

**YOUTH POLICY REVIEW SERIES**

**Youth and  
Public Policy in  
Serbia**

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**Tatjana Stojic**

**A publication of  
Demokratie & Dialog e.V.**



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# Contents

List of Acronyms .....	vii
Executive Summary .....	1
<b>1: Introduction .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.1 Rationale for the Pilot Review	
1.2 Rationale for the Review in Serbia	
1.3 Objectives	
1.4 Methods and Approach	
1.5 Challenges and Limitations	
1.6 Conclusions	
<b>2: Background on Youth.....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1 Introduction	
2.2 Context	
2.3 Key Issues Affecting Young People	
2.3.1 Leisure Time	
2.3.2 Access to Information	
2.3.3 Employment	
2.3.4 Mobility and Migration	
2.3.5 Education	
2.3.6 Health	
2.3.7 Participation	
2.3.8 Crime and Violence	
2.4 Youth Visibility	
2.5 Conclusion	

<b>3: Youth and Public Policy. . . . .</b>	<b>52</b>
3.1 Introduction	
3.2 Key Definitions	
3.3 Development of Youth Policy	
3.3.1 Youth Policy in Tito’s Yugoslavia	
3.3.2 Youth Policy in Milosevic’s Serbia	
3.3.3 Youth Policy, 2000–2007	
3.3.4 Youth Policy, 2007–2011	
3.4 Youth Policy in 2012	
3.4.1 National Youth Strategy	
3.4.2 National Youth Action Plan	
3.4.3 Law on Youth	
3.4.4 Local Youth Action Plans	
3.4.5 Intersectoral Legislation Dealing with Youth	
3.5 Institutions for Implementation	
3.5.1 Ministry of Youth and Sport	
3.5.2 National Youth Council	
3.5.3 Local Youth Councils	
3.5.4 Local Youth Offices	
3.5.5 Agency for Youth	
3.5.6 Civil Society	
3.6 Financing	
3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation	
3.8 International Support and Alignment with International Standards	
3.9 Conclusion	
<b>4: Intersectoral Coordination. . . . .</b>	<b>85</b>
4.1 Introduction	
4.2 Coordination Mechanisms	
4.3 Employment	
4.3.1 Institutions	
4.3.2 Policies	



4.3.3 Implementation and Outcomes	
4.4 Health	
4.4.1 Policies	
4.4.2 Implementation and Coherence	
4.4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation	
4.4.4 Outcomes and Effectiveness	
4.5 Formal Education	
4.5.1 Policies	
4.5.2 Institutions	
4.5.3 Implementation and Outcomes	
4.6 Nonformal Education	
4.6.1 Institutions	
4.6.2 Policies	
4.6.3 Resources	
4.7 Conclusion	
<b>5: Vulnerable Groups . . . . .</b>	<b>122</b>
5.1 Introduction	
5.2 Groups Recognized in Policy	
5.3 Groups Overlooked by Policy	
5.4 Conclusion	
<b>6: Conclusion . . . . .</b>	<b>142</b>
6.1 Introduction	
6.2 Steps Forward	
6.3 Gaps	
6.4 Recommendations	
<b>Bibliography . . . . .</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Appendix I: Research Plan . . . . .</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>Appendix II: Focus Group Results . . . . .</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>Appendix III: Questionnaire . . . . .</b>	<b>165</b>
<b>Appendix IV: List of Interviews . . . . .</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Appendix V: About the Authors . . . . .</b>	<b>181</b>

# List of Acronyms

- CeSID—Center for Free Elections and Democracy
- EU—European Union
- FRY—Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
- GDP—Gross Domestic Product
- ICTY—International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
- IDP—Internally Displaced Person
- ILO—International Labor Organization
- IOM—International Organization for Migration
- KOMS—Umbrella Organization for the Youth of Serbia
- LGBTI—Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Intergender
- MERD—Ministry of Economy and Regional Development
- MoYS—Ministry of Youth and Sport
- NES—National Employment Service
- OECD—Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- OSCE—Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
- RSD—Republic of Serbia Dinars
- SRS—Serbian Radical Party
- STD—Sexually Transmitted Disease
- UNDP—United Nations Development Programme
- UNICEF—United Nations Children’s Fund
- USAID—United States Agency for International Development
- YCS—Youth Coalition of Serbia

# Executive Summary

In recent years, Serbia has made significant strides in developing policies that are cognizant of and responsive to the concerns of Serbia's youth. The adoption in 2011 of a national Law on Youth represents a significant step forward in the realization of young people's rights. But, while Serbia's youth has made demonstrable headway in the policy domain, young people continue to face significant obstacles on the road from childhood to adulthood. This review sheds light on the opportunities and challenges confronting young people in Serbia, as well as how Serbia's youth might successfully advocate for policies and reforms that overcome such obstacles.

Young people between the ages of 15 and 31 make up about 20 percent of the population in Serbia. Confronted by a graying population and the hardships of a post-communist, post-conflict transition, these young people faced enormous obstacles over the course of the past decade. On the economic front, while Serbia has experienced steady gains in GDP since the democratic changes of 2000, Serbia's young people continue to suffer from high rates of unemployment, a lack of access to the labor market, and vulnerability to macroeconomic instability. On the political front, while Serbia has successfully made the transition to an electoral democratic state, young people continue to be far removed from decision-making processes and are often denied a voice in the decisions that affect their lives.

To remedy this, in 2007 Serbia launched a multifaceted, participatory strategy to develop a national youth policy. In that year, it established the Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS) and charged it with overseeing that policy. In 2008, in consultation

with youth policy experts, civil society organizations, intersectoral ministries, and thousands of young people themselves, the MoYS drafted Serbia's first National Youth Strategy. The following year it adopted an Action Plan that delineated the tools and activities through which to realize the ambitions laid out in the Strategy. In 2011, for the very first time, Serbia's parliament adopted a national Law on Youth—to go into effect in 2012.

The passage of the Law on Youth and the creation of a coherent national strategy are important steps in empowering Serbia's young people. The policy that has thus far developed may be applauded for the following reasons:

- **A Participatory Process:** The process that led to the development of the National Youth Strategy, Action Plan, and Law on Youth was broadly inclusive and engaged experts, civil society organizations, youth groups, and young people themselves from all across Serbia.
- **Recognition of Civil Society:** Civil society formed an important partner throughout the development of Serbia's Youth Strategy, and it has been reflected in the Law on Youth.
- **A Legal Framework:** The passage of Serbia's Law on Youth in 2011 represents a major step forward in the creation of a national youth policy that will not be bound to a single government.
- **Informed by International Standards:** The development of the legal framework and policy documents on youth closely followed the standards set in international human rights instruments.

