetermined purpose, promotion of patriotic values, volunteerism, collectivism, brotherhood and unity, etc. (see more Portfolio on Youth Work ([Порфтолио на младински работници](#)))

With the collapse of socialism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, this form of youth work disappeared. As a society in transition, the former Yugoslavia was completely unprepared for the education of young people. The state, as well as the entire region, is responding to the current list of priorities in order to establish economic, political, judicial and social stability. [Forum Syd Balkans Programme, (Skopje, 2019) How to understand youth work in the community, p.9 retrieved from http://www.triagnolnik.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/kako_da_se_razbere_mkd.pdf (Accessed December 16, 2019)].

Since then, significant progress has been made in the field of youth work. Today's youth work is primarily guided by the CSOs who are learning from the best practices from the western countries. With financial support from foreign and international foundations, several Macedonian associations have attempted to introduce different approaches to youth work based on models from other European countries.

In 2012, the [Center for Intercultural Dialogue](#), with support of [National Democratic Institute](#) (NDI), has launched an initiative to recognize and professionalize youth work. As a result of this initiative, the Union for Youth Work ([Сојуз за младинска работа](#)) was established and is still functioning today. Another result of the initiative was the organization of the first Youth Work Fair which was organized in 2013 in organization of the Center for Intercultural Dialogue, with support of NDI and Agency of Youth and Sport. The Youth Work Fair was intended to raise awareness of the need for professionalization and recognition of youth work, as well as to establish a link between youth work providers and institutions. The event brought together 40 youth job bidders and representatives of institutions who discussed the necessary legal solutions and regulations, as well as defining the capacities and competences of youth job bidders.

This initiative was followed by several other projects aimed at standardizing and professionalizing youth work. As a result of these initiatives, understanding of youth work has increased significantly in the Republic of North Macedonia. In September 2018, for the first time in the history of North Macedonia, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy adopted the standard of occupation in the field of youth work, under the name Worker with Youth.

In June 2021, the Union for Youth Work and the Agency for Youth and Sports awarded certificates to 14 youth workers for a completed adult education program in accordance with the occupational standard Youth Worker. Thus, for the first time in our country, certified professionals were recognized according to one of the profiles of the youth worker, in accordance with the National Portfolio of Youth Workers. [<https://smr.org.mk/2021/07/01/%d1%81%d0%b5%d1%80%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%84%d0%b8%d1%86%d0%b8%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b8-%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%b2%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5-%d0%bc%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b4%d0%b8%d0%bd%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b1%d0%be/>] (Accessed February 24, 2022)].

National definition or understanding of Youth Work

Youth Work is defined in Art. 3 in Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)) as: "an organized and systematic process of

education and support of authentic development of young people with the aim of fulfilling their overall personal, social and civic potential.”

The same definition may be found in the Portfolio on Youth Work. [Portfolio on Youth Work (Порфтолио на младински работници), Union for Youth Work, (Skopje, 2019), p.12 https://issuu.com/smr.sojuz/docs/portfolio_for_youth_workers (Accessed December 16, 2019)].

On the other hand, Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies is defining Youth Worker as “qualified persons who have the competencies to work with young people by carrying out activities that support their personal and social development through informal and informal learning.”

10.2 Administration and governance of youth work

Governance

Main actors:

Main governmental authority involved in policy-making on youth work is the Agency of Youth and Sport, while also very important governmental actor is the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

The main non-public actor who is taking part in the development of policies in the field of youth work is the Union for Youth Work (Сојуз за младинска работа) which is a network of youth work providers: youth organizations and organizations working with and for youth whose mission is to regulate and standardize youth work, support youth workers and raise public awareness of the importance of youth work.

On the other side, institutions responsible for implementing the measures envisaged in the area ‘Local Youth Work’ in the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 are the Agency of Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Local Self Government, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, and local self-government units.

