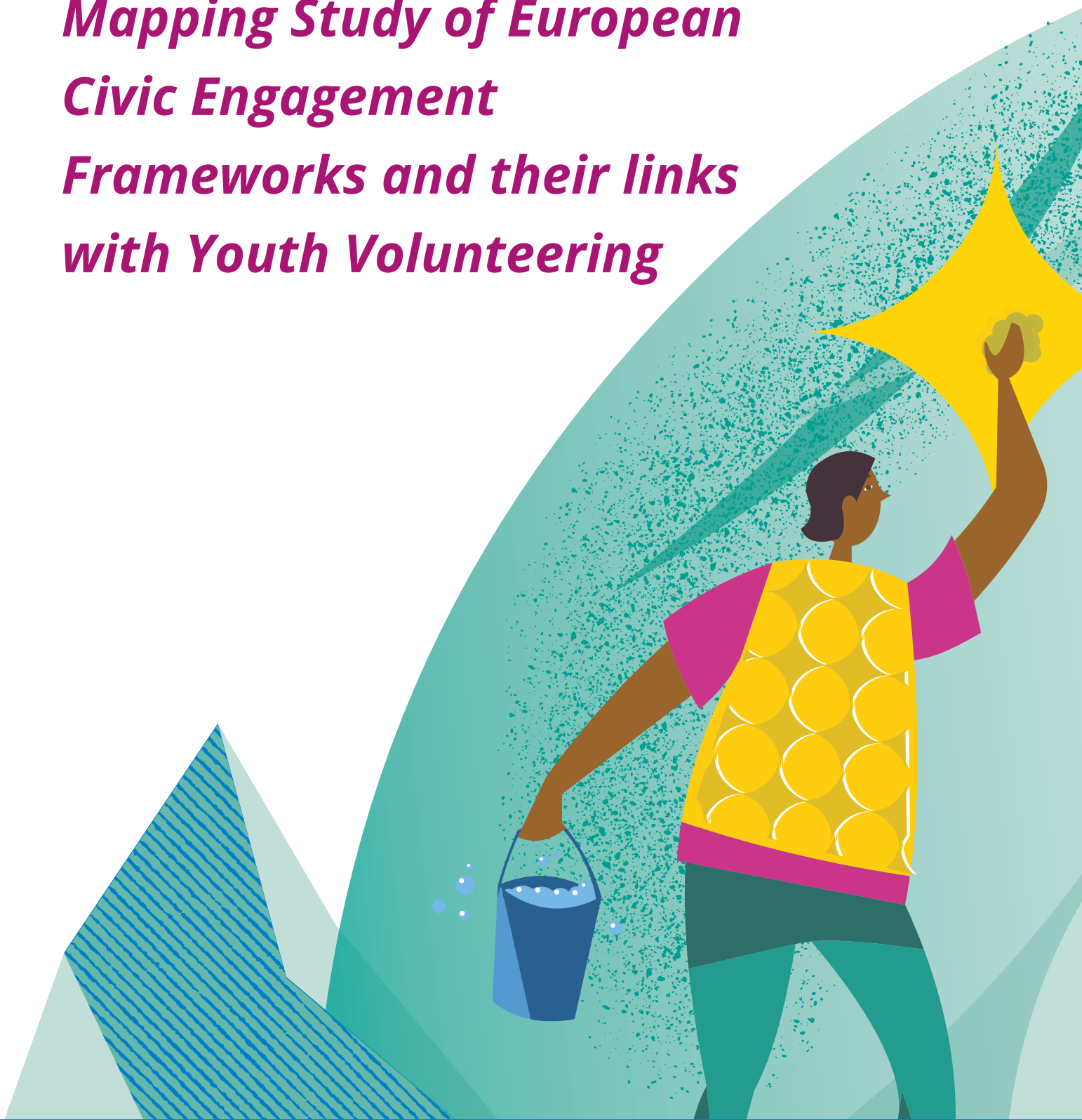


# *Mapping Study of European Civic Engagement Frameworks and their links with Youth Volunteering*



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## ***Strategic National Agencies' Cooperation on Volunteering***

This research is a **part of a series of studies** carried out within Strategic National Agencies' Cooperation on Volunteering (SNAC Volunteering).

The primary aim of this long-term partnership on volunteering is **strengthening the European Solidarity Corps Programme and volunteering in general** and to put solidarity at its core.

The SNAC Volunteering is the cooperation between 14 National Agencies and 2 SALTOs and is coordinated by the SALTO European Solidarity Corps from 2022 to 2027. The cooperation supports the implementation of the Council Recommendations on the Mobility of Young Volunteers across the European Union.

The SNAC Volunteering provides space for knowledge exchange and networking in the Europe and its partner regions.

The main areas of activity of SNAC Volunteering are:

- Analysis (including research and publications)
- Visibility & Advocacy to improve the conditions for volunteering in the European Solidarity Corps programme (including communication work and online events)
- Knowledge exchange (including networking events)

This research contributes to the field of analysis, provides necessary data for the future development of the European Solidarity Corps programme and of the field of volunteering in general.

Other research topics:

- Exploration of the Complementarity and Synergies of the European Solidarity Corps Programme with other EU Youth Programmes
- Working Title: Explore Needs of Young People and Organisations in the Volunteering Field That Lead to New Trends in Volunteering and Solidarity Activities
- Mapping and Analysis of Research on Youth Volunteering in Europe

More research is planned in the SNAC Volunteering.

**Stay tuned!**

# Introduction

## Background

Together with the Strategic National Agencies Cooperation (SNAC) on Volunteering, the SALTO European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre (SALTO ESC) and its partners aim promote better conditions for volunteering.

Civic engagement and volunteering are strongly interlinked. The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) programme, due to its role as a single entry point for solidarity activities, has a strong potential for fostering civic engagement among young people.

With the SNAC on Volunteering, it aims to make the complementarity of volunteering and civic engagement visible and tangible and to create better volunteering conditions for active citizens.

## Aim and objectives

Volunteering and civic engagement are closely linked. Civic engagement frameworks could play an essential role in the development of the ESC Programme and other volunteering programmes at regional, national and international level.

Therefore, the purpose of this mapping is to analyse policies/strategies to encourage civic engagement across Europe, with particular emphasis on the complementarity of volunteering and youth policies.

The specific objectives of this mapping are to explore and find out:

- How do youth participation, youth civic engagement, youth volunteering and youth policies interlink?
- What types of youth civic engagement frameworks (strategies, instruments, and funding opportunities) are available at EU and national level?
- How do youth civic engagement frameworks connect with (youth) volunteering, the ESC and other relevant programmes?
- The complementarities and synergies between youth civic engagement frameworks and youth volunteering to improve youth volunteering.

## Not -yet?- “policies” but “frameworks”

Despite the initial intention of this mapping to explore various Youth Civil engagement “policies” at European and national level, one of the first findings was that “youth civic engagement” is not -yet- a “policy”. No relevant reference to “youth civic engagement policy” or even “civic engagement policy” could be found in the desk review of national laws, programmes, provisions, strategies, or frameworks.

It would not be respectful or accurate to define as “youth civic engagement policies”, strategies and programmes that at European or national level never are, with the argument that it is an emerging concept or intended to be promoted.

As described in the findings of this mapping of youth civic engagement, it is gaining importance both at European and national levels as a concept that further expands and develops the traditional idea of youth participation. Nevertheless, as the following sections show, the growing importance and the emerging synergies around “civic engagement” have not -yet- crystallised in a “policy”. Therefore, in consultation and agreement with the SALTO ESC RC team, this mapping explores youth civic engagement frameworks -not policies.

However, this relevant adjustment in the initial intentions of this mapping plays no role in relation to its ultimate aims of identifying implications and drawing lessons for youth volunteering. Moreover, this first finding can be very relevant and the first creation and further development of real “youth civic engagement policies” both at European and national levels can be a long-term goal to achieve.

## Methodology

### Phase 1

The starting point for this mapping was a kick-off meeting with the SALTO ESC team to clarify, discuss, and agree upon the key elements of the mapping and to set out the communication, coordination and feedback mechanisms.

The mapping continued with a literature review of websites, articles and policy documents in the fields of youth participation, youth civic engagement, youth volunteering and youth policies. [See Annex 2: Consulted bibliography for the desk review.](#)

This first phase of the literature review provided a holistic understanding of these concepts, their links, and a first exploration of youth civic engagement frameworks at European and national levels.

This first phase ended with the presentation of the first findings of the partner’s meeting in Gdansk, 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

### Phase 2

The literature search continued in a second phase with a more in-depth analysis of the type of existing youth civic engagement frameworks and their connection to (youth) volunteering, the ESC and other relevant programmes.

It is beyond the scope and possibilities of this mapping to make a complete or comparative analysis of youth civic engagement frameworks at national level. In addition to the youth civic engagement frameworks at European level, in this second phase of the mapping, certain frameworks particularly relevant at national level have been characterised and analysed. Direct consultations with key stakeholders were used to complement the literature review, for the characterisation and in-depth analysis of youth civic engagement frameworks at national level.

This made it possible to explore the various links and implications for youth volunteering at national and European levels.

### Phase 3

In this last phase the draft final report of the mapping was shared with the SALTO ESC RC and the partners. Apart from their direct feedback and improvements to the overall draft, this final report focused on the concurrent volunteering research.

Following this exchange and interaction, this final report of the mapping was drafted including the complementarities and synergies between youth civic engagement frameworks and youth volunteering to improve them.

## Working definitions

Before exploring the interlinks between them, in this section of the mapping of youth participation, youth civic engagement, youth policies and volunteering are “defined” for the purposes of this mapping.

There are obviously different interpretations and definitions for these key terms. They vary depending on countries, languages, traditions, and approaches to youth policy, youth work and non-formal education.

The purpose of this section is not to present the final or true definitions of these concepts, but rather to shape a shared understanding that further explores their connections and ultimately their implications for volunteering.

### Youth participation

In the European youth field, youth participation<sup>1</sup>:

*“is about individual young people and groups of young people having the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and, if necessary, the support to freely express their views, contribute to and influence societal decision-making on issues that affect them, and be active in the democratic and civic life of our communities”.*

The EU Youth Strategy, the European Youth Goals and the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes are aimed at strengthening youth participation in democratic life, which can be understood, as defined in the Youth Participation Strategy (p.16)<sup>2</sup>, in two interconnected ways:

- **Youth participation as a voice and involvement of youth in decision-making<sup>3,4</sup>**

This involves young people expressing their views in order to influence or be involved in decision-making processes. This can refer to a range of different decision-making processes, from governmental political or policy decisions, to how a community space is used to the running of a youth organisation.

- **Youth participation as civic action and youth activism**

This involves young people taking individual and/ or collective action with the intention of making a change in the world around them. This can mean taking political action such as organising or being involved in protests, as well as social and civic activities such as local community improvement initiatives, or volunteering for a cause or civil society organisation.

### Youth volunteering

1 Youth Participation Toolkit: <https://participationpool.eu/toolkit/>

2 Youth Participation Strategy: [https://participationpool.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ParticipationStrategy\\_Download\\_EN.pdf](https://participationpool.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ParticipationStrategy_Download_EN.pdf)

3 Lundy, L. (2007) ‘Voice’ is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(6), 927–942 see Arnstein, S. R. (1969)

4 A ladder of citizen participation, *Journal of the American Institute of planners* 35(4), 216–224 or Roger Hart’s Ladder of Children’s Participation



In the Council recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union<sup>5</sup> cross-border voluntary activities are characterised as follows:

*“open to all young people, undertaken voluntarily in the general interest, for an extended period, in a clear context and in a country other than the country of residence, unpaid or with symbolic payment and/or coverage of expenses. Voluntary activities should not have a negative impact on potential or existing paid employment, nor should they be considered a substitute for it.”*

For the purposes of this mapping, this characterisation can be used as a working definition. To refer to youth volunteering in general, and not to cross-border volunteering, simply omit from this definition the “in a country other than the country of residence”.

Following this characterisation, the Council Recommendation acknowledge the value and functions of volunteering:

*“voluntary activities constitute a rich experience in a non-formal educational and informal learning context which enhances young people’s professional skills and competences, contributes to their employability and sense of solidarity, develops their social skills, smoothes their integration in society and fosters active citizenship.”*

The European Commission, on the occasion of the 2011 European Year of Volunteering, recognised that “volunteering is an active expression of civic participation, which strengthens common European values such as solidarity and social cohesion. Volunteering also provides important learning opportunities, because involvement in voluntary activities can provide people with new skills and competences that can even improve their employability... Volunteering plays an important role in sectors as varied and diverse as education, youth, culture, sport, environment, health, social care, consumer protection, humanitarian aid, development policy, research, equal opportunities and external relations.”<sup>6</sup>

Youth volunteering would, in principle, be equivalent to volunteering in general, with the only peculiarity that activities are developed by and for young volunteers.

Nonetheless, apart from the specific programmes and organisations working specifically with young people, several studies<sup>78</sup> show that youth volunteering differs from adult volunteering in several aspects. In comparison with adult volunteers, young volunteers have different motivations, are more relationship-based, the volunteer group plays a key role, and developing new skills is more important.

Without going deeper in the differences between volunteering in general and youth volunteering

5 Council recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union – European Council [2008/C 319/03] – November 2008 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32008H1213%2801%29>

6 European Year of Volunteering 2011 [https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/european-year-of-volunteering/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/european-year-of-volunteering/index_en.htm)

7 Cnaan, Ram & Handy, Femida & Wadsworth, Margaret. (1996). Defining Who Is a Volunteer: Conceptual and Empirical Considerations. *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* - NONPROFIT VOLUNT SECT Q. 25. 364-383. 10.1177/0899764096253006.

8 Omoto, AM & Snyder, M & Martino, SC. (2001). Volunteerism and the life course: Investigating age-related agendas for action (vol 22, pg. 181, 2001). *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*. 23. 73-73.

(clearly out of the purposes of this mapping), it is important to keep at least the most obvious ones in mind when addressing youth volunteering.

## **Youth civic engagement**

The concept of civic engagement is linked to both civic education and active citizenship. As a result, it was originally used to refer to the expectation that young people would or should engage in public life as part of their growing up as citizens.

But the understanding of civic engagement has expanded to include adult public life. One of the first examples of extending the concept of civic engagement to adults is in the book *Prime Time*, by Marc Freedman (1999). Nowadays, the concept of civic engagement is not specific to age or group, and in its diverse and broad understanding, it has different dimensions: civic engagement as community service, civic engagement as collective action, civic engagement as political involvement, and civic engagement as social change.

Keeping in mind the current general and intergenerational understanding of civic engagement, for the purposes of this mapping, it is relevant to look at the meaning of civic engagement and how it applies particularly to youth.

At European level, the EU Youth Strategy, a framework for EU youth policy cooperation for 2019-2027, based on the Council Resolution of 26 November 2018, focuses on three core areas of action, around the three words: Engage, Connect, Empower. It fosters youth participation in democratic life, it brings young people together across the EU and beyond to foster volunteering, learning mobility, solidarity, and intercultural understanding, and it supports youth empowerment through quality, innovation, and recognition of youth work.<sup>9</sup>

Based on this, “youth civic engagement” could be defined as individual and collective actions designed to identify and address social challenges. Youth civic engagement takes many forms, from individual voluntarism to organisational involvement, to classical political participation. It includes efforts to directly address an issue, working with other youth to address a shared challenge, and interacting with representative democratic institutions at local, regional, national and European levels.

## **Youth policy**

Youth Policy is a set of political strategies implemented by public authorities aiming at creating “conditions for learning, opportunities, and experiences, which ensure and enable young people to develop the knowledge, skills and competences. This allows young people to be actors of democracy; integrate into society; and, in particular, enable them to play an active role in both civil society and the labour market. The key measures of youth policies are to promote citizenship learning and the integrated policy approach.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions “Engaging, connecting and empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy” - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0269>

<sup>10</sup> European Union – Council of Europe Glossary on youth <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/glossary>

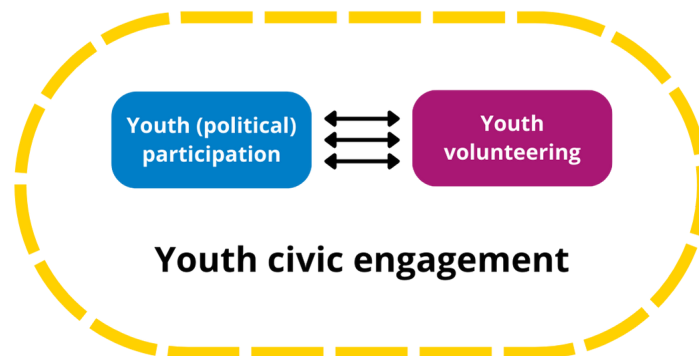
This definition of youth policy, included in the glossary on youth of the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership, underlines a key characteristic of youth policy; its cross-sectorial and integrated nature.

Indeed, youth policy strategies at national and at European level focus on various fields (education, employment, inclusion, participation, health, environment, leisure, culture....) and does it, ideally in an integrated way so that, for instance, education and employment policies support and complement each other.

## Interlinks

The above understandings of youth participation, youth volunteering, youth engagement and youth policy show that there are multiple links and connections between them.

The links between youth participation, youth volunteering and youth engagement could be represented as follows:



This is certainly a simplified picture. Realities are always more complex than schemes. In reality, borders are not as clear, programmes, actors and activities combine different motivations and purposes... Nonetheless, being aware of this, the illustration could be useful to illustrate at least schematically, based on the working definitions explored above, the links between the key concepts of this mapping.

### *Youth (political) participation – Youth volunteering*

Youth (political) participation activities and youth volunteering respond, in principle and as we have seen in the previous section, to different objectives, motivations and formats.

However, there are obviously links between youth volunteering and youth participation. Youth volunteering involves acting within a certain community or social context. These actions imply, one way or another, the promotion of a certain social change with a certain political dimension that is more or less explicit.

An example of the links between youth volunteering and youth participation would be a young volunteer supporting disadvantaged young people through sport activities. This kind of youth volunteering, so common and extended throughout Europe, is often linked not only to a willingness to support concrete individuals, but also the collective efforts of social, integration and health policies. In other words, in these cases, youth volunteering is placed in the overall context of youth participation.

Otherwise, if youth volunteering does not transcend the support of individuals or groups, if it is not linked to collective attempts to address social challenges, it would be questionable whether youth volunteering would be (a kind of) youth participation.

At the macro level, as an example of the links between youth volunteering and youth participation, one might think of the priorities and fields of action of youth volunteering programmes (EVS, ESC...). These respond to policies and political priorities that volunteer programmes seek to promote beyond the spontaneous or natural preferences of potential volunteers.

### ***Youth (political) participation – Youth volunteering – Youth civic engagement***

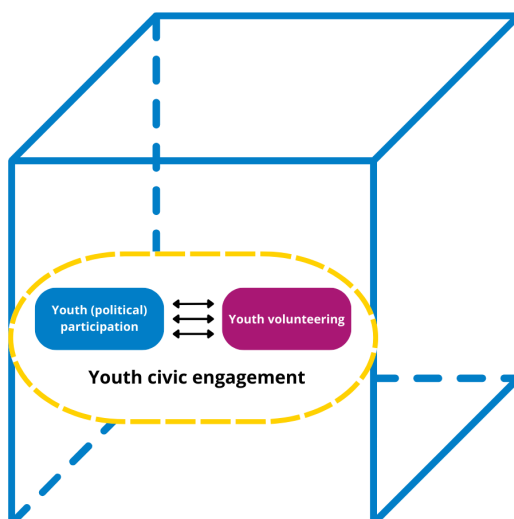
Youth civic engagement is generally perceived as an overarching approach to civic commitment that includes youth participation, youth volunteering, and increasingly significant forms of youth activism, such as the so called do-it-ourselves politics<sup>11</sup> and Direct Social Actions.

In other approaches, youth participation, in its broadest sense, including conventional, and non-conventional youth participation and personal commitment, is clearly linked and almost equivalent to youth engagement.

### ***Youth (political) participation – Youth volunteering – Youth civic engagement – Youth policy***

At the policy level, the links between youth participation, youth volunteering, youth engagement, and youth policy are of a different nature.

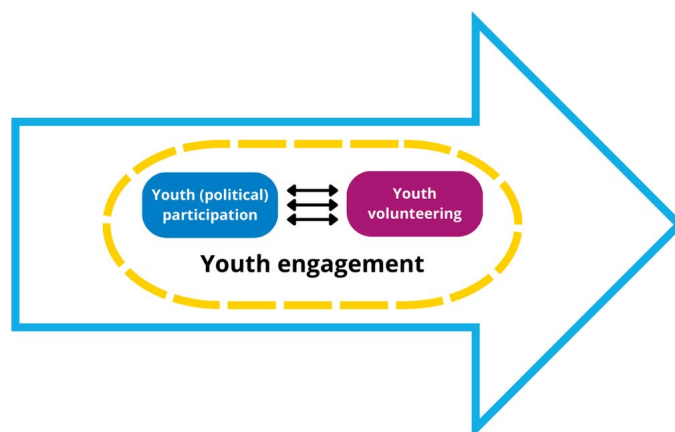
First of all, we have to consider that youth policy addresses, as mentioned, many other areas (education, employment, inclusion, participation, health, environment, leisure, culture...) beyond the promotion of youth participation, civic engagement and volunteering. Youth policy considers them but clearly goes beyond them.



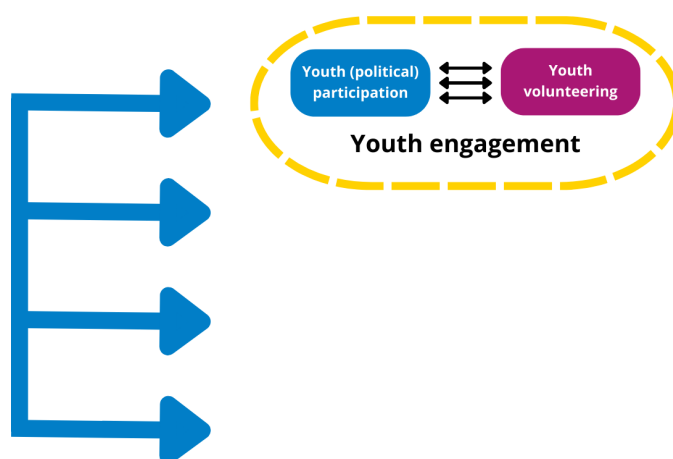
<sup>11</sup> Pickard S. (2019), *Politics, Protest and Young People: Political Participation and Dissent in 21st Century Britain*, Palgrave Macmillan UK.

The well-known slogan “nothing for young people without young people” can summarise the reasons why youth participation, youth civic engagement and youth volunteering are called or supposed to play a key role in developing and implementing youth policy.

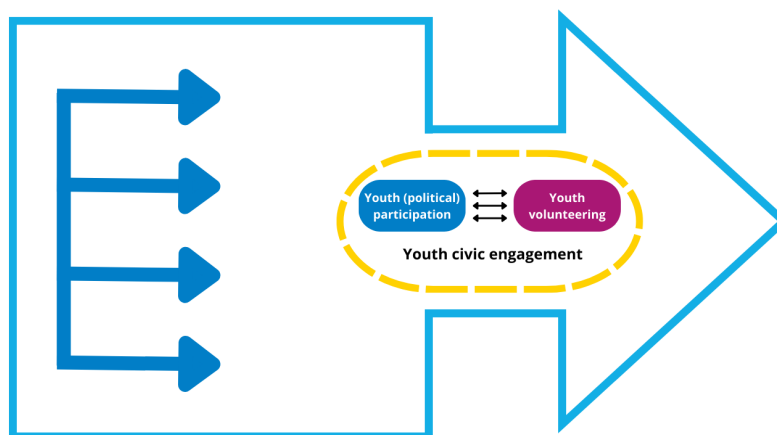
But this key role may be different. Sometimes, youth participation and civic engagement are an intermediate stage in the development of youth policy. Consultations and youth interventions in the decision-making process would be some examples of such an approach.



Other times, it is an additional outcome to be achieved in conjunction with other specific sectorial outcomes. An example would be the development of youth policy in the field of education, with the aim of improving student participation.



In some cases, youth participation and civic engagement are key for the sustainability and long-term success of youth policies. This would respond to the idea that youth policies, even if initially planned and implemented in a significant way over the long term, will succeed only if they involve young people in their continual renewal.



In any of these approaches described in a very schematic way, or in any other approach that might exist, youth policy shapes and, in many cases, guides the content of youth participation and/or of youth civic engagement. For example, the priorities and themes of youth activities or volunteering areas change from one programme to the next according to the different youth policies. That is why a participative approach to youth policy-making is crucial.

Youth participation in youth policy-making depends on some power sharing and power concession by authorities/adults. Without some sort of negotiation process, bottom-up initiatives are hardly successful. The role of the authorities is to create an environment, an infrastructure of civic engagement, where participation and civic engagement can thrive. If this is the case, volunteering activities, for instance, can become spaces for participation and civic engagement in which current and future youth policy developments can be influenced.

## ***Youth civic engagement frameworks at European level***

In line with the previous section, this part of the mapping of youth civic engagement frameworks at European level is characterised by the evolution of youth policy over the past few years.

### ***Background***

Over the past two decades, European youth policy frameworks have been largely driven by the needs and conditions of young people, focusing on education, employment, health and well-being and 'empowerment', and affirming the relevance of youth participation in civil society and political processes.

The 2001 white paper "The new impetus for young people in Europe" underlined the importance of engaging young people in "active citizenship", encouraged voluntary activism and stressed the need to deepen young people's understanding and information. In 2008, a European Parliament declaration called for "more attention to youth empowerment in EU policies" (European Parliament, 2008).

It is clear that, from the outset, youth policies at European level were intimately linked to youth participation and civic engagement.

### ***EU Youth Strategy: Investment and Empowerment (2010-2018)<sup>12</sup>***

The previous EU Youth Strategy: Investment and Empowerment (2010-2018) followed this agenda and focused on a twofold approach. The first focused on investing in policies and opportunities to improve young people's well-being. The second focused on empowerment and mobilising young people to contribute to social progress and 'EU values and goals'. The strategy had three main objectives: to create opportunities for young people in education and employment, to promote solidarity and social inclusion, and to improve youth access and participation in society. The emphasis on participation explicitly covers civic and political participation, and considers the challenge of this task, especially for marginalised youth. The EU Youth Strategy proposed initiatives in eight areas:

- Participation
- Voluntary activities
- Employment and entrepreneurship
- Social inclusion
- Education & training
- Health & well-being
- Youth & the world
- Creativity & culture

As discussed at the beginning of the previous [Interlinks](#) section of this mapping in these eight areas the two components of youth civic engagement (participation and volunteering). These two areas

<sup>12</sup> [https://youth.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2010-2018\\_en](https://youth.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-2010-2018_en)



are specific and at the same time integrated in a different way in the other six thematic youth policy areas (employment and entrepreneurship, social inclusion, education and training...).

In the previous EU Youth Strategy, youth civic engagement (participation and volunteering) was explicitly promoted as a policy goal and at the same time as an intersectoral approach for the development of sectoral policies.

### *The EU Youth Strategy (2019-2027)<sup>13</sup>*

This integration and merging of youth civic engagement frameworks and of youth sectoral policies is also present in the current framework for EU youth policy cooperation for 2019-2027: the EU Youth Strategy based on the Council Resolution of 26 November 2018<sup>14</sup>. It promotes the civic engagement and participation of youth in a broad sense, with special emphasis on supporting democratic life and creating the environment that ensures that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society.

Youth civic engagement was at the heart of the EU Youth Strategy since its very beginning. It was the result of the 6<sup>th</sup> cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue - Youth in Europe: What's next?, which took place in 2017/2018 where the eleven European Youth Goals were developed.

- Connecting EU with Youth
- Equality of All Genders
- Inclusive Societies
- Information & Constructive Dialogue
- Mental Health & Wellbeing
- Moving Rural Youth Forward
- Quality Employment for All
- Quality Learning
- Space and Participation for All
- Sustainable Green Europe
- Youth Organisations & European Programmes

These goals identify the cross-sectoral areas of youth policy that have an impact on the lives of young people.

The areas of action of EU Youth Strategy are articulated around three key words: Engage, Connect, Empower.

- With “**Engage**”, the EU Youth Strategy aims towards a meaningful civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation of young people.
- With “**Connect**”, the EU Youth Strategy aims to promote relations and exchange experiences through different forms of mobility that are key for solidarity and the future development of the European Union.
- With “**Empower**”, the EU Youth Strategy encourages them to take charge of their own lives
- Youth work and inclusion strategies serve as catalysts for empowerment.

<sup>13</sup> [https://youth.europa.eu/strategy\\_en](https://youth.europa.eu/strategy_en)

<sup>14</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C:2018:456:FULL>

In a very schematic way, the following table lists the instruments, programmes, activities and funding possibilities that were put in place between 2019 and 2021 under the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy. Those are taken from and further described in the Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Implementation of the EU Youth Strategy (2019-2021)<sup>15</sup>.

The table is therefore not fully updated, but it clearly illustrates the evolution and current merging of youth civic engagement frameworks into the current EU youth strategy.