Yet, if Serbia has made important steps in laying the foundation of a solid youth policy, significant questions remain about the implementation of such policy. Among the gaps that threaten to impede the current policy from realizing its full potential are the following:

- **Role of Youth as a Resource:** Though both the government and the media have come to speak of youth as a resource, young people are largely unconvinced by such characterization. This may be explained by the intersectoral laws and regulations that do not treat youth as a resource or tool for future prosperity.
- **Intersectoral Cooperation on Implementation:** The MoYS is charged with overseeing Serbia's youth policy. To ensure proper implementation of the existing Law on Youth and National Youth Strategy, it will have to rely extensively on colleagues in other ministries. In addition, MoYS has considerable limitations in its ability to position itself vis-à-vis major stakeholders.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The monitoring and evaluation plan that now exists is not results-oriented and lacks analytical views on the cost and general effectiveness of applied measures. This is a significant omission and must be addressed if the policy is to be amended as needed.
- **Participation Going Forward:** The level of participation of youth and civil society organizations in the development of Serbia's youth policy has been incredibly substantive. What has been left unclear, however, is whether such participation will continue in earnest throughout the implementation stage.
- **Social Inclusion beyond Poverty:** Since 2003, young people have been recognized as a vulnerable group in Serbia. While this recognition is an important step in bringing youth to the forefront of the policymaking agenda, such vulnerability has been defined almost exclusively in financial terms. As a consequence, some young people who are marginalized in Serbian society have gone unnoticed. This includes the LGBTI population, young prisoners, and even rural youth.
- **Changes in Government:** The effectiveness of Serbia's youth policy may be attributed in large part to the convictions

of the MoYS and its openness to nongovernmental stakeholders. The future of the MoYS—both its existence and its composition—is by no means guaranteed, however. Both the ministry itself, as well as the party that now controls it (the G17 Plus) may not be part of the next Serbian government.

- **Linking National with Local:** By May 2011, 96 municipalities had prepared and adopted local youth action plans, while 15 more were in the phase of adoption. With few exceptions, such plans do not offer concrete objectives or activities. Funds allocated for the implementation of the youth action plans remain very modest. As of yet, there is no means to ensure real commitment from local governments to implement action plans.

Given these gaps, this report offers the following set of recommendations for policymakers and youth civil society organizations in the months and years going forward:

- **Maintain Pressure on Intersectoral Ministries:** Both civil society organizations and the MoYS must maintain a watchful eye on the work of intersectoral ministries. Civil society organizations, in particular, should take steps to monitor resource allocation and hold ministries accountable for promises made in the National Youth Strategy. Youth civil society organizations have the potential to serve as a watchdog, naming and shaming those ministries that do not comply.
- **Demand a Role in Implementation:** Civil society organizations have not been adequately included in the work groups responsible for implementation. Young people, in particular, must demand a greater say in the decisions that will affect the policies they have helped draft.
- **Stay Focused and United:** Civil society organizations in Serbia have a tendency to split and fracture. Much has been accomplished thanks to their unity on youth issues, and now

is not the time for such alliances to fray. If necessary, young people themselves should play a role in ensuring that such organizations stay united in their efforts to see a national youth policy realized in practice.

- **Rethink Monitoring and Evaluation:** More emphasis must be given to developing a cohesive, impact-based monitoring and evaluation methodology. The MoYS should rethink the resources it is devoting to monitoring and evaluation, and involve young people themselves in ensuring that expectations are being met and problems resolved.
- **Expand the Terms of Vulnerability:** The MoYS should expand its understanding of youth vulnerability to include social as well as economic exclusion.
- **Incentivize Youth Entrepreneurship:** Steps should be taken not only to improve access to good education but also access to entrepreneurship. Such activities may include providing a favorable tax policy for youth enterprises for an initial period of more than one year. Policy measures might also be taken to support interconnections among young and senior entrepreneurs through mentoring programs, business clubs, or associations.
- **Develop an Education Strategy:** Ensuring that Serbia's young people are better able to join the job market necessitates a whole scale rethinking of formal education in Serbia. The Ministry of Education, working hand-in-hand with the MoYS, should engage in a participatory process to redesign Serbia's education system, beginning with an inclusive, comprehensive, and contemporary national education strategy.





# 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Rationale for the Pilot Review

This report evaluating youth policy in Serbia is part of a pilot series of six reports reviewing public policies affecting young people in the following countries: Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Nepal, Serbia, and Uganda. The pilot project consisted of research teams on the ground to conduct analyses based on a specially developed evaluation matrix, assisted and supported in the research process by international advisors. An International Editorial Board supervised and evaluated the pilot process.

The Open Society Youth Initiative provided funding for the pilot project. The Youth Initiative supports young people in their efforts to be agents of positive change and advocates for the full and effective participation of all young people in the political, social, and cultural life of their communities.

The pilot project had the following objectives:

- To review public policies pertaining to youth (including, but not exclusively specific to, youth policies) in several countries using the draft evaluation matrix specifically developed for the purpose.
- To make available research that will allow young people to engage in an informed debate on the public policies affecting them and their communities in the countries concerned.
- To build a pool of young researchers capable of evaluating policies pertaining youth, including specific youth policies.

- To contribute to building the capacity of the youth sector in the targeted countries to research public policy issues.
- To develop the evidence base for pilot advocacy activities in cooperation with the Open Society Youth Initiative and other partners.
- To broaden the scope of the international youth sector to include general policies pertaining to youth that go beyond specific youth policies.
- To develop the capacity of the international youth sector and its partners and networks for evidence-based strategy development for young people and their issues.

## **1.2 Rationale for the Review in Serbia**

The goal of this review is to gauge the progress and effectiveness of public policies that affect young people in Serbia, as well as to identify areas and opportunities for future engagement on youth reform.

In recent years, young people in Serbia have made significant strides in advocating for policies that are cognizant of and responsive to their concerns. The adoption in 2011 of a national Law on Youth represents a significant step forward in the acknowledgment and realization of young people's rights. Yet, while Serbia's youth has made demonstrable headway in the policy domain, young people continue to face significant obstacles on the road from childhood to adulthood. This review will not only shed light on the opportunities and challenges confronting young people in Serbia, but also on how Serbia's youth might successfully advocate for policies and reforms that help overcome such obstacles.

The Republic of Serbia—henceforth “Serbia”—was selected as one of seven case study countries that demonstrated a high potential for future advocacy work based on the results of this

review. Serbia was selected, in part, because it is home to a national Open Society foundation, the [Fund for an Open Society—Serbia](#), which works to advance European integration, the rule of law, good governance, education reform, as well as transitional justice, social inclusion, and human rights. The Fund expressed an interest in participating in the project and had the internal capacity to implement it.