Cross-sectoral cooperation

The process of recognition and establishment of the youth work in the Republic of North Macedonia is at the very beginning. Currently, the cooperation is between the Agency of Youth and Sport, Municipalities (Local Self-Governance) and the Union for Youth Work. Moreover, for the purposes of establishment and recognition of youth work, the Agency of Youth and Sport and Union for Youth Work signed Memorandum for cooperation (Меморандум за соработка помеѓу Агенција за млади и спорт на Република Северна Македонија и Сојуз за младинска работа).

10.3 Support to youth work

Policy legal framework

As mentioned in the previous chapters, in the National Youth Strategy 2016-2025 there is a chapter on Local Youth Work. In terms of the key challenges identified in the area of youth work, the Strategy provides appropriate long-term objectives and specific measures for addressing the respective problems. The long-term objectives are: Recognition of youth work as a key tool for assisting the positive personal and social development of young people; Formal recognition and regulation of the use and availability of youth work as an integral part of the education system of the country; Ensuring the quality and availability of youth work in the territory of each municipality.

Some of the measures envisaged for each of the objectives are: Promoting the concept and use of youth work through campaigns, public events, broad variety of youth work activities and positive examples from other countries; Educating the teaching staff and

other professionals who work with young people (school counsellors, psychologists, social workers, etc.) and introducing them to the concept and potential use of youth work; Integrating basic principles of youth work in the study programmes for professions that are involved in youth development (teachers, psychologists, school counsellors, social workers, etc.); Introducing a minimum number of mandatory vacancies for young people as part of activities within the municipalities; Defining a National Portfolio for Youth Workers with minimum competence and training of the staff who implement youth work; Ensuring adequate human capacity for implementation of youth work in the territory of each municipality; Involving young people as active partners in the process of implementing youth work; etc. Some measures have already been implemented, such as a development of Portfolio for Youth Workers ([Портфолио на младински работници](#)).

Youth work is complementary to formal education, social work with youth, special education and rehabilitation for youth, and other occupations that work with youth. The most common tasks of youth work are: supporting the personal and social development of youth by providing organized and structured support for youth, as well as facilitating the active participation of youth in community life. Youth work uses the methods of non-formal education, mentoring, coaching, peer counseling, information and informal experiential learning.

Youth work also contributes to the development of young people's self-confidence and socialization, their sustainable independence and strengthening of their abilities, as well as the development of their tolerance and the strengthening of youth responsibility.

The Union for Youth Work in cooperation with the Agency for Youth and Sports is considering the possibility of establishing formal education for youth workers in North Macedonia. In that direction, the Union for Youth Work also cooperates with the Institute for Social Work and Social Policy, which operates within the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje. In June 2021, the Union for Youth Work and the Agency for Youth and Sports completed the first cycle of the formal educational program for youth workers in North Macedonia, which the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies define as “qualified persons who have competencies to work with young people by implementing activities that support their personal and social development through informal and informal learning”. Thus, for the first time in North Macedonia, certified professionals were recognized as youth workers, in accordance with the National Portfolio of Youth Workers ([Портфолио на младински работници](#)). [<https://smr.org.mk/2021/07/01/%d1%81%d0%b5%d1%80%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%84%d0%b8%d1%86%d0%b8%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b8-%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%b2%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5-%d0%bc%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b4%d0%b8%d0%bd%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b1%d0%be/>].

The Union for Youth Work in all processes cooperates with the National Youth Council of Macedonia, as the highest representative body of young people in the country. In addition, cooperation is continuously realized with the Coalition of youth organizations SEGA, as well as with other organizations offering youth work that are not part of the Union for Youth Work.

Internationally, the Union for Youth Work cooperates with other networks of youth job providers, youth workers' associations, other organizations active in the field of youth work, and universities that offer education for youth workers.

Funding

Information regarding the funding can be found in Chapter 5.6.

Cooperation

There is certain level of cooperation between the Union for Youth Work, Agency on Youth and Sport, Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, local self-governance, Center for Adult Education, Center for Vocational Education and Training and other relevant governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations, but as the process of establishing and

formalizing youth work is still in its infancy, there is no publicly available information on whether and how national authorities have established or promoted frameworks of cooperation between all youth work stakeholders.