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
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| <p><b>Engage</b></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengthening young people's democratic participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The EU Youth Conferences in 2020, 2021 and 2022 focused respectively “on making young people’s views and ideas for democratic interaction in Europe more visible”, on “Participation of young people in political processes and decision-making locally, regionally, nationally and at European level” and on the “Sustainable Green Europe and Inclusive Societies goals”.</li> <li>● Council conclusions on fostering democratic awareness and democratic engagement among young people in Europe<sup>16</sup>.</li> <li>● Council conclusions on strengthening the multi-level governance<sup>17</sup>.</li> <li>● Council Resolution - New guidelines on the governance of the EU Youth Dialogue<sup>18</sup>.</li> <li>● Council Resolution on the outcomes of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue<sup>19</sup>.</li> <li>● In 2020, a revamped version of the Commission’s European Youth Portal was launched</li> <li>● 7<sup>th</sup> Cycle of the Youth Dialogue focusing on the topic ‘Creating Opportunities for Youth’ (2019 – 2020).</li> <li>● In Spring 2021, the survey of the 8<sup>th</sup> cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue on the topic of “Space and participation for all” was launched.</li> <li>● In the last quarter of 2021, a Flash Eurobarometer on young people’s participation in social and civic life was launched.</li> <li>● In 2021, the Commission launched a call to establish a Youth Sounding Board for International partnerships to create a space for the meaningful involvement of young people in the EU’s international cooperation policy.</li> <li>● Regional Youth Cooperation Office<sup>20</sup> (joint inter-governmental initiative of the six Western Balkan candidate and potential candidate countries aiming to promote the spirit of reconciliation and understanding between the youth in the region) launched intra-regional youth exchanges and cooperation projects.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Supporting the fair green transition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The green dimension was integrated as an overarching priority in the new Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes.</li> </ul> |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

15 <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/cd7e8978-2cd9-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

16 [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020XG1201\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020XG1201(01)&from=EN)

17 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8766-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

18 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8766-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

19 [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42020Y0626\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42020Y0626(01)&from=EN)

20 <https://www.rycowb.org/#>

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Engage</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The GreenTrack campaign, launched by the European Commission in collaboration with the Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN) and Biodiversity Action Europe (BAE), drew to a successful conclusion<sup>21</sup></li> <li>● The Education for Climate Coalition<sup>22</sup>, a bottom-up initiative for a climate-neutral society led by pupils and students with their schools, universities and community explored innovative education solutions for environmental sustainability and promoted concrete actions.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Connect</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Commission supported organisations and individuals participating in the Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps programmes, addressing adverse effects of the pandemic and setting up mitigating measures, such as the possibility to replace planned physical activities by virtual ones, enabling blended activities or the possibility to postpone projects.</li> <li>● The Commission assisted Member States in their efforts to mobilise support for distance learning, in particular digital solutions. Two extraordinary Erasmus+ calls were launched in August 2020 to support “digital education readiness” and “creativity”, including for the youth sector, each providing €100 million to respond to educational COVID-19 challenges through collaborative projects.</li> <li>● With an almost doubled budget, the new Erasmus+ programme offers reinforced and new opportunities for transnational learning mobility and cooperation for all sectors of education and training.</li> <li>● DiscoverEU<sup>23</sup>, a recent successful pilot initiative that gives 18-year-olds the opportunity to discover Europe through learning experience abroad, has been integrated into the Erasmus+ programme.</li> <li>● The new <u>Council Recommendation on the mobility of young volunteers across the European Union</u>.<sup>24</sup> This new Recommendation is relevant and timely in the context of the pandemic and its emerging priorities (health and safety of volunteers, inter-generational solidarity), and explores new forms of volunteering including digital or blended volunteering.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Empower</b> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Promoting social inclusion and recovery</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Several EU actions focused on the development of an inclusive approach with specific measures for disadvantaged children and youth, such as the EU strategy on the rights of the child, the Child Guarantee initiative<sup>25</sup>, Erasmus+, the European Solidarity Corps and the European Social Fund Plus<sup>26</sup>, or with measures related to the inclusion of young migrants and refugees.</li> <li>● The EU strategy on the rights of the child, adopted in March 2021, recognises the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has on children and includes targeted actions to foster the promotion and protection of children’s rights.</li> <li>● The Council approved in 2020 the conclusions on raising opportunities for young people in rural and remote areas.<sup>27</sup></li> <li>● The two Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives (CRII and CRII+) allowed Member States to mobilise and redirect the available resources under the EU cohesion policy funds to address the COVID-19 pandemic including its impact on young people.</li> <li>● The REACT-EU (Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe) package extends the crisis response and repair measures and provides a bridge to the long-term green, digital and resilient recovery of the economy. Member States are using part of these additional resources to help young people in terms of access to employment, quality education and training and social services.</li> </ul>                                                       |

21 [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/thegreentrack-campaign-completes-successful-journey-2022-06-27\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/news/thegreentrack-campaign-completes-successful-journey-2022-06-27_en)

22 <https://education-for-climate.ec.europa.eu/en>

23 [https://youth.europa.eu/discovereu\\_en](https://youth.europa.eu/discovereu_en)

24 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7768-2022-INIT/xx/pdf>

25 [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-strategy-rights-child-and-european-child-guarantee\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-strategy-rights-child-and-european-child-guarantee_en)

26 <https://ec.europa.eu/european-social-fund-plus/en>

27 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/05/26/raising-opportunities-for-young-people-in-rural-and-remote-areas-the-council-adopts-conclusions/>

**Empower****Quality youth work for all**

- The Finnish Council Presidency focused on supporting and developing youth work with two sets of Council conclusions. The conclusions on digital youth work invite Member States and the Commission to encourage the exchange of best practices, to promote and make use of EU funding instruments, peer-learning activities and research, and to improve digital competences through non-formal learning and training. In the Council conclusions on education and training of youth workers<sup>31</sup>, Member States and the Commission are invited to carry out further research, to foster the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work and to explore options to further develop the education and training of youth workers.
- The European Youth Work Agenda was a top priority for the German Council Presidency, which led to the adoption of a Council Resolution followed by the third Youth Work Convention in Bonn. The Council Resolution asks the Member States and the Commission to take measures to integrate youth work into existing and future youth policies, recognise the role and the needs of the youth work community and create training, tools, applications and mechanisms with the support of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.
- To strengthen and further develop youth work throughout Europe, the Bonn Process aims to align the commitment of different stakeholders in the youth work community of practice.

**Promoting a healthy and active lifestyle**

- Among EU actions specifically dedicated to the health of young people and children, are Europe's Beating Cancer Plan and the Joint Action on Health Equity Europe that joins Member States efforts addressing health inequalities and social determinants.
- The 'HealthyLifestyle4All' initiative campaign launched in 2021, links sport and active lifestyles with health, food and other policies. Central to the initiative is a dedicated platform to showcase the commitments (pledges) by different stakeholders.
- The Joint Action on Mental Health (ImpleMENTAL) will implement a multi-level national suicide prevention programme and a system reform to strengthen community-based services with a specific focus on services for children and young people.
- To support stakeholders' efforts, the Commission set up a group on 'COVID19 mental health support' within its EU Health Policy Platform and hosted a high-level conference<sup>34</sup> on the mental health impact of the pandemic in May 2021.

## Main cooperation and mutual learning instruments

### Support to evidence-based policy-making

- The Youth Partnership between the European Union and the Council of Europe developed work on the impact of COVID-19 on young people and the youth sector by setting up the Knowledge Hub<sup>28</sup>.
- The Youth Wiki<sup>29</sup> online platform provides a comprehensive overview of national youth policies in 32 European countries and includes a chapter on youth work as well as comparative maps.
- The dashboard of youth situation indicators has been reviewed for the 2019-2021 period by a dedicated expert group<sup>35</sup> which also provided proposals for new quantitative and qualitative policy indicators.

### Mutual learning activities

- Exchanges at the expert group on the mobility of youth volunteers prepared the proposal for a revision of the Recommendation on mobility of volunteers.
- The expert group on indicators came up with proposals to revise the dashboard in order to better grasp the situation of young people.
- An expert group on youth work will kick-off in the last quarter of 2021 as part of the implementation of the Youth Work Agenda.
- Mid 2021, for the first time, peer learning activities in the field of youth policies were organised. A peer learning activity on non-vocational qualifications for youth work at the initiative of France in June 2021 focused on the recognition of competences and qualifications of youth workers. There was also a peer learning activity on the rights-based approach in youth policy at the initiative of the Portuguese presidency in June 2021. A peer learning activity on volunteering mobility happened at the end of 2021 at the initiative of Estonia.

### Future National Activity Planners (FNAPs)

- The Future National Activity Planners (FNAPs) introduced in 2019, allow Member States to share their priorities in line with the EU Youth Strategy on a voluntary basis. As part of the FNAPs, the Commission surveyed Member States in 2019 and in 2021 to gather information on their youth policy priorities regarding the implementation of the European Youth Goals and cooperation needs in line with the EU Youth Strategy. Transnational cooperation activities under the Erasmus+ programme have been identified by Member States as their preferred cooperation tool for this area, followed by expert groups and peer learning. Two thirds of the replies from the 2021 FNAPs exercise confirmed quality youth work as the most relevant topic for cooperation, followed by the need to implement the European Youth Work Agenda.

### Dialogue with stakeholders

- The EU Youth Strategy Platform was launched in 2019 to facilitate participatory governance and the coordination of the strategy's implementation, in both real and virtual settings. It brings together representatives of the EU institutions, Member States, National Agencies of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, youth organisations, local and regional authorities as well as other stakeholders.
- The first EU Youth Coordinator was nominated in June 2021.

### Monitoring of funding on youth: EU programmes and funds

- The accompanying Staff Working Document on the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy reports on the past multiannual financial framework activities in 2019-2020, but also presents the opportunities for funding on youth under the new 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework combined with the temporary recovery instrument, NextGenerationEU.

### Communicating the EU Youth Strategy

- In 2019, communication material on the Strategy was developed in several languages, particularly on the internet and through social media.
- The European Youth Portal<sup>30</sup>, now offers a broad range of information on the EU Youth Strategy. With the help of the network of Eurodesk and Eurodesk Brussels Link, the Portal provides inter alia youth information on opportunities for mobility and exchange projects and on democratic participation activities in policy areas such as employment, human rights or peacebuilding.

28 <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/covid-19>

29 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki>

30 [https://youth.europa.eu/home\\_en](https://youth.europa.eu/home_en)

## Conclusions at European level

The previous description of the current EU Youth Strategy shows that in their aims, strategies, support measures and implemented activities, youth civic engagement frameworks are rooted, intimately linked, and **integrated in the overall youth policy** developments at European level.

Compared to the previous EU Strategy for Youth Investing and Empowering, there is **greater integration of youth engagement in the current strategy**. It goes beyond the two working areas and certain mainstreaming instruments of the previous strategy.

The brief description of the current EU Youth Strategy shows that the **approaches and instruments linked to Youth civic engagement frameworks** (youth political participation, youth participation in decision-making processes, consultations and youth dialogue, volunteering, co-management...) **are integrated across many programmes and policy areas**. There are, of course, specific activities that focus entirely on youth engagement and youth participation, but youth engagement and youth participation **are merged across youth policy sectors** (environmental, educational, employment, health...).

**Cooperation and mutual learning instruments** (support for evidence-based policy-making, mutual learning activities, future National Activity Planners (FNAPs), dialogue with stakeholders, monitoring of youth funding, and Communication of the EU Youth Strategy) are particularly important in the current Youth Strategy support and reinforce the integration of civic engagement in the sectorial policies. The evidence-based policy-making approach and the mutual learning activities are clear examples of that.

As characterised at the end of the previous [interlinks](#) section of this mapping, at times, civic engagement instruments are sometimes intermediate steps in a sectoral area of youth policy (i.e., Youth Conference on “Sustainable Green Europe and Inclusive Societies goals”), at times a parallel aimed outcome (i.e., measures to integrate young migrants and refugees under the European Social Fund Plus), and at times a systematic approach for its sustainability (i.e., the Cycles of the Youth Dialogue).

Moreover, policy developments and implementation show that, in fact, the links between youth policy and youth engagement frameworks are more complex and that both are strongly shaped by other policies.

Examples of that include integrating new priorities in youth policies and programmes as a response to the refugee crisis or as a response to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The synergies and funding opportunities linked to Coronavirus Response Investment Initiatives are another example of the complex interaction between youth engagement frameworks and broader EU policies.

For all these reasons, based on this analysis, we can conclude that youth civic engagement frameworks, while not fully equivalent, are very much aligned with the development of youth policy at European level and currently focus on the following main axes:

- EU Youth Conferences, the Youth Dialogue Cycle, and youth consultations of a different nature as spaces for democratic engagement.

- The strengthening (in terms of budget) and the enlargement with new priorities (i.e., environmental sustainability, digital education readiness and creativity) of the Erasmus+ and the ESC programmes.
- The development and implementation of comprehensive and long-term strategies for social inclusion, youth work empowerment, environmental sustainability, and health. These strategies have a strong youth civic engagement dimension in terms of participation in their design and in their implementation. Additionally, such strategies create synergies and use funds from other non-youth specific initiatives and encourage youth participation.
- The development of resolutions, conclusions, and recommendations at Council level to enhance the development of youth engagement frameworks.
- Promoting cooperation and mutual learning instruments and strategies as horizontal and supportive mechanisms. The most relevant of those strategies are evidence-based policy-making, mutual learning activities, Future National Activity Planners (FNAPs), youth funding monitoring and communication strategy.

## ***Range of youth civic engagement frameworks at national level***

### ***Foreword***

The same steps done in previous sections of this mapping for exploring youth engagement frameworks at European could be done for each member state at national level:

- 1) Explore the conceptual frames of each country/language/tradition.
- 2) Disclose and describe interlinks between key concepts.
- 3) Identify existing “youth civic engagement frameworks” at national level.

This is due to many reasons (i.e., time and resources available, number and diversity of languages, number of countries...) outside the scope and the possibilities of this mapping. This section is limited to the identification and description of some examples, a range of “youth civic engagement frameworks” in different countries, where different trends and developments are identified.

Nevertheless, it is relevant in this introduction, to - at least- point out the degree of diversity and complexity that would be found if the conceptual exploration and the description of interlinks between them at national level.

Starting with the working definitions, we would note that, at the conceptual level, words and concepts in different languages and countries have very different associated meanings. These differences are partly due to the language itself, but especially to history, traditions and its use and misuse. For example, in some countries and languages (youth engagement) the bibliography and documents are -still today- very strongly linked to formal political participation and voting. Education for citizenship and citizenship in some countries and traditions was and still is linked to nationalistic or patriotic education or understood as merely related to formal education. Volunteering in France, for example, has two different terms and meanings associated with it (volontaire and bénévole). In some countries and languages, engagement is very strongly linked to the idea of “political activism” and it would not be naturally associated with volunteering. The list of divergences at the conceptual level even at the most obvious and superficial level, is very long. Consequently, the interlinks between them across the various countries would certainly become a colourful kaleidoscope.

National differences are of course not limited to concepts and understandings. Policy differences (youth policy and youth engagement frameworks) are quite significant due to - among other factors - different traditions, different governmental structures in charge of them, different level or regionalisation or decentralisation, the articulation and role of civil society, the political momentum, different degree of influence of European youth policies, and the different degrees of “autonomy” of “youth” participation or engagement with adults.

That said, all of these divergence factors coexist with increasing convergence factors as has been the case for decades, the European youth policies and programmes and their implementation at national level so that links and similarities can be identified, and mutual learning and synergies are possible.



With these common elements in the following sections, the selected national youth civic engagement frameworks are characterised, among others, by the following four elements:

- **Youth participation/engagement strategies at national level**
- **Learning to participate/engage**
- **Consultations and support instruments**
- **Volunteering**

After a first analysis of youth civic engagement frameworks in the different countries, the first two elements were identified as the core and those with a stronger and more direct future impact. Indeed, apart from the regular work of the structures set up for youth participation engagement (i.e., student councils at local and national level, regional and national youth councils) the usual multiannual strategies for youth participation/engagement define the main priorities and mark the national agendas. At the same time, learning programmes promote the necessary awareness and exploration of new challenges associated with youth civic engagement.

In addition, the description of the consultations and supporting instruments gives an idea of the role played by youth engagement in other sectorial policies, especially in the areas of inclusion, sustainability, employment and education.

Finally, in line with the ultimate purpose of this mapping, volunteering at national level is characterised by some considerations, as well as on how the previous elements shape and influence its development.

With regard to the reasons for selecting these necessarily limited examples, at the beginning of each of them are the particularly interesting, inspiring, or differential aspects.

## **Estonia<sup>31</sup>**

The detailed characterisation of the youth engagement frameworks in Estonia can be found in [Annex 1](#) of this mapping.

After its analysis, the most interesting, inspiring, and differentiated aspects of youth civic engagement frameworks in Estonia are:

- Youth participation/engagement is framed, is part of a larger long-term strategy: the youth field development plan.
- Practical community work as part of the curricula of civic education for upper secondary level.
- The particular focus on consultation initiatives at municipal and community level.
- Recognition of volunteering through the Volunteer Pass.

31 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/estonia/overview>

## France<sup>32</sup>

The detailed characterisation of the youth engagement frameworks in France can be found in [Annex 1](#) of this mapping.

After its analysis, the most interesting, inspiring, and differentiated aspects of youth civic engagement frameworks in France are:

- The idea of civic engagement, participation, citizenship and voluntary service are strongly linked, has a long tradition and is central to youth policy.
- The strong youth consultation mechanisms at local and regional level.
- The “twofold” volunteering system (benevolat, volontariat).
- A very big diversity of volunteering frames.

## Germany<sup>33</sup>

The detailed characterisation of the youth engagement frameworks in Germany can be found in [Annex 1](#) of this mapping.

After its analysis, the most interesting, inspiring, and differentiated aspects of youth civic engagement frameworks in Germany are:

- A comprehensive youth strategy at national level.
- Extensive education for youth participation/engagement in formal and non-formal sectors with a strong cooperation between them.
- The very strong role of regions at all levels (policy, consultation mechanisms, education...).
- A large, diverse, and very complete palette of volunteering schemes (many different fields and actors).

## Ireland<sup>34</sup>

The detailed characterisation of the youth engagement frameworks in Ireland can be found in [Annex 1](#) of this mapping.

After its analysis, the most interesting, inspiring, and differentiated aspects of youth civic engagement frameworks in Ireland are:

- The joint frameworks for children and youth.
- A set of indicators of good practice in youth civic engagement was defined for the evaluation of a national non-formal citizenship programme.
- Consultation initiatives and structures dealing with a big number and diversity of sectorial policies.
- The existence of a National Volunteering Strategy, and within it, various youth volunteer-

32 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/france/overview>

33 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/germany/overview>

34 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/ireland/overview>

ing programmes and schemes.

## **Luxembourg<sup>35</sup>**

The detailed characterisation of the youth engagement frameworks in Luxembourg can be found in [Annex 1](#) of this mapping.

After its analysis, the most interesting, inspiring, and differentiated aspects of youth civic engagement frameworks in Luxembourg are:

- Youth participation/engagement does not have a national strategy but is an important part of youth policy.
- The special attention to young people transitions (school to work and housing).
- The consolidated - functioning for over ten years - national structured dialogue.
- The existence of a very well-articulated mechanism of recognition of volunteering.

## **Portugal<sup>36</sup>**

The detailed characterisation of the youth engagement frameworks in Portugal can be found in [Annex 1](#) of this mapping.

After its analysis, the most interesting, inspiring, and differential aspects of youth civic engagement frameworks in Portugal are:

- Education for youth participation/engagement is very much linked to the concept of citizenship.
- Participatory youth budgeting is a very relevant instrument for youth engagement both in its operational and educational dimension.
- Clear and effective mechanisms of youth consultation at national level.
- Comprehensive volunteering schemes clearly linked to citizenship education and social inclusion, but as well to emerging issues particularly affecting young people (i.e., environmental protection and recovery, internet security, safe dating...).

35 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/luxembourg/overview>

36 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/portugal/overview>

## Conclusions at national level

The detailed characterisation of the selected six youth civic engagement frameworks (See [Annex 1](#)), its analysis and selection of the 34 participants in the [Youth Wiki](#)<sup>37</sup> confirm that at national and European level they are rooted, intimately linked, and integrated in the overall development of youth policy at national level.

In general terms, the concept of “civic engagement” is increasingly present and used as a result of the evolution, enlargement, development, and combination of different forms of youth participation. Indeed, in the previous description and analysis, it can be concluded that youth participation strategies, educational programmes, consultation mechanisms and volunteering schemes combine community services, collective actions, political involvement and social change in line with the concept of civic engagement as defined in the [working definition section](#) of this mapping. Levels (international, European, national, regional and local), policy areas (education, employment, social inclusion, sustainability, culture...) and programmes (educational in the formal and in the non-formal sectors, volunteering, partnerships...) are combined in the different countries shaping what could be characterised as youth civic engagement frameworks.

Nonetheless, those frameworks at national level, even more clearly than at European level are - still - far from making up a youth civic engagement policy as identified in the first steps of this mapping. (See [Not - yet? - “policies” but “frameworks”](#)). The mapping at national level has confirmed, except for some programmes in Germany and France, the lack of references to youth civic engagement in terms of policy.

More important than references or concepts, in some countries there is youth participation or engagement strategy but, in many others, this is not the case.

As for learning to participate/engage in some countries, the cooperation and synergies between formal and non-formal sectors are quite strong (i.e., Germany) and less so in others (i.e., Ireland). In Germany or Portugal, for example, approaches focus more on “engagement -participation in a wide sense-”, and in Estonia and France, for example, more on “citizenship”.

As far as consultation mechanisms in other policy areas, youth consultations are clearly defined and coordinated, but in other areas they are rather limited and based on programmes or projects. At the European level and as shown at the end of the [interlinks](#) section of this mapping, civic engagement instruments are sometimes intermediate steps in a sectorial area of youth policy (i.e., in Luxembourg the participation of the National Youth Council participated in a hearing at the Chamber of Deputies on the integration of young refugees), at times a parallel aimed outcome (i.e., the setting and work of the Youth Hub in Ireland that supports Government Departments, State agencies and non-government organisations to give children and young people a voice in decision-making on issues that affect their lives), and at times a systematic approach for its sustainability (i.e., the local youth commissioners in Germany, members of the local councils representing the concerns voiced by young people).

As regards youth volunteering, specific schemes are developed to varying degrees. Programmes

<sup>37</sup> <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki>

and management structures are clearly set and very youth specific in some countries (Portugal, Germany, Luxembourg...) and in others they are integrated into non-youth specific programmes and bodies (Ireland, France...).

Similarly, it could be concluded that there is a very different degree of articulation with respect to the different levels (international, European, regional, and local), or in relation to the evaluation and quality management mechanisms.

The articulation of so-called youth civic engagement policies at national level would require a vision of youth civic engagement, a coherent planning of all the above-mentioned components, the corresponding allocation of responsibilities and the necessary resources. All this, of course, with the legitimate, logical, and necessary differences between the different countries and to be defined developed with the participation of youth.

This, the setting of true youth civic engagement policies at national and European levels, the creations of conditions and environment so that young people can be or become civically engaged, can be a common mid-long term objective of the different youth related actors.

## ***Complementarities and synergies for improving youth volunteering***

The growing explicit or implicit importance of “youth civic engagement” as a concept and as a practice as concluded in earlier sections (covering political participation, traditional forms of youth participation and new emerging ones, other forms of engagement and volunteering – See [youth civic engagement](#)) implies that at European and national levels:

- Within the overall framework of youth civic engagement youth volunteering is generally growing in terms of budget, legislation, programmes, quality standards, outcomes and recognition.
- Youth volunteering is not an “isolated” pillar. Volunteering has strong links and synergies with other youth participation programmes.
- At policy level, youth volunteering, apart from being directly linked to the needs of the local community, is increasingly linked to broader policy agendas: the development of youth policies at national and European levels, play an increasing role in sector policies, youth consultations and formal and non-formal educational programmes for participation/engagement/citizenship.
- Consequently, in terms of focus, themes and format, youth volunteering is richer and wider in comparison with previous generations of programmes at European and national levels. It deals with the traditional fields of volunteering (i.e., social inclusion, culture, employment, education...) but with emerging ones as well (i.e., climate change, digitalisation, psychological health, the consequences of the COVID 19 pandemic...).
- Especially at national level, in many countries, youth volunteering coexists, is linked and sometimes shares schemes and management structures with children and adult volunteering.
- There are growing synergies among local, national, and international levels/schemes of youth volunteering. Some examples are the quality and recognition tool ([Volunteer Pass](#)<sup>38</sup>) after the examples of the YouthPass or EuroPass in Estonia, the international solidarity volunteering (VSI) and the international administrative volunteering (VIA) in France, the work of [IJAB](#)<sup>39</sup> – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany, the [Localise](#)<sup>40</sup> youth volunteering programme in Ireland, the [Voluntary Cooperation Service in Luxembourg](#)<sup>41</sup> and the International Work Camps in Portugal.

As a result of these synergies, the links and complementarities as well as its growing importance, youth volunteering is a subject of discussion more than ever. Indeed, youth volunteering is current-

38 <https://vabatahtlikud.ee/vabatahtlik-tegevus/vabatahtliku-pass/>

39 <http://www.ijab.de/>

40 <https://virtual.localise.ie/localise-landing/>

41 <https://www.volontaires.lu/moi-volontaire/>

ly facing various challenges linked to its growth and development (i.e., funding, recognition, quality assurance, and exploitation of its outcomes, new formats and themes...).

In discussing the answers to these challenges, more players and more influences than before are to be considered and are actually playing a role.

As described in this mapping in the sections on youth volunteering at national and European level, each volunteering scheme and each country is trying to respond to it according to the needs and aspirations of each context.

These challenges and responses are described in more detail in the recommendations section for each country of the *Volunteering Infrastructure in Europe*<sup>42</sup> and/or in the current volunteering debates and reforms in each country, which can be found in the *Youth Wiki*<sup>43</sup>.

After analysing those challenges and the findings of this mapping, some main specific responses or general guidelines could be proposed.

- The first would be to **preserve and further develop the specific nature of youth volunteering** with its differentiated characteristics compared to children or adult volunteering.
- In the same line, it would be important to guarantee its **autonomy in terms of funding** so that the necessary resources are allocated to youth volunteering schemes.
- In terms of management, it should have **specific bodies** where, in line with the idea of youth civic engagement, young people and young volunteers should participate in decision-making.
- At policy level, **youth volunteering can contribute to the articulation of true youth civic engagement policies**, as suggested after the initial findings *Not -yet? - “policies” but “frameworks”* section of this report. The articulation of effective youth civic engagement policies would be desirable for a **better alignment of policies and practices**.
- For the moment, **youth policies are the most relevant existing policy frameworks** in the vast majority of countries and at the European level for youth volunteering. Within those, developing meaningful youth participation, including co-decision bodies and structures, remains an ongoing challenge.
- As regards links and synergies with other sectorial policies, it would be desirable to strengthen them, by establishing stable structures, not just of consultation but of co-management and co-decision, overcoming the often-used programme-based approach (where youth participation varies and depends on each programme).
- As for the schemes (formats, lengths, players and partners, support measures and quality management) it would be desirable on the one hand to have clear information and stability for the **consolidation of the existing practices, and on the other hand flexibility to**

42 <https://www.europeanvolunteercentre.org/vie>

43 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki>

**allow the development of new forms of youth volunteering** (i.e., digital).

- With regard to the different levels of youth volunteering (European, national and local) and the growing links between them in line with the concept of civic engagement, **the synergies between them should be maximised and exploited**. Synergies between European and national levels and between national and local levels are recognised in most of the countries analysed. The **European-local synergies** are probably the ones that **need further development** in terms of funding, themes, formats, and recognition.
- In terms of thematic focuses or priorities, the diversity and openness to new topics is a common denominator. Over the last few years, youth volunteering has faced significant and unforeseen social challenges, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, extreme poverty and exclusion, and growing numbers of migrants and displaced persons. As a common (educational) goal of youth volunteering, in line with the concept of civic engagement, we could propose **the development of “social empathy”, prosocial skills and global awareness** in order to respond in the different contexts, as well as in digital.



## Annexes

### **Annex 1: Detailed characterisation of civic engagement frameworks at national level**

#### **Estonia<sup>44</sup>**

##### **Youth participation/engagement strategies**

A specific National Strategy on Youth participation does not exist, but Youth participation is one of the underlying concepts and one of the strategic goals of the Youth Field Development Plan 2021-2035 (Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2021-2035), adopted 12.08.2021. Namely the strategic goal nr 2 focuses on participation and aims that the protection of youth rights in the state is consistent and active youth participation is supported.

While youth participation has always been one of the core pillars of national youth strategies in Estonia, the measures for better involvement of youth into policy making are taken even further with the current strategy highlighting the opportunities by:

- Creating the prerequisites for an increased trust in and commitment to the state by young people
- Ensuring that young people can express their opinion and heard out on all levels of governance
- Empowering young people to be active citizens.

Operational programmes directing the implementation of these strategic goals are under development (tbc).

The Youth Sector Development Plan 2021-2035 outlines the main strategic goals in the field of youth, incl. the strategic goal no. 2: participation – the protection of youth rights in the state is consistent and active youth participation is supported.

The strategy also defines the underlying principles for services and policy approaches concerning youth, incl. focus on ensuring meaningful active inclusion and participation of young people in weighing options, making decisions and implementing them. Young people must have the ability to make choices, show initiative and create solutions regarding important challenges by receiving enough information, support and feedback. Young people must also have their say in the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of services intended for them. This is one way to empower young people in their development into active and caring citizens.

The strategy highlights that the way how young people perceive their inclusion and their sense of belonging depend on whether their thoughts are heard and responded to at home, at school and in the community, whether they have a sense of belonging with their peers and whether they are

<sup>44</sup> <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/estonia/overview>

included in meaningful activities within the community. It is stressed that young people need the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to participate in the society and express their opinion and also to cope with major changes in the society. Participation opportunities help to avoid social apathy or the want and need for radical self-expression. To increase participation, the rights of young people must be protected and their civic participation, including their age-appropriate involvement in representative democracy, must be supported. This is the foundation for the development of a strong civil society and the survival of democracy.

In terms of how these strategic goals are foreseen to be approached, the strategy brings up 3 areas of attention:

- Creating the prerequisites for an increased trust in and commitment to the state by young people:
  - valuing and increasing the awareness about youth rights, including the right for free time and the right to make decision about time use.
  - providing young people with opportunities to use the public space and by including young people in the design process of public spaces and services intended for them.
  - harnessing the potential of the youth in developing the state (inclusion in national defence, developing attitudes and providing participation opportunities in the areas of the environment, safety, security, integration, and so on)
- Ensuring that young people can express their opinion and heard out on all levels of governance:
  - increasing knowledge about the actual needs and circumstances of young people that serves as the prerequisite of youth participation via the youth sector monitoring and analysis system.
  - providing young people with the prerequisites of developing the habits and skills for self-expression (including through the development of school democracy on all levels of education and enabling creative self-expression through hobby education for young people)
  - providing opportunities to express one's opinion by simple and convenient means (while also ensuring the representation of risk groups and young people living abroad and the participation of young people in the development of solutions supporting participation)
  - giving young people feedback about how their opinion was considered, showing the actual impact of their participation and thereby increasing their motivation to express their opinion.
  - increasing capacity for inclusion in ministries and local governments, for example by creating area- based solutions and responsibility networks for including young people and by training the decision- makers and officials
  - creating a advisory group at the Prime Minister's office and a youth roundtable at the President's office to give young people increased opportunities to express their opinion
- Empowering young people to be active citizens:
  - ensuring young people has opportunities to partake in representative democracy in order to support growth in electoral turnout.
  - supporting youth organisations and councils in including young people and ensur-

- ing the collection and dissemination of best inclusion practices
- supporting youth initiatives on local level
- supporting youth participation and meaningful contribution in the community (including the management of NGOs and volunteer work)

There are 4 indicators that will measure the results:

- Number of participation formats
- Ratio (%) of local governments out of all local governments that have a functioning youth council
- Ratio (%) of 18–26-year-old candidates out of the total number of candidates at the local government council elections
- Ratio (%) of 15–26-year-olds who have participated in organised volunteer work

Operational programmes directing the implementation of these strategic goals are under development (tbc).

The development plan is approved by the Government of the Republic after discussing the document at the Riigikogu. The implementation of the development plan is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research with all relevant ministries contributing within their scope.

The implementation of the development plan is based on inclusive management and organisation of youth policy. It is ensured that youth policy has a multidisciplinary approach and is based on understanding the real circumstances and needs of young people and the inclusion of young people. The management of the area is based on a youth sector monitoring and analysing system which ensures the efficiency, impact analysis and development monitoring of youth sector services. A consistent evaluation of a youth-centred policy development is organised in cooperation with the Estonian National Youth Council.