Serbia was also selected because it exemplifies the priorities laid out in the Youth Initiative's 2011–2012 strategy. This strategy listed priority countries as those that are conflict-affected; disproportionately affected by inward and/or outward youth migration; home to significant minority and/or marginalized communities; and in the process of implementing official youth policies. To varying degrees, Serbia meets each of these qualifications.

Having been involved in four separate wars throughout the 1990s, as well as being the target of a NATO bombing campaign in 1999, Serbia can be accurately labeled as "conflict-affected." In addition, Serbia has also experienced significant outward migration—in part attributable to conflict but also attributable to dire economic prospects—with many young people seeking employment opportunities elsewhere in Europe. Serbia is also home to significant minority and marginalized communities, including, but not limited to, the Roma and internally displaced persons (IDPs). As mentioned, Serbia is also in the process of implementing an existing youth policy. A Youth Policy was developed in 2007, as was an Action Plan, and a subsequent Law on Youth, which was adopted in May 2011—precisely when this review was begun.

### 1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the Serbia Public Policy Review are to

- evaluate the progress and effectiveness of public policies that affect young people in Serbia using the the evaluation matrix developed for this purpose;
- identify areas and opportunities for future engagement by local activists and policymakers concerned with youth and public policy;
- make this research available to policymakers, activists, and young people throughout Serbia, so that they can engage in an informed debate on the public policies that affect young people and their communities throughout the country; and
- produce the evidence needed to develop future youth advocacy activities in cooperation with the Fund for an Open Society–Serbia.

The Serbia Review is one of six public policy reviews being conducted in Europe, Africa, and South Asia as part of the Pilot Evaluation Series. The objectives of the Pilot Evaluation Series are as follows:

- establish a common framework for a rights-based approach to the evaluation of how public policy impacts young people around the world;
- use this evaluation as a basis for research-based advocacy and comparative public policy analysis;
- support the capacities of the youth sector, including young people, to research and debate the public policies that affect them and their peers.

## 1.4 Methods and Approach

The evaluation process employed throughout this review relied on a mixture of desk research, direct consultation with young people, experts, and policymakers, as well as an in-depth field visit. To develop conclusions about the strengths and/or weaknesses of existing public policies, the research team conducted extensive background research over a period of several months. Once these conclusions were deemed sufficiently well-founded, they were tested in a series of interviews and focus groups with stakeholders throughout the country. In addition, the research team developed a substantive questionnaire, which allowed them to further test their assumptions and helped to fill in any gaps within the existing literature.

Among the methods employed throughout this policy review were the following:

- **Desk Research:** Once the research team adapted the Youth Initiative's evaluation matrix to accommodate the Serbian case, the team began an intense period of desk research. From June 2011 through August 2011, they reviewed relevant documents, legislation, research, and previous reviews of youth policy pertaining to Serbia. In the process, they also mapped those actors engaged in the youth sector in Serbia that they believed would be sources of relevant information.
- **Interviews:** Following the extensive desk review, the local research team began drafting the report. Once a comprehensive first draft had been produced, they assembled a list of relevant stakeholders to be interviewed one-on-one or in small groups, together with the international advisor, during the two-week field visit held from September 24–October 7, 2011. A total of 31 interviews were conducted for the purpose of this review. Interviews often went into considerable depth, lasting more than one hour. Wherever possible, interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. Where a

recorder was not employed, written notes were taken. Following each interview, a summary and/or full transcript of interviewee responses was made. Interviews were conducted in semistructured, one-on-one fashion in Serbian with stakeholders, including young people under the age of 31, civil society representatives active in the youth sector, experts on youth engagement, and policymakers working in fields either directly or indirectly related to youth. For a full list of interviewees, please refer to Appendix IV.

- **Focus Groups:** To obtain additional insight into the perceptions and opinions of stakeholders, the research team also conducted a total of nine focus groups. Two focus groups were held in central Serbia, in the city of Nis, on October 3, 2011. One of these focus groups involved young people and another involved NGO activists engaged in youth issues. Three focus groups were also held in Novi Sad, in northern Serbia, on October 4, 2011. One of these focus groups involved young people, another involved NGO activists engaged in youth issues, and a third involved young Roma. Four more focus groups were held in Serbia's capital, Belgrade, on October 6 and 7, 2011. These concentrated on three specific sectors of interest for the report: education, employment, and health. One focus group targeted policymakers and NGO activists. Close to 50 people participated in these focus groups. For a list of questions asked during the focus groups, please refer to Appendix II.
- **Questionnaire:** All focus group participants were asked to complete a questionnaire evaluating their knowledge of and opinions about subjects of concern to young people and public policy in Serbia. The questionnaire was developed by the local research team in tandem with the international advisor, as well as an independent researcher with a background in psychology. The questionnaire may be found in Appendix III.

To read more about the methods employed in conducting this research, please see Appendix I. For insight into the background of the researchers and the international advisor who authored this review, please refer to Appendix V.

## 1.5 Challenges and Limitations

The authors confronted several challenges and limitations throughout the composition of this review:

**Limited Time Frame:** Given the still-formative stages of the youth policymaking process in Serbia, it is difficult—if not impossible—to speak of “impact.” Serbia adopted its national Law on Youth just weeks prior to the initiation of desk research for this review. While its National Youth Strategy was adopted in 2008 and its Action Plan in 2009, the changes expected from such a process are likely to be years in coming. As a result, this review will limit itself to an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of current youth policy and the expected challenges that policymakers and activists are likely to confront in the years ahead.

- **Attribution:** Another challenge confronting the reviewers is the question of attribution. To ensure that correlation is not mistaken for causation, this review will rely on a wide array of stakeholder perspectives. More than 75 experts, policymakers, activists, and young people were consulted throughout the composition of this review. Many had hands-on experience in the formulation of the current policy and were well able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the process and its projected implementation.
- **Generalizability:** To attempt a high degree of generalizability of review findings, the authors did their best to include a wide variety of relevant stakeholders throughout this study. As stated, they consulted more than 75 individuals before completing the review. The researchers attempted

to maximize the generalizability of their findings by ensuring the geographic and ethnic diversity of their respondents.

## **1.6 Conclusions**

This chapter presented an overview of the ambitions and content of this report. It offered an explanation of the methods employed in gathering research and drawing conclusions. The following chapters will present the fruits of such labors. They begin with an examination of the youth in Serbia in 2012, offering insight into the many issues that affect young people's daily lives. Chapter 3 continues with an in-depth discussion of youth policy, providing readers with an overview of the policy's evolution, its various dimensions, as well as the mechanisms set in place to realize its stated ambitions. Chapter 4 examines the effectiveness of this policy in practice, offering an in-depth examination of four sectors that will have a major bearing on young people in the future: employment, health, formal education, and nonformal education. Chapter 5 continues by examining the manner in which policy does (or, as in several instances, does not) address Serbia's most vulnerable groups. Finally, Chapter 6 concludes with an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the current policy and recommendations for the future.