10.4 Quality and innovation in youth work

Quality assurance

The quality of youth work refers to the achievement of the goals of youth work, as well as incorporating its values and characteristics into the planning and implementation of youth work programs.

The criteria for the quality of youth work in North Macedonia are defined on the basis of recommendations received through consultative meetings organized by the Union for Youth Work, taking into account existing quality standards from other European countries.

Union for Youth Work in 2019 published "Youth work quality standards" ([Стандарди за квалитет на младинската работа](#)). According to this publication, the quality of youth work in North Macedonia will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The goals of youth work correspond to the rights and needs of young people
- Youth work is based on active and voluntary participation of young people
- Youth work offers opportunities for learning and personal and social development of young people
- Youth work promotes equality and inclusion of all young people
- Youth work is carried out in appropriate spaces by professionals
- Youth work is based on processes of continuous monitoring, evaluation and quality improvement.

The level of fulfillment of the criteria for quality youth work is assessed using a set of indicators that can compare reality with the vision of youth work and identify specific areas for improvement.

Research and evidence supporting Youth Work

There is hardly any information available on possible support for better understanding of youth work, provided by national authorities. In 2013 the Agency of Youth and Sport supported the first Youth Work Fair organized by the Center for Intercultural Dialogue. The Agency also supported the fair organized in 2014 by the same CSO. This fair included 70 youth organizations from North Macedonia and Europe, who presented their work to the audience. The fair included presentations of the latest trends in youth work and contemporary ways of functioning of youth organizations throughout Europe. The fair was attended by representatives of the Agency of Youth and Sport, National Agency of European Educational Programs and Mobility, the Council of Europe's Youth Department, the European Commission, the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership, the European Youth Forum, SALTO Resource Centers, as well as 70 youth organizations from North Macedonia and Europe.

There is no other available information on this topic, and also there is no specific top-level budget or funds for supporting research on youth work.

Participative youth work

Information can be found in section 5.4.

Smart youth work: youth work in the digital world

In February 2021, with financial support from the Agency of Youth and Sport, the Union for Youth Work started training for Youth Workers. In June 2021, the Union for Youth Work

and the Agency for Youth and Sports awarded certificates to 14 youth workers for a completed adult education program in accordance with the occupational standard Youth Worker. Thus, for the first time in our country, certified professionals were recognized according to one of the profiles of the youth worker, in accordance with the National Portfolio of Youth Workers. This is the first formal educational program in our country for youth workers, which the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies defines as “qualified persons who have competencies to work with young people by implementing activities that support their personal and social development through informal and informal learning.

[<https://smr.org.mk/2021/07/01/%d1%81%d0%b5%d1%80%d1%82%d0%b8%d1%84%d0%b8%d1%86%d0%b8%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%bd%d0%b8-%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%b2%d0%b8%d1%82%d0%b5-%d0%bc%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b4%d0%b8%d0%bd%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b1%d0%be/>].

10.5 Youth workers

Status in national legislation

The profession of youth worker is still not recognized in the Macedonian national classification of occupations, but, with the introduction of the occupation - youth worker, this is introduced as an occupation. It is expected to enter the national qualifications framework once youth work becomes part of the higher education program.

According to the Union for Youth Workers there are 3 profiles of youth workers in North Macedonia: worker for youth, graduate youth worker and expert on youth work. Worker for youth is a person who has a basic level of knowledge of youth work. Graduate youth worker is a person with good knowledge in youth work and huge experience in practicing youth work, while an expert on youth work is a youth worker with the highest knowledge and skills of youth work and long-term experience in practicing it.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in 2018 adopted the Occupational standard document - Workers with Youth ([Стандард на занимање Работник со млади](#)). According to this document, the Workers with Youth plans, organizes, implements, monitors and evaluates activities, prepares instruments and research; design programs and projects for youth according to their needs; takes care of the quality of youth work and contributes to the development of effective, efficient and ethical practice; teaches; mentoring young people to support their personal and social development and their active participation in the community; informs young people; lobbies and advocates for changes that facilitate and facilitate the personal and social development of young people and enable their active participation in the community; organizes youth exchanges, festivals, campaigns, events, youth education camps within the youth organization, youth cultural centers, youth clubs, NGOs, etc.