The implementation of the development plan and relevant reporting is supported by a steering committee. The work of the committee is led by the Ministry of Education and Research and the committee includes representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Finance and the Government Office. Additionally, an important role is taken by youth representatives; strategic partners of the Ministry of Education and Research and experts of relevant areas are also included. The committee advises the minister, supports the consideration of the connections and impact between different areas when implementing the development plan, analyses reports and evaluates progress towards the development plan's goals. The steering committee gives recommendations for the introduction, amendment and conclusion of programmes on the basis of related progress reports and provides an evaluation regarding the amendment and conclusion of the development plan.

Following the adoption of the national youth strategy, operational programmes are developed, with key responsibility shared between the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, Department of Youth and Talent Policy and the Education and Youth Board.

The monitoring and evaluation of the Youth Field Development Plan 2021-2035 (Noortevaldkonna

arengukava 2021-2035) is part of the general mechanism established for all policy fields in Estonia. In general, it is required from the ministry appointed as a responsible body for the policy document, to report to the Government every year the implemented activities, achieved outcomes and results.

An approach to evaluation and monitoring of the strategy is also described. The implementation of the development plan, also monitoring and evaluation is coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Research with all relevant ministries contributing within their scope and co-organised in cooperation with the Estonian National Youth Council.

The reporting is supported by a steering committee. The work of the committee is led by the Ministry of Education and Research and the committee includes representatives from the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Finance and the Government Office. Additionally, an important role is taken by youth representatives; strategic partners of the Ministry of Education and Research and experts of relevant areas are also included. The committee advises the minister, supports the consideration of the connections and impact between different areas when implementing the development plan, analyses reports and evaluates progress towards the development plan's goals. The steering committee gives recommendations for the introduction, amendment and conclusion of programmes on the basis of related progress reports and provides an evaluation regarding the amendment and conclusion of the development plan.

The measures for better involvement of youth and supporting youth participation have been taken even further with the current strategy on the visionary level. For example, the strategy aims at further advancing the participation opportunities for youth with diversifying the participation formats and introducing two new measures at highest level, like creating a advisory group at the Prime Minister's office and a youth roundtable at the President's office to give young people increased opportunities to express their opinion. Based on this, it is important to note that the operational programmes directing the implementation of these strategic goals are yet under development (tbc) which means that further updates will follow in this respect.

### **Learning to participate/engage**

There are two most relevant policy documents in relation to social and civic competencies and participation of youth in Estonia:

In 2002 the Parliament adopted The Estonian Civil Society Development Concept, that forms a basis for the strategic development of civil society in Estonia. The document defines principles and values that are important both for the public and non-profit sector. Under this document, the Government adopted the Civil Society Development Plan 2015–2020 (Kodanikuühiskonna arengukava) prepared under the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior, which aims at the promotion of civil society in 2015–2020. The plan focuses on two priorities: socially active residents and acting capabilities of citizens' associations, i.e., ensuring that citizens' associations have sufficient possibilities for achievement of their goals. The development plan establishes the goal of participation of citizens' associations in the formation of policy as natural and valued cooperation. It is also important to increase the influence of citizens' associations in the process of dealing with social problems and improvement of the well-being of people through social innovation, social entrepreneurship and

provision of public services.

The Document is implemented under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, who allocates the funds and contracts partners in order to ensure the implementation.

The framework of reference for the civic and social competences used in the development plan is not defined.

There are no specific youth target groups defined in the Document.

The national strategy to increase youth participation is part of the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 (Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020).

### **Formal learning**

Citizenship education “Civics and citizenship education” exists as a compulsory separate subject both in basic and secondary general education. In basic school, the obligatory time taught in 2nd stage of study is 1 lesson per week and 3rd stage of study 2 lessons per week. The National curriculum for upper secondary schools defines that two courses are obligatory to be taught in Civics and citizenship education. The national curricula introduced in 2011 established several competencies related to citizenship education (values, social skills, communication skills and entrepreneurship skills) for which the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes to be mastered by the end of each ISCED level are defined.

According to the national curriculums, the following learning objectives are defined for a basic and upper secondary school in the area of social studies and in particular Civics and citizenship education.

National curriculum for upper secondary schools: the objective of teaching social subjects in upper secondary school is to develop students’ social competence; it refers to the ability to understand the causes and effects of the social changes taking place in the history of humankind and in modern-day society; recognise basic social scientific research methods and use some of them in studying and in everyday life; create future scenarios and visions in an area that is important socially or personally; know about and respect human rights and democracy, be informed about civil rights and duties, and be familiar with the skills and behaviour that are in accordance with them; recognise cultural specificities and follow generally accepted etiquette; and continuously show an interest in the development of one’s nation, community and the world, shape one’s own opinions and be an active and responsible citizen. In Civics and citizenship education students acquire social writing skills: knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for functioning in society and making responsible decisions. The aim of the subject is to create the preconditions for the strengthening of the identity of a citizen and social cohesion, shaping active citizens, supporting the formation of readiness for dialogue and respect towards people who understand the world differently, as well as the self-awareness of students in questions regarding worldviews.

### **Non-formal and informal learning**

In Estonia, the Basic Schools and Upper Secondary Schools Act defines the legal framework for stu-

dent bodies and student councils in basic and upper secondary schools. The Act defines, that the student body of a school has the right to decide and independently organise the matters of student life in accordance with acts and legislation adopted based on acts. A student body has the right to:

- form unions and organisations with other student bodies;
- become a member of Estonian and international organisations or pursue cooperation with them through a student council;
- decide and organise all the other matters of student life, which fall within the competence of student bodies;
- elect a student council who represents the student body within the competence of the student council.

The Acts concerning higher and vocational education, define the legal framework for student bodies and student councils in the education institutions, e.g. the Vocational Educational Institutions Act (2013).

The Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations in cooperation with Estonian Youth Work Centre and the Ministry of education and research launched a programme Community practice (*kogukonnapraktika*) in 2015. Supported by European Social Fund and state budget the programme aims to introduce a practical community work as part of the curricula of civic education for upper secondary level. The cooperation programme provides students with the opportunity to experience a short-term practical work period.

The Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 defines the following policy goals in relation to partnerships between formal education providers, youth organisations and youth work providers:

- measures are devised and implemented for systematic cross-sectoral and inter-agency communication and collaboration;
- youth work in schools is enhanced;
- the use of youth work tools and training resources are supported in formal education.

The financial support for these policy measures is not specified but is part of larger programmes supporting youth work and the implementation of the Development plan in general.

In Estonia, the youth participation and initiatives to support the capability to participate through non-formal learning are generally supported via youth work provision as the participation is defined in Estonia both as a goal and as a method in youth work. There are specific policy goals defined in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 and there is systematic public financing available. In general, the youth work programmes supporting the participation include support scheme for youth organisations and youth councils, there are training programmes available for youth workers both as higher education and as training. In the plan, the specific attention is given to the target group of youth at risk of exclusion due to several reasons.

There is no single system of quality assurance/quality guidelines specific to non-formal learning activities/projects in general. There is support for youth work quality initiated by Estonian Youth Work Centre (starting from 01.08.2020 Education and Youth Board) and there is a mechanism to monitor policy implementation, however, the participation of young people is considered as a part of youth work and youth policy goals.

There is no specific certification in the area of civic educators established in Estonia. There is a possibility to gain professional education as a teacher and youth worker, both professions include competencies in relation to civic education and participation as part of the occupational standard.

Until 2019, there was a regular offer of training and materials available for people working in formal and non-formal settings with young people systematically provided by Youth Agency of the Archimedes Foundation (starting from 01.01.2021 the Department of Youth Programs of the Agency of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps).

There is an initiative to create a network of stakeholders active in the civic education field in order to support the development of cooperation inside and between formal and non-formal education.

### **Consultations and support instruments**

The participation of young people in decision making is defined as one of four strategic objectives in the Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020 (Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2014-2020). Same is in the draft document of the new development plan for the years 2021-2035.

There are regulations on youth involvement. The involvement of young people in general and of youth councils is defined in the Youth Work Act. The involvement of pupils and students is defined in education institutions acts, and the participation of the children in the Child Protection Act.

There are plenty of mechanisms for the involvement of young people in public policy processes. In general, youth participation in public policy takes place within the general framework and practice of participatory governance in Estonia. In the consultation processes, the young people are addressed as a group of stakeholders, which means that generally young people are invited to the consultation as one of the consulted parties.

The collective consultation remains an important principle underlying the interaction between the young people and the state or municipality. This means that youth consultation and involvement occur predominantly between a youth council, organisation or association on the one hand and a state, municipal, third sector or business organisation on the other hand. The consultation of unorganised young people is organised through opinion markets and other forms of participation.

At the municipal level, local youth councils are consulted on topics that are relevant for youth. In 2019, the municipal youth councils were active in 42 local governments. In addition, 15 county youth councils were active, one in each county of Estonia. Most of them are now demolished as the county level municipalities were also demolished. Most often the consultation is arranged with:

- local and regional youth councils – consulted at the local or regional level;
- youth organisations – consulted at local and/or national level;
- student and pupils' councils – consulted partner at local and national level;
- participation café – a form of consultation at the local level;
- umbrella organisations of youth councils and youth organisations – consulted at the national level.

The youth consultation in the public policy processes occurs mainly in 3 contexts:

- drafting sectorial strategies and development plans;
- implementing sectoral strategies and development plans;
- design of the youth work services.

The main method of involving young people in drafting strategies is the participation of the representatives of youth organisations or umbrella organisations in different working groups. In these settings, the young people are informed of the developments, and they can express their opinion on particular themes and partake in discussions leading to final formulations.

Technically speaking, this involves the formulation of positions regarding concrete questions, participation in meetings, involvement in communication, reacting to other participants' opinions and proposals, input to official document drafts and other activities to be carried out during the process.

The consultations take place regularly at national-level policy. As the responsible ministries for policy areas are obliged to report annually on the implementation of the policy measures, the youth representatives are also mostly consulted annually on these policy document implementation reports.

Consultations take also place case-by-case depending on the emergence of new legislation or policy proposals.

## Actors

In general, the main umbrella organisations are involved in drafting policy programs and legislative acts as representatives of young people in Estonia:

- National Youth Council (the umbrella organisation of youth associations and youth organisations);
- Estonian School Student Councils Union (the umbrella organisation of school student councils);
- Federation of Estonian Student Unions (the umbrella organisation of college student councils).

In the implementation phase, local youth organisations, youth councils, and youth work organisations are involved in carrying out activities of a concrete policy program.

There are no specific target groups in general consultation mechanisms defined.

The main public authorities are:

- the Ministry of Education and Research: responsible for youth policy and education policy;
- the Ministry of Social Affairs: responsible for labour market policy, but also for social protection and services including child and family policy;
- Education and Youth Board, a governmental institution responsible for implementation of



education and youth policy.

Other additional stakeholders are:

- Estonian Association of Youth Centres, implementing youth work in youth centres;
- Youth Agency of the Foundation Archimedes, an independent body established by the government under the Ministry of Education and Research, responsible for implementing youth policy, National Agency for Erasmus+ (note: starting from 01.01.2021 is also a part of the Education and Youth Board amongst other youth and education organisations).

### Information

There are some specific mechanisms of data collection and monitoring of youth consultation, e.g., Structural Dialogue, Ombudsman for Children reviews the youth rights, youth monitor, etc. However, there is no specific data collection system on the level of youth participation.

### Outcomes

Participation of young people in decision-making has two main outcomes:

- quality of the decision
- development of active citizenship

Generally, based on the consultation, a draft law or policy document is revised. There is an obligation for the government authorities to provide information on every proposal whether it has been accepted and also the reasons, if not. Policy documents progress report is generally required from the ministry appointed as a responsible body for the policy document. Usually, it is necessary to report to the Government every year the implemented activities, achieved outcomes and results. The yearly reports are bases for the Government to renew or to terminate the implementation of the policy document. The inclusion of interested parties to the reporting procedure is advised.

The most important government initiative to promote youth participation has been the introduction of the annual funding scheme for youth councils and youth organisations.

Estonian National Youth Council initiated a project "Osaluskohvikud" (Eng. *youth participation cafes*) to provide platform for local politicians, civil servants, professionals working with young people, parents, etc. to meet and discuss different relevant issues with local young people from schools, youth organisations, non-organised youth interested to take part at the event, etc. The cafes have been taking place in November every year in different communities all over the country and have involved more than 1,500 participants yearly.

### Volunteering

Volunteering as an activity has a long history in Estonia. However, only since the turn of the millennium, has volunteering been approached in an organised way. The first national strategy on volunteering – Estonian National Development Plan for Volunteering 2007-2010 – was adopted in 2006. Since the very beginning, the Ministry of Interior has played an important role in the process of institutionalization of volunteering and civil society, as a partner to voluntary organisations and

civil society. In Estonia, there is no legal definition of volunteering in general.

In Estonia, no distinct governance system exists for youth volunteering. There is no legislation on youth volunteering as such, but the volunteering has been described in the fields of rescue services. The European Solidarity Corps (previous European Voluntary Service) is organised by the Education and Youth Board Department of Youth Programs of the Agency of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps.

In 2018, research was conducted that showed that 19% of all volunteers are young people aged 15-24 and 69% of all young people are volunteers.

In Estonia, no distinct governance system exists for youth volunteering. There is no legislation on youth volunteering as such, but the volunteering has been described in the fields of rescue services. The European Solidarity Corps (previous European Voluntary Service) is organised by the Department of Youth Programs of the Agency of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps (until 31.12.2020 the Youth in Action National Agency Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency).

Instead, two other structures are being used for this purpose. On the one hand, youth volunteering takes place within the legislative and administrative framework for volunteering in general. This aspect of youth volunteering is structured by general civil society regulations and organisational practices. On the other hand, youth volunteering takes place within youth work settings (e.g., youth organisations, youth centres, youth projects, etc.). This aspect of youth volunteering is regulated by youth work regulations and organisational practices.

Supporting and organising youth work is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Research, more concretely the Department of Youth and Talent Policy.

Supporting and organising the development of volunteering, in general, is the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior. At the ministerial level, themes and issues related to volunteering are addressed in the Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020. In the development plan, volunteering is seen to be an integral part of civil society and the NGO movement in the country. The new Civil Society program 2021-2024 (Kodanikuühiskonna programm 2021-2024) was approved on 10.07.2020 and it is the follow-up for the currently valid Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020. Youth volunteering is mentioned in that document, but is not set as a specific goal, volunteering is being addressed in general.

For the period 2014-2018, the Ministry of Interior set up a collaboration agreement in the field of volunteering development with Kodukant, the Estonian Village Movement. Neither this collaboration agreement nor action plan for 2016 mention anything on youth volunteering specifically. However, the list of organisations in Volunteering Network, which is comprised of 30 organisations, includes also youth or youth work organisations (Youth in Action National Agency, The Foundation Domus Dorpatensis, Association of Open Youth Centres in Estonia, Estonian National Youth Council). Young people volunteer through these organisations as well as through other organisations, for example, Estonian Food Bank, Estonian Fund for Nature, Estonian Society for the Protection of Animals, village movement Kodukant and others.

## Youth volunteering

There is no single strategy in Estonia on youth volunteering. Youth volunteering is addressed in the [Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020](#), important policy in relation to the volunteering is also defined in the area of youth work in the [Youth Field Development Plan 2014-2020](#) and in the new youth field development plan for the years 2021-2035 ([Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2021-2035](#)).

In the [Civil Society Development Plan 2015-2020](#), volunteering is seen as a method that supports the development of youth social-political activism and participation in society. According to the development plan, a challenge that needs to be addressed is that though young people have a good understanding of the principles of participation, it does not always translate into actual behavior. This situation has been identified as a call for ministerial action to support the development of civic activism among young people.

The Civil Society Development Plan addresses mainly the cooperation between the public sector and citizens' associations. The new Civil Society programme for 2021-2024 ([Kodanikuühiskonna programm 2021-2024](#)) that is a follow-up for the currently valid development plan that ends in 2020, brings out important results that also contain youth field as an important partner. There are 3 results that are concretely connected to the Youth field program 2020-2023 (not specifically to youth volunteering, but connecting to that) are as following:

- the activities of youth work, NGOs, schools and universities are connected with civic society.
- the Community Practice program is distributed in schools all over Estonia.
- the youth participation is being developed on local level.

The new youth field development plan for the years 2021-2035 ([Noortevaldkonna arengukava 2021-2035](#)) brings the attention to youth volunteering with different activities and one youth specific indicator regarding youth volunteering. The document brings out youth volunteering in four contexts:

- youth volunteering is a way to encourage youth entrepreneurship, creativity and ideas;
- youth volunteering is a way to empower young people to be active citizens, to participate and contribute meaningfully to the community;
- the share of young people participating in voluntary activities is one indicator for the development plan's strategic goal no 2 (the starting and goal levels are to be defined yet);
- creating youth volunteering possibilities is a way to ensure quality youth work that is available equally in different regions.

As no distinct governance system for specifically youth volunteering exists, volunteering is a topic in the civil society strategic planning that is being coordinated by the [Ministry of Interior](#). The main cross-sectoral cooperation in the field of youth volunteering is being done between the [Ministry of Education and Research](#) and [Ministry of Interior](#).

A statistical overview of volunteering in general and youth volunteering, in particular, is poor as young people constitute only a part of all volunteers. As the new development plan for youth field will dedicate one indicator to the youth volunteering, there is hope that the data will be more ac-

curate in the future.

Compared to the previous nationwide representative survey conducted in October 2013, the share of young volunteers aged 15-24 has decreased from 22% to 19% of all volunteers in the country (based on the survey conducted in 2018). In 2018, 69% of the young people were volunteers. Young people are motivated to volunteer in order to get new knowledge, experience, and skills, and to spend their time pleasantly with friends and family. The reasons of not participating in voluntary activities are connected to the missing information regarding existing possibilities. This means that the full potential of youth volunteering is currently not being used.

The overall awareness level of volunteering is the highest amongst young people aged 15-24. Unfortunately, the same can be said about people who volunteer, but are not aware of them being volunteers. The amount of young people aged 15-24 not being volunteers has decreased from 58% in 2013 to 31% in 2018, which is the lowest percentage compared to other age groups.

Volunteering in youth work and volunteering with/for children ranking in the overall list of popularity of volunteering areas has decreased over years. In 2009, the percentage was 29%, in 2013 it was 23%, and in 2018 it was 19%. From the most recent volunteering experience fields, youth work has become more popular increasing from 9% in 2013 to 12% in 2018.

The Network of Estonian Non-profit Organisations in cooperation with Estonian Youth Work Centre and the Ministry of Education and Research launched a programme “Kogukonnapraktika” (Eng. *Community practice*) in 2015. Supported by ESF and state budget the programme aimed to introduce a practical community work as part of the curricula of civic education for upper secondary level. The cooperation programme provided students with the opportunity to experience a short-term practical voluntary work period. The programme ended in 2020.

There is no single system of quality assurance/quality guidelines specific to youth volunteering. There is support for youth work quality initiated by Estonian Youth Work Centre (current Education and Youth Board) and there is a mechanism to monitor policy implementation, however, the quality of voluntary activities of young people in youth work are not specifically covered.

As there are no regulations on youth volunteering, the target group for it is also not regulated or set. In the youth field, the target group is young people aged 7-26.

Several organisations are involved in cross-border volunteering networks and provide Estonian young people opportunities to volunteer abroad and foreign young people to volunteer in Estonia.

Department of Youth Programs of the Agency of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps implements the European Solidarity Corps (previous European Voluntary Service or EVS). Different Erasmus+ voluntary activities are also implemented by NGOs, for example:

- Continuous Action (voluntary work, international youth exchanges and training activities, etc.).
- EstYES (youth exchanges, training activities, European Solidarity Corps, and other voluntary activities, including volunteering in Estonia).

Global Education Network of Young Europeans (GLEN) sends young volunteers to some African, Asian or Eastern-European countries for a three-month-long period. The programme has been running since 2003 and during this time, more than 50 volunteers have been supported. The programme is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

NGO Mondo has been involved in sending Estonian volunteers to different countries (most actions are supported by the Estonian state, European Commission and/or private donators), for example:

- Kenia - starting from 2018 the volunteers are being sent through the EU AID Volunteers programme
- Ghana
- Uganda - starting from 2018 the volunteers are being sent through the EU AID Volunteers programme
- Afganistan
- Burma
- Ukraine

According to their report, in 2018, 19, and in 2019, 35 humanitarian aid volunteers were on different missions in these countries. In 2020, 8 volunteers were on different missions despite of the spread of Covid-19.

There is a specific regulation covering conditions to enter Estonia and apply for the temporary residence permit in Estonia for youth volunteering. In general, volunteering is recognised as studies and therefore conditions that allow temporary residence permits for studying also apply in case of youth volunteering.

The Aliens Act defines specific regulations to volunteers coming to Estonia. There is an opportunity to get a residence permit on conditions similar to studies when a person is applying for the permit and has come to Estonia as a volunteer. The Act defines that a temporary residence permit for study or volunteering may be issued to an alien “for voluntary service within the framework of a youth project or program recognised by the Ministry of Education and Research”. Specific requirements in the Act for voluntary service define, that a temporary residence permit for study may be granted for voluntary service under the following conditions:

- the activity of an alien in the framework of a youth project or program shall not be employed for the purposes of this Act, including that an alien shall not get remuneration for the activity.
- an institution or organisation within the framework of whose youth project or program an alien is applying for residence permit for voluntary service activities shall bear the subsistence costs of an alien during his or her residence in Estonia.
- an institution or organisation within the framework of whose youth project or program an alien is applying for residence permit for voluntary service activities has entered an insurance contract which would cover all medical costs caused by illness or injuries of an alien and
- a contract of voluntary service has been concluded between an alien and the institution or organisation within the framework of whose youth project or program an alien is applying for residence permit for voluntary service activities.

The contract of voluntary service entered into between an alien and the youth association for voluntary service in the framework of whose youth project or program an alien is applying for a residence permit, has to describe:

- the duties of an alien
- the tutoring conditions related to the performance of the duties.
- working time of an alien
- means for covering travelling, subsistence and accommodation costs and for allowances during the whole stay in Estonia and
- the training provided to an alien for better performance of voluntary service if necessary.

Department of Youth Programs of the Agency of Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps (until 31.12.2020 the Foundation Archimedes Youth Agency) has been the most prominent promoter of voluntarism among young people through promoting European Voluntary Service (since 2017 the Solidarity Corps) for years covering different information channels and forms.

Information about youth volunteering opportunities is distributed via specific information channels accessed by young people interested in volunteering or other similar activities. There is a specific portal to advertise voluntary work opportunities called Vabatahtlike Värav. The portal is supported by the European Social Fund and is coordinated by Village Movement Kodukant.

Youth information website Teeviit also mediates some voluntary work opportunities and creates some itself - Teeviit has a team of volunteers, who create content for Teeviit's social media, webpage, etc. Teeviit is coordinated by the Education and Youth Board.

There is no existing policy framework for skills recognition specially for volunteering activities. However, the recognition and validation of the learning and work experience, including in non-formal and informal learning environments, has a long tradition in education and youth policies. There is a legal framework allowing prior learning and work experience to be recognised and validated in the formal education system. Also, for example, youth workers can obtain a qualification through a procedure of validating prior learning and work experience, including voluntary work.

There are different tools for skills recognition in youth volunteering. Below are listed a few of the existing arrangements:

- The Volunteer Pass is a document that presents skills acquired through volunteering activities. The Pass has been developed after the examples of Youthpass and Europass. It uses the lifelong learning 8 key competences framework for presenting and analysing competences acquired in voluntary activities. In general, the list of skills is written up by the volunteer him- or herself; it is a self-assessment exercise. The Pass is primarily used as a tool, which aids the volunteer to analyse and understand what competences he or she has acquired during a volunteering activity. Also, educational institutions, firms, and NGOs may take the information presented in a person's pass into account when selecting students or recruiting employees. However, taking the information presented in the pass is up to the organisations. There is no official system of recognition of the pass which would define the status and value of the information presented there.

- The youth information site [Teeviit](#) (previously called Launchpad or Stardiplats) is a tool for young people to describe their experiences obtained from formal, non-formal and informal learning. It helps the young people to compile a CV containing all relevant experiences for applying for a job.

## France<sup>45</sup>

### Youth participation/engagement strategies

Strictly speaking, there is no new strategy to develop youths' participation. However, the Government - and other public authorities - implement and consolidate programmes and schemes the purpose of which is to increase the civic participation of young people, by following the example of the strengthening of civic service and of the creation of the National universal service, which is one of the pivotal measures of the current Government's youth policies. More generally, these two commitment schemes are in keeping with the "Civic Path" (« Parcours citoyen ») programme which constitutes a policy for youth participation and commitment.

The various national schemes for youth participation or engagement are steered and regulated by the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sport. However, the coordination and implementation of policies are also the responsibility of the directorates or agencies concerned (e.g., the Civic Service Agency).

The implementation and objectives of these schemes are analysed and evaluated in particular by the National Institute for Youth and Non-Formal Education (INJEP). Participation (civic, commitment) is one of the central themes of the work of the INJEP National Institute for Youth and Non-Formal Education (Institut National de la Jeunesse et de l'Éducation Populaire), which has published a range of analyses on public policies relating to youth participation, changes and its challenges, as well as on participation and commitment schemes, including civic service.

In addition to the academic work of the INJEP National Institute for Youth and Non-Formal Education (Institut National de la Jeunesse et de l'Éducation Populaire) and the statistics of ministerial departments, youth associations committed to participation, particularly civic participation, such as the FFJ (French Youth Forum) and the National Association of Children's and Young People's Councils, also produce resources (articles and reports) on this subject.

Youth participation has been the subject of two « works » of the Priority Youth Policy (Plan priorité jeunesse) implemented between 2013 and 2017 which focused on two aims: "promote and enhance youth commitment" and "strengthen youth representation in the public sphere" through several measures, described below, which are still in force:

- "Inform and raise youths' awareness of all types of commitment, during their entire school career and outside of formal education"
- "Promote youth commitment, a line of focus that is particularly promoted in 2017 the year of associative commitment"
- "Promote the recognition and value of association, union and political experiences by capitalising on acquired knowledge and taking them into account in school careers and professional integration"
- "Encourage youth participation in associative, political and union movements"
- "Encourage the development of youth organisations led by youths"
- "Perform a situational analysis of youth dialogue and participation in the public sphere"

45 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/france/overview>



## Learning to participate/engage

Learning civic skills is at the heart of public policies on youth and popular (non-formal) and formal education.

The desire to increase the significance of participation by young people, especially as regards their learning about citizenship. This is achieved by teaching moral and civic education (EMC - *éducation morale et civique*), with curricula defined by ministerial decrees. (Orders of 17-1-2019 published in the BO (Bulletin Officiel spécial - Official special newsletter) n° 1 of 22 January 2019 and of 19-7-2019 published in the BO spécial (Official special newsletters) n° 8 of 25 July 2019).

## Formal learning

Education in citizenship and acquiring civic skills constitute a long-standing challenge for formal education, which has always given importance to developing pupils' knowledge of citizenship, as well as to going beyond the mere framework of citizenship, by developing actions in which pupils can experience citizenship.

Schools and educational institutions are effectively considered as places for "individual and collective learning about the democratic exercise of political citizenship."

This learning is ensured through programmes such as the Civic Path (*Parcours citoyen*). The Civic Path is a multi-disciplinary educational and civic programme mainly led throughout secondary school (*collège* to *lycée*). Its purpose is to teach and raise student's awareness of their rights and duties.

Learning on lessons, in particular Civic and moral education (*enseignement moral et civique*, EMC), and media and information education (*éducation aux médias et à l'information*, EMI), it contributes towards transmitting the values and principles of the Republic.

Circular no. 2016-092 of 20-6-2016 establishes the Civic Path (*Parcours citoyen*) during which "the student becomes a citizen who progressively gains awareness of his/her rights, duties and responsibilities [...], tests his/her ability to act and collaborate through contact with others, to exercise such rights, duties and responsibilities and improve them through different activities. The journey also allows the student to learn to accept the diversity of opinions and disagreements, by promoting listening and debates. It provides him/her with the means to behave thoughtfully and responsibly and to develop his/her critical thinking abilities."

The civic path relies on the mobilisation of educational teams, associations and other stakeholders within the school's territory.

Learning to participate also takes shape through educational actions and teachings such as Moral and civic education (*Enseignement moral et civique*, EMC) or class councils:

Those programmes and actions include:

- EMC – Moral and Civic Teaching (*Enseignement Moral et Civique*), set up by the programming and framework law of 8 July 2013 on refoundation the *École de la République*. EMC's

aim is to bring together “the training of future citizens and the formation of their critical reasoning”, to have secondary-school students and *lycée* students acquire “a moral conscience that enables them to understand, respect, and share humanist values of solidarity, respect, and responsibility.” Teaching EMC must be cross-cutting and interdisciplinary. In practical terms, it must include specific educational activities (regulated debates, student councils, etc.) and co-operative projects (artistic, cultural, etc.) that question democracy. That teaching is part of the student's *citizen pathway* (*parcours citoyen*), defined by circular no. 2016-092 of 20-6-2016. In that *citizen pathway* (*parcours citoyen*), students take part in actions that encourage the training of the future citizen (EMC, media-education courses, Defence and Citizenship Day, etc.).

- Class councils and the delegate elections (cf. 5.2) also take part in experiencing democracy, especially through voting, debating, exercising representation, and deliberating.
- The citizenship pathway also links formal education with popular (non-formal) education, since commitment schemes such as the Universal National Service or international volunteering programmes for young people (of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs) are also part of this citizenship pathway, which can last a lifetime.

### Non-formal and informal learning

Learning to participate and acquiring civic skills are also objectives of non-formal education, known as “people’s education” in France, whose values include emancipation, solidarity and the exercise of citizenship

Developing links and exchanges between formal, informal, and non-formal education, based on young people learning about citizenship, mainly takes the form of a range of initiatives and programmes put in place by public institutions in partnership with associations. Those actions include some that aim at:

- Strengthening participatory bodies within school establishments (cf. 5.3 councils and youth bodies).
- Reinforcing the participation of young people in the decision-making of schools.
- Encouraging young people’s involvement in civil society by implementing the Citizen Reserve (Réserve Citoyenne), which aims at encouraging the driving forces of civil society to become involved beside educational teams, or putting a gap year into academic careers. The gap is defined by circular no. 2015-122 of 22-07-2015; it involves students suspending their studies for a period of between 6 months and one year, in order to undergo a period of personal experience, professional experience, or commitment, either in France or abroad.
- The implementation of the Wednesday Plan (*Plan Mercredi*) enabling volunteer local and regional authorities to offer each child educational, artistic and also civic activities during extracurricular time.
- The development of awareness of environmental protection and sustainable development. In 2019, the Ministry of National Education generalized “eco-delegates” in secondary classes. These eco-delegates will be elected by the authorities of their school. The role of eco-delegates is to promote environmentally friendly behavior at school (switching off lights, reasoned use of energy, selective sorting, etc.) and to propose any initiative contributing to the protection of the environment in his school.