# 2: Background on Youth

## 2.1 Introduction

Serbia is several years into the development of a nationwide youth policy. Having adopted a National Youth Strategy in 2008 and an accompanying Youth Action Plan in 2009, in May 2011 the nation's parliament took the historic step of passing a national Law on Youth. The process leading up to the adoption of Serbia's Law on Youth has widely been heralded as among the most participatory and representative to date. For many stakeholders, it is regarded as a hallmark of best practices for future collaboration between Serbia's civil sector and policy-making communities. Yet the years and decades preceding the adoption of Serbia's Law on Youth were often bitter and saw hard fought battles. This chapter lays out the contextual realities that mediated the process of public policy formation, as well as the challenges and achievements confronting young people in Serbia in 2012.

## 2.2 Context

Serbia is located in southeastern Europe, in the heart of what was once the multiethnic Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. A small, landlocked country with a population of just over 7.3 million, Serbia has one of the major land routes from Western Europe to the Middle East.<sup>1</sup> At its borders lie Hungary,

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1. This figure does not include Kosovo. World Bank (2009), *World Development Indicators: Serbia*.

Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Croatia; as a consequence, Serbia is home to a significant number of minority communities, including, but not limited to, Albanians, Hungarians, Bosnians, Croats, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Romanians, and Roma.

Like many of its neighbors, Serbia is a prospective member state of the European Union (EU).<sup>2</sup> Its trajectory toward EU membership has, however, been precarious. This difficulty has stemmed in large part from the multiple transitions—from socialism to capitalism, from authoritarianism to democracy, and from war to peace—the country has undergone since the initiation of multiparty politics in 1990.

The 1990s saw Serbia embroiled in a series of violent civil wars in Bosnia, Croatia, and later Kosovo that led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Thousands of young Serbs were drafted into these wars, volunteering or forced to serve in neighboring republics and provinces. These violent and protracted civil wars gave rise to the now-infamous term “ethnic cleansing” and would leave a legacy of nationalism and xenophobia that would threaten Serbia’s post-communist transition for years to come.

The wars unfolding at Serbia’s borders were compounded by a domestic struggle within Serbia, as the nation’s leader—Slobodan Milosevic—oversaw his country’s postsocialist transition not to democracy but to authoritarianism. As Milosevic waged war in Bosnia, Croatia, and later Kosovo, he also waged a political assault against his fellow Serbs: monopolizing the media, brutalizing (and, in several instances, murdering) opponents, and rigging elections.

The combined effect of Milosevic’s aggressive domestic and foreign policies resulted in the political, economic, and cultural

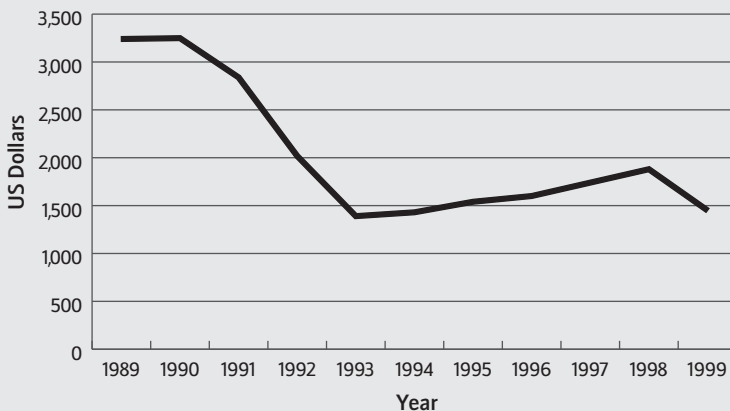
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2. In October 2011, the European Commission announced its recommendation that Serbia receive EU candidacy status. However, the specific date for Serbia’s candidacy was left pending until Serbia has resolved its still-tenuous relationship to Kosovo.

isolation of Serbia for much of the decade. Throughout the 1990s, Serbia was repeatedly targeted by United Nations sanctions. In part—though not exclusively—because of this, the country experienced hyperinflation and declining standards of living—with GDP per capita falling dramatically from \$3,249 in 1990 to just \$1,450 in 1999 (see Figure 2.1). In 1999, Serbia was also targeted by a NATO bombing campaign intended to stop Serbian forces from committing further human rights violations in Kosovo.

Economic decline, civil war, and political repression did not bode well for Serbia's youth. The country's political, economic, and cultural isolation gave rise to a booming gray economy and a culture of criminality in which gangsters and paramilitary operatives gained the status of national icons. To escape this, as many as 500,000 young people left Serbia between 1991 and

**FIGURE 2.1: GDP PER CAPITA 1989–1999**



**Source:** Adapted from OCHA and UNICEF, *Economic Sanctions, Health and Welfare in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia 1990–2000*, Belgrade, 2001.

2001.<sup>3</sup> Those that remained in Serbia were confronted by massive criminality, the rising tide of nationalism, and political extremism.

Yet it was against this very backdrop that an emergent democratic culture began to find its voice. Young people, in particular, played a major role. Condemning Milosevic's anti-democratic agenda, these youths waged protests throughout the 1990s, forming the now legendary resistance movement, Otpor, in 1998. For two years, young people across Serbia staged daring acts of nonviolent resistance. Working with political parties, they ultimately helped to unseat Milosevic in elections held in September 2000. Just weeks thereafter—on October 5, 2000—Milosevic would be forced to resign. In his place, an ostensibly democratic candidate—Vojislav Kostunica—took the helm of power.

The political changes of October 2000 engendered a new degree of hope and optimism throughout Serbia. Many believed the country would smoothly transition to liberal democracy and quickly join the ranks of the EU. This did not prove to be the case, however.

Since 2000, Serbia's democratic transition has been plagued by numerous fits and starts, as reforms have lagged far behind citizens' expectations. The legacy of the 1990s and, in particular, a decade of war, criminality, and authoritarianism proved less ephemeral than many had hoped. The culture of nationalism so deeply ingrained in young people's minds in the 1990s proved difficult to erase. Those who had earned their fortunes by exploiting Serbia's war-torn economy were unwilling to make the reforms demanded of a democratic society. And, many were reluctant to confront the practices of nepotism and corruption that had seeped through all levels of Serbian society.