Youth workers are mentioned in the new Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies ([Закон за младинско учество и младински политики](#)). According to this law (Article 22), in cooperation between the municipalities and the youth forms of organization, youth centers are established in which youth workers are responsible for working with young people.

Education, training and skills recognition

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first certified training for youth workers was realized and in June 2021, the Union for Youth Work and the Agency for Youth and Sports awarded certificates to 14 youth workers for a completed adult education program in accordance with the occupational standard Youth Worker.

In November 2020, the Union for Youth Work published a new opportunity for online training for youth workers on topic-intercultural learning. Developed as part of the DEEP - Diversity Educational E-Resource Project, the aim of the course is to support youth workers

in using a variety of forms, approaches and tools to engage young people in the Western Balkans in intercultural learning.

The course is available on the online learning platform of SEEYN - South East European Youth Network, and is available in three languages: Macedonian, Albanian and Serbian.

The course was developed by expert teams of the Union for Youth Work and Balkan Idea from Serbia, with financial support from RICO - Regional Youth Cooperation Office and United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF). [See more <https://smr.org.mk/2020/11/26/%d0%be%d0%bd%d0%bb%d0%b0%d1%98%d0%bd-%d0%ba%d1%83%d1%80%d1%81-%d0%b7%d0%b0-%d0%bc%d0%bb%d0%b0%d0%b4%d0%b8%d0%bd%d1%81%d0%ba%d0%b8-%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b1%d0%be%d1%82%d0%bd%d0%b8%d1%86%d0%b8/> (Accessed on February 9, 2021)].

Mobility of youth workers

The possibilities for youth workers to take part in exchange opportunities, cooperation and networking at local, regional, national and international level are covered mainly by Erasmus + programs and National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility. See more in Chapter 6.5.

10.6 Recognition and validation of skills acquired through youth work

Existing arrangements

In September 2018, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy adopted the document Occupation standard Worker with youth ([Стандард на занимање Работник со млади](#)). According to the occupational standard, the worker with youth has a fourth level of complexity of work tasks.

In the recently released Portfolio on Youth Workers the authors presented several templates intended to assist youth workers in the process of evaluating and presenting their profile as a youth worker. These are templates where youth workers can systematically present their abilities, past experience, education, diplomas and certificates and so on.

The Portfolio is made by the Union for Youth Workers, with cooperation with the Agency on Youth and Sport, Adult Education Center and Vocational Education and Training Center. The process is financed by the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility, through KA3 Erasmus project.

There is no publicly available information on how these or other templates are used by youth workers, or whether there are any others self-assessment tools or other documents for recognition of the skills and competences acquired.

In the framework of the project "Educational Opportunities for Youth Workers", with support from the Agency of Youth and Sport, in December 2019 Union for Youth Work verified the first educational program for workers with youth in the Republic of North Macedonia. The decision for verification was brought by the [Adult Education Center](#), which is public institution, a separate legal entity established by the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia in November 2008.

Skills

Previously mentioned Occupation standard prescribes a range of knowledge and skills that a worker with youth should possess. For example, a worker with youth develops instruments to research the needs of young people in the community; conduct research; analyze and present the research results; manage with different conflict situations; encourages culturally and socially acceptable behavior, altruistic and proactive behavior

among young people; creates tools for assessing and self-assessing young people's personal affinities and abilities; develops critical thinking and rethinks opportunities for building new attitudes; applies teamwork; etc.

10.7 Raising awareness about youth work

Information providers

Profession Youth Worker is in its infancy. In June 2021, the Union for Youth Work and the Agency for Youth and Sports completed the first cycle of the formal educational program for youth workers in North Macedonia, which the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies define as “qualified persons who have competencies to work with young people by implementing activities that support their personal and social development through informal and informal learning”. Thus, for the first time in North Macedonia, certified professionals were recognized as youth workers, in accordance with the National Portfolio of Youth Workers ([Портфолио на младински работници](#)).