- Support experiments on the acquisition of social and civic skills through non-formal learning. Several experiments supported financially by the public authorities, in particular those set up under the Youth Experimentation Fund, have enabled young people to become involved and to value the benefits of this involvement.
- Develop tools for valuing social and civic skills acquired through civic participation (bénévolat, volunteering, etc.), such as skills portfolios or the “Aki” application developed by the Franco-German Youth Office. This application makes it possible to recognise the cross-cutting skills developed in particular during international mobility.

Associations that hold Youth and Non-Formal Education (Jeunesse et Éducation Populaire) accreditation (*cf. 5.6*) and receiving grants by reasons of that special partnership enter into an agreement that set out the objective of actions and results indicators. That procedure enables a watch to be kept on the quality of projects undertaken by the associations.

Several initiatives have been put in place to support and strengthen training in the development of civic skills of staff working in the youth field (teachers, youth workers, educators, etc.).

The Ministry of National Education makes its own tools and educational supports relating to education in citizenship, such as the CANOPE network, which lists works published on the subject. In addition, educational documentary resource centres (at national, regional, and département level) offer documents in different forms that concern teaching staff and pupils. Each establishment has a documentation and information centre containing resources on the topic. The web site of the Ministry of National Education, <http://eduscol.education.fr>, “informs and supports” education professionals; it has a section on education in citizenship, where teachers can find topic sheets.

As regards training for teaching staff, training arrangements exist at various levels: national, LEA-level, and *département*. The initial training of supervisory staff and teaching staff makes those members of staff increasingly aware of civic challenges. Education in citizenship is part of the list of requirements for training teachers at the University Teacher-Training Institute (Institut Universitaire de Formation des Maîtres) (*Official National Education Bulletin, Bulletin Officiel de l'Éducation Nationale* of 19 December 2006). The promotion of civic values by stakeholders in education is done in partnership with an association network, including the civic information centre (CIDEM – Civics and Democracy) which has an educational-resource portal on citizenship.

In addition to teachers, facilitators and “youth workers” can receive training in citizenship. The various training bodies that offer access to professions and qualifications in the field of facilitation offer sessions on that topic. They are available for all qualifications in “voluntary” facilitation (Certificate of Competency to work as a facilitator in collective reception centres for minors, Brevet d'Aptitude aux fonctions d'animateur en accueils collectifs de mineurs) and “State qualifications” (Professional Certificate in youth, non-formal education, and sport). For example, the so-called “CEMEA (Centres for Training in Active Education Methods, Centres d'Entraînement aux Méthodes d'Éducation Active)” offers training in Education in citizenship and Collective reception centres for minors (Éducation à la citoyenneté et Accueils collectifs de mineurs) to facilitation professionals.

The Ministry for Sport also participates in promoting citizenship through the use of sport and the development of practical guides for sports educators.

As part of its campaign to prevent harassment and sexist and sexual violence in sport “#TousConcernés”, the Ministry of Sports has developed the third edition of the “Petit guide juridique” which

aims to better understand the consequences of “incivility, violence and discrimination”

The tool is structured in 4 parts:

- “What the law says about discrimination, incivility and violence in sport.”
- “What the law says about racism, LGBT+ hate, sexism, hazing or religious discrimination in sport.”
- “What the law says for each actor in case of discrimination, incivility or violence in the field of sport.”
- “Legal protection of victims in cases of discrimination, incivility or violence in sport”.

### Consultations and support instruments

French public authorities have had a long-standing concern over young people’s participation in drawing up public policies. However, that approach is most often followed at local level within local councils: participation is more effective and active in local democratic bodies (municipalities) than in national bodies, where it occurs on a more one-off basis. Since the 1970s, local authorities have worked at promoting young people’s participation in local democracy.

Several initiatives have been launched recently, for example the creation of the Advisory Youth Council comprised of youth organisation representatives.

Local authorities in particular are committed to youth participation in the local democracy. Local authorities have a measure of freedom in the setting up of youth representative bodies, which has led to considerable diversity in such councils’ design, frequency of meetings and implementation. Young people are consulted on a wide variety of themes, not only those that concern them directly. In the case of local councils (regional and municipal alike), consultations may have bearing on local life, in such topics as participatory *lycée* budgeting, mobility, the environment and access to culture.

There are just as many questions raised at national level, where they are a matter for ministerial action. Themes tackled arise from ministries’ areas of concern: healthcare, accommodation, professional integrations, political representation of young people, civic commitment, mobility, etc

In 2017, a law aimed at creating a “culture of lifelong commitment” was enacted: the Law No. 2017-86 of 27 January 2017 on equality and citizenship. Article 54 of the law sets up a structured dialogue between young people, representatives of civil society and public authorities:

*1. - The public policies for young people conducted by the State, the regions, the departments, the municipalities and the territorial authorities with special status shall be the subject of an annual process of structured dialogue between young people, representatives of civil society and the public authorities. This debate focuses in particular on the establishment of strategic orientations and the articulation and coordination of these strategies between the different levels of territorial authorities and the State.*

There are no any specific texts that legally govern and define young people’s participation in drawing up public policies. Young people’s participation is based on general texts, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Council of Europe’s European Charter on the participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life.

Associations for promoting political participation by young people and local youth councils can draw up their own guides and charters. The ANACEJ - National Association of Children's and Youth Councils (Association Nationale des Conseils d'Enfants et de Jeunes) has drawn up reference guides and texts that set out the operating procedures of youth councils, such as Our Agreement 2 (Notre Accord 2). That text was adopted on 26 June 2013, and it reaffirms the value and significance of participation by children and young people, especially as a tool for "education in citizenship aimed at improving the local authority as a whole".

At municipality and intermunicipality level, youth councils may give opinions and make suggestions either upon the Mayor's request or on their own initiative. Young people may therefore be involved in decision-making for certain municipal projects.

At regional level, a number of participation initiatives have been developed by Regional Councils, including:

- ad-hoc consultations giving the floor to young people's opinions; for example, the "*États Généraux*" (Hauts-de-France region), consultations with youth organisations during development of the Regional Plan (Bretagne regions)
- event-type participation
- consultative bodies (regional youth councils) serving as permanent youth representation.
- involvement in development of such policies as participatory *lycée* budgeting.

At national level, the Cross-Ministerial Committee for Youth (CJ) "encourages and supports dialogue with young people with a view to regarding them as stakeholders in and providers of solutions on matters that concern them". Ministries concerned may introduce various forms of youth participation in development of public policies. There exist, however, three main types of ministerial consultations:

- approaches encouraging young people's presence in the public areas of institutional policy debates.
- consultations based on dialogue with youth associations
- schemes for the co-development of policies with young people. Such co-development is based on partnership work and horizontal dialogue between young people, associations and the public authorities.
- an online consultation which is based on dialogue with youth associations

It is important to specify that all those actions aimed at having young people take part in the development of their territory are not necessarily carried out on a regular basis; they can also be one-off actions.

Ministries involved in youth policies can set up online consultations to gather young people's opinions on ministerial policies or projects currently being implemented. These consultations are open to all young people. For example, the National Student Consultation launched by the French Network of Students for Sustainable Development - REFEDD in partnership with, among others, the

Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Ecological and Solidarity Transition.

In France, the EU-Youth Dialogue is organised and facilitated by the Cnajep (Committee for National and International Relations between Youth and Non-Formal Education Associations - Comité pour les relations nationales et internationales des associations de jeunesse et d'éducation populaire) (see actor sub-chapter), through the Provox platform, which brings together over 70 youth and popular education movements. Provox's goal is to drive the contributions of young people in France at the European level.

The platform organises EU-Youth dialogue campaigns at national level. "These include consultation phases, the organisation of youth-electoral debate events, support for structured dialogue stakeholders in France, participation in political meetings and European youth conferences, and the implementation of the campaign results".

Pledge weeks give students the opportunity to become aware of all forms of commitment inside and outside the school. They usually take place between September and October each year. Elections for school bodies (elections to the council of delegates for school life) are organised during these weeks.

## Actors

There are many bodies involved in youth participation. Distinctions should be made between institutional stakeholders (ministries), youth association federations, youth representative bodies and associations.

Main stakeholders in youth affairs include:

- **Youth movements**

*(The structures listed here are the main partners of the Department for Youth, Non-Formal Education and Voluntary Organisation. They are listed for information only).*

- the Comité pour les Relations Nationales et Internationales des Associations de Jeunesse et d'Éducation Populaire ([CNAJEP](#) – Committee for National and International Relations between Youth and Non-Formal Education Associations). The CNAJEP contributes to co-construction of public policies, managing national implementation of the "structured dialogue" decided upon by the Council of European Ministers, which adopted a resolution on 23 November 2015 aiming to "improve youth political participation in democratic life in Europe".
- [the Forum Français de la Jeunesse \(FFJ – French Youth Forum\)](#)
- [The Association Nationale des Conseils d'Enfants et de Jeunes \(ANACEJ – National Association of Children's and Youth Councils\)](#) has existed since 1991 and helps set up and develop local youth councils. It is a member of the CNAJEP.
- [Young Europeans-France](#) brings together young people aged between 16 and 35 who wish to defend "the European project". Their objective is to promote Europe among young people in a transparent manner. The association has 1,200 members in 30 local groups and a network of 30,000 young people throughout Europe. Indeed, JEF France is the French branch of JEF-Europe (Young European Federalists - Jeunes Européens

fédéralistes).

Although mainstreamed youth participation is promoted by public and community stakeholders, they are as yet no special practices or schemes designed to foster consultation of or participation by the most socially disadvantaged young people.

Despite such advances in youth consultation, and NGOs' and the public authorities' determination to implement best practices, a number of obstacles to youth participation still remain. One of the major problems is the lack of "social diversity" due to under-representation of the more disadvantaged young people in youth representative bodies, and a contrasting over-representation of young graduates proficient in the codes of political participation. The lack of generational renewal of members of associations and institutional bodies may also have an influence on French youth representativeness.

- **Public authorities**

- All ministries take part in developing youth participation. However, the leading authority in the organisation of consultation is the ministry in charge of youth, which works in partnership with the CNAJEP/ANACEJ and the FFJ.
- Since 2008, student organisations and youth movements have been represented as a group in the *Conseil Économique, Social et Environnemental (CESE* – Economic, Social and Environmental Council).
- · The Conseil d'orientation des politiques de jeunesse COJ
- Local authority officials responsible for youth affairs can also organise and administer local youth councils; usually local authority employees also manage municipal youth councils.

- **Additional stakeholders**

In addition to the French public authorities, such international organisations as UNESCO also promote youth participation and consultation in France through the "UNESCO Youth" programme and UNESCO Youth Forum.

## Information

The National Institute for Youth and Non-Formal Education (INJEP) collects annual data (produced through surveys) on the level of participation of young people, particularly with regard to engagement activities (bénévolat, volunteering, etc.). This data is compiled in the "DJEPVA Barometer" report on youth, commissioned by the Department for Youth, Non-Formal Education and Voluntary Organisation (Direction de la jeunesse, de l'éducation populaire et de la vie associative DJEPVA) and carried out in partnership with the Research Centre for the Study of the Conditions of Life (CREDOC). The fifth edition of the DJEPVA DJEPVA (Department for Youth, Non-Formal Education and Voluntary Organisation - (Direction de la jeunesse, de l'éducation populaire et de la vie associative)/ INJEP (National Institute for Youth and Non-Formal Education - Institut National de la Jeunesse et de l'Éducation Populaire) barometer on youth (2020) shows that young people's commitment increased during the COVID-19 health crisis.

In addition, INJEP National Institute for Youth and Non-Formal Education (Institut National de la Jeunesse et de l'Éducation Populaire) has also published myriad articles and reports specifically dedicated to the participation of young people in the construction of public policies, both at the regional

and national levels, as well as on the ways in which public authorities consult young people. In Laurent Lardeux's *Les dispositifs de participation des jeunes au niveau des conseils régionaux* (2015) and Jean-Claude Richez's *L'État des lieux des dispositifs de participation des jeunes dans les départements ministériels* (2014), INJEP National Institute for Youth and Non-Formal Education (Institut National de la Jeunesse et de l'Éducation Populaire) researchers highlight the diversity and specificity of the mechanisms set up by public authorities to consult young people.

More recently, INJEP National Institute for Youth and Non-Formal Education (Institut National de la Jeunesse et de l'Éducation Populaire) published an article in 2021 on the relationship between young people and democracy: *La démocratie à l'épreuve de la jeunesse. Une (re)génération politique ?* (L.Lardeux, V.Tiberj, 2021). The article reports on the progression of the relationship between young citizens and democracy, as well as "the new aspirations of young people towards greater horizontality and global justice".

### Outcomes

This approach based on co-construction with young people is most often placed in the public domain by ministries, which, where appropriate, provide the (youth) associations with which they have worked with information on changes to policies and projects.

As an example, the ministry of youth (Ministère de la Jeunesse) has provided public information on co-constructing public policies in conjunction with young people as part of the Priority Youth Policy in 2012-2017 (Plan).

The study report "*État des lieux des dispositifs de participation des jeunes dans les départements ministériels*" (Inventory of youth participation schemes in ministerial departments), published by INJEP in 2014, highlights a number of "best practices" in youth consultation introduced by the authorities, including:

- "young people are involved in monitoring implementation of the policy decided upon"
- "young people are represented in sufficient number in workgroups"
- "young people are kept informed and receive work documents upstream"
- "young people's proposals are incorporated by the workgroup when they form the subject of an agreement, and are mentioned and indicated as coming from young people"

Young people's and youth organisations also play a part in drafting ministerial texts, by producing analyses and making proposals upstream in the form of contributions.

### Large-scales initiatives for dialogue

As part of the establishment of National universal service (Service national universel, SNU), a new commitment scheme that is part of the civic path of youths aged over 16, the Government has organised several consultation events, some of which including youths.

National consultation was carried out in three stages: a phase of consultation with some youth organisations, student unions, parent representatives and association stakeholders followed by a phase for consultation with youths in territories and an on-line consultation, carried out in October 2018.



A “Hackathon” of the National universal service was organised. During this event, the Minister of National Education and Youth, and the State Secretary, were able to speak with participants, who were invited to imagine their future experience of the SNU through creative tools and workshops.

In April 2021, the Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister for Equality between Women and Men, Diversity and Equal Opportunities, and the Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in charge of Relations with Parliament and Citizen Participation launched a [citizen consultation on discrimination, which will be held in June 2021.](#)

## **Volunteering**

Two types of civic commitments coexist in France: bénévolat and volunteering, which is a specifically French distinction. Although there are two commitment concepts, it is important to stress that they are both based on the same values of (voluntary) solidarity and commitment.

### ***Bénévolat***

There is no legal or contractual definition of the bénévolat status in French law. The commonly accepted definition is that of [the opinion of the Conseil Économique et social](#) (EESC – Economic and Social Council) rendered at its meeting of 24 February 1993 which defines the bénévole as anyone who freely commits to non-salaried action to help other people outside their professional and family time (this definition applies to all volunteers, youth, elderly people, etc.).

A bénévole acts in his/her organisation without being bound to its structure by any duration or frequency other than the rules that may have been optionally and freely consented to in a mutual agreement. The bénévole is not subject to any subordination. Bénévoles participate in their organisations’ activities without receiving any financial compensation. However, they may be reimbursed for the costs incurred by their activity. A bénévole does not receive a salary.

There are two types of bénévolat: “formal”, exerted in an organisation, and “informal”, also known as “direct bénévolat” or “proximity bénévolat”, which is expressed by one-shot, non-permanent help (collecting toys, helping neighbours, etc.).

### ***Volunteering***

Volunteering is another form of commitment (in a more formal legal framework defined by the public authorities, unlike bénévolat). Unlike the bénévoles, volunteers are compensated (financial compensation).

The various schemes are governed by rules of their own. Law no.2010-241 of 10 March 2010 bearing on the civic service has however brought together several civic service schemes: charitable volunteering, international administrative volunteering, international business volunteering, international solidarity volunteering and European voluntary service. This form of commitment often responds to a general interest mission and is usually exercised in non-profit organisations or with legal entities governed by public law. In addition, volunteer status is governed by regulatory texts (laws and decrees) providing a restrictive legal framework.

## Youth volunteering

Non-profit organisations are regarded as interlocutors, autonomous organisations representing civil society, as well as partners of the State with which they fulfil general interest missions.

The public authorities participate in development of the non-profit sector by supporting it financially and regulating its legal, legislative and administrative framework, as well as by promoting *bénévolat* and developing tools (*bénévolat* guides, etc.) that are useful and necessary to non-profit organisations.

In France, the public authority with final responsibility for the non-profit and *bénévolat* sector is the ministry in charge of youth which also covers “voluntary organisations and non-formal education” (Decree no. 2014-409 of 16 April 2014 and Decree no.2012-782 of May 2012). Currently, the Ministry in charge of youth is the Ministry of national Education.

Under the aegis of the ministry, the DJEPVA - Department (directorate) for Youth, Non-Formal Education and Voluntary Organisations and in particular the Sub-Division for Cross-Ministerial Youth Policies and Voluntary Organisations implements guidelines for non-profit organisations and *bénévolat*/volunteering and coordinates cross-ministerial actions for non-profit organisations and *bénévolat*.

This sub-directorate operates a fund dedicated to voluntary organisations, the FDVA – Voluntary Organisation Development Fund.

The fund finances training of *bénévoles* through grants to NGOs and promotes long-term *bénévolat*. Financing is allocated in the context of calls for projects, by decision of the Minister after consulting an advisory committee “bearing on the composition and jurisdiction of the advisory committee on funds for the development of voluntary organisations” (Order of 7 February 2012).

Furthermore, as with other youth policies, implementation of youth policies on volunteering and *bénévolat* is based on partnership and cross-ministerial work. Other ministries contribute to the development of youth commitment, including the ministry of the Interior for firefighter volunteering and the Ministry of National Education and the ministry in charge of higher education which promotes youth commitment of young people through a range of schemes (including the National Education Civic Reserve (*Réserve Citoyenne National Education*) and educational validation of prior *bénévole* experience.

Among these ministries, the ministry in charge of foreign affairs plays an important coordinating role in implementation and management of international solidarity volunteering (VSI) and international administrative volunteering (VIA). It is responsible for issuing authorisations to organisations implementing volunteering missions (Law no.2005-159 of 23 February 2005 bearing on the contract for international solidarity volunteering), and as such works in close partnership with the DJEPVA.

Youth policies including those promoting commitment are also implemented by local authorities, which contribute to the development of volunteering and *bénévolat* by promoting them *via* such local structures such as local missions, youth information offices and information points. Some

local authorities, particularly regions and *départements*, have their own international volunteering schemes. They play an important role in mobility within a non-formal educational framework.

The Civic Service Agency manages the setup and development of the civic service. Created on 12 May 2010, it is supervised by the ministry in charge of youth and is a public interest group. It enables public and private partners to pool resources for implementation of general interest missions, in compliance with Decree no.2012-91 of 26 January 2012 bearing on public interest groups. The agency is under the responsibility of the ministry of youth.

The Cooperation Fund for Youth and Popular Education (FONJEP), created in 1964, is a body managed jointly by national government, local authorities and non-profit associations. Its objective is to bolster the development of non-profit youth volunteering projects and popular education.

France Volontaires is an organisation set up in 2009 that aims to promote and develop different forms of international solidarity volunteering. It brings together 34 French organisations engaged in non-formal education and international solidarity and is supported by many partners: governments, communities and associations. The organisation also sends out international solidarity and civic service volunteers. It contributes to the public interest grouping of the *Agence du Service Civique* (Civic Service Agency).

France Bénévolat is a public utility organisation set up on 22 January 2010 with the aim of developing voluntary work, promoting general interest, putting people interested in bénévolat assignment with voluntary organisations in touch with one another, as well as supporting such organisations by reinforcing recognition and promotion of their *bénévoles*.

The Mouvement Associatif (Non-Profit Movement) is a federation bringing together 600,000 organisations. Its role is to act as a mouthpiece for voluntary organisations and set up permanent dialogue with public authorities. It represents almost one in two non-profit associations in France.

La Fonda is a public utility organisation set up in the 1980s. Its role is also to “equip” non-profit stakeholders by conducting surveys, drafting reports and surveys on the non-profit sector and organizing participative events;

The Ligue de l’Enseignement (Education League) is a confederation of over 40,000 lay and non-formal education organisations, grouping together about 2,500,000 members and hundreds of thousands of *bénévoles*. Founded in 1866, it is one of the oldest non-formal education organisations still active in France. It encourages and supports local initiatives that enable general access to “education and culture in the recognition of cultural diversity” and encourage voluntary work. It is one of the public authorities’ special interlocutors.

The CNAJEP - Committee for National and International Relations between Youth and Non-Formal Education Organisations (Comité pour les relations Nationales et Internationales des Associations de Jeunesse et d’Education populaire) promotes youth commitment to local and non-profit action. It brings together over 70 youth movements and ensures that associations are represented in dealings with the public authorities and in joint bodies. The CNAJEP also acts as an observatory and “laboratory for ideas” on youth, non-formal education, and public policies, as well as being a vehicle for proactive dialogue with the public authorities on all these questions.

The Forum Français de la Jeunesse (FFJ – French Youth Forum) is one of the main stakeholders in youth participation. Set up in 2012, it is “an autonomous forum where France’s youth can express their ideas”, bringing together the main youth-led bodies (associations, unions, political parties’ youth branches, student insurance companies, etc.).

Animafac, is a national organisation that assists students in their non-profit projects, promotes involvement in higher education and has a non-profit network consisting of 5000 student organisations. It is a major stakeholder in civic service volunteering.

The implementation of systems for community and volunteer work is based on cross-sector cooperation that mobilises a range of actors who work together: ministries, public institutions and operators, associations and the entrepreneurship sector and the social and solidarity economy. The results of this cooperation are the development, implementation and coordination of community and volunteer work programmes for young people, with data on volunteer activities also produced.

Promoting volunteering activities is a recurrent measure of youth policies especially because the NGOs that allow the development of volunteering are considered as both the “leaven of the social cohesion” and “major economic actors”.

Policies promoting community and volunteer work are incorporated both in youth policies and, more often, in overall policies supporting community work.

There is no strategy specifically dedicated to the involvement of young people in community and volunteer work as such. However, in 2018 the French government set out a roadmap for the development of community work that includes measures for growing involvement. Lastly, in 2019 the government launched a forerunner to implementing the Universal National Service (SNU) for young people between 15 and 25 years old. One of its objectives was creating a culture of engagement. The intention was to gradually roll out this measure to an entire age group over the next few years.

Although the authority responsible for definition of volunteering and bénévolat policies is the ministry in charge of youth policies, such policies are not drafted within the same administrative framework according to type of commitment: *bénévolat* “policies” are not necessarily drawn up by the public authorities, which, out of respect for non-profit organisations’ independence, only intervene to support them (financially) and promote *bénévolat* through various initiatives. “The State certifies, authorises, provides expert advice, accompanies, monitors and evaluates the action of non-profit organisations”.

The situation is different for the volunteering policies, which are supported, defined, managed and controlled by the State and various ministries.

The DJJ is also the Director of the DJEPVA- Department for Youth, Non-Formal Education and Voluntary Organisations, under the aegis of the ministry in charge of Youth. In the commitment field, the Department (DJEPVA) develops, and coordinates youth commitment (volunteering/*bénévolat*) projects, ensures they are properly implemented, and monitors various schemes.

As the State’s role is to financially support non-profit organisations in their actions and promote

voluntary work, there is no public national *bénévolat* programme. Nevertheless, owing to their independence, non-profit organisations have the possibility of developing and implementing their own *bénévolat* schemes and programmes.

One of the key commitment programmes set up by the State is Civic Service (Service Civique). This cross-ministerial and crosscutting system plays a pre-eminent role in youth policy. Established by Law 2010-2041 of 10 March 2010 bearing on civic service, enacted on 13 May 2010.

Civic Service is a programme designed to encourage civic commitment by young people aged 16 to 25, as well as by young people with disabilities aged 16 to 30, without any qualification conditions. Missions typically last between 6 to 12 months with at least 24 hours per week, for “non-profit organisations or legal entities governed by public law” having received civic service approval to accomplish general interest missions of educational, environmental, scientific, social, sporting, family or civil security or prevention, Francophonie and French language promotion, etc”.

The objective of civic service is to reinforce national cohesion by encouraging youth commitment to general interest service. It provides a new form of commitment whereby young people can increase their self-confidence, professional skills and experience citizenship. Civic service is promoted by the Government, in particular because it is considered as an instrument for cohesion and social diversity insofar as all young people.

The system fits in with the history of National Service and civic commitment. After suspension of military service on 28 October 1997 (Law no.97-1019 of 28 October 1997 bearing on reform of national service, which came into full effect in the 2000s, various volunteering schemes made their appearance with the objective of integrating young people into society, including the voluntary civil service created in 2006 by Law no.2006-396 of 31 March 2006 on equality of opportunities, which was open to all young people aged 16 to 25 who wanted to fulfil a general interest mission for a period of 6 to 12 months. Civil service has been replaced by Civic Service (Law no.2010-241 of 10 March 2010).

The authority that administers the commitment scheme is the Civic Service Agency (*Agence du Service Civique*), which is under the supervision of the ministry in charge of youth, which is a GIP (an organisation that brings together public and private partners that pool resources to implement general interest missions). The Civic Service Agency is tasked with defining, managing and monitoring civic service.

Universal National Service is aimed at all young people. Over time, it will take the form of a mandatory month between 15/16 and 18 years old, consistent with the civic route, followed by a longer commitment to volunteer work between 18 and 25 years old. Its implementation began with a pilot project that started in June 2019 and involved approximately 2,000 young people. The plan is to implement it gradually over the coming years.

The purpose of the Universal National Service is to:

- “assert the values of the French Republic to strengthen social and national cohesion”
- “lay the foundation for a culture of commitment”

- “raise awareness of major social and societal issues”

The civic reserves were created by [Law n°2017-86 “equality and citizenship”](#) of 27 January 2017. It is a system offering general interest projects within non-profit associations and public bodies. It is organised according to specialised topics partly including those of the civic service: solidarity, health, education, culture and sport, the environment, history and citizenship, international development, emergency interventions.

It brings together existing citizen reserves (from defence, education and the police), as well as thematic areas yet to be defined. Since [Decree n°2020-922 of 29 July 2020 on various systems of Universal National Service](#), a “universal national service” reserve has been created. It allows young people from 15 years old to carry out casual volunteer work as part of a general interest project. Due to the public health crisis, specific projects have been created as part of the civic reserve to meet the needs created by the crisis.

Site: [Civic reserve](#)

In addition to Civic Service volunteering, young people also have the opportunity to be volunteer [Jeunes sapeurs-pompiers](#) (JSPs-Young firefighters). The volunteering status of firefighters is defined by the [Law no. 96-370 of 3 May 1996](#) and [Law no. 2002-276 of 27 February 2002](#), included in the *Code Général des Collectivités Territoriales* (General Local Authorities Code).

The scheme is designed for young people aged 11 to 18 who want to discover the profession of firefighter.

International Business Volunteering (IBV) and International Administrative Volunteering (IAV) are two International Volunteering schemes that, under certain conditions, enable young people to carry out scientific, technical or commercial missions at a French business abroad (IBV) or a French Government department located abroad (IAV). These schemes are regulated by several legislative texts including the [Law of 14 March 2000](#) bearing on civil volunteering instituted by Article L.111 - 2 of the National Service Code and the [Decree in Council of State no.2000-1159 of 30 November 2000](#).

IBV and IAV volunteers benefit from social protection ([Decree no.2000-1160 of 30 November 2000](#) setting the conditions under which the State contributes to the social protection of civilian volunteers assigned through voluntary organisations) and annual leave ([Decree no. 2000-1161 30 November 2000](#) laying down the rules for volunteers’ annual leave).

Removing [obstacles](#) (economic and social alike) that prevent some young people from carrying out *bénévolat* work, and above all volunteer work, is a public goal which aims to increase volunteering of all young people, especially young people with fewer opportunities. When they exist, support measures for young people largely depend on type of commitment:

[Bénévolat](#)

There are very few schemes designed to materially or financially help young *bénévoles*, and none of them are mandatory. However, if volunteers are required to cover expenses themselves on behalf of the non-profit organisation, they may be reimbursed by the organisation responsible for defining the internal rules on [reimbursement](#) of expenses incurred by *bénévoles* (travel expenses).

In France, the inter-departmental delegation for welcoming and integrating refugees and the Agency for Civic Service manage a national volunteering programme for refugees called Volont'R. This programme is based on a two-fold offer: on one hand, it allows young French people from 18 to 25 years old to become involved in a civic service project (volunteer work) to help refugees and, on the other hand, allows young refugees to take part in civic service projects that are adapted to their circumstances.

The projects offered to benefit refugees could cover all topics in civic service (culture, sports, environment, etc.). Here are some examples of projects that are already offered: supporting asylum seekers and protected persons, promoting access to social and health-related rights for migrants, aiding literacy for French-speaking youth, etc.

Increasing and diversifying young people's European and international mobility is a recurrent youth policy stake. Mobility policies aim to enable all young people to gain experience abroad, whether for training, study or engaging in solidarity projects, especially as the French mobility offer is one of the broadest in the world but still lacks visibility for young people.

The OFAJ- Franco-German Youth Office, which was set up by the Elysée Treaty in 1963. The OFAJ is an international organisation with headquarters in Paris and aims to support and develop all types of exchanges between young people from France and Germany, and to consolidate Franco-German relations through a range of mobility and language exchange programmes for children and young people, including jobseekers.

Volontariat de solidarité internationale (VSI – International Solidarity Volunteering) is a scheme governed by the Law of 23 February 2005. 29 organisations have received French government approval to deliver VSI.

International Administrative Volunteering enables young people aged 18 to 28 to work abroad for French government departments. It can be performed in embassies, *Alliances Françaises*, research institutes, etc.

International Business Volunteering enables young people aged 18 to 28 to carry out professional missions abroad for periods of 6 to 24 months. Volunteers are paid between €1,200 and €3000 net per month, depending on the country. All professional sectors are concerned, including finance, marketing, IT, construction, agronomy, tourism, law and human resources.

## Germany<sup>46</sup>

### Youth participation/engagement strategies

The government's joint Youth Strategy sends a message to the younger generation that it takes their interests and needs into consideration.