The first problems were seen within Serbia's newly empowered Democratic Opposition of Serbia, the 18-party coalition that

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3. I. Erdei (2010), "Migrations of the Future—Serbian Youth Between Imaginary and Real Migration," in *Migration in, From, and To Southeastern Europe: Ways and Strategies Part 2* (2010), ed. K. Roth, and J. L. Bacas (Ethnologia Balkanica 14).

had helped to unseat Milosevic. Disagreements over the future path of Serbia led to a fracturing of Serbia's prodemocratic elements. This was followed in 2003 by the assassination of Serbia's first reformist prime minister, Zoran Djindjic, by elements once beholden to Milosevic. Shortly thereafter, the Serbian Radical Party—the president of which was indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)—staged a surprising electoral comeback, raising fears that Serbia's prodemocratic trajectory was in jeopardy.

The uncertainty of Serbia's future was further exacerbated by what many perceived to be the state's inability to deal with its recent past—most notably its role in the Yugoslav wars. The government's failure to apprehend and extradite suspected war criminals, including Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, impeded its consideration for admission to the EU. European integration was further impeded by the country's territorial uncertainty. In 2006, Serbia parted ways with Montenegro—a constituent state of Yugoslavia—and, in 2008, Kosovo formally declared its independence.

In 2012, despite having made significant strides toward democracy since 2000, Serbia continues to suffer from territorial, political, and economic uncertainty.

At present, Serbia is composed of 29 districts, plus the City of Belgrade. Serbia is home to two provinces: Vojvodina in the north (comprising seven districts) and the contested province of Kosovo in the south (comprising five districts). Between Vojvodina and Kosovo lies central Serbia, which occupies the remaining districts. Serbia may be further subdivided by its 24 cities and 150 municipalities. By far the largest of Serbia's cities is Belgrade, which has a population of more than 1.2 million.<sup>4</sup>

Historically, Serbia has faced large intraregional and interregional discrepancies, which have hindered equitable development.

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4. By comparison, Serbia's second largest city—Novi Sad—has just under 300,000 inhabitants, while Nis has just over 250,000 inhabitants.

In 2012, Serbia's north is more developed than its south, which largely relies on agriculture. Serbia's cities have also been more developed, as a consequence of which Serbia has witnessed an influx of domestic migrants to its urban centers.<sup>5</sup> The urban population is highly concentrated in just a handful of urban centers—namely Belgrade, Novi Sad, Nis, Subotica, and Kragujevac—which together are home to 46 percent of the country's urban population. Not all rural-urban young migrants choose to stay in big cities, however. Particularly for those young people who move to study in urban centers, a lack of job opportunities and housing, combined with peri-urban poverty, leave many with little choice but to return to their rural communities.

Just as there is urban-rural migration in Serbia, there is also outward migration. Emigration and the issue of "brain drain" are viewed as compellingly acute, particularly in rural areas. More so than their urban counterparts, young people living in Serbia's rural communities express a great desire to leave the country. Some studies have shown that as many as one in two young people between the ages of 15 and 26 would leave Serbia if given the opportunity.<sup>6</sup> Such numbers, however, may be exaggerated. While many young people profess a desire to leave the country when asked, few are able to delineate concrete steps they are taking to achieve this goal, and fewer still wind up making the move.

The desire to move is, however, caused in large part by the difficult economic transition that Serbia has undergone since 2000. Serbia's economy—which depends primarily on services, industry, and agriculture—has been through a major transformation since the fall of the Milosevic regime. Thanks to a major

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5. From 1991 to 2001 alone, Serbia witnessed an increase in the percentage of people living in urban areas from 13.9 percent to 28.2 percent. See: International Organization for Migration (2008), *Migration in Serbia: A Country Profile 2008*.

6. V. Pejic (2003), "Young People in Serbia—Attitudes, Moral Values and Perspectives," *South-East Europe Review*, p. 71.

series of liberal-economic reforms, macroeconomic stability was largely restored, and GDP per capita has risen from \$1,600 in 2000 to \$6,267 in 2011. In 2010, national GDP was estimated at roughly \$38 billion.<sup>7</sup>

While such statistics show significant improvement over Milošević-era economics, the situation appears far bleaker on the ground. Serbia suffers from close to a 20 percent unemployment rate and a large trade deficit of \$7.2 billion. While poverty has fallen since the 1990s, roughly 8 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. In part because of this, Serbia has witnessed declining total fertility over the past several decades. It now stands at about 1.4 children per woman of childbearing age. The birthrate has also fallen to under 9.2 births per 1,000 population—making Serbia home to one of the lowest birth-rates in Europe.

### 2.3 Key Issues Affecting Young People

There are about 1,512,646 young people, between the ages of 15 and 31, living in Serbia, making up about 20 percent of the overall population.<sup>8</sup> Serbia's young have slightly more men than women, with 768,221 men and 744,425 women. Of this total youth population, most are Serbian and identify themselves as Orthodox Christian.<sup>9</sup>

Serbia's unique context has created both challenges and opportunities for its young people. On the economic front, while Serbia has had steady gains in GDP since the democratic changes of 2000, Serbia's young people continue to suffer from high rates of unemployment, lack of access to the labor market,

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7. World Bank (2011), "[Serbia](#)."

8. Republic of Serbia, "[Population Census 2002](#)" (Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia).

9. For more on Serbia's ethnic and religious minorities, see Chapter 5.

and vulnerability to macroeconomic instability. On the political front, while Serbia has successfully made the transition to an electoral democratic state, young people continue to be far removed from decision-making processes and are often denied a stake in the decisions that affect their lives.

This section lays out the key issues that affect young people in Serbia in 2012. It begins by offering a description of youth life before examining the challenges that affect young men and women in Serbia.

### 2.3.1 Leisure Time

The importance of leisure time for the social and emotional development of young people is widely recognized. Yet opportunities for leisure and organized entertainment are regarded as being “poor” in Serbia, a fact that is believed to contribute to the high incidence of physical inactivity of young people throughout the country.<sup>10</sup>

Young people in Serbia spend about 80 percent of their free time either socializing, watching television, or using the Internet. With respect to young people in high school, most students spend their free time in nonstructured gatherings with their peers, watching television, using their mobile phones, and using computers. The situation is similar for university students, who spend most of their time socializing, going out, listening to music, and watching TV, and applies to young people in both urban centers and rural communities alike (see Figure 2.2).<sup>11</sup>

By comparison, a relatively small number of young people spend their free time engaged in sports, reading, obtaining additional training, or studying. Few young people devote their time to reading books or newspapers, and more than one-third of

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10. Youth Count, Country Report Serbia (2007), p. 205.

11. According to the National Youth Strategy, the most common activity for university students is listening to music (78%), socializing (73%), going out (55%), and watching TV programs (45%). National Youth Strategy (2008), p. 23.