The Union for Youth Workers is nowadays the main information provider, but beside them, as a program country in Erasmus+, young people from North Macedonia are participating in many training and youth exchanges for youth workers (in the country and abroad). Information about such opportunities are provided by the [National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobilities](#).

Information is usually provided through social media. Information about opportunities for youth workers can be also found on some specialized websites that are providing different mobility opportunities for young people, like: [mladi.mk](#); [mladiinfo.eu](#), as well on websites on CSOs who are offering such opportunities.

Key initiatives

Within the third European Convention on Youth Work, held from 7 to 11 December 2020, an initiative was developed to establish a European network of national associations of youth workers. The process was jointly initiated by the national associations of youth workers from 12 countries, including the Union for Youth Work from North Macedonia.

The European Network of National Associations of Youth Workers will strive for better recognition, certification and validation of youth work as an occupation and profession, and will support the professional development of youth workers by developing systematic international cooperation and exchange opportunities. At the same time, the network will strive to grow into an equal partner with decision-making institutions at European level regarding youth work.

10.8 Current debates and reforms

Forthcoming policy developments

After preparation of the first accredited non-formal education program for Adult Vocational Education: Worker with Youth, in line with the 2018 Worker with Youth Vocational Standard, taking into account the diversity of youth work outlined in the Council of Europe Youth Work Recommendations, adopted by the Council of Ministers on 31 May 2017 there is no public available information about forthcoming policy about Youth Work.

Ongoing debates

Union for Youth Work together with other youth organizations and MPs are working on new (the first) Law on Youth Work. There is no public available information on the preparation process and when this law should be adopted.

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 Program 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 North Macedonia and abroad, and is the only one of its kind in the Balkan.

Green job: Green jobs are decent jobs that contribute to social equality and preservation, renewal and improvement of the environment and climate.

Individual employment plan (IEP): document created for an unemployed person upon his first registration within the Employment Service Agency in North 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 North Macedonia and an instrument for establishing a system of qualifications acquired in the Republic of North Macedonia that provides the basis for visibility, access, passage, acquisition and quality of qualifications.

Organization for youth is any registered organization in accordance with the Law on Associations and Foundations, which is not run by young people or is a youth of a political party, youth section in a trade union organized as part of another legal entity, whose program goals and activities are aimed at promoting the interests of young people.

The Ohrid Framework Agreement: Document that consists of agreed framework for securing the future of Macedonian democracy and permitting the development of closer and more integrated relations between the Republic of North 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 the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies "Youth" are people aged 15 to 29 years. This category is seen as particularly vulnerable to socio-economic changes in the society and also a category which holds huge capacity for social progress.

Youth centers are places where programs are prepared and implemented that improve the well-being of young people, the development of personal, social and professional life of young people, information of important interest to young people and other aspects of young people's lives.

Youth Guarantee: measure which 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 Service Agency. The applicants receive a quality job offer, further education or internship.

Youth organization is any organization registered in accordance with the Law on Associations and Foundations, in which the highest decision-making body is composed of at least two thirds of young people aged 15 to 29 and whose goals and activities are defined and aimed at promoting interests of youth.

Youth participation is a process that enables young people to participate and make joint decisions on policies and programs that directly or indirectly shape young people's lives.

Youth policy is a set of measures and activities taken to meet the needs of young people, in order to realize their full potential.

Youth Work: organized and systematic process of educating and supporting the authentic development of young people in order to realize their full personal and social potential and their active involvement in the life of the community.

Youth Worker: qualified persons who have the competencies to work with young people by carrying out activities that support their personal and social development through informal and informal learning.

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Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia ([Агенција за вработување на Република Македонија](#))

ARCHIVE

Information from previous years can be accessed and freely downloaded through the PDF files below.

2020

[Republic of North Macedonia 2020](#)

2019

[Republic of North Macedonia 2019.pdf](#)

2018

[Republic of North Macedonia 2018](#)

2017

[Republic of North Macedonia 2017](#)