From more needs-based local transport and high-speed internet, to affordable housing and climate action measures, decisions in any policy area can have a direct impact on the younger generation. For this reason, the federal government, in cooperation with all federal ministries, developed a Youth Strategy coordinated by the Federal Youth Ministry (Bundesjugendministerium, BMFSFJ). In the development phase, young people were asked to contribute their views as experts in matters that affect them. Many put forward their ideas and wishes at the Youth Policy Days 2019 (Jugend-PolitikTage), in thematic audits, or via online consultations. There are nine youth-related action areas:

- Future, generational dialogue & youth views
- Participation, engagement & democracy
- City & country, living & culture.
- Diversity & participation
- Education, work & free spaces
- Mobility & digitalisation
- Environment
- Health

Key participation formats to help implement the Youth Strategy were the Federal Youth Conference (Bundesjugendkonferenz September 2020), the EU Youth Conference (October 2020) and the Youth Policy Days (JugendPolitikTage) in 2021. BMFSFJ runs another initiative together with the German Children's Fund (Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk) called "Strong child and youth parliaments" (Starke Kinder- und Jugendparlamente). The initiative supports around 30,000 children and young people who are active in child and youth parliaments. It raises the visibility and public profile of the over 500 child and youth parliaments in Germany to gain appreciation for their work. The project aims to strengthen the role of child and youth parliaments as an important part of a diverse range of opportunities for young people to participate at a local level. BMFSFJ also works to more actively include young people as a target audience for political communication and to develop suitable formats for improving dialogue between young people and policymakers.

The Youth Strategy is based on the concept of an independent youth policy and was developed and implemented across ministries and with the participation of youth/young people and civil society. The Federal Government's Youth Strategy is being further developed through a National Action Plan (NAP) for Child and Youth Participation. New focal points include the participation of children under the age of twelve and political participation at local and state (Land) level. The NAP for Child and Youth Participation is being developed within a dialogue process (until 2025) that involves the Federal Government, federal states (Länder), municipalities, civil society and children and young people. Among other things, it aims to raise awareness of quality standards for effective participation and to strengthen self-determined children's and youth parliaments and participation

<sup>46</sup> <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/germany/overview>



networks. In addition, an important role is played by the Academy for Children's and Youth Parliaments project, with its decentralised structure in 16 youth education centres. The results of this dialogue process will be presented as a resolution recommendation to the Federal Cabinet and the Conference of Youth and Family Ministers.

The Interministerial Working Group on Youth (IMA Jugend) was created in October 2018. Its members – representatives from the federal ministries and government commissioners – meet regularly to monitor the implementation and further development of the Youth Strategy with the National Action Plan for Child and Youth Participation. IMA Jugend's activities are coordinated by the Federal Youth Ministry (Bundesjugendministerium, BMFSFJ).

The Youth Policy Advisory Council of the BMFSFJ was set up to involve youth interest groups, civil society, the federal states (Länder) and municipal umbrella organisations in developing and implementing the Youth Strategy with the National Action Plan for Child and Youth Participation. The council is chaired by Sven Lehmann, the Parliamentary State Secretary of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerin für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMSFSJ). It is co-chaired by Prof. Karin Böllert, Chair of the Child and Youth Welfare Association (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder und Jugendhilfe, AGJ). The civic advisory council representatives discuss youth-related topics and make suggestions and recommendations for improvement. The council is an important forum that connects government and civil society.

All event formats within the framework of the NAP for Child and Youth Participation are participation-based. A range of recurring formats involving young people as experts in matters that affect them are designed to ensure as many young people with wide-ranging perspectives as possible participate in developing the Youth Strategy. The Interministerial Working Group uses the findings in its activities developing and implementing the Youth Strategy. The formats have different sizes, target groups and scopes. They include youth audits (Jugend-Audits), the Youth Policy Days (JugendPolitikTage), Federal Youth Conferences (Bundesjugendkonferenzen) and an online participation tool.

The Youth Strategy service office (Servicestelle Jugendstrategie) is currently part of the Foundation for the Social Pedagogical Institute Berlin "Walter May" (Stiftung Sozialpädagogisches Institut Berlin "Walter May", Stiftung SPI). It helps the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ) to develop and implement the government's joint Youth Strategy (Jugendstrategie). The office advises the BMFSFJ on expert and strategic matters, provides organisational support for committee meetings, and helps with conferences, workshops, and other youth participation formats. It also develops ideas and elements to use in communication.

Policymakers, civil society, and young people are constantly evolving the Youth Strategy. All federal ministries share responsibility for this process. Continual youth participation is a requirement of all Youth Policy initiatives. More information can be requested from Stiftung SPI's Youth Strategy service office ([jugendstrategie@stiftung-spi.de](mailto:jugendstrategie@stiftung-spi.de)).

### **Learning to participate/engage**

The topography of citizenship education in practice (Topografie der Praxis politischer Bildung) cre-

ated by the civic education service (Fachstelle politische Bildung) gives an overview of the extremely diverse and varied citizenship education landscape, its structures and approaches. It shows which fields of practice cover citizenship education and the various concepts used.

The Youth Strategy (Jugendstrategie) of the federal government requires concerted political efforts to ensure effective youth participation, civic engagement, and democracy in action. The Youth Strategy publication on the strategic action area “Participation, engagement & democracy” (Beteiligung, Engagement & Demokratie) says:

The focus must be on encouraging young people’s involvement in democracy, strengthening their democratic awareness, equipping them with the skills they need for democratic participation and social solidarity, as well as on taking preventive action against oppressive and anti-democratic tendencies. (Youth Strategy (Jugendstrategie) of the federal government, page 45)

In July 2016, the federal government adopted its strategy on preventing extremism and promoting democracy (Strategie zur Extremismusprävention und Demokratieförderung). The strategy’s action areas include “Civic education, intercultural education and democracy” and “Civil society engagement”. The goal is to expand packages of measures and develop new ideas. This includes a programme by the Federal Ministry of the Interior (Bundesministerium des Inneren, BMI) called “Social cohesion through participation” (Zusammenhalt durch Teilhabe) (since 2010). Annual funding budget: 12 million euros. The programme funds projects to strengthen democratic participation and combat extremism. The focus is on regional clubs, associations and educators.

The Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, bpb) lobbies for better understanding of political matters, a keener awareness of democracy and greater willingness to participate in political processes. bpb works with the state, policymakers, educational institutions, academia and the media. It is active in the areas of non-curricular citizenship education for young people and adults as well as citizenship education in schools. bpb provides a public service.

The 16 state agencies for citizenship education (Landeszentralen für politische Bildung) in the federal states (Länder) work to promote and strengthen citizenship education and civic responsibility. These non-party agencies are attached to one of the federal ministries. In some states, for example, they take the form of a regional office (Landesanstalt) or regional organisation (Landeseinrichtung). Whilst the agencies are independent from the bpb, they act as its state-level equivalent.

The federal programme “Live Democracy!” has been promoting civil society engagement for our democracy, for diversity and against all forms of extremism and hostility to democracy at municipal, regional and supra-regional level since 2015.

Experience Democracy (DemokratieErleben) encourages young people to actively take control of their reality, offers them a wide range of opportunities for participation and helps them to take charge of decisions that affect them.

Experience Democracy is a broad alliance of civil society organisations supported by the Standing Joint initiative of providers of political education for youth (Gemeinsame Initiative der Träger Politischer Jugendbildung, GEMINI) is an association of national organisations for political education for youth that operates as the national committee for political education (Bundesausschuss

politische Bildung, bap).

### Formal learning

Citizenship education in Germany in general aims at:

- teaching the ideas of freedom and democracy,
- bringing young people up as tolerant people who respect other people and their convictions,
- fostering the belief in international understanding,
- strengthening social commitment and political responsibility and
- enabling young people to assume their own rights and duties.

Developing an awareness of democracy and politics is part of the German education system. Citizenship education is a fixed subject in all schools and years from 9th grade onwards. Educational policy is decided by the federal states (Länder). They have their own legislation regarding educational policy. There is a wide array of arrangements. This means that the significance of the subject, the syllabuses and the names of the school subjects can vary from state to state: politics, social sciences, social studies, sociology, political sciences, political education, general studies, international politics – social and civic skills are taught under a variety of names.

The regulations found in frame curricula and syllabuses or in the school acts in the states (Länder) require schools to get pupils actively involved in shaping their school learning. Various types of participation are possible: as class spokesperson, on the school council, in class conferences, in teacher conferences, in school conferences, as a member of the regional school council, or at the state school conference. The regulations on this vary across the states.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland) has issued various resolutions relating to citizenship education. These include the following resolutions:

- Strengthening Democracy Education (Stärkung der Demokratieerziehung) of 6 March 2009. It says that education in democracy is a central task of schools and youth education institutions and that democracy and democratic actions can and must be learnt. (Strengthening Democracy Education (Stärkung der Demokratieerziehung), page 2.)
- Establishing democracy education in schools (Demokratie als Ziel, Gegenstand und Praxis historisch-politischer Bildung und Erziehung in der Schule) (Resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs [Kultusministerkonferenz, KMK] dated 6 March 2009, version dated 11 October 2018). Given current social and political developments and the high speed of the digital transformation, the KMK redrafted its 2009 recommendation and adopted the new version on 11 October 2018. The new version says: Digitalisation is a driver of social development, a connective force and an opportunity for participation. [...] Schools are more important than ever both as places where democracy is taught and as places where democracy is experienced first-hand. School must be a place where democratic values and human rights standards are practised, put into practice and learnt.
- Intercultural education at school (Interkulturelle Bildung und Erziehung in der Schule) ver-

sion dated 5 December 2013. The resolution sets out targets and general principles for systematic intercultural development in schools to help pupils acquire intercultural skills. This includes opportunities relating to democracy education and the promotion of a democratic culture of discussion.

- Remembering our past for our future – Recommendations for a culture of remembrance to form an object of historical and political education in schools (Erinnern für die Zukunft. Empfehlungen zur Erinnerungskultur als Gegenstand historisch-politischer Bildung in der Schule) of 11 December 2014.
- Media Education in Schools (Medienbildung in der Schule) of 8 March 2012. The declaration contains basic statements on the importance of the media to schools and education. It gives schools and teachers guidance on teaching pupils media literacy in order to give them the skills they need for civic participation and cultural participation in society.

### Formal - Non-formal cooperation

The all-day school (Ganztagsschulen) concept enables cooperation between schools and external partners such as youth organisations and youth associations. The investment programme Future Education and Care (Zukunft Bildung und Betreuung, IZBB) provided the basis for implementing all-day schools and resulted in the establishment of more than 8 000 all-day schools between 2003 and 2009. Since then, the federal states have continued to focus on improving quality and extending all-day school activities. Germany had over 14,000 all-day schools in the 2010/2011 school year. The number of all-day schools has more than tripled in the last 10 years (as of 2019). The regulations relating to all-day schools are different in each federal state as the topic is dealt with at state level. In some cases, they take the form of framework agreements between the department of education and various umbrella associations and organisations. These provide the organisational and financial framework for cooperation between schools and associations, clubs and institutions on the provision of childcare and all-day schooling services. Alternatively, schools can enter into cooperation agreements with local or regional external partners. School cooperation partners could be, for example, state sports associations/federations, state federations for cultural youth education or regional youth councils. Or they could be local educational institutions that provide extracurricular educational activities, or clubs or religious or other social organisations that give children the opportunity to take responsibility for how we live side by side in society.

The all-day schools approach enables schools to enter into partnerships with public-sector and independent youth services and, depending on the school's area of responsibility, allows both sides to be involved in shaping the teaching concept. Content can include social and intercultural education, the prevention of violence, strengthening of personal skills, integration, participation and democracy. The learning provided at all-day schools is reviewed regularly. Evaluations and regular quality management ensure that learning is constantly enhanced and adapted to changing conditions. The all-day schools are funded by the federal states (Länder).

### Non-formal and informal learning

Outside of school, young people can learn about participation via various state-funded activities, such as volunteer schemes or membership of a club, youth organisation, youth centre, youth club, etc. Youth organisations are places where young people can practice using democratic systems and thus have an influence on youth policy. Child and youth work is the basis for social, political

and cultural education and for creating space for young people to come together and meet in their free time in a setting of their choosing. Further important stakeholders are the youth education centres, political youth education organisations and civic involvement and civil society organisations as part of social movements.

The Child and Youth Plan of the federation (Kinder- und Jugendplan des Bundes) is the programme for funding youth work and the work of youth organisations on a national level. Areas funded include youth education in political subjects. On a regional (Länder) level, the implementation acts to Book 8 of the Social Code (Sozialgesetzbuch Aches Buch, SGB VIII) provide the basis for structural support and project funding in youth (association) work and other areas of child and youth services. See also Supporting Youth Organisations > Public financial support

Youth-led participation is the central quality aspect of child and youth organisation work. Youth group leaders (Jugendgruppenleiter/-innen), also called team leaders (Teamleiter/-innen), play a particularly important role in this regard. Their training has an impact on their work and thus the quality of participation. Training is completed in line with set standards. In 2009, the conference of youth ministers (Jugendministerkonferenz) adopted a catalogue of minimum requirements across Germany. The federal states also set supplementary quality standards on aspects such as the duration of training (nationwide: at least 30 hours, in some states up to 50 hours). Anyone who has completed training in line with the applicable standards can apply for the youth leader card (Jugendleiter/In-Card, Juleica). Juleica card holders are thus certified as meeting the quality and qualification requirements for voluntary youth work. The card can also be used as authentication to public bodies such as information and advice centres, youth institutions, the police and consulates.

No general quality assurance system exists in the non-formal sector. Many organisations in the non-formal sector have developed their own quality standards. Different quality management/quality assurance systems apply depending on how a project or programme is funded, as different guidelines apply in each case. This relates mainly to national and international youth work and the various formats in which it takes place. In the field of international youth work, a range of quality systems and tools are in place for the following formats: youth exchanges, expert dialogue, volunteer programmes, au pairs, seminars/training and placements. See also 'Innovation forum Global Youth: Quality in formats of international youth work (Innovationsforum Jugend global: Qualität in Formaten der Internationalen Jugendarbeit) as of 2015.

All formats aim to give children and young people the opportunity to learn how to participate in society and to make an active and voluntary contribution in any number of ways (individual or group formats), either as a participant or leader (group leader, supervisor, team leader) of an initiative. Full-time employees are relevant as they have access to suitable programmes and methods that allow them to teach young people participation skills. As such, in the context of participation, the quality assurance systems mentioned above are always relevant to all stakeholders: children, young people, full-time staff and managers.

The German children's fund (Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk) offers a nationwide training programme to become a moderator for child and youth participation. The programme provides training for individuals in child- and youth-related roles, such as experts in youth services and in formal and non-formal learning, child and youth commissioners, employees of children's offices and participation coordination bodies, as well as political and public-sector staff involved in planning, organising

and implementing participation processes involving children and young people. The programme teaches specific measures and strategies for use in everyday work.

Information about ways to encourage participation by children and young people, theoretical principles, strategies, action areas and cooperation partners is available for experts on the websites [www.kinderrechte.de](http://www.kinderrechte.de) and [www.kinderpolitik.de](http://www.kinderpolitik.de).

The event calendar page of the citizens' information portal ([Wegweiser Bürgergesellschaft](#)) has details of seminars, conferences and events dealing with civil society issues that are organised by civil society groups and charitable organisations.

The Become youth-friendly ([Jugend gerecht werden](#)) toolbox contains practical methods for youth work professionals, along with information on a range of initiatives, theoretical background knowledge, a [list of participation-related training options and more besides](#).

The Federal Network for Child and Youth Participation ([BundesNetzwerk Kinder- und Jugendbeteiligung](#)) is a think tank for positions, projects and campaigns. It lobbies for democracy as a tangible form of governance, societal model and way of life for all age groups.

The Youth Participation Resource Centre ([Servicestelle Jugendbeteiligung](#)) is a central point of contact on matters relating to youth participation in Germany. It provides information, advice and training, and supports young people by connecting them with participative youth initiatives.

The civic participation network ([Netzwerk Bürgerbeteiligung](#)) brings together people from all walks of life and professions who want to promote public participation in political decisions. The network meets annually.

The Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) set up the NECE platform ([Networking European Citizenship Education](#)) to connect stakeholders involved in citizenship education. Conferences and workshops are held on a regular basis.

### Consultations and support instruments

Youth participation is a cornerstone of (child and youth) policy-making in Germany. The legal bases for youth participation are given by:

- The [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) referring to the fundamental right of participation in Section 12 (1). The UN Convention gives children and young people the right to express their views freely in all matters that affect them. Their views must be given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child or young person.
- Section 1 of the [German Civil Code \(Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, BGB\)](#) saying: "The legal capacity of a human being begins on the completion of birth."
- In Germany, the right of petition is a basic right in Section 17 of the [Basic Law \(Grundgesetz, GG\)](#): "Every person shall have the right individually or jointly with others to address written requests or complaints to competent authorities and to the legislature."
- The right to freedom of expression has been part of the [Basic Law \(Section 5\)](#) since it first took effect: "Every person shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opin-

ions in speech, writing and pictures [...].”

- Book 8 of the Social Code – Children and Youth Services (Sozialgesetzbuch Aches Buch – Kinder- und Jugendhilfe, SGB VIII), Section 8 (1) saying that children and young people must be involved in decisions by public-sector youth services that affect them, in line with their level of development. Additional paragraphs relevant to youth participation are Section 1 (1) and (3), Section 9 (2) and Section 11 (1).
- Federal Building Code (Baugesetzbuch, BauGB) Section 1 (6) sentence 3 requiring the needs of young people to be considered.
- Works Constitution Act (Betriebsverfassungsgesetz, BetrVG) Section 60 on youth and apprentice representation.

At regional (Länder) level it is the implementation acts as laid down in Book 8 of the Social Code (Aches Buch Sozialgesetzbuch, SGB VIII), the state constitutions and the school acts (Schulgesetze) that form the basis for youth participation in the federal states.

At local level (boroughs, communities), youth participation might be guaranteed through the local constitutions of the states, the municipal codes, district regulations or district administration acts.

There is an overview of community guidelines for public participation on the civic participation website (Netzwerk Bürgerbeteiligung). In 2019, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und nukleare Sicherheit, BMU) published its own guidelines on good civic participation.

At all levels, young people were and are involved in developing and designing different strategies. This takes place in online and offline consultations. Young people are repeatedly consulted when it comes to the updating and evaluation of the strategies. Examples of strategies where young people were involved:

These notably include the federal government’s joint Youth Strategy (Jugendstrategie) containing 163 measures across all federal ministries in nine youth-related action areas. A main aim of the government’s Youth Strategy is to enable the direct, visible and effective participation of young people in the Youth Strategy. This means giving them specific opportunities to be heard and to take action. A range of formats involving young people as experts in matters that affect them are designed to ensure as many young people with wide-ranging perspectives as possible participate in developing the Youth Strategy.

These are some examples of opportunities for direct participation. No youth advisory board exists with the direct participation of young people. However, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ) set up an advisory committee on the government’s Youth Strategy (Jugendstrategie) that involves civil society organisations and representatives of youth interests.

At regional (Länder) level young people were involved in:

- developing the JES! youth strategy to help implement the Independent Youth Policy (Eigenständige Jugendpolitik) in Rhineland-Palatinate via the RLP youth forum (jugendforum RLP), the former “Good youth policy” blog (Gute Jugendpolitik) and dialogue-based events.

- developing integrative youth policy in North Rhine-Westphalia through dialogue with young people at various youth conferences and the “Rethink – think young – fresh ideas for NRW” (umdenken – jungdenken! Frische Ideen für NRW) initiative.
- developing Thuringia’s state strategy on youth participation, adopted in March 2019. Thuringia consulted young people during the development of the strategy. It held Youth Talks to give young people aged 10 to 18 the opportunity to say their views on participation and discuss the plans of the interdisciplinary working group in charge of developing the strategy. Thuringia’s youth strategy includes a mission statement, minimum standards for participation, objectives and measures.
- implementing Saxony-Anhalt’s sustainability strategy. The “Young people shape the future” (Jugend Macht Zukunft) project involves young people in shaping the sustainability strategy. The outcomes are summarised in a final report. The young participants presented their demands to Saxony-Anhalt’s Minister President Dr Reiner Haseloff.
- the work of the social committee (Sozialausschuss) in the State Parliament of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania via a series of consultations looking at what it was like to be a young person in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Jung sein in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) in 2019.
- In Bavaria, there has been a master concept to strengthen the participation of children and young people since 2022, supplemented by the website Kinder + Jugend Partizipation. The aim of the master concept is to provide further impetus for strengthening the participation of children and young people in all areas of life that affect them by means of a comprehensive cross-departmental approach at state (Land) level. A special focus is placed on strengthening the participation of socially disadvantaged or individually impaired young people, as well as children and young people with disabilities.

Young people have many opportunities to participate in their local area. For example, at the end of 2018 the district of Giessen set up an initiative called “Youth policy for the great places of tomorrow: youth-friendly towns, cities and boroughs – making Giessen more youth friendly” (Jugendpolitik für die guten Orte von morgen: Jugendgerechte Städte und Gemeinden – jugendgerechter Landkreis Gießen). The initiative offers advice to young people and funds projects and programmes to promote youth participation.

Methods for consulting young people range from youth parliaments, local youth councils, allotment of dedicated office hours for young people by local politicians, youth advisory boards and youth fora, conferences and hearings to round tables, participation projects and the participation of young people in online and offline public dialogue.

### Actors

Youth participation in political decision-making processes is open to all young people, including young people with fewer opportunities and young people with a migrant background. Public measures also have the aim to increase the diversity of participants.

Some key public authorities represented in youth consultation processes are:

- the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ), as well as other federal ministries,



- the ministries in charge of youth affairs (Jugendministerien) of the federal states,
- the Local Government Associations at Federal Level (Bundesvereinigung der kommunalen Spitzenverbände) and
- the statutory institutions in the field of youth services as members of the youth service committees (Jugendausschüsse).

Other actors in participation processes are:

- The German Federal Youth Council, (Der Deutsche Bundesjugendring) DBJR, especially with the EU Youth Dialogue,
- State student councils, (Landesschülervertretungen),
- Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance - Against Extremism and Violence (Bündnis für Demokratie und Toleranz - gegen Extremismus und Gewalt) with its peer network "JETZT - jung, engagiert, vernetzt" (NOW - young, committed, interconnected), an association of committed young people between the ages of 16 and 23 from all over Germany,
- German Children and Youth Foundation (Deutsche Kinder- und Jugendstiftung) DKJS.

Many local authorities have local youth commissioners (Jugendbeauftragte) who are usually members of the local council. Their job is to represent the concerns voiced by young people and local child and youth work organisations to the local council. The local youth commissioners guide the participation of young people and are thus an important point of contact between young people and local politics. One example of this is Bavaria: Since 2002, almost all regions of Bavaria have appointed youth commissioners to look after the concerns of local children and young people.

### Information

Generally speaking, participative processes include the documentation of the number and age of participants and the scope of demands and action recommendations that are developed as a result of these processes. All information is made available to the public. Where participation takes place online, it is more difficult to collect information on the participants as they often take part anonymously. No central office currently exists that records the extent of all government-run youth participation processes.

### Large-scales initiatives for dialogue

The YouthPolicyDays are held every two years and offer approximately 1,000 young people a forum for dialogue with the Federal Government and networking. Findings are fed into further development of the Federal Government's youth strategy and the National Action Plan for Child and Youth Participation. The Federal Government provides specific feedback on the young participants' recommendations. The Federal Youth Conference takes place every two years, alternating with the YouthPolicyDays, and is also a key component for participation at federal level to facilitate dialogue between youth and politics and to further promote youth policy awareness in politics and administration. The focus is on working groups looking at current youth policy challenges, in which a total of around 200 young people and representatives of the federal ministries enter into direct exchange. A youth team is closely involved in the preparation and implementation of the events.

A youth check (Jugend-Check) was developed on a national level. This was agreed in the coalition

agreement (Koalitionsvertrag) of the ruling parties (2013-2017). In August 2017, the German Research Institute for Public Administration (Deutsches Forschungsinstitut für öffentliche Verwaltung) began setting up the youth check competence centre (Kompetenzzentrum Jugend-Check, KomJC). The youth check aims to make visible the impact that proposed legislation will have on young people aged from 12 to 27 and incorporate the findings into the legislative process. The idea to introduce a youth check came about during discussions on an Independent Youth Policy (Eigenständige Jugendpolitik). It was based on the realisation that young people's concerns rarely get the attention they deserve in political processes.

During the 19th legislative period (2017-2021), 543 draft laws from 11 of the 14 federal ministries were examined for youth relevance and 126 youth checks were published. The youth check therefore shows that the concerns of young people must be considered across all ministries. The Competence Centre Youth Check (ComYC) also shares its experiences as an example of good practice at international events. <https://www.jugend-check.de/blog/2022/05/13/rueckblick-konferenz-zu-jugend-checks/>

The youth check itself is not an instrument for participation. However, participation formats such as the youth audit (Jugend-Audit) collect experiences from the many different living situations faced by young people to help further develop the youth check. Young people give feedback on the audit tool or on the findings of individual youth checks. The competence centre uses the findings to continually improve the youth check methodology. The aim of this ongoing development is to appropriately reflect the everyday realities faced by young people.

In 2022, Thuringia became the first federal state to introduce a youth check for the state's legislation.

The EU Youth Dialogue involves young people in implementing the EU Youth Strategy. Dialogues between young people and policymakers are a key component of this. Youth dialogue (Jugenddialog) is a platform by the German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring) giving young people the opportunity to talk to policymakers about their concerns and wishes. Youth dialogue takes place at all levels and in many formats: at EU youth conferences, in Europe-wide surveys, in national events, in projects run by local youth associations (Jugendverbände), or at neighbourhood events. For 18 months at a time, the focus is on one priority topic, which is discussed and worked on in several phases. Implementation of the EU Youth Dialogue in Germany is coordinated by the German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring).

The mitmischen.de portal of the German parliament (Deutscher Bundestag) is a direct line between young people and the German parliament. Young people can use the portal to give their opinions, discuss political topics and submit online petitions.

A youth action programme ran from 2017 to 2019 called Shaping the future together – 20 participation projects for Hesse (Gemeinsam Zukunft gestalten – 20 Partizipationsprojekte für Hessen, Programm P) with total funding of up to 1,100,000 euros. It offered non-curricular youth education activities to promote participation by young people.

The youth participation programme Jugend BeWegt in Baden-Württemberg aims to promote and integrate child and youth participation in local communities for the long term. Local communities

and associations of towns and communities that wish to implement and support youth participation locally can apply for programme funding. The programme aims to strengthen existing approaches, pool experiences and establish a long-lasting network of local communities/associations of towns and communities. The key element of the project is supportive coaching on participation. The programme is managed jointly by the youth organisation of Baden-Württemberg (Landesjugendring Baden-Württemberg) and the youth foundation of Baden-Württemberg (Jugendstiftung Baden-Württemberg).

The Youth participation resource centre of North Rhine-Westphalia (Serviceestelle für Kinder- und Jugendbeteiligung in Nordrhein-Westfalen) mainly helps politicians and youth service/youth work experts to implement participation projects. Other services include advice on planned new participation projects in towns and boroughs, and moderation, mediation or in-house training and long-term process support.

Democracy days (Demokratie-Tage) are for young people who want to play an active part in shaping their environments, and for educators and parents interested in learning and living democracy (Demokratie lernen und leben). In 2018, they are held – amongst others – in Rhineland-Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, Saxony and Hesse.

The participation network (Beteiligungsnetzwerk) run by the regional youth council of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (Landesjugendring Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) has been promoting child and youth participation since 2001. It guides, advises and trains employees from public administration, politics, schools, youth work and youth organisations, as well as children and young people, on planning and implementing participation processes and projects.

## Volunteering

A large number of actors and stakeholders participate in regulating, managing the strategic orientation of and implementing volunteering schemes in practice. At the political level, these are the lower house of the Federal Parliament (Bundestag) and various federal ministries (Bundesministerien); at the civil society level, several organisations and working groups.

Within the Federal Government, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ) is primarily responsible for the political framework around civic engagement. In 2015, a department for democracy and civic engagement (Abteilung Demokratie und Engagement) was set up inside the Ministry. Within that department, section (Referat) 114 is responsible for the youth voluntary services (Jugendfreiwilligendienste) Voluntary Social Year (Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, FSJ), Voluntary Ecological Year (Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr, FÖJ) and the International Youth Voluntary Service (Internationaler Jugendfreiwilligendienst, IJFD).

Other relevant government bodies are:

- Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben, BAFZA), a service provider affiliated with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs (BMFSFJ) that fulfils a large range of tasks in connection with the Federal Volunteer Service (Bundesfreiwilligendienst, BFD) and youth volunteering services (Jugendfreiwilligendienste)

- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ), which supports the weltwärts volunteering scheme
- Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt, AA), which supports the kulturweit volunteering scheme and handles visa issues
- Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, BMAS), which handles any social security related issues
- Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (Bundesministerium des Inneren, für Bau und Heimat, BMI), which is responsible for questions pertaining to residence and immigration for incoming volunteers.

Within the lower house of the Federal Parliament (Bundestag), the parliamentary subcommittee on civic engagement (Unterausschuss Bürgerschaftliches Engagement) of the Committee on Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Ausschuss für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend) works to continue improving the circumstances under which volunteering takes place. It discusses ongoing legislative projects that touch upon civic engagement. One of the fundamentals of its work is the set of recommendations of the Enquête commission “Future of civic engagement” (Zukunft des Bürgerschaftlichen Engagements). Between 1999 and 2002, this commission had analysed the situation concerning civic engagement in Germany before drawing up a political strategy. The subcommittee builds on this strategy and, in collaboration with civil society groups, helps to continue develop the Federal Government’s policies in the field of civic engagement.

Major non-public stakeholders in the field of volunteering are:

- Germany’s umbrella associations for independent social welfare organisations (Spitzenverbände der Freien Wohlfahrtspflege) including, inter alia: Workers’ Welfare Association (Arbeiterwohlfahrt Bundesverband e.V., AWO), Paritätischer Gesamtverband e.V. (umbrella organization in the area of voluntary welfare services), German Red Cross (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz e.V., DRK), German Caritas Association (Deutscher Caritasverband e.V.)
- German Sports Youth, part of the German Olympic Sports Confederation (Deutsche Sportjugend (dsj) im Deutschen Olympischen Sportbund e.V. (DOSB))
- International Bureau (Internationaler Bund, IB)
- German Federation for Cultural Youth Education (Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Kinder- und Jugendbildung e.V., BKJ)
- Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union (Naturschutzbund Deutschland e.V., NABU)

There are several working groups (Arbeitskreise) and networks active in the volunteering sector that work to continue developing and improving volunteering schemes:

- Action Committee Service for Peace (Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden, AGDF) AGDF is a network of organisations and institutions that engage in peace-building in Germany and abroad. They work towards improved framework conditions for and better recognition of longer-term volunteering placements.
- Federal Working Party for the Voluntary Social Year (Bundesarbeitskreis FSJ, BAK FSJ) BAK FSJ brings together the federal associations of organisations that offer Voluntary Social Year (FSJ) placements.