FIGURE 2.2: LEISURE TIME OF SERBIAN YOUTH\*

	Age 15–19	Age 20–24	Age 25–29	Average Youth (15–29)	Age 30+	Average Adults
Watch TV	22	29	34	29	69	62
Socialize	33	25	22	27	14	16
Read books	6	7	7	7	4	5
Read news- papers, magazines	0	2	2	2	3	3
On Internet	23	26	14	22	3	6
Study	1	3	2	2	1	1
Sports	7	6	4	6	2	3
Listen to music	7	1	3	4	2	2
The Arts	0	0	3	1	2	2

\*Numbers represent percentages

**Source:** Peace Building and Inclusive Local Development.

secondary school children are not members of a single library.<sup>12</sup> The numbers are bleaker still for those engaged in creative hobbies, such as music or the arts, and charity work.<sup>13</sup>

Cultural pursuits among youth are, themselves, very low in Serbia. According to the Institute of Psychology, one in two

12. National Youth Strategy (2008), p. 24.

13. CeSID (2009), Public Opinion Survey.

secondary school children in Serbia has never visited a theater or museum. The trend continues as children become young adults. Young people make up less than 4 percent of the total number attending theaters, visiting museums, attending classical music performances, and listening to jazz concerts in Serbia.<sup>14</sup> Of the music young people choose, most listen to pop and folk, techno, rock, and, to a lesser extent, R&B. Few, however, attend live concerts, as many complain that they lack the financial resources.<sup>15</sup>

In fact, a lack of adequate financial resources is widely reported as the primary obstacle to organized entertainment.<sup>16</sup> As a consequence, the level of cultural participation depends heavily on young people's socioeconomic status. Those who claim less dependency on their parents, are able to afford their own place to live, and are more highly educated tend to engage in more cultural pursuits.

On the whole, however, the leisure time of young people in Serbia is widely perceived as unstructured and, according to Serbia's National Youth Strategy, "inappropriate and poor," with opportunities for structured cultural engagements few and far between.<sup>17</sup>

### 2.3.2 Access to Information

Access to information is widely regarded as critical to enabling young people to partake in the decisions that most directly affect their lives. Yet young people—particularly teenagers—often believe they are missing critical sources of information to such a degree that their professional and intellectual development is being inhibited.<sup>18</sup>

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14. National Youth Strategy (2008).

15. CeSID (2009), Public Opinion Survey.

16. As many as 65% of students cite insufficient funds as the main obstacle to quality leisure time (National Youth Strategy, p. 23).

17. National Youth Strategy (2008), p. 23

18. CeSID (2009), Public Opinion Survey.

Television is by far the main source of information for young people in Serbia. Forty-four percent of young people spend one to three hours watching television per day, and 29 percent watch television for three to five hours daily.<sup>19</sup> While as many as 80 percent of young people rely on television as their primary source of information, TV is not the only information source. Print media and informal channels of information, such as dialogue and discussions with friends and colleagues, are also used, while about 40 percent of young people also rely on radio. Nor is television equally used across the population. Young people living in rural communities and with less education tend to watch more television than do young educated urbanites.

Although Internet and computer usage remains below the EU average, it has been steadily rising in cities and towns across Serbia. According to research conducted by Strategic Marketing, 51 percent of the country's households have some form of Internet access, with two-thirds relying on it on a daily basis.<sup>20</sup> About 68 percent of young people use the Internet every day—far higher than the national average of 36 percent. Young people between the ages of 12 to 29 are particularly avid users of the Internet, with occasional Internet usage as high as 91 percent.<sup>21</sup> Still, a minority of young people use the Internet to obtain information, choosing instead to use the Internet to surf, email, and socialize. Among the most popular websites visited by young Serbians are YouTube, Facebook, Google, and the web news sources, B92 and Blic.

With regards to the television programs that young people watch, movies, sports, reality shows, and music are by far the most heavily favored. Viewership of news programs is low—with

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19. Institute of Psychology (2007), *Everyday Life of Youth in Serbia: Snap of Time Budget*.

20. "Survey Looks at Internet Usage in Serbia," *B92*, July 2, 2010.

21. CeSID (2009), Public Opinion Survey.

57 percent of young people reporting almost no interest in news coverage.<sup>22</sup> Still, consumption of televised news appears to increase with age, with only 11 percent of teens but as many as 27 percent of those aged 25 to 30 regularly or occasionally watching news programs.<sup>23</sup>

Despite the preponderance of television viewing and their increasing access to the Internet, young people continue to complain of a lack of information. This is particularly true with respect to young people's knowledge of job opportunities. Young people express little knowledge of available employment or professional resources, a problem that, at least in part, accounts for the high rates of unemployment among young people in Serbia.

### 2.3.3 Employment

Positioning youth in the labor market and resolving youth unemployment are of critical importance to the future of every society—this is particularly true in Serbia. Serbia's youth has been disproportionately affected by high levels of unemployment, especially during times of economic crisis. Both the economic crises experienced in the 1990s and the global recession of 2008 adversely affected the potential and existing job opportunities for Serbia's youth, leaving as many as one in two young people jobless or underemployed.<sup>24</sup>

Unfortunately, accurate statistics on youth unemployment are notoriously difficult to come by. According to the latest data available from the Republican Statistical Office, youth unemployment varies between 46 percent and 27 percent, with those aged 15 through 24 experiencing higher rates of unemployment

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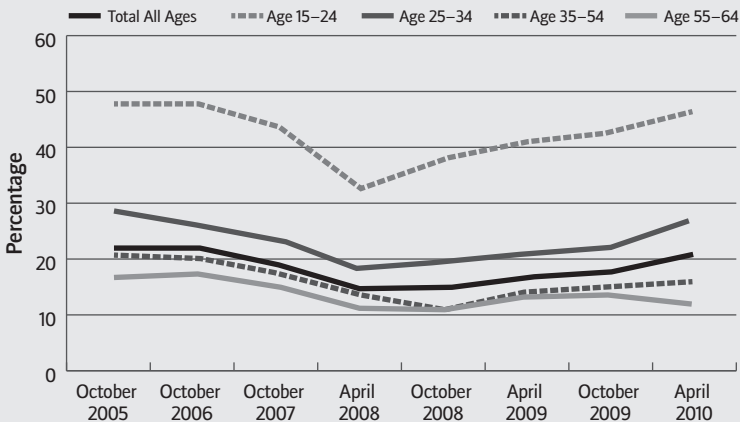
22. Institute of Psychology (2007), *Everyday Life of Youth in Serbia: Snap of Time Budget*.

23. CeSID (2009), Public Opinion Survey.

24. M. Arandarenko (2010), "Serbia: Youth Employment Targets until 2010," United Nations Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration.

than their older counterparts (see Figure 2.3).<sup>25</sup> Youth unemployment also accounts for a substantial amount of the total unemployment in Serbia, perhaps as much as 49 percent.<sup>26</sup> However, such figures do not take into account young people engaged in the black market. According to the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development MERD, close to 30 percent of young people aged 15 to 24 are involved in the informal economy (see Figure 2.3).