- Federal Working Party for the Voluntary Ecological Year (Bundesarbeitskreis FÖJ, BAK FÖJ) BAK FÖJ brings together 45 of the 49 accredited organisations that offer FÖJ placements.
- Political representation group for participants in international volunteering schemes (Politische Freiwilligenvertretung internationaler Freiwilligendienste, PFIF) PFIF, a political representation group for participants in international volunteering schemes, contributes towards the continued development of international volunteering schemes.
- Association of Protestant Volunteering Schemes (Konferenz Evangelischer Freiwilligendienste, KeF) KeF is an association of organisations offering volunteering programmes in Germany and abroad.
- Protestant Volunteering Schemes (Evangelische Freiwilligendienste) This organisation is a group of Protestant organisations offering volunteering schemes in Germany and abroad.
- Catholic Federation of Voluntary Services (Katholische Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Freiwilligendienste) This association is a network of providers of volunteering schemes in Germany and abroad that are affiliated with the Catholic church in Germany.
- International Voluntary Services Interest Group (Gesprächskreis Internationale Freiwilligendienste, GIF) GIF is part of the Learning and Helping Overseas Association (AKLHÜ e.V. – Netzwerk und Fachstelle für internationale Personelle Zusammenarbeit).
- Protestant Forum for Voluntary Services in Development Cooperation (Evangelisches Forum entwicklungspolitischer Freiwilligendienst, eFeF) eFeF is a network of Protestant and development organisations, associations and agencies that host and send volunteers on assignments through the weltwärts programme.

There is no central directory of organisations that offer volunteering opportunities for young people. Online, there are a number of lists, such as these:

- Volunteering agencies in Germany
- Opportunities for volunteers as listed by AKLHÜ
- Volunteer exchanges
- Opportunities for civic engagement and sources of funding in the development field
- Organisations offering volunteering placements under the Federal Voluntary Service (Bundesfreiwilligendienst)
- List of sources of information concerning FSJ/FÖJ placements
- Points of contact in a variety of areas in which volunteering is possible

Germany's federal structure is also reflected in the volunteering field. At the federal (national) level, responsibility lies with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend). At the Länder (state) level, this role is played by the competent state ministries, e.g., in Baden-Württemberg the responsible ministry is the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration (Ministerium für Soziales und Integration). There is currently no coherent civic engagement policy in place between the federal and Länder levels.

Most volunteering schemes are subject to federal legislation, such as the youth voluntary schemes Voluntary Social Year (Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr, FSJ) and Voluntary Ecological Year (Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr, FÖJ), as well as the Federal Volunteer Service (Bundesfreiwilligendienst, BFD). The BFD is managed and funded exclusively at the federal level, whereas in the case of FSJ and FÖJ the Federal Government is only responsible for funding the educational support given to volunteers;

all other tasks are managed by the federal states in question. Non-profit organisations, in their capacity as civil society groups, are responsible for managing and implementing the schemes, which includes selecting and supporting volunteers. The implementing organisations take care of assigning the volunteers to the places of assignment or the projects they manage.

As a rule, the federal ministries are required to work together in matters that relate to two or more federal ministries. Cross-sectoral cooperation as well as cooperation with other departments in another federal ministry and with the Federal Chancellery (Bundeskanzleramt), the lower (Bundestag) and upper house (Bundesrat) of parliament, the Mediation Committee (Vermittlungsausschuss), and the supreme state authorities of the federal states is governed by the Joint Rules of Procedure of the Federal Ministries (Gemeinsame Geschäftsordnung der Bundesministerien, GGO).

The advisory council for the Federal Volunteer Service (Beirat für den Bundesfreiwilligendienst) advises the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ) on issues relating to the Federal Volunteer Service (Bundesfreiwilligendienst, BFD). It meets once a year. It consists of 23 members that are elected for four years. Its members are the federal spokespersons for volunteers and representatives of the BFD central offices (Zentralstellen), of churches, of employees' and employers' associations, and of the federal states and the local government central associations. There is no such institution for the youth voluntary services (Jugendfreiwilligendienste).

An interministerial working group consisting of representatives of the competent federal ministries - the BMFSFJ, the Federal Foreign Office (Auswärtiges Amt, AA) <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/> and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ) coordinates and discusses the international youth voluntary schemes offered by the Federal Government, e.g., the International Youth Voluntary Service (Internationaler Jugendfreiwilligendienst) and other voluntary services such as weltwärts or kulturweit). The working group also discusses adjustments with regard to visa issues, the recognition of placements abroad, health issues, security situations. The second-tier authority of BMFSFJ, the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben, BAFzA), is also present in this interministerial working group.

There are also consultations between BMFSFJ and the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales, BMAS) relating to social security issues of volunteers at home and abroad or questions such as, e.g., the labour market neutrality of volunteering schemes.

### **The National Volunteering Strategy**

The Federal Government's (Bundesregierung) youth strategy is entitled "A shared responsibility: Policy for, with and by young people. The Federal Government's Youth Strategy" (In gemeinsamer Verantwortung: Politik für, mit und von Jugend. Die Jugendstrategie der Bundesregierung). It makes specific mention of volunteering, along with participation and democracy, as fields of action that the Federal Government wishes to focus on. Voluntary services (Freiwilligendienste) are covered in greater detail in the civic engagement strategy (Engagementstrategie) of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ). The strategy is entitled "BMFSFJ civic engagement strategy: Strategic orientation of engagement policy (Engagementstrategie BMFSFJ: Strategische Ausrichtung der En-

agementpolitik). It was adopted in early 2016 and represents the terms of reference for the 18th parliamentary term (2013-2018). The strategy aims to create a favourable environment for civic engagement and give it greater recognition. It covers civic engagement across all age groups, including young people. A new strategy for the 2018-2021 parliamentary term has yet to be presented.

The youth strategy (Jugendstrategie) of the Federal Government describes the challenges and perspectives faced by young people in Germany. Building on this, it outlines the core aspects of the youth strategy: participation by and greater visibility for young people, and the acceptance of joint responsibility. The strategy calls for greater recognition of young people's civic engagement, the creation of stable framework conditions and easy access to funding opportunities. Finally, it calls for target group-appropriate access to civic engagement opportunities.

The civic engagement strategy (Engagementstrategie) of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth provides a definition of civic engagement, describes the status quo regarding civic engagement in Germany, and highlights the challenges. The strategy identifies four principles that should drive civic engagement policy: a trisectorial approach under which civil society, the private sector and policymakers cooperate; interministerial cooperation; coherence between various civic engagement policy priorities; and a favourable legal framework. It also calls for new approaches to be found for areas where there is urgent need for action.

The BMFSFJ strategy identifies the following six main areas of action:

- Promoting the programme infrastructure for civic engagement
- Strengthening the culture of recognition of civic engagement through, e.g., awards
- Stabilising and continuing to develop volunteering schemes as a specific form of engagement
- Structuring research into civic engagement
- Safeguarding results-oriented promotion of civic engagement
- Strengthening public perception of civic engagement.

The target groups among which civic engagement should be promoted include people in rural areas, individuals from less educated backgrounds, and members of the refugee and migrant community.

Responsibility for implementing the youth strategy lies with the entire Federal Government (Bundesregierung), with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth taking the lead.

Responsibility for the civic engagement strategy (Engagementstrategie) and developments associated with it lies with the BMFSFJ, specifically the democracy and civic engagement department (Abteilung Demokratie und Engagement). It works to create favourable framework conditions for civic engagement, ensure reliable funding and promote the recognition of various forms of civic engagement.

The current civic engagement strategy of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth was adopted in January 2016. The concerns of civil society are taken into account in all areas covered by the strategy. The Federal Government is tasked with drawing up

a civic engagement report (Engagementbericht) once per legislative period and to outline how this engagement can be developed further. The third civic engagement report, entitled “Civil society of the future: Young people’s civic engagement in the digital age” (Zukunft Zivilgesellschaft: Junges Engagement im digitalen Zeitalter) was published in 2020.

Important civic engagement promotion programmes are subjected to an impact analysis in order to ensure a results-oriented approach. One example of this is the impact analysis of the sponsor scheme (Patenschaftsprogramm) under the federal programme “People supporting people” (Menschen stärken Menschen), whose outcomes were presented in 2017.

## Youth volunteering

Germany has two national volunteering schemes, volunteering being a specific kind of civic engagement: the youth voluntary services (Jugendfreiwilligendienste) and the Federal Volunteer Service (Bundesfreiwilligendienst, BFD). They are aimed at different target groups and are subject to different legislation. Volunteering opportunities are available in a wide range of areas:

- Social care, e.g., kindergartens or day-care centres, retirement and care homes, hospitals, outpatient social or care services, emergency services, civilian protection, or disaster relief
- Culture and monument preservation, e.g., memorial sites, museums, cultural associations, archives, theatres or youth clubs
- Education, e.g., special schools, all-day schools or media education programmes
- Sports, e.g., in sports clubs or associations, “exercise-oriented” kindergartens (Bewegungskindergarten) or leisure and sports activities
- Integration and inclusion, e.g., facilities for people with a disability, or schemes assisting refugees and migrants to integrate
- Democracy, e.g., as part of a voluntary year to promote youth participation (Freiwilliges Jahr Beteiligung zur Förderung von Jugendbeteiligung)
- Environment, especially for Voluntary Ecological Year placements (Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr), e.g., in an environment or conservation association, conservation centre, landscape maintenance and horticulture, farming and animal husbandry, forestry, environmental technology and renewable energies, animal care, environmental education, environmental science and environment agencies.

The rules and regulations surrounding the youth voluntary services schemes Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr (Voluntary Social Year, FSJ) and Freiwilliges Ökologisches Jahr (Voluntary Ecological Year, FÖJ) are laid down in the Act to Promote Youth Voluntary Services (Gesetz zur Förderung der Jugendfreiwilligendienste, JFDG), which came into force effective 1 June 2008 (last amended 12 December 2019). These schemes are designed for young people who have completed full-time compulsory education but are under the age of 27. The Act sets out the general framework and stipulates basic parameters for volunteers to take part in these schemes, for example the duration of a voluntary service, what organisations may be accredited as providers of youth voluntary services and which labour law, health and safety provisions and data protection provisions must be observed.

The service unit for youth voluntary services (Servicestelle für Jugendfreiwilligendienste), which is attached to the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben, BAFzA), advises and supports organisations, volunteers’ places



of work and volunteers. The FSJ Bundestutorat (national tutoring group) of BAFzA is responsible for quality development and assurance in regard to the educational support provided. It assists the educational staff working for non-affiliated organisations in providing this educational support. It also organises national conferences for experts working in this field and conducts statistical surveys and evaluations.

The Federal Volunteer Service (Bundesfreiwilligendienst, BFD) is a scheme for everyone in Germany who wishes to contribute to the common good outside of work or school. It is open to everyone who has completed full-time compulsory education. Depending on the federal state, this can include young people aged 16 or even 15. The BFD was introduced upon the coming into force of the Federal Volunteer Service Act (Bundesfreiwilligendienstgesetz) on 28 April 2011 (last amended 12 December 2019).

The competent authority is the Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben, BAFzA). It is supported by what are known as central offices (Zentralstellen), which are responsible for providing support to the volunteers' places of work and the distribution of funds. BAFzA also deploys

The civic engagement strategy (Engagementstrategie) of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ) points out that the level of civic engagement among young people has declined slightly in recent years, due amongst other things to increased time pressure, in turn due to rising expectations in terms of education, training and the transition from school to work. The resulting need to remain geographically more mobile and the loss of one's social surroundings were other factors that have led to volunteers discontinuing the activity prematurely.

The quality of Germany's national volunteering schemes is assured by the existence of various sets of regulations.

The regulations pertaining to the Federal Volunteer Service are known as the "framework regulations pertaining to training and guidance for the with particular reference to training courses and the educational staff used for this purpose" (Rahmenrichtlinie für die pädagogische Begleitung im Bundesfreiwilligendienst (BFD) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Seminararbeit und des dabei eingesetzten pädagogischen Personals). They were adopted on 24 July 2013 and stipulate minimum standards and quality features of the training and guidance given to BFD volunteers, with specific reference to training courses and the educational staff used for this purpose. Organisations offering volunteering schemes have developed their own quality standards, for instance:

- a group of Catholic organisations offering volunteering placements (katholische Trägergruppe),
- the German peace movement Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden.

Main government agencies and organisations engaged in quality assurance in national volunteering schemes:

- Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (BMFSFJ) as source of funding
- Federal Office of Family Affairs and Civil Society Functions (Bundesamt für Familie und

zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben (BAFzA), especially in regard to the recognition of places of assignment in connection with the Federal Volunteer Service (Bundesfreiwilligendienst) and the youth voluntary services FSJ and FÖJ

- Quifd, the agency for quality in volunteering schemes (Agentur für Qualität in Freiwilligendiensten)
- IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany (Fachstelle für Internationale Jugendarbeit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland e.V.), responsible for training courses, advisory services and publications relating to all international youth work formats, including national and international volunteering schemes

## Ireland<sup>47</sup>

### Youth participation/engagement strategies

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth is the government Ireland's National Strategy on youth participation is The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making. The National Strategy was introduced in 2015 and covers the timeframe from 2015 until 2020.

The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making aims to address participation at a national, regional and local level.

The main elements of the national strategy are:

- The background and rationale for the participation of children and young people in decision-making.

The objectives of the strategy:

- Definition, model and principles of children and young people's participation in decision-making
- The legal, policy and infrastructural supports to implement the strategy.

The strategy focuses on the everyday lives of children and young people and the places and spaces in which they are entitled to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives.

Therefore, the strategy identifies the following objectives and priority areas for action:

- Children and young people will have a voice in decisions made in their local communities.
- Children and young people will have a voice in decision-making in early education, schools and the wider formal and non-formal education systems.
- Children and young people will have a voice in decisions that affect their health and well-being, including on the health and social services delivered to them.
- Children and young people will have a voice in the Courts and legal.

The strategy contains a series of additional objectives, which include:

- Promoting effective leadership to champion and promote participation of children and young people.
- Development of education and training for professionals working with and on behalf of children and young people
- Mainstreaming the participation of children and young people in the development of policy, legislation, and research.

A key priority of the strategy is that seldom-heard children and young people are enabled to take part in decision-making. This is considered to be particularly critical in the case of children living in

<sup>47</sup> <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/ireland/overview>

the care of the State or in receipt of child protection and welfare services.

### **Learning to participate/engage**

There is no specific national strategy which applies to social and civic competences in Ireland.

### **Formal learning**

Citizenship education is taught in second-level schools in Ireland as a separate subject called 'Politics and Society.' Politics and Society was introduced as a senior cycle subject in 2016 and was examined for the first time in 2018.

The recommended teaching time for Politics and Society is one hour 20 minutes per week, i.e., a double class. Weekly class time includes engagement in participatory learning activities and undertaking project work. The facilitation of the citizenship project takes in the region of 30 hours.

The main learning objectives of Politics and Society are to develop:

- an understanding of the social systems within which people act: locally, nationally and more widely
- an understanding of concepts which underpin contemporary systems of government and of the diverse models for making these concepts operational
- an understanding of and a respect for human rights and responsibilities, for human dignity and for democratic modes of governance
- an understanding of and a respect for sustainable development
- a commitment to and a capacity for active participation in the learner's social and political worlds
- a commitment to and a capacity for critical, discursive and independent thinking
- a commitment to and a capacity for engagement in peaceful and democratic means of resolving conflicts
- a sense of care for others and a respect for and a valuing of diversity in all areas of human life within the parameters of human rights principles
- the capacity to analyse and interpret qualitative and quantitative social and political research data, and to use such data carefully in forming opinions and coming to conclusions.

### **Non-formal and informal learning**

Foróige Youth Citizenship Programme is a youth development programme that promotes young people's civic and social skills. Foróige is the largest youth organisation in Ireland, working with over 50,000 young people aged 10-18 every year through volunteer-led Clubs and staff-led Youth Projects. The aim of the programme is to enable young people to make a positive difference in their community by taking part in a citizenship project.

The programme involves young people researching the needs of their community, organising practical action in response, evaluating the effectiveness of their work and reflecting on what they're learning along the way.

The programme has an explicit commitment to inclusion of young people who traditionally would

not have entered the Citizenship Programme. For example, there has been a significant increase in entries from projects such as Garda (Police) Youth Diversion.

Garda Youth Diversion Projects are community based and supported youth development projects which seek to divert young people from becoming involved (or further involved) in anti-social or criminal behaviour. These projects facilitate personal development and promote civic responsibility.

Neighborhood Youth Projects (NYPs) are community based preventative adolescent projects for young people experiencing adversity

The Aldi Foróige Youth Citizenship Awards are open to all young people aged 10 - 18 involved in citizenship projects or activities in their youth clubs or groups. This includes young people involved in Foróige youth clubs or groups, other youth clubs or groups and Comhairle na nÓg (local child and youth councils).

The Awards Showcase gives young people the opportunity to display their citizenship projects/activities and gain recognition for the work they have done to help improve their communities.

The Foróige Youth Citizenship Programme is measured against indicators of good practice in youth civic engagement.

These indicators include:

- Organised efforts are required to promote youth civic engagement and encourage young people to see that they can make a difference
- Facilitate young people to input into what citizenship means rather than telling them what 'good citizenship' is
- Programmes should be action-orientated, providing real opportunities for young people to engage in civic action
- Promote skills development and reflection
- Provide clarity regarding the degree of youth ownership, avoid 'adultism'
- Promote adult-youth partnerships
- Have structured guidelines to encourage project completion
- Encourage exposure to diverse social networks
- Encourage participation of young people who traditionally may not be involved in civic activities

The National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) is the quality assurance framework for non-formal learning in Ireland. The aim of the National Quality Standards Framework (NQSF) is to ensure that youth work organisations provide quality services to young people.

## Consultations and support instruments

At national level, several Government departments and state agencies have since 2000 developed national policies, strategies, plans, sets of standards and frameworks that name the participation of children and young people in decision-making as a key objective with accompanying commitments.

These include:

- [National Play Policy: Ready, Steady, Play](#) (2019)
- [National Recreation Policy for Young People: Teenspace](#) (2018)
- [National Action Plan for Social Inclusion](#), (2007-2016)
- [The Agenda for Children's Services](#), (2007)
- [Report of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship](#), (2007)
- [National Strategy for Service User Involvement in the Irish Health Service](#), (2008-2013)
- [National Youth Justice Strategy](#), 2021-2027
- [National Drugs Strategy](#) (Interim), 2009-2016
- [Steering Group Report on a National Substance Misuse Strategy](#), February 2012
- [An Garda Síochána Children and Young Person's Strategy](#), 2012-2014
- [Youth Café Best Practice and Toolkit](#)
- [Ireland's National Traveler/Roma Integration Strategy](#), 2011
- [National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives](#), 2011-2016
- [Youth Justice Action Plan: Tackling Youth Crime](#), 2014-2018
- [National Policy Framework for Children and Young People: Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures](#), 2014-2020
- [National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making](#), 2021.
- [The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making](#) (2015-2020) builds on the National Children's Strategy's infrastructure for children and young people's participation. The National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making was also launched 2021.

## Citizen Participation Unit

The [Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth](#) (DCEDIY) has a dedicated Citizen Participation Unit, which takes the lead and national role in ensuring that 'children have a voice on matters that affect their lives and their views will be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity'. The work of the Participation unit is guided by Article 12 of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) and is directed by the belief that children and young people are the citizens of today and not just the adults of tomorrow.

The work of this Unit is responsible for much of the progress achieved under Goal 1 of the [National Children's Strategy](#) through the development of effective structures for children's participation in decision-making, conducting consultations and dialogues with children and young people, and the development of evidence-based policy in keeping with national and international best practice.

The DCEDIY funds and oversees [Comhairle na nÓg](#), [Dáil na nÓg](#) and the Children and Young People's Participation Support Team and has established an effective mechanism for collaboration with academic institutions on children's participation. [Comhairle na nÓg](#), and [Dáil na nÓg](#) are de-

scribed in Chapter 5.3 Youth representation bodies.

### **Children and Young People's Participation Support Team**

The DCEDIY Children and Young People's Participation Support Team includes:

- staff from the DCEDIY Citizen Participation Unit
- three regional Participation Officers
- a Children's Participation Administrator from Foróige and Youth Work Ireland, who are contracted by the DCEDIY.

DCEDIY Children and Young People's Participation Support Team works on building and developing best practice, conducting participation initiatives and supporting existing participation structures.

The regional Participation Officers have a particular role in supporting the work of Comhairle na nÓg and Dáil na nÓg through:

- providing support, advice and training for organisers of Comhairle na nÓg
- conducting regional networking sessions for young members of Comhairle na nÓg
- conducting regional networking and development sessions for adult organisers of Comhairle na nÓg
- working with the DCEDIY in overseeing expenditure under the DCEDIY Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund.

### **Children and Young People's Participation Hub**

Hub na nÓg (Youth Hub) is a national centre of excellence and coordination in the area of youth participation. The DCEDIY committed to the establishment of a national Hub to support implementation of the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making (2015-2020) (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2015).

Hub na nÓg supports Government Departments, State agencies and non-government organisations to give children and young people a voice in decision-making on issues that affect their lives, with a particular focus on those that are seldom heard.

The key objectives of the Hub are to:

- champion and promote participation.
- create resources and training materials.
- conduct training.
- document and disseminate learning.
- establish an online children's participation database.

The vision for the Participation Hub includes the establishment by the DCEDIY of strategic formal partnerships with organisations and initiatives in the statutory and non-statutory sectors to develop and document innovative best practice in children and young people's participation in decision-making.

### The research advisory group

The DCEDIY Children and Young People's Participation Research Advisory Group was established in 2013. Its aims are:

- to explore mechanisms for the DCEDIY to collaborate with academics and researchers in documenting children's participation initiatives, led and carried out by the DCEDIY
- to develop education and training on children's participation

The group is comprised of officials from the DCEDIY Citizen Participation Unit and the Research Unit, together with senior academics from third-level institutions with expertise in children's rights and children and young people's participation in decision-making.

The role of the Advisory Group is:

- to support the DCEDIY in finding suitable academic collaborators to write up and co-author the participation initiatives of the DCEDIY;
- to support the DCEDIY in developing education and training materials;
- to collaborate with the DCEDIY in building a strong evidence base for children's participation in decision-making.

### Actors

The key youth actors involved in consultative processes are young people from Comhairle na nÓg (child and youth councils). However, young people are generally recruited to be involved in consultations based on the theme of the consultation. For example, young people who have been adopted were recruited to participate in consultations on adoption policy conducted by the DCEDIY.

The DCEDIY Citizen's Participation Unit collaborates with other Government departments, statutory bodies and non-governmental organisations in providing opportunities for children and young people to have a voice in decisions that affect their lives, with a strong focus on ensuring participation by seldom-heard children and young people.

### Information

Information on the numbers of young people consulted as part of consultations are recorded in youth consultation reports.

Since July 2017, Hub na nÓg and the Participation Support Team is working with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth in planning and conducting consultations with children and young people on various issues such as:

- the Oberstown Standards;
- the layout of the new Children's Court;
- the voice of the child in Adoption proceedings.



## Outcomes

The outcomes of these consultations resulted in young people having a direct input into policy-making.

### Large-scales initiatives for dialogue

Large-scale initiatives for dialogue or debate between public institutions and young people  
The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth have conducted many consultations with young people on behalf of themselves and other government departments and bodies in recent years including:

- Consultations with young people into youth mental health and well-being in Ireland on behalf of the Youth Mental Health Taskforce
- Consultations with young people on the implications of Brexit on behalf of the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister)
- Consultations on the inclusion of Children and Young People in the Recruitment of the Ombudsman for Children
- Consultations with Children and Young People about Human Rights in Ireland in advance of the United Nations Universal Periodic Review on behalf of the Department of Justice and Equality
- Consultations with young people concerning harmful internet communications including cyber bullying on behalf of the Law Reform Commission
- Consultations with young people on the development of the National Youth Strategy
- Consultations with Young People on Reform of the Junior Cycle on behalf of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA)

## Volunteering

### *The National Volunteering Strategy*

The National Volunteering Strategy (2021-2025) sets out a long-term vision for volunteering and volunteers in Ireland. This Strategy sets out a general direction for government policy in relation to volunteers and the volunteering environment. The purpose of the Strategy is to recognise, support and promote the unique value and contribution of volunteers to Irish society. This Strategy has five strategic objectives:

- To increase participation and diversity in volunteering including embracing new trends and innovation.
- To facilitate, develop and support the Volunteering Environment so that it contributes to vibrant and sustainable communities.
- To recognise, celebrate and communicate the value and impact of volunteers and volunteering in all its forms.
- To promote ethical and skills-based international volunteering to deliver results for beneficiaries and to enhance Global Citizenship in Ireland.
- To improve policy coherence on volunteering across Government both nationally and locally.

The definition of volunteering is set out in the National Volunteering Strategy and is defined as: 'Volunteering is any time willingly given, either formally or informally, for the common good and without financial gain.'

This definition covers a wide range of 'volunteering activities' for example-

- Formal volunteering taking place within organisations (including institutions and agencies);
- Informal volunteering that which takes place outside an organisational setting; and
- The individual who, in many cases, does not consider what they do as volunteering but sees his or her actions as 'lending a hand' or 'being neighbourly.'

'To put it simply, volunteering is doing more than you have to, because you want to, because you care.'

Partnership is a core value underpinning the Strategy. It states, "We developed this Strategy through partnership and a collaborative approach and this will continue as we implement the Strategy actions over the coming years." As part of developing the Strategy, the Department of Rural and Community Development issued a Call for Input, which sought input from the public and stakeholders.

The Strategy acknowledges that one of the challenges to Ireland's volunteering infrastructure is a need to encourage cross-sectoral dialogue.

Volunteer Ireland is the national volunteer development organisation and a support body for Volunteer Centres in Ireland. The key roles of Volunteer Ireland are:

- To recognise, support and celebrate volunteering in Ireland in a variety of ways including major campaigns like the National Volunteering Week and the Volunteer Ireland Awards
- To advocate on behalf of volunteers and volunteer involving organisations to create the best possible environment for volunteering in Ireland
- To manage I-VOL, the national database of Irish volunteering opportunities and listings
- To support Volunteer Centres based in each country in Ireland.
- To deliver training in best practice in volunteer management to organisations that involve volunteers.
- To provide support and guidance to companies interested in volunteering.
- To develop and support best practice in volunteering and Volunteer Centres.

The Department of Rural and Community Development is the main government department responsible for volunteering. The Department is responsible for Voluntary Organisation Funding. This includes the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO). SSNO provides funding to voluntary organisations in Ireland. Organisations that want to apply must focus on providing supports and improving the lives of disadvantaged people.

The Public Participation Network is a network that allows local authorities to connect with community groups around the country. The Public Participation Network is the 'go to' for all local authori-

ties who wish to benefit from community and voluntary expertise in their area.

Boardmatch Ireland is the national corporate governance charity in Ireland. It was set up to improve governance in the not-for-profit sector by strengthening boards and management committees, providing both services and support to not-for-profit organisations and charities to help them improve and strengthen their board composition.

It allows candidates to volunteer their time, energy and skills to the non-profit (community and voluntary sector) at a board level. The free Boardmatch service matches a candidate's skills and expertise with the needs of a non-profit organisation.

### **Youth volunteering**

There is no national programme for youth volunteering in Ireland. However, there are a range of programmes and initiatives targeting young people that promote youth volunteering.

Young Social Innovators (YSI) provides a range of services to young people, including the Junior and Senior Innovation Action Programmes. Their programmes and initiatives target young people in second level schools, Youthreach or youth organisations. YSI programmes and initiatives support young people and their educators to develop innovative solutions to tackle social issues in their communities and the wider society. These programmes promote education for social innovation by empowering and supporting young people to realise their potential as social innovators, giving them the skills and confidence to tackle social issues facing them, their communities and wider society. YSI programmes and initiatives often include volunteering.

YSI's last strategy was called 'Social Innovation Thinking Differently, A Plan to Develop Ireland's Innovators and Entrepreneurs who will Build a Fairer, Inclusive and Sustainable World.' This Strategy featured YSI's history, vision and impact stories from young social innovators across Ireland. It also outlined YSI goals and actions for 2017-2020 and provided commentary on Ireland's potential to be a leader in social innovation, including what steps should be taken to ensure this can happen. YSI is also endorsed in the Social Inclusion Division under the Department of Social Protection in particular under the recently published Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025; Ambition, Goals and Commitments.

This programme is funded through several public and private sponsors, including the Department of Rural and Community Development.

Gaisce or 'great achievement' in Irish, is a self-development programme for young people between the ages of 15-25 in Ireland.

There are three levels of Gaisce award- Bronze, Silver and Gold:

- The minimum starting age for the Bronze award is 15 years and the average length is 26 weeks;
- The minimum starting age for the Silver award is 16 years and the average length is 52 weeks;
- The minimum starting age for the Gold award is 17 years and the average length is 78

weeks.

The core values of Gaisce are empowerment, inclusion and equality, respect and excellence. There are four different challenge areas in the Award programme. Participants must participate in each challenge area for at least one hour per week to earn an Award.

The four challenge areas are:

- Community involvement- this usually involves some form of volunteering.
- Personal skills
- Physical recreation
- Adventure journey.

Young people are supported in their journey to achieving their Gaisce Award by an adult supervisor called a President's Award Leader (PAL). A PAL can be any adult (other than a family member) who is involved in supporting the personal development of young people.

Over 300,000 young people have participated in the Gaisce Programme.

Gaisce is a charitable organisation that receives funding from a number of public and private sponsors. The main public sponsor is the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

The Pope John Paul II Award is a faith achievement award for young people between the age of 16 and 18. It is non-competitive, inclusive, flexible, and voluntary. It enables participants to take an active part in the life of their Church and in the life of their community and society.

Localise is a youth volunteering programme. The programme engages young people aged 11 and over in local community work. It is a not-for-profit company and is supported by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability and Youth and the Office of Migrant Integration within the Department of Justice. Localise runs the 'Volunteering for All' award that is a nationwide initiative that recognises and affirms volunteering and charitable work undertaken by young people from all backgrounds and circumstances.

Other youth volunteering programmes are:

Environment:

- ECO-UNESCO
- Fridays For Future

Emergency Services:

- Order of Malta
- Red Cross Youth

Outdoor Pursuits:

- [Scouting Ireland](#)

Rural:

- [Macra na Ferime](#) (Stalwarts of the Land)

Sport:

- [Gaelic Athletic Association \(GAA\)](#)
- [Football Association of Ireland \(FAI\)](#)

Recent information on youth volunteering in Ireland is limited. The National Volunteering Strategy sets out that by 2026 there will be an ‘increase in the evidence base of the quantity and demographic breakdown of volunteers, contribution to volunteers and the value and benefits of volunteering individuals, groups and communities.’ (pg. 40) To achieve this, the Strategy includes the medium-term action of establishing a National Survey on Volunteering to provide baseline data on volunteers.

Statistics from the national database of volunteering opportunities, iVol, show that of 13,148 volunteers registered in 2016, 418 (3%) were aged 16-17 years old and 2,428 (18%) were aged 18-22 years.

A report published by the National Youth Council in 2011 titled ‘[Lending a Hand: Young People and Volunteering](#)’ found that the Transition Year (TY) programme in schools is the main place where young people get involved in volunteering activity. This is usually through national volunteering programmes such as The Gaisce Award (The President’s Award) or the Young Social Innovators Initiative Programme.

Since the call for volunteers to support the community response to COVID-19 went out in March 2020, over 30,000 indicated their willingness to volunteer in response to the crisis on the national volunteering database, I-VOL. Although there are no statistics on young persons’ volunteering during the pandemic, it should be presumed a percentage of newly registered volunteers were young persons.

There are no top-level policy measures to support young volunteers established in Ireland, to cover indirect expenses participants might incur. However, individual organisations may cover volunteer’s expenses. Legal rights protecting volunteers are covered by the [Civil Law Bill 2010](#).

## Luxembourg<sup>48</sup>

### Youth participation/engagement strategies

A stand-alone national strategy on youth participation does not exist. However, the development of young people's social and civic competences is an important objective of the Luxembourgish youth policy. As stated in the 2008 Youth Law (Art. 1,3), one objective of youth policy is to contribute to the education of young people as responsible and active citizens who are respectful of democracy, values and fundamental rights of society. Young people's participation is also an important issue discussed in the 2012 Youth Pact and in the Youth Pact 2017-2020. Promoting the participation of young people is defined as a main objective of youth policy.

The 2012 Youth Pact outlines 5 action fields and defines several objectives to support the young people of Luxembourg. The 4th action field is titled 'Establish young people as stakeholders'. It aims at fostering the participatory potential of young people. The 4th action field of the Youth Pact calls for establishing young people as stakeholders by:

- Eliminating gender boundaries
- Promoting and developing youth participation
- Promoting and extending participation opportunities
- Promoting access to culture
- Implementing the national action plan regarding integration and the fight against discrimination.

Most of the actions are implemented at national level and address very diverse political fields.

The Youth Pact 2017-2020 defines political objectives with regard to 3 domains:

- School-to-work transitions
- Housing transitions
- Participation.

The Youth Pact 2017-2020 aims at strengthening the participation of all young people by endeavouring to:

- Position youth participation in formal and non-formal education:
  - Promote the development of a thematic expertise of the actors in the field of non-formal education in the domain of democracy, values and participation.
  - Develop a coherent approach for the participation and active citizenship of pupils in schools.
  - Develop the method of structured dialogue further, both for youth organisations and young people that are not members.
- Develop inclusive participation for particular target groups:
  - Encourage the development of models for inclusive participation by the existing tools (funding schemes, trainings, contracts, publications, pilot projects)
  - Promote the development of concepts and methods of youth work in order to fos-

48 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/luxembourg/overview>

- ter the inclusion of young people with disabilities
- Foster the cultural participation of young people by making use of their inclusive potential.
- Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders through participation in networking:
  - Create a platform to set up a network for all actors involved in promoting the participation and citizenship of young people.

The Youth Pact 2017-2020 does not define any concrete mechanisms, outputs or time frames for the implementation of the different actions. Nor does it name the public or non-public actors involved and their specific role in the process of the implementation.

Many and various public authorities (policy departments, administrations) are involved in the implementation of the political actions defined in the Youth Pact (e.g., the National Youth Service, the National Employment Administration, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Housing, Ministry of Equal Opportunities, etc.). The main body for the implementation and supervision of the Youth Pact is the interdepartmental committee. To date, no evaluation of the implementation of the strategy has been conducted.

### **Learning to participate/engage**

The development of young people's social and civic competences is an important objective of the Luxembourgish youth policy. As stated in the [2008 Youth Law](#) (Art. 1,3), one objective of youth policy is to contribute to the education of young people as responsible and active citizens, respectful of democracy, values and fundamental rights of society. The [2009 law on compulsory education](#) (loi du 6 février 2009 relative à l'obligation scolaire) highlights the importance of the development of social and civic competences at schools. According to this law, the objectives of the schools are to 'prepare pupils to assume their role as responsible citizens in a democratic society' and 'educate them on ethical values based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [...]'. (Art. 3). An important project to promote civic education in youth is the strategy for civic education launched in 2014 by the [Ministry of Education, Children and Youth](#). The main element of this strategy includes the establishment of a Centre for Political Education that brings together all scholarly and extracurricular initiatives in the domain of civic education.

### **Formal learning**

Citizenship education is incorporated in curricula for general and vocational education at the upper secondary level. It is taught as a separate subject (in the form of lessons on 'citizenship education', 'civic education', 'knowledge of the contemporary world'). Citizenship education is also taught as an integrated subject of the compulsory learning area 'life and society' ([European Commission, EACEA & Eurydice, 2017](#)). The recommended minimum number of hours of compulsory citizenship education as a separate subject during a notional year at primary and general secondary education is 29.9 hours per year ([European Commission, EACEA & Eurydice, 2017](#)). Objectives of citizenship education at upper secondary level are the following ([EACEA & Eurydice, 2012](#), p. 30):

- Developing political literacy (basic facts, key concepts)
- Acquiring critical thinking and analytical skills
- Developing values, attitudes, and behaviour (sense of respect, tolerance, solidarity, etc.)

- Encouraging active participation and engagement at the school level
- Encouraging active participation and engagement in the local community.

In order to strengthen the quality of citizenship education in schools, a teacher specialisation in citizenship education has been implemented and the provision of guidance and support material was further developed.

### **Non-formal and informal learning**

There are participative structures both at secondary and postsecondary level of education (Higher education student unions, school student unions). Further participative structures include the Youth Parliament, the Higher Youth Council, or the National Youth Council. These structures provide learning opportunities for young people and contribute to the development of young people's social and civic competences. The revised Youth Law of 2016 introduces mechanisms of quality assurance in non-formal education, which are defined in the working paper 'Guidelines for non-formal education in childhood and youth'. The law defines action fields in the area of non-formal learning. 'Development of values, participation and democracy' is defined as one important action field. The National Youth Service organises, in cooperation with the National Youth Council, several training programmes (stages pour groupes scolaires) for members of pupil committees and for school mediators (see also: [enfancejeunesse.lu](http://enfancejeunesse.lu)). The Centre for Political Education is an important institution that supports non-formal learning activities focusing on social and civic competences (see: Information providers/counselling structures).

The revised Youth Law of 2016 has implemented a system of quality assurance for non-formal education. The objectives and organisation of the quality assurance process have been defined by the framework of non-formal education for open youth work in 2017.

Teachers, trainers, non-formal education workers and youth workers are offered the opportunity to receive training and certification related to the development of social and civic competences. The National Youth Service is the main provider of training opportunities in the field of non-formal education (for an overview of the various training activities, see: [agenda.snj.lu](http://agenda.snj.lu)) The Training Institute of National Education (IFEN; Institut de formation de l'Éducation nationale) provides training courses for elementary and secondary school teachers in civic education.

### **Consultations and support instruments**

Youth participation and consultation is a basic principle of youth policy in Luxembourg. The 2008 Youth Law promotes youth participation and consultation on local and national level, mostly by reinforcing existing measures and organisations or by establishing new structures. At national level, youth consultation is mainly ensured by three bodies:

- The Higher Youth Council, which was introduced by the 2008 Youth Law, is an advisory board studying youth issues, either on its own initiative or by request of the government. The council recommends reforms and innovations aiming at increasing young people's well-being (2008 Youth Law, Art. 12).
- The National Youth Council is an umbrella organisation that gathers the youth organisations in Luxembourg. Its main objective is to increase active participation of young people



in society.

Organisations associated with the National Youth Council are political youth movements, labour union youth movements, scouts and guides, socio-cultural and leisure associations for the young.

- 3The National Assembly of Young People, established by the 2008 Youth Law, gives young people and youth organisations the possibility to participate in the examination of all issues related to actions and policy on behalf of young people at national and at European level.

These bodies meet on a regular basis and play a predominant role in the national structured dialogue. The National Pupil Conference of Luxembourg and the Youth Information Centre are two further important organisations involved in the structured dialogue. The instrument of national structured dialogue was introduced in 2013. The main topic in the first cycle (2013-2014) was the Youth Guarantee. In the second cycle (2014-2015) the theme was 'access to housing for young people'. The method consists of consultation with young people from different backgrounds and larger meetings where organisations are involved and other interested people can present statements and discuss them with politicians (ministers). The National Working Group Luxembourg organises the current 9th cycle of the structured dialogue (January 2021 - June 2022). This working group is composed of representatives from different stakeholders in the youth field (see: Mission Statement). In 2021, the event 'Jugenddësch' on well-being and mental health of young people was organised. This consultation in the framework of the structured dialogue allowed for a constructive exchange between government representatives, experts and representatives of (non)organised youth (Jugenddësch). Consultation of young people also occurs on ad hoc occasions. During a meeting in autumn 2016, youth organisations and their representatives were given the possibility to exchange their views on the realisation of the Youth Guarantee in Luxembourg with the minister of Education, Children and Youth and the minister of Labour, Employment and the Social and Solidarity Economy. The young participants could express their different perspectives and claims. The results of the discussion were taken into account in the further development of the Youth Guarantee in Luxembourg.

According to the basic principle of a participatory youth policy approach, young people and youth representatives are strongly involved in the preparation of the national youth strategy that defines the main policy themes of national youth policy. The participation and consultation of young people is organised by the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth in close cooperation with the National Youth Council and the umbrella organisation of youth centres (DLJ; Daachverband vun de Lëtzebuurger Jugendstrukturen).

At local level, some municipalities organise youth councils or youth forums, where young people can participate in local planning by making suggestions, articulating their needs or providing criticism. Most municipalities also regularly convene an advisory youth commission where young people or party representatives can become members and give advice on youth-related issues and political decisions at local level. These commissions meet on a regular basis.

The Municipal Youth Plan represents another instrument on the local level that promotes the participation of young people. The 2008 Youth Law reinforces the implementation of Municipal Youth Plans.

Currently, there is no systematic mechanism of data collection/monitoring of the process of consultation of young people with regard to decision making.

At European level, many recommendations adopted at the EU Youth Conference in Luxembourg in September 2015 were integrated into the [Council Resolution on encouraging political participation of young people in democratic life in Europe](#). These joint recommendations were elaborated during the IV cycle on structured dialogue under the Trio Presidency Italy-Latvia-Luxembourg. Outcomes of the consultations held in the framework of the national structured dialogue are documented and available online. In 2014 and 2015, youth organisations were consulted on housing policy and were given the opportunity to present their statements on this issue. Statements of young people in the framework of round table discussions with politicians were also documented (in 2015) and evaluated in a follow-up two years later (2017). At national level, the Youth Pact is the most important policy document into which young people's opinions have been directly integrated. At local level, a number of youth action plans have been elaborated in the framework of the Municipal Youth Plan ([Heinen et al., 2009](#)). These action plans are the result of an empirical analysis of the situation of young people and a counselling process of young people themselves (by youth forums or world cafés, for instance). These action plans guide local youth policy for a defined period of time. While most of the scientific analyses are available online (e.g. [Heinen et al., 2007](#); [Meyers et al., 2009, 2012](#)), most of the action plans are internal documents that are not publicly available.

Beyond the formal mechanisms of consultation described above, there are further opportunities for young people and youth representative bodies to enter into dialogue with policy-makers. For instance, if:

- Members of the National Pupil Conference of Luxembourg and the minister of Education, Children and Youth had a [debate](#) on the scheduling of exams or met representatives of the political parties to [talk about the reform of secondary education](#)
- Members of the National Youth Council participated in a [hearing](#) at the Chamber of Deputies on the integration of young refugees
- Members of the [National Pupil Conference of Luxembourg](#) participated in the [consultation process](#) to evaluate the health measures in schools and care facilities in the context of the COVID-19 health crisis.

## Volunteering

Youth volunteering is an important field of youth policy in Luxembourg, as voluntary activities are undertaken by a high number of Luxembourgish young people. The legal basis of youth volunteering in general was introduced by [the 1999 Law on Voluntary Service](#) and the legal basis of the Youth Voluntary Service by [the 2007 Law on Youth Voluntary Service](#). These laws regulate volunteering on both the national and international levels. The Ministry of Education, Children and Youth is the main public authority in the field of policy on voluntary activities of young people. [Anefore](#) (the national agency in charge of the European programmes in the fields of education, training and youth) is responsible for the formal implementation of the Erasmus+ programme and the [European Solidarity Corps](#); the National Youth Service is in charge of the practical implementation of the European Solidarity Corps and other volunteering programmes (e.g. National Voluntary Service).

The voluntary services address young people below 30 years of age who have completed man-

datory schooling. Further criteria differ depending on the specific voluntary service. Young people's voluntary activities take place within different non-profit organisations in Luxembourg. The main top-level governmental authority responsible for youth volunteering is the National Youth Service under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth.

Promotion of volunteering in general is placed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Family Affairs, Integration and the Greater Region (ministère de la Famille, de l'Intégration et à la Grande Région). As a result of this, the target age groups of initiatives and policies sometimes overlap. The support commission for voluntary service (Commission d'accompagnement du service volontaire) is an important body, which takes part in the development of policies in the field of youth volunteering. It is in charge of making recommendations on the implementation of the law on voluntary service, suggestions on the training of young volunteers or a proposition for a mediation between the volunteer and the hosting organisation (if needed). This commission is composed of 7 full members and 7 deputy members from different ministries and public administrations. Members are proposed from the minister in charge of youth policy, the minister in charge of education, the minister in charge of employment, the minister in charge of development cooperation, and the minister in charge of culture (one full and one deputy member in each case). Furthermore, one member is proposed by the Higher Youth Council, the director of the National Youth Service is a permanent member. Regional or local authorities are not involved in the development of policies in the field of voluntary activities. However, at local level, many different organisations work with young volunteers in a variety of domains including local activities, citizenship, integration and social action, culture, human rights and peace, education, environment, humanitarian relief and international solidarity, religion, health, assistance, sports and tourism. Some of these organisations are also members of the voluntary agency.

The support commission for voluntary service (Commission d'accompagnement du service volontaire) is an important body, which takes part in the development of policies in the field of youth volunteering. It is composed of representatives of different ministries and therefore is an important body for the promotion of cross-sectoral cooperation.

### **Youth volunteering**

Youth volunteering is an important issue of youth policy in Luxembourg. It is part of the general youth policy strategy and plays an important role in its strategic orientation (2016 Youth Law, 2012 Youth Pact, Youth Pact 2017-2020).

The 2016 Youth Law is an important reference describing the mission of the National Youth Service on youth volunteering. It outlines the tasks of organising voluntary service programmes (Art. 7e). Procedures concerning youth workers' training (animateurs, aide-animateurs) as well as conditions concerning the recognition of young people's volunteering experiences are regulated by the 2009 grand-ducal regulation. The Youth Law further states that authorities will enhance volunteering by contributing to the organisations' support (Art. 15,4). Promoting and developing voluntary activities is also one among other objectives outlined in the 2012 Youth Pact, the national youth strategy guiding the government's political action in the field of youth. Under the objective 'promote and develop youth participation' the Youth Pact calls to strengthen all young people's participation in associations and voluntary activities. Under the objective 'better support', it also calls for the financial perpetuation of the Voluntary Guidance Service, a voluntary programme especially focusing on

young people with fewer opportunities. The Youth Pact 2017-2020 defines the promotion of participation as an important objective. It aims at strengthening participation in formal and non-formal education, by addressing particular target groups (e.g., people with disabilities) and fostering the collaboration of different stakeholders in the field of youth participation.

Youth volunteering falls into the competence of the Ministry of Education, Children and Youth, which is responsible for the development of strategic orientations and policy programmes. The National Youth Service is the responsible authority for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of youth voluntary programmes at national level. Several non-public actors also take part in the implementation of youth volunteering:

- The Youth Merit Luxembourg Foundation (Mérite Jeunesse Luxembourg) supports the development of young people (aged 14 to 25 years) according to the principles of the international association The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and annually confers the youth merit award to a group of committed young people.
- The Youth Information Centre (Jugendinfo) is an important nationwide contact point that provides information on youth volunteering and the voluntary service. The centre is run by the National Agency for Youth Information (ANIJ, Agence Nationale pour l'Information des Jeunes)

Furthermore, two agencies address the overall population, and not specifically youth in particular:

- The Voluntary Agency (Agence du Bénévolat A.S.B.L) provides information and guidance in the field of voluntary work. It serves as an interface between volunteers and associations working with volunteers, providing a platform for exchange and training (competence centre) and informing and sensitising the general public to the creation of favourable conditions for volunteering in civil society (resource centre). Many associations working with volunteers are members of this coordinating agency.
- The Higher Council for Voluntary Work (Conseil supérieur du Bénévolat) is a national institution that promotes volunteering and acts as an advisory body to the government in the field of voluntary work.

The National Voluntary Service (SVN; Service Volontaire National) is the main national programme for youth volunteering. It addresses young citizens (16 to 30 years of age) who have completed their compulsory education and who are motivated to engage in socio-cultural, socio-educational, cultural or environmental projects. Its duration is 3 to 12 months. The SVN helps young people acquire practical competences and provides personalised support. The service especially focuses on disadvantaged young people with fewer opportunities and aims at encouraging early school leavers to go back to school to successfully complete a degree. Participants in the National Voluntary Service in 2020: 367 (MENJE, 2021, p. 98). Targets for the level of youth participation in the voluntary services have not been defined by the public actors. However, the National Youth Service aims to increase the number of participants from year to year by promoting the opportunities to participate in voluntary activities. Furthermore, the leave for youth workers (congé jeunesse) is another important programme that supports the development of voluntary activities for young people. The leave for youth workers was introduced in 2007 and entitles young people to time off from work so that they can participate in voluntary activities within the country and abroad: internships, study days or seminars, holiday camps or clubs, etc. The modalities are regulated by the grand-ducal

regulation of 11 November 2008 defining the modalities of application of the leave for youth workers (règlement grand-ducal du 11 novembre 2008 déterminant les modalités d'application du congé-jeunesse). The beneficiary of a leave for youth workers is entitled by law to a total of 60 days off throughout the full professional career, while not exceeding 20 days over a period of 2 years. The duration of the youth worker's leave is recognised as an active period of work, where the employer must pay the employee a compensatory allowance. This allowance will correspond to the average daily salary, but may not exceed 4 times the social minimum wage for unskilled workers.

Quality assurance (QA) is ensured by the 2007 Law on Youth Voluntary Service (Art. 3) (loi du 31 octobre 2007 sur le service volontaire des jeunes) which defines also the standards of quality. Furthermore, the monitoring and evaluation of voluntary services contribute to the quality assurance and improvement of the programmes (see: Policy monitoring and evaluation). Organisations that want to offer a voluntary service programme get an agreement by decision of the minister in charge of youth policy. A commission composed of representatives of different ministries and presided over by the director of the National Youth Service provides advice regarding such agreements and evaluates the organisation's capacity and capability to fulfil certain requirements. According to the law, organisations have to prove that they have no criminal record, justify the ability and capacity to organise a voluntary service, and dispose over the necessary human and financial resources. Agreements are fixed for three years and define the maximum number of persons enrolled. They can be extended for the same length of time. However, an agreement can be withdrawn when an organisation does not fulfil the requirements defined by the agreement. It can also be withdrawn if the organisation endangers the volunteer's security and physical or mental health. The organisation is required to send a copy of the contract with the volunteer, an annual report of the activities of the volunteers and a final report on every case of voluntary service to the National Youth Service. The National Youth Service is entitled to inspect the organisation at any time and to examine all accompanying documents.

Luxembourg participates in the European Solidarity Corps, an initiative of the European Union designed for young people between 17 and 30 years of age. The initiative supports participants to carry out volunteering activities, traineeships and jobs in their own country or abroad. It aims at strengthening cohesion, solidarity, democracy and citizenship in Europe, while also responding to societal challenges and strengthening communities, with particular effort to promote social inclusion. Luxembourg also participates in the EU Aid Volunteers programme. By this programme, young people can become volunteers in humanitarian projects worldwide, showing solidarity with

The Voluntary Cooperation Service (SVC; Service Volontaire de Coopération) was launched in March 2009 in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs and the Luxembourgish cooperation circle of development NGOs. It offers a volunteering opportunity for young people (18 to 30 years of age) who are interested in providing aid in developing countries. The objective is to raise the awareness of young people concerning the problems in developing countries in order to develop their solidarity via a concrete project, to provide learning opportunities to develop specific competences and to valorise the experience. They may participate in a cooperation project for 3 to 12 months. In 2020, the total number of participants in the Voluntary Cooperation Service was 8 (MENJE, 2021) (2019: 86). This comparatively low number in 2020 results in the sanitary crisis and the related mobility and travel restrictions. 21 young people had to suspend their voluntary service abroad and returned to Luxembourg before the end of their mission.

Other services also play an important role in the promotion of the Voluntary Guidance Service to youth in Luxembourg (Successful Transition to Training and Employment):

- Employment Service Job Counselling (ADEM-OP; Service d'orientation professionnelle) (employment service job counselling) offers individual counselling interviews as well as group information events for adolescents and adults in search of a suitable profession
- Centre of psycho-social and educational support (CePAS; Centre psycho-social et d'accompagnement scolaire) provides guidance to young people to help them discover their skills and professional objectives. The CePAS also offers psychological counselling to young people and their families.

Information on volunteering opportunities is disseminated in direct contact with interested young people and through information provided online. The National Youth Service, being the main responsible body, organises so-called 'Info-Session Services Volontaires', events which take place several times a year. Young people can subscribe in order to receive general information on voluntary services. The National Youth Service maintains the internet page [volontaires.lu](http://volontaires.lu) with information available to both interested young people and to the volunteering organisations on the three main national and international voluntary programmes:

- National Voluntary Service (SVN; Service Volontaire National)
- Voluntary Cooperation Service (SVC; Service Volontaire de Coopération)
- European Solidarity Corps (Corps européen de solidarité).

Furthermore, the National Youth Service publishes leaflets in which young volunteers report their experiences they have gained during their voluntary service. These leaflets are distributed throughout the country in order to promote and raise awareness about youth volunteering opportunities in Luxembourg and abroad. The National Youth Service supports youth organisations in their efforts to mobilise more young people to engage in voluntary activities and promotes voluntary services in the framework of info-sessions which take place on a regular basis in different Luxembourg regions.

The recognition of skills acquired through participation in voluntary activities is specified in the grand-ducal regulation of 9 January 2009 on Youth (règlement grand-ducal du 9 janvier 2009 sur la jeunesse). The National Youth Service is in charge of the recognition procedure. Furthermore, the grand-ducal regulation of 11 January 2010 (règlement grand-ducal du 11 janvier 2010 portant organisation de la validation des acquis de l'expérience pour la délivrance des brevets, diplômes et certificats prévue au chapitre V de la loi du 19 décembre 2008 portant réforme de la formation professionnelle) defines the procedure of the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Validation des acquis de l'expérience – VAE).

According to the grand-ducal regulation of 9 January 2009 on Youth (règlement grand-ducal du 9 janvier 2009 sur la jeunesse), young people who have participated in voluntary activities and who fulfil certain criteria are eligible to receive a certification of engagement (attestation de l'engagement). To be considered for this certification, young volunteers under the age of 30 years must have completed either a minimum of 400 hours in a project or a minimum of three months in a voluntary service programme. Furthermore, young people who participated in a training session of at least 150 hours are also eligible. According to the law, the certificate must include the date and

duration of the volunteering commitment, the type of engagement, the tasks performed by the young volunteer, the description of achieved qualifications and a general statement describing the type of training. The certificate is signed by the minister in charge of youth policy. An attestation committee (commission d'attestation) has been introduced by law. Its role is:

- To advise the minister in charge of youth policy with regard to the recognition of volunteer experience
- To contribute to the development and evaluation of the recognition mechanism of volunteer experience
- To make proposals concerning the training and promotion relating to the recognition mechanism of volunteer experience.

The grand-ducal regulation of 11 January 2010 (règlement grand-ducal du 11 janvier 2010 portant organisation de la validation des acquis de l'expérience pour la délivrance des brevets, diplômes et certificats prévue au chapitre V de la loi du 19 décembre 2008 portant réforme de la formation professionnelle) defines the validation and recognition of knowledge acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning (VAE; Validation des acquis de l'expérience) and offers an additional means of access to diplomas. The VAE enables individuals to obtain all or part of an educational degree (e.g., a Secondary Technical Education Diploma, a Master Craftsman qualification, a Higher Technician Certificate or a University Diploma). The VAE is applicable to everyone, regardless of age, level of study or professional status. The prerequisite is a minimum of 3 years or 5 000 hours (continuous or not) of paid, unpaid or voluntary work that is directly related to the requested certification. The applicant must compile a portfolio of their experience and submit it to a validation committee or a qualified panel. The portfolio should provide details of the knowledge, competencies and skills that have been acquired and are directly related to the certification; it should include concrete examples of tasks that have been performed by the applicant. After an interview with the applicant, the committee (or panel) makes its decision based on the portfolio provided. The decision of the validation committee or panel can lead to the following scenarios concerning the applicant's request: no validation, partial validation or full validation. Certificates, diplomas and qualifications obtained through VAE are equivalent to certificates, diplomas and qualifications obtained through other traditional methods and certificate holders are awarded the same entitlements.

## Portugal<sup>49</sup>

### Youth participation/engagement strategies

The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic enshrines the right to participation to all citizens, including the 'right to participate in public life', the 'right to vote', the 'right to access public positions', the right to constitute or participate in 'associations and political parties' and the 'right to petition and right to class action' (chapter II – Rights, freedoms and guarantees of political participation: articles 48<sup>th</sup>, 49<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 51<sup>st</sup>, 52<sup>nd</sup>).

The National Youth Plan is the political instrument of intersectoral coordination of youth policies' in Portugal. One of its key themes is «Governance and Participation», a section with more than 40 measures, framed in five strategic goals under the priority «To promote multilevel, inclusive, participative and participatory government practices, in view of the institutional strengthening of youth policies».

The national policies for the promotion of the political and civic participation of young people had been implemented through a set of measures framed in other national plans and specific programmes, that with the approval of the National Youth Plan 2018-2019, know their aggregation and strategic orientation.

Due to their relevance, we highlight the measures that were developed in the National Education Strategy for Citizenship, a reference document implemented in the 2017/2018 school year, in the state and private schools that joined the Curricular Flexibility and Autonomy Project (PACF), in accordance with The Profile of Students When out of Compulsory Education and Essential Learning.

The Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth, PI (IPDJ, I.P.), and the Secretary of State for Youth and Sports (SEJD) have particular relevance in the promotion of action that stimulate youth participation. The following initiatives are examples of such measures:

- Support programmes for youth organisations (e.g., PAJ, PAE, PAI and Formar +);
- Volunteering programmes targeting young people (Now Us (Agora Nós), with initiatives such as Dating with Fair Play (Namorar com Fair Play), Generation Z (Geração Z) and Youth Volunteering for Nature and Forests (Voluntariado Jovem para a Natureza e Florestas) (see chapter 2);
- The 70 NOW! Campaign (Campanha 70 JÁ!);
- The Youth Parliament programme;
- Euroschool competition;
- Celebrations of the Associationism Day and International Volunteer Day;
- Creation and implementation of advisory bodies for youth policies, such as the Youth Advisory Council (CCJ) and the Advisory Board of the IPDJ;
- Youth Development Academy;
- Youth Participatory Budget Portugal.

Besides these specific and real measures, IPDJ encourages in Municipalities the enhancement of the Youth Municipal Councils and participates in many of them through their decentralised servic-

49 <https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/portugal/overview>



es.

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The implementation of the National Youth Plan and, subsequently, of the measures in the key theme «Governance and Participation» is responsibility of each of the entities that executes them. It is, therefore, a shared execution, of interministerial nature, although the coordination is made by IPDJ, I.P. and the supervision by the member of Government responsible for Youth.

### **Learning to participate/engage**

The National Strategy for Citizenship Education (ENEC) was presented in 2017 and started to be implemented in schools in 2017/2018 (school year), so that children and young people in different cycles may experience and acquire skill sets and knowledge of citizenship, specifically values and concepts of national citizenship, human rights, gender equality, non-discrimination, interculturalism, inclusion of people with disabilities, health education, sexual and reproductive rights education and road safety education.

The Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth (IPDJ, I.P.) and its preceding bodies have been leading the defence, dissemination and support of non-formal education processes in Portugal, since the post-25<sup>th</sup> April 1974 period. In addition to the direct provision of tailored programmes on those methodologies, the support to the associationism movement – where non-formal education processes are more prevalent – and, in more recent times, the leadership of divisive projects – such as the establishment of the national youth worker profession – have earned a prominent position.

On the other hand, in a perspective of joining the formal and non-formal education dimensions, the IPDJ, I.P., is now responsible for developing the integration, valorisation and recognition of non-formal learning outside of school. This approach will be address in a project named Youth Pass, which will be a crucial complement to the basic and secondary education diploma.

The Youth Pass, created by Decree no.336/2017, of 7th November, is a certificate that registers participation, promotes recognition and validates the learning developed by young people, between 12 and 18 years old, in processes and activities outside the school context. It is the “history” of each young person in non-formal education.

The intervention strategy in the non-formal model is complemented with initiatives and dates that won or are winning a spot in the annual calendar of young people and associations, such as the Youth Associationism Day (30<sup>th</sup> April, with more than 14 years of celebration since its establishment), Good Associativism Practices (merit awards for the work of youth organisations) and, more recently, ADJ – Youth Development Academy, an annual space of non-formal education, with the partnership of the Erasmus+ Agency Youth in Action, CNJ and FNAJ.

### Formal learning

The transversal approach to the Citizenship Education curriculum can take different forms, depending on the dynamic adopted by schools due to their autonomy, particularly in the context of the curriculum of the subjects and through the development of projects and activities of their own initiative, while working together with families and entities involved in this context, in the framework of the relationship between the school and the community. It can be developed according to the needs and specific problems of the school community, together with and in response to the objectives defined by each group of schools or individual schools within their educational projects.

The strategy of citizenship education is applied through changes to the curriculum, learning activities in the classroom, extracurricular activities, participation of students and parents in school governance, assessment of students and schools, and continuous professional development of the faculty.

Besides that, Ministry of Education, through General Directorate for Education, has developed a set of guidance documents, involving partnerships and cooperation protocols with other entities. Citizenship Education aims to contribute to the development of responsible, autonomous and solidary people who know and act according to their rights and duties, in dialogue and respect for others, with a democratic, pluralistic, critical and creative spirit, according to the human rights' values. It also enables the development of essential skills for social life and labour market integration.

### Non-formal and informal learning

The Ministry of Education promotes a number of events and activities throughout the school year, to raise awareness among students to important citizenship issues. Examples are the National No Smoking Day, the European Day of Languages, the Human Rights Day, the Refugee Day, the Certification for Intercultural Schools, and the United for the Planet competition, among others.

Students have the right to participate, through their representatives, in accordance with the existing legislation, in administrative bodies and school management, in the creation process of the school's educational project and the internal rules of procedure.

Students have the right to gather in student assemblies and are represented by the student association, by their representatives in the governing, administrative and school management bodies and their representatives in the classroom, according to the existing legislation and the school's internal rules of procedure.

In the context of their autonomy, schools develop a wide range of tools and communication strategies (e.g., e-mail, website, newsletter, newspapers, radio, social networks, conferences, and other events).

Parents/legal guardians have the right to contribute to the creation process of the educational project and the internal rules of the school, as well as participating in the school's daily life of the. They also have the right to create a parents' association, according to the principles of freedom of association.