**FIGURE 2.3: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUPS  
2005–2010**



**Source:** Adapted from the Labor force survey, Republican Statistical Office.

25. This number is roughly double the average rate of unemployment in the EU.

26. Operational Program for Human Resource Development, 2012–2013, DRAFT (Ministry of Economy and Regional Development).

As Figure 2.3 indicates, youth employment has proven particularly vulnerable to economic crisis. Given that young people are often employed on only a part-time basis and often receive temporary—rather than fixed—employment contracts, they have proven to be the first in line to lose their jobs.<sup>27</sup> Thus, although the employment prospects of Serbia's youth appear to have been increasing since 2005, the global meltdown of 2008 led an immediate worsening of the youth unemployment data.<sup>28</sup> Young men—who traditionally enjoy higher employment rates than young women—were particularly adversely affected by the crisis, with their employment rates falling by as much as 30 percent in 2008.<sup>29</sup>

But if raging unemployment continues to be the main problem affecting the socioeconomic prospects of Serbia's youth, it is by no means the only problem. Of additional concern for young people are obstacles to their entrance into the labor market and, closely related to this, their overrepresentation in the informal economy.

One of the most significant problems affecting young people is obtaining their first job. Young people in Serbia are often confronted with a perplexing Catch 22: unable to gain professional experience without a first job, but unable to obtain a first job without prior professional experience. As a result, young people (and in particular, young graduates) often face prolonged unemployment, making getting the elusive first job more difficult still.

For those young people who do find employment, most do so as a result of personal connections rather than public job announcements. According to the Survey on the Necessary Skills of Employees in Serbia, as many as 34 percent of employers

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27. Interview with Mihail Arandarenko, professor of labor and economics at the University of Belgrade, October 10, 2011.

28. M. Arandarenko (2010), "Serbia: Youth Employment Targets Until 2010."

29. By comparison, female youth unemployment rates grew by 17%.

acknowledge hiring on the basis of friendship or family connections, while just one in four employers places job announcements or places ads through the National Employment Service. The preponderance of jobs obtained through connections, rather than merit, fosters professional complacency among Serbia's youth—graduates give up the job search, waiting instead for a relative or friend to come through with a job offer.<sup>30</sup>

Polling data from 2002 through 2005 offer insight into the long transition that awaits young graduates from education to job. According to the Survey on the Necessary Skills of Employees in Serbia, more than 66 percent of young people were unemployed for up to four years before finding a job. While the situation improved slightly from 2005 until 2007, as many as 25 percent of the young still had not found a job two years after the completion of high school or university.<sup>31</sup>

In large part because of the difficulty in entering the formal job market, many young people have had little choice but to join the informal economy, where they are denied social security and job protection and are vulnerable to exploitation.<sup>32</sup> Although it is impossible to obtain precise figures about the number of young people currently working in the informal economy, apparently as many as 29 percent of young people work in the informal economy.<sup>33</sup> Many of them lack a university or high school degree. In fact, according to 2006 data obtained by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, nearly 95 percent of all employed young people with only primary education worked in the informal economy, compared with 40 percent

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30. This was confirmed in one-on-one interviews with young graduates of university. Group interview conducted on September 20, 2011.

31. Survey on the necessary skills of employees in Serbia, Vladan Bozanic, Project Youth Employment and Migration, MDGFund.

32. UNDP (2005), Human Development Report, *The Strength of Diversity*, p. 85. See also S. Bigini (2007), *Report on Youth and Youth Policy in Serbia* (UNIFEM, Program office in Belgrade), p. 6.

33. Operational Program for Human Resource Development, 2012–2013.

with a high school diploma and 16 percent with university-level qualifications.

Of those young people who do find work in Serbia's formal sector, most are well-educated Serbian males from (sub)urban areas. In addition to women and the uneducated, surveys indicate that ethnic minorities and youth who come from lower socioeconomic strata are not only the most vulnerable to transition and the effects of economic crises, but are most likely to remain in a vicious circle of poverty and unemployment.<sup>34</sup> For more on the employment prospects of Serbia's young minorities and marginalized communities, please refer to Chapter 5.

### 2.3.4 Mobility and Migration

Mobility and migration are often an important feature of young people's lives, allowing them to escape economic insecurity, broaden their understanding of foreign cultures, and attain greater independence as they learn self-reliance. Serbia's young people have only recently begun to enjoy the fruits of mobility. After a decade of economic, cultural, and political isolation, much of Serbia's youth remains insular, ethnocentric, and unknowledgeable about the world beyond their immediate borders.

As many as one in two young Serbians have never traveled abroad (see Figure 2.4). Just 15 percent of young people travel abroad at least once a year. Most young people have not traveled throughout the region, let alone throughout the EU. Many have also not traveled domestically. In fact, one in four high school students has not traveled anywhere in the past two years.<sup>35</sup>

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34. CeSID i MOS (2007), "Istrazivanje o aktivnom ucescu mladih u drustvenom zivotu" (Report on the Participation of Young People in Societal Life).

35. National Youth Strategy (2008).



**FIGURE 2.4: PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE TRAVELED OUTSIDE OF SERBIA**

Age	South Serbia*	Serbia*
15–19	50	35
20–24	47	34
25–29	40	39
30+	42	35

\*Numbers represent percentages

**Source:** Peace Building and Inclusive Local Development.

Young people give several reasons for not traveling. Until 2010, EU visa restrictions meant travel to Western Europe was cumbersome, expensive, and, in many cases—particularly for young males—impossible. Although Serbia’s admission to the White Schengen list in January 2010 reduced the bureaucratic hurdles to travel abroad, travel remains expensive and outside the budgets of many young Serbs. Of those who do travel, few opt for low-cost travel methods such as backpacking. Research indicates that the reasons for this are varied, including conformism and habit, fears of the unknown, and a general lack of knowledge about cost-effective opportunities.<sup>36</sup> With respect to regional travel, deep-rooted prejudices and unresolved identity issues continue to impede young Serbs’ thinking about traveling to neighboring Croatia, Bosnia, and even Montenegro.

36. Civic Initiatives (2005), *Ispitivanje položaja i potreba mladih u lokalnim zajednicama* (The Study on Status and Needs of Young People in Local Communities).

Yet, if short-term travel abroad has proven elusive, emigration has not. As many as 500,000 young people are believed to have left Serbia since the end of communism in 1990.<sup>37</sup> Polls show that many more would leave if given the chance.<sup>38</sup> Many of those who have left have been among Serbia's best and brightest. According to the Ministry of Science and Technology, in the past decade alone some two thousand researchers left Serbia in search of professional opportunities elsewhere. Most were from IT and natural science disciplines.

Domestic migration has also been an issue for young people. Although recent studies show internal migration remains rather low—just 16 percent of young people claim to have moved from their village, town, or city—upwards of 70 percent of young Serbs express a desire to leave their communities and move elsewhere in Serbia.<sup>39</sup> Foremost among the reasons young people give for wanting to leave is for economic opportunity. Yet, of those who actually do move, the main reasons given are the desire to be with family (32 percent); education, training, or apprenticeship (16 percent); and employment (8 percent).

Internal migration affects young people differently. Young women, for example, are more likely to move than young males. Young people from rural communities are also inclined to move. In fact, 42 percent of young migrants originated from smaller towns in search of larger centers, compared with only 18 percent of young migrants who have moved from large centers to smaller towns.<sup>40</sup>

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37. Ministry of Education and Sports, Department for Pupils and Students Standard, Youth Section, 2003, p. 3.

38. As many as one in two young people would like to leave Serbia, according to Vladimir Pejic (2003), "Young People in Serbia—Attitudes, Moral Values and Perspectives," *South-East Europe Review*.

39. Peace Building and Inclusive Local Development (2010), *Migration—Inclusive Social Development Survey*.

40. Statistical Office of the Public of Serbia (2009), Ad hoc Survey on Labor Force, April.

### 2.3.5 Education

Education is critical for the intellectual and professional development of children around the world—Serbia is no exception. Yet the reform of Serbia’s education system has proven to be slow going, as politicization and controversy have impeded efforts to improve the education system, whether informal or formal. At the time of this writing, while some gains have been made, young Serbs continue to suffer from an education system that is antiquated, memorization-based, and ill-equipped to meet the needs of the 21st century.

Serbia mandates eight years of primary education for all 7-to-14-year-olds. As of 2006, kindergarten was established as an obligatory part of Serbia’s public education system. At 15, young people begin secondary education, which generally lasts until the age of 19. This includes vocational or trade schools, which last an average of two or three years; professional schools, which offer four-year programs in specific fields such as nursing or journalism; grammar schools, which offer a more general high school education in preparation for university; and art schools, which offer four-year programs in the fine and applied arts, as well as music. Following high school, a number of other formal and nonformal educational opportunities are available, including both public and private universities.

Official data on primary education coverage offer impressive figures for primary school attendance and graduation (99 percent and 95 percent, respectively). Of those that complete primary school, 83 percent are said to go on to attend secondary school. Among those least likely to attend (let alone complete) primary and secondary schools are the Roma, young girls in rural areas, and the disabled. It is thought that as many as 85 percent of young people with developmental disabilities do not

attend school, while just 10-to-15 percent of the Roma complete primary education.<sup>41</sup>

With the introduction of private universities and a new array of nonformal educational institutions, the attendance at tertiary educational institutions has risen since 2000. In 2006, some 229,355 students were officially enrolled in universities—a significant increase from the 182,941 who attended in 2001.<sup>42</sup> The number of young graduates from these institutions remains lower still, at about 3 percent of the total youth population.<sup>43</sup> It is thought that about 40 percent of university students do not complete their studies. Of those who do, many study far longer than the official length of study would suggest. For example, in 2008 most 2-year courses of study at colleges last an average of 4.2 years, while 4-year courses of study lasted 6.8 years. Six-year courses took some 7.6 years to complete. Thus, on average, one year of study lasts 1.45 years.<sup>44</sup> While this has changed since the introduction of the Bologna reforms, the average number of years needed to complete higher education is still thought to exceed the official requirements.

Serbia's education system has long suffered from rigid curricula and traditional teaching methods, which many believe contribute to the high rates of unemployment for educated Serbs.<sup>45</sup> To address this problem, Serbia has initiated a series of reforms aimed at redefining the aims and outcomes of education (see Chapter 4).

Still, studies show that Serbian students continue to lag far behind the educational attainment of their peers. A 2008

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41. Fund for an Open Society (2010), *Indicators of Equal Access to Quality Education for Roma* (Belgrade: Fund for Open Society).

42. UNICEF (2002), "Primary Education in FRY," cited in *A Brave New Generation, Youth in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Findings and Recommendations*, (Belgrade: UNICEF Belgrade). See also Serbian Bureau of Statistics, *Statistical Yearbook 2006*.

43. National Youth Strategy 2008, p. 27.

44. TransMONEE, UNICEF (2009).

45. As determined in focus groups.

assessment of the educational performance by 15-year-old students indicated that Serbian math, science, and literacy scores were about 60–70 points below the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average, and some 30–90 points lower than their neighbors in Croatia and Slovenia (the differences being particularly acute with respect to reading skills).<sup>46</sup> Although the education system is marked by comparative equity along socioeconomic lines, minorities and marginalized groups continue to lag behind the majority, with illiteracy rates among some communities as high as 75 percent.

One of the major problems affecting the education system is its emphasis on rote learning and memorization at the expense of critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork. As a consequence, little interconnection exists between the education young people receive and the demands of the job market. Old-fashioned vocational profiles and a lack of sufficient training and skills development leave young graduates poorly prepared for the job market. A lack of career guidance and professional orientation makes youth less able to make active decisions on career development or to think creatively about employment possibilities. Upon graduation, many of Serbia's young people find that they lack even basic information about how to be competitive in the job market.

To address this gap, nonformal education programs and organizations have sought to increase young people's employability by offering retraining programs and extracurricular professional development. The civil sector has been particularly active in this regard, delivering a variety of programs aimed at sparking entrepreneurship, as well as offering career guidance. State institutions, such as the Workers' University, have also made

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46. Thirty-eight points being the equivalent of about one full school year. Quality and Equity of Education in Serbia: Educational Opportunities of the Vulnerable—Pisa Assessment 2003 and 2006 data, Aleksandar Baucal (2009), *Dragica pavlović-babić* (Belgrade), p. 20.

efforts in the area of retraining. Unfortunately, little is known about the effectiveness of such education initiatives as non-formal education remains poorly regulated in Serbia.

### 2.3.6 Health

Young people face numerous physical and mental health risks on the road from childhood to adulthood. Enabling young people to successfully confront those risks is key to any successful youth strategy. Yet Serbia's young people often confront the most serious health threats outside of the health care system, believing existing institutional arrangements to be either unresponsive to their needs or inefficient in meeting them.

Among the primary health challenges that young people face are smoking, abuse of alcohol, drug use, and abuse and/or neglect; injury resulting from accidents remains the leading cause of death. Youth also suffer from higher rates of mental and behavioral disorders, including addiction, depression, and suicide, than the general population. Young women, in particular, report low rates of contraceptive use, with an increase in incidence of sexually transmitted infections. Preventive care, in particular, is rare in Serbia, as many young people are unwilling or