The Municipal Council of Education (CME) of each school group is an advisory body, which includes,

among other elements, a representative of the municipal assembly. The CME has the right to: review the annual plan of activities; comment on the education offer and network provided for each school year; recommend improvement measures for the school's organisation and the school's educational intervention.

With regard to learning through extracurricular activities, the Ministry of Education promotes a number of initiatives in various areas of competence:

- [Eco-Schools project](#) and [Tagus project](#) – in the field of environmental awareness
- [Mega Sprinter competition](#), [Tag Rugby Project](#) – in the field of sports activities for peace and social inclusion
- [Intangible Heritage Collection Kit](#), [My School Adopts a Museum](#), [Little Shadow Festival](#), [Ithaca Plan](#), [Tic Toc Project in the School of the Future](#) – in the field of artistic projects for intercultural dialogue and media literacy
- [European clubs](#), [Euroguidance Network](#), [Trip to Germany contest](#) – in the field of International and/or online collaborations for intercultural education
- [European Youth Parliament programme of the Youth Parliament programme \(national\)](#) – in the field of activities related to political life
- [Link Yourself to Others Project](#) – in the field of volunteering on the local community.

Still within the framework of promoting participation resorting to tools and methodologies in formal, non-formal and informal education, it is important to highlight two recent initiatives: the [Schools Participatory Budget](#) and the [Youth Participatory Budget \(Youth PB\)](#).

The School Participatory Budget is intended for students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of basic education and secondary education and consists of a process with several stages that ensures students the possibility of actively participating in the development of a project, according to their preferences, needs and wills, that contributes to the improvement of their school. The amount of the SPB is €500, in the case of schools with fewer than 500 students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of basic education and secondary education, or, alternatively, the value equivalent to €1 per student in the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of basic education and secondary education, in the case of schools with more than 500 students.

Youth PB is a process of democratic participation in which citizens aged between 14 and 30 can present and decide on public investment projects.

The several editions of the Program are regulated by a Resolution of the Council of Ministers. The first edition was regulated by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 130/2017, the second edition by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 67/2018 and the third edition by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 59/2019. This initiative aims to contribute to the improvement of democracy through innovation and the strengthening of forms of public participation by young citizens. It has the following objectives:

- To strengthen the quality of democracy and its instruments, valuing participatory democracy within the framework of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic
- To encourage the active and informed participation of young people in the decision-making process, encouraging a strong and active civil society that continues the cohesive economic and social development and a corresponding increase in quality of life.

- To promote the participation of young citizens in the definition of public policies appropriate to their needs and in line with their opinions
- To reinforce education for citizenship and the sense of belonging to the community as a whole, encouraging responsible citizen action, by promoting privileged contact between young citizens and public bodies, involving them in the permanent definition of res publica.

The thematic areas to which young citizens can submit proposals have been different in the various editions of the Programme. In the first edition (2017), young citizens could submit proposals in the following thematic areas: inclusive sport, science education, social innovation, and environmental sustainability. The projects admitted to the Portuguese Participatory Youth Budget in the 2018 edition covered the areas of public policies related to inclusive sport, intergenerational dialogue, cultural innovation, and environmental sustainability. The projects admitted to the Portuguese Participatory Youth Budget in the 2019 edition covered the areas of the domains and key themes of the National Plan for Youth, approved by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 114 114 A/2018, of 4 September, namely: Formal and Non-Formal Education, Employment, Housing, Health, Environment and Sustainable Development, Governance and Participation and Equality and Social Inclusion. This initiative covers the entire national territory.

The areas of Social Innovation and Environmental Sustainability are those where the highest number of proposals were submitted. The thematic areas of Social Innovation and Education for Science are those where the largest number of projects were put to a vote. Partnerships with civil society organisations are encouraged and required in a broad sense and are therefore transversal in all levels.

Among the concrete actions to achieve these goals, curriculum guidance documents were produced, in cooperation with other bodies and institutions of the public sector and various civil society partners, as reference systems in addressing the various dimensions of citizenship.

In line with the curriculum guidance documents, the Ministry of Education (ME) provided teacher training, under the continuous professional development, through the Directorate-General of Education, to teachers of all subjects and levels.

The ME even provides teachers criteria and specific resources for assessing students in some of the thematic fields included in the transversal field of citizenship education. For example, in entrepreneurship education, projects like [ASTEE](#) and [Youth Start – Entrepreneurial Challenges](#) include various assessment tools and resources (e.g., questionnaires, oral and written activities, projects, self-assessment exercises and peer assessment, etc.). In other thematic fields, such as financial education, manuals/guides that include assessment exercises were published.

In addition to this, as already mentioned, the Youth Pass programme development is underway, which aims to issue a participation certificate in programmes of the IPDJ, which recognises the learnings acquired in a non-formal context, allowing the interconnection of said learnings with the secondary education diploma. Although the launch is only provided for in the form of a pilot project, covering only a few programmes developed by the IPDJ in an initial phase, this process will represent an additional quality assurance of this type of learnings.

## Consultations and support instruments

The involvement of young people in Portugal's decision-making is mainly characterised by being:

- Consultative, in the sense that the contributions of young people, although often considered and incorporated in the decisions, are not binding.
- Representative, in the sense that the procedures for consultation take place mainly through youth representative organisations, from youth and student associations to platforms of youth organisations, or even local or national youth consultative councils.
- Formal consultation mechanisms mainly take place in the advisory boards of the State's different fields of public intervention. The participation of young people is concentrated in organisations related to the field of youth, sports, education, employment or health.
- The consultation with young people, at a national level, takes place through the following mechanisms:
  - Youth Advisory Council
  - IPDJ Advisory Council
- At the local and regional level through:
  - Youth Municipal Councils
  - Regional Advisory Councils of the IPDJ

The actors involved in the youth consultation process are diversified, encompassing governmental structures, youth and student organisations, or even civil society organisations that work with relevant issues and with an impact on young people.

- Youth actors
  - National Youth Council (CNJ), a right granted by the law that constitutes it, regarding elaboration of legislation and definition of policies that affect the young.
  - National Federation of Youth Associations (FNAJ), direct consultation in several legislation processes, participation in the constitution of workgroups and others
  - Youth Associations – youth associations are involved in consultation processes, not only by intervening locally, in the implementation of projects, but also as youth representatives in dialogue with the political power, such as the Youth Municipal Councils, where all youth associations of a municipality enrolled in RNAJ have a seat.
  - Student associations – the student associations, as well as their respective federations, have played a key role in youth consultation processes, especially in regard to educational policy and the defence of students' interests with policymakers and with the administrative bodies of schools. Due to Law no. 57/2019 of 7th August, the students' representatives have a seat on councils, as interlocutors
- Public authorities
  - Secretariat of State for Youth and Sports
  - IPDJ – Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth, PI
  - Parliamentary Committee on Culture, Communication, Youth and Sport
  - City Councils – the local government is a key actor in any process of youth consultation and has played a key part in stimulating structures for associations headed by young people, since they have a closer relation. Its active role is essential to the creation and promotion of municipal youth councils, and it constitutes a privileged public space for youth participation, for the development and implementation of

local youth policies.

- Additional stakeholders
  - The meetings of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) can include other elements justified by their agenda, even if they are not part of the CCJ's composition. According to paragraph 2, of article 1<sup>st</sup> of Decree-Law no. 129/2015), the following individuals or entities can participate in the meetings, whenever convened by the president:
    - Government members of specific sectors
    - Members of the regional governments of Madeira and the Azores;
    - Movijovem — Youth Mobility, C.I.P.R.L.
    - National Agency for the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme;
    - Youth organisations at a national, regional and local level
    - Other entities developing a relevant action in the youth sector.

In addition to the above-mentioned key actors, there are also other ministries who promote comprehensive consultation and monitoring processes focused on the young public. Here are some examples:

- The Ministry of Education involves young people in policy consultation, monitoring and assessment, through the National Education Council
- The Ministry of Health does the same, through the National Council for Drugs, Drug Addiction and the Harmful Use of Alcohol
- The Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, through the Committee for the Coordination and Monitoring of the Youth Guarantee

Considering the transversality and intersectorality of youth policies, in 2007, the Interministerial Commission for Youth Policies (CIJ) was established. This Commission was created by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 77/2007, of 4<sup>th</sup> June, with the purpose of ensuring the integrated operational coordination of youth policy in an interministerial and intergovernmental structure, which promotes the creation of integrated networks of information and services for young people, attracts financial means for the implementation of programmes, and stimulates a concerted and supplemental action of said structures. Although its operation period has been intermittent, not gathering in recent years, there is an intention of reactivating this commission, framed in the National Youth Plan approved in 2018.

To the National Youth Council (CNJ), as to the National Federation of Youth Associations (FNAJ), opinion requests are made about bills regarding youth associationism, the legal framework for holiday camps, the legal framework for the youth worker profile, programmes to support and promote youth employment, among other matters related to young people's life.

The opinions expressed are discussed and taken into account in the final formulation of official documents.

Both the National Youth Council (CNJ) and the National Federation of Youth Associations (FNAJ) are involved in the activities of the IPDJ, I.P., often playing a preponderant role in the conception and implementation of those activities (e.g., Youth Associationism Day, International Youth Day, University on Youth Development, etc.).

The integration of young people's opinion in the formulation and assessment of political measures can be found in various processes. Here are some examples:

- The National Youth Plan was devised from a wide national listening process, on an online form, accessible to all young people, as well as from a national forum dedicated to the theme. The contributions were crucial for the preparation of the plan. The report of the listening process was made available online and outside the digital world in several forums.
- The current law in force concerning the legal framework on youth associativism ([Law no. 57/2019](#)) was also subject to an extensive consultation, discussion and negotiation process.
- The professional profile development of the youth worker and its respective RVCC were part of the contributions of several actors in this sector, namely their representative platforms.
- The Youth Pass was developed based on the work group of a number of actors, including youth representatives.
- The Formar+ programme was part of contributions resulting from a public sounding out process.
- The National Plan for Implementation of a Youth Guarantee has already been amended as a result of proposals made by the representation of youth interests in the Committee for the Coordination and Monitoring of the [Youth Guarantee](#)

A wide consultation process was developed for the creation of the PNJ ([National Youth Plan](#), approved in August 2018 and published on 4<sup>th</sup> of September — Resolution of the Council of Ministers No. 114-A/2018). A diversified set of mechanisms was developed such as an [online survey](#), development of focus groups, debate forums, in addition to the dissemination and collection of perspectives through formal bodies and channels.

The legal framework for Youth Associativism and its revision were also examples of issues subject to consultation and large-scale initiatives for debate between public institutions and young people.

## Volunteering

In Portugal [Law no. 71/98](#) provides the legal framework for volunteering, aiming to promote and ensure all citizens the participation in volunteering activities. This law defines volunteering as the 'set of actions of social and community interest carried out unselfishly [...], within the framework of non-profit projects, programmes and other forms of assistance to individuals, families and the community [...]'.

The tutelage of volunteering is under the purview of the Ministry of Employment, Solidarity and Social Security and in 2017 competencies for the implementation of policies in the area of volunteering were assigned to CASES – Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social, CIPRL. On the other hand, the promotion of youth volunteering has been an inherent objective of youth policy, as a tool that provides young people opportunities of civic and community intervention, which contribute to the acquisition of new skills in a non-formal manner. With that in mind, the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth (IPDJ) under the guidance of the Secretariat of State for Youth and Sports, created a National Youth Volunteering Programme, named Now Us (Agora Nós), which foresees the implementation of short-term or long-term youth volunteering projects. For their contemporane-

ity and dimension, the following long-term initiatives stand out: Youth Volunteering 70JÁ - Young People Rights, Messages and Company (Recados e Companhia), for the promotion of solidarity and intergenerational dialogue; Dating with Fair Play (Namorar com Fair Play), for the prevention of abuse in dating and Generation Z (Geração Z). In 2017, by Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 166/2017, the programme *Young Volunteering for Forests* was reinstated (it had been active between 2004-2010). Renamed Youth Volunteering for Nature and Forests VJNF – Voluntariado Jovem para a Natureza e Florestas) this programme aims to bring awareness on natural and forest resources preservation and to prevent and minimize forest fires in the country (see section 2.5).

At the transnational level, the European Solidarity Corps Programme takes on particular importance in the national panorama, providing unique and outstanding experiences to young people.

Public actors are responsible for the sector regulation, as well as for the assessment of its compliance. In Portugal, the competencies for the prosecution of policies in the area of volunteering are assigned to CASES - Cooperativa António Sérgio para a Economia Social, CIPRL, under the tutelage of the Ministry of Employment, Solidarity and Social Security. The Ministry of Education and the Secretary of State for Youth and Sports, which is responsible for the Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth (IPDJ), are the public actors responsible for youth volunteering.

The non-public actors are:

- National Federation of Youth Associations (representing associations at a national level) and its members.
- National Youth Council (national platform of youth organisations) and its members.
- Portuguese Confederation of Volunteering and its members (29 volunteering organisations and promoters with various fields of activity). Its purpose is to represent the Portuguese volunteers and their respective organisations, regardless of their sectors of activity, as well as contribute to the defence of their respective rights and interests.

In April 2017, the composition and functioning of the advisory body for issues regarding volunteering, solidarity, family, rehabilitation and social security was promulgated – Decree-Law no. 48/2017. The National Council for Solidarity and Social Security Policies (CNPSSS) is under the tutelage of the Ministry of Employment, Solidarity and Social Security, in coordination with the Deputy Minister regarding citizenship and equality. It is an advisory body that aims to ensure the participation of social partners, of the associative movement and other civil society entities, in coordination with public bodies legally responsible for the definition and monitoring of the implementation of social security policies, social and family policies, as well as the inclusion of people with disabilities and volunteering. Naturally, this council has in its composition stakeholders in the area of volunteering and youth volunteering.

Although there is no national strategy on youth volunteering, in Portugal, for the past 16 years, the IPDJ, I.P., and private non-profit organisations have carried out a constant work to promote youth volunteering as a way of contributing to the acquisition of skills and intervention in the community.

In 2013, the first National Volunteering Plan – 2013-2015 (not specifically targeting youth) was created, being established by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers no. 29/2013. This Plan was a strategy to implement voluntary service and, although not referring exclusively to youth volunteer-



ing, it also provided measures affecting youth.

The Plan was structured in three axes:

- Raising awareness and publicizing
- Promoting and training
- Priority 3 – Acting and developing.

For each of these axes, a set of 13 intervention measures were implemented, properly scheduled and with the involved entities identified.

In July 2017, when CASES received the competencies for the prosecution of policies in the area of volunteering, a set of measures to support volunteering was presented, aiming to contribute to the consolidation, expansion and qualification of voluntary work:

- an online platform, whose management is CASES's responsibility. Besides being a flexible help in the gathering of those who want to develop a voluntary action and the organisations that promote them, it provides all necessary information for the voluntary activity, such as the legal framework, the responses and current insurance products and available endorsements.
- a financial support for organisations that promote long term voluntary actions, in the social area, that develop long run voluntary actions in the field of social action, to deal with expenses that may come from the personal accident and liability insurance of the volunteers they receive.
- a financing line for training actions and awareness-raising in the area of volunteering, for qualification of voluntary work, namely capacity-building of the volunteers and of the entities that promote voluntary actions.

Although these measures are not entirely to support young people volunteering, it is sure that this back up mechanism may become a consolidating and promoting tool for young volunteering.

Also, in the context of the National Youth Plan (Plano Nacional para a Juventude), youth volunteering has two strategic goals (SG):

- SG 1: to promote youth volunteering practices on the preservation of forests, ecosystems and nature (key subject: Environment and Sustainable Development). Youth Volunteering for Nature and Forests is the instrument to bring it about.
- SG 2: to increase civic and political participation of young people mainly through support given to the associative movement and volunteering and investment on political literacy (key subject: Governance and Participation). Now Us, 70NOW! and International Work Camps (Campos de Trabalho Internacional) are the instruments to bring it about.

### **Youth volunteering**

The concept of “Youth Volunteering” used by the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth since the beginning of the 2000´s, encompasses different forms of intervention with a common denominator, the public they address (young people). After the publication, in 1998 and 1999, of the general

legislation and regulation of volunteering in Portugal, it was defined as the set of actions of social and community interest carried out in a disinterested way by people, within the scope of projects, programmes and other forms of intervention at the service of individuals, families and the community developed without profit by public or private entities, and in the middle of the International Year of Volunteers (2001) the then Portuguese Institute for Youth launched the National System for Youth Volunteering. The National System for Youth Volunteering, innovative at the time of its launch, was based on an electronic platform and aimed to stimulate the development of the practice of volunteering by young people by promoting, through the Internet, the meeting of young people, the entities that promote volunteer projects, sponsors and trainers. The demonstration of interest in volunteer projects by the youth population, as well as the awareness and social recognition of the importance of volunteering as an instrument of non-formal education, contributed to the Portuguese Institute for Youth's rethinking its intervention in this area.

The Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth promotes three youth volunteering programmes: "Now Us" programme; "Youth Volunteering for Nature and Forests" programme and "International Work Camps" programme. The work done for more than a decade in the area of youth volunteering, the new motivations, interests and economic/social situation of young people as well as the European practices of promoting volunteering as a driver for acquiring non-formal or informal skills and the need to reduce obstacles to the mobility of young volunteers in Europe, led the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth to create and regulate a programme that frames youth volunteering activity, the "Now Us" programme.

The "Now Us" programme, regulated by Ordinance no. 242/2013 of 2 August, is aimed at entities that intend to promote voluntary actions at young people who intend, through participation, to acquire skills. It has as objectives:

- Stimulate and support youth volunteering practices in areas considered relevant to society.
- To develop formative processes with the volunteers
- Disseminate the youth volunteering carried out in national territory.
- Create a register of entities promoting youth volunteering activities.

The areas of intervention are:

- Environment
- Health
- Culture
- Sports
- Social Solidarity activities

The launch of the "Now Us" programme platform, an IT platform that is a key instrument for the programme's feasibility, meant that the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth took on a concept of youth volunteering that goes beyond sporadic promotion with greater or lesser seasonality, of projects aimed at a certain age group, betting on the continuity and quality of volunteer actions and on the openness to a greater and more continuous participation of young people. Without abandoning the basic concept of "a set of actions of social and community interest carried out in a disinterested way by people, within the framework of projects, programmes and other forms of intervention at the service of individuals, families and the community developed without profit

by public or private entities”, it is necessary to focus our efforts on the quality and promotion of volunteer projects aimed at young people, taking into account that youth volunteering is a form of intervention at the service of individuals, families and the community, but also at the service of the valorisation and personal development of young volunteers. In the framework of the “Now Us” programme, the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth develops the following youth volunteering actions: “Generation Z”; “Dating with Fair Play”; “Surfing the Internet Safely” and “Youth Volunteering 70 JÁ!”.

The “Generation Z” programme is a long-term youth volunteer action, managed by the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth, for private non-profit organisations and young people aged between 16 and 30. It has as objectives:

- Widening the scope of volunteering in the framework of the “Now Us” programme
- Valuing interventions by and for young people
- Create synergies with civil society and public entities through the preparation of voluntary activities.
- To contribute to a useful and effective intervention in the community
- Powering the quality of voluntary activities and the acquisition of skills by volunteers
- Valuing the recognition of non-formal education.

The areas of intervention are: Human rights, civic participation, prevention of dating violence, prevention of aggressive behaviour (bullying), gender equality, sports, cultural exchange, intergenerational solidarity, employment and entrepreneurship, youth tourism, social inclusion, with special attention to actions targeting young NEETs, combating extremism and violent behaviour, youth health, environment, associativism.

The long-term action “Dating with fair play”, part of the “Now Us” programme, aims to mobilise young people to prevent violence in dating through peer education. It takes place in all five regions of the continent. Volunteers go to primary (3<sup>rd</sup> cycle), secondary and university schools or to municipalities and other third sector entities. Each entity must appoint a person in charge (teacher or association leader) to accompany the volunteers in carrying out a set of initiatives to be developed with the young participants. Volunteers in teams of two go three days a month to the places where the activities take place (in schools during the school term). Violence in intimate relationships often begins with dating between young people, and results in an unequal relationship in which one of the couple wants, through violence, to dominate and control the other person. The action has as its objectives:

- Promote the realisation of the right to equality and social inclusion of all young people, combating social exclusion from all forms of inequality and discrimination.
- Prevent the victimisation of young people and violence based on gender inequalities.
- Combat dating violence
- Raise awareness of gender equality among young people
- Eliminate gender stereotypes by promoting a culture of non-violence.
- Promote participatory citizenship.

The action is aimed at young people aged between 16 and 30. The participants are young people attending primary (3<sup>rd</sup> cycle), secondary and university education, as well as students integrating

technical-vocational courses and others in vocational training. The action has several programmed activities. In each edition, an awareness/training action is developed for volunteers that will contribute to increase their knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Conflict management
- Human rights
- Youth rights
- Gender equalities/inequalities
- Violence (emotional/social, physical, sexual, domestic, gender, financial)
- Prevention of dating violence
- Pursuit, design, management, and monitoring of projects

Volunteers will develop in schools or third sector entities a set of actions/workshops (solidarity, formative, sportive, artistic) to make the participants aware of equality and diversity, and to contribute to the change of violent behaviour in dating. This intervention culminates in the preparation of a project in the context of formal and non-formal education, aiming in a playful-pedagogical way, to encourage young people for an active and participative citizenship. Young volunteers are entitled to:

- General training of young volunteers
- Specific training on the subject
- Certificate of participation
- Personal accident and liability insurance
- Reimbursement of expenses.

The volunteer programme “Surfing the Internet safely” is aimed at young people aged between 18 and 30 with knowledge of the use of new information technologies linked to the Internet. It aims to contribute to the development of responsible and safe use of the Internet by providing information sessions and awareness-raising activities for children, young people, parents/educators, and citizens in general.

The beneficiaries of this programme must have the following requirements:

- Knowledge in information and communication technologies
- Good communication skills
- Ease of interpersonal relationship
- Certificate of pedagogical skills (preferential)
- Enrolled in the youth volunteering platform “Now us”
- Previous participation in the “Safe Internet Day” and/or the “Surfing the Internet Safely” (preferential)

The types of presentation of the programme are the following:

- Information sessions
- Awareness actions

The information session is about 60 minutes long and consists of:

- Summary exhibition, supported by a multimedia presentation, on topics such as: fake news, cyberbullying, Internet of things, hate speech, online addiction, data protection, social networks and others.
- Clarification of doubts and execution of a small evaluation questionnaire with delivery of a gift and certificate of participation.

The information sessions can target groups of children and young people, from 6 to 25 years old (priority), and/or people over 60 years old. The specific training of the volunteers is ensured through self-training done through pedagogical resources available online and also in person or via skype. Young volunteers who carry out the action in a period of more than 3 hours and 30 minutes have a grant of 12 euros/day. Young people who do less than 3 hours and 30 minutes per day will be awarded a grant of 6 euros/half a day. Volunteers are entitled to personal accident and liability insurance, and the certificate of participation.

The long-term action “Youth Volunteering 70 JÁ! – Youth Rights” is integrated in the “Now Us” programme and aims to make young people aware of Article 70 of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic. The action takes place in the five regions of the continent. Volunteers go to primary (3rd cycle), secondary and university schools or to municipalities and other third sector entities. Each entity must appoint a person in charge (teacher or association leader) to accompany the volunteers in carrying out a set of initiatives to be developed with the young participants. Volunteers, in teams of two, travel three days a month to the places where the activities take place.

The action has as its objectives:

- Inform young people about their constitutional rights.
- Promote human rights.
- Emphasise the link between human rights and dignity.
- Promote convergence between formal and non-formal education through youth volunteering.
- Promote the rapprochement of young people with institutions, in particular those which are furthest removed from youth organisations and public bodies.
- Encourage voluntary work and citizenship among the most vulnerable young people.

The beneficiaries of this action are volunteers, young people aged between 18 and 30, with a minimum compulsory education, the 12th year of schooling. Preferably, young volunteers with university attendance linked to the areas of social and human sciences or law. The participants in this action are young people who attend the basic (3rd cycle), secondary and university education system, as well as students who integrate technical-vocational courses and others in the area of training. In each edition, an awareness-raising/training action is developed for young volunteers that will contribute to increase their knowledge and skills in different concepts:

- Human rights, in particular the rights of youth
- Ethics
- Citizenship and fundamental rights
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDS) and Agenda 2030
- The rights and duties of young volunteers.

The young participants will develop in their schools a set of actions/workshops (solidarity, training, sports, arts), promoted by volunteers, which aim at contributing to inform the school community about human rights and in particular the rights of youth. Volunteers can use the contents of the site, as a pedagogical tool, as well as other materials produced for that purpose. This intervention culminates in the preparation of a project in the context of formal and non-formal education, aiming, in a playful-pedagogical way, to encourage young people for an active and participative citizenship. Young volunteers have the right to:

- General training of young volunteers
- Specific training in the theme
- Certificate of participation
- Personal accident and civil responsibility insurance
- Reimbursement of expenses.

“Youth Volunteering for Nature and Forests” programme is another national youth volunteering programme promoted by the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth. This programme promotes practices in the field of nature protection, forests and their ecosystems, by raising awareness among the general public and preserving against forest fires and other disasters with an environmental impact, and by monitoring and restoring affected territories. The programme has as its objectives:

- Inventory and monitoring of animal and plant species at risk
- Inventory, signage and maintenance of forest paths and access to water points
- Recovery of footpaths
- Cleaning and maintenance of leisure parks
- Mobile surveillance, on foot or by bicycle, in areas defined by the local coordination bodies.
- Fixed surveillance at the guard posts
- Inventory of areas in need of cleaning
- Logistical support to forest fire prevention and detection centres
- Inventory and monitoring of burnt forest areas.
- Reforestation activities
- Activities to control invasive species.
- Other activities integrated in the areas of intervention of the programme.

The beneficiaries of this programme are residents of Portugal aged between 18 and 30 inclusive, who must be of good repute for volunteering in this programme. The entities that can apply for this programme are the following:

- Entities listed in the National Register of Non-Governmental Environmental Organisations and similar Organisations.
- Entities listed in the Register of Forest Producers ´ Organisations.
- Youth Associations registered in the National Register of Youth Associations
- Municipal Councils
- Parish Councils
- Other entities that pursue objectives covered by the intervention area of this programme, by order of the governing board of the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth

“International Work Camps” programme is another youth volunteering programme promoted by the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth. This programme aims to promote voluntary activities of a community, civil or social nature, carried out by a group of young people of several nationalities. They foster the development of a local community through tasks of a collective nature and promote cultural and linguistic learning and intercultural interaction among young people. The programme’s areas of activity are the following: Environment, Archaeology, Socio-community, Restoration and enhancement of historical and cultural heritage and others of recognised interest. The beneficiaries of the programme are the promoters and the young people aged between 18 and 30 who live in Portugal. Short-Term Youth Volunteer projects.

Several entities, such as youth associations, non-governmental organizations, private social solidarity institutions, sports associations and federations and other similar entities develop short-term projects involving young volunteers in several areas, such as: environment, health, culture, sports, social solidarity activities and other similar activities.

Data on youth volunteer programmes promoted by the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth The Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth develops a diverse set of programmes in several thematic areas aimed at young people. Young people from different regions of the country have participated in several projects and initiatives. In 2013, 1672 young people participated in the several volunteer programmes promoted by the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth and 504 projects were developed. In 2014, 2391 young people participated, and 2011 projects were developed. In 2015, 1756 young people participated, and 279 projects were developed. In 2016, 1574 young people took part in the programmes, and 384 projects were carried out. In 2017, 3046 young people participated, and 727 projects were carried out. In 2018, 1818 young people took part in the programmes, and 207 projects were carried out. In 2019, 2826 young people participated, and 362 projects were developed. In 2020, until the month of August 1353 young people took part in the programmes and 380 projects were developed. These data allow us to conclude that 2017 was the year in which most young people participated in volunteer programmes (3046) and 2014 was the year in which most projects were carried out. On the other hand, 2016 was the year in which fewer young people participated in volunteer programmes (1574) and 2018 was the year in which fewer projects were carried out (207).

In order to implement the quality of the developed actions in the framework of the Now Us Programme (Agora Nós) and Youth Volunteering for Nature and Forests Programme (Vountariado jovem para a Natureza e Florestas), entities promoting these programmes must respect the following specific requirements:

- to have human resources necessary for the coordination of actions, preferably with a background in social psychology or other fields allowing team management;
- to have the resources and materials needed to perform the volunteers’ tasks;
- to present a document before the IPDJ, I.P., demonstrating the compliance with the specific requirements mentioned in the previous paragraph: an express and written declaration together with the resumes of those responsible for coordinating the actions.

A pre-assessment of the projects submitted is carried out by the staff of the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth in order to verify that they meet the requirements and criteria defined by the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth. The selection of young volunteers is carried out according

to the regulations of each programme. The Board of Directors of the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth approves these projects according to the defined criteria. The Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth is developing a computer platform in which it intends to include questionnaires to be answered by young people who participate in the several volunteer programmes.

The IPDJ may audit, during the projects, the compliance with what was previously declared in the application. The obligation of delivering a final report, which is the promoters' responsibility, also enables the assessment of projects by the IPDJ. In case of non-compliance, the IPDJ can suspend the project or not approve future projects of that entity, under the 'Now Us' programme.

Depending on youth volunteering actions, volunteers are between 14 and 30 years old. Volunteers, before starting tasks, acquire training, given by the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth, on the rights and duties of the volunteers and the promoting entity provides specific training on each task to be developed. Volunteers are entitled to a certificate of participation, a certificate of recognition of acquired skills and personal accident and liability insurance. In the selection process of young volunteers, the Portuguese Institute for Sport and Youth considers the following criteria: geographical origin (rural areas, hinterlands, industrial or coastal areas), level of education, employment situation, gender, and special needs. The aim of this process is that young people at risk of exclusion have the same opportunities as other young people.



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## VOLUNTEERING CONFERENCE

Shaping volunteering in Europe and beyond

4 - 6 October 2023

Podgorica, Montenegro

The Volunteering Conference is one of the activities within the framework of the long-term Strategic National Agencies' Cooperation on Volunteering.

The aim of the conference is in line with the SNAC Volunteering aim to strengthen the European Solidarity Corps Programme and volunteering in general.

Objectives of the conference:

- support the implementation of the Council Recommendation on the Mobility of Young Volunteers across the EU;
- create a space for networking and exchange between the different stakeholders of the programme;
- influence the mid-term evaluation of the programme and the forthcoming shaping of the new programme;
- celebrate the 5th anniversary of the first deadline of the European Solidarity Corps.

The location of the conference, Podgorica, reflects the objective of SNAC Volunteering to give visibility to the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps in the partner regions of the EU.

The participants invited to the conference are representatives of the NAs dealing with European Solidarity Corps, practitioners from organisations involved in European Solidarity Corps, young people involved with European Solidarity Corps, experts/trainers within European Solidarity Corps. All of them are invited to discuss the results of the SNAC Volunteering research and the current and possible future implementation of the Council Recommendations on the Mobility of Young Volunteers across the European Union.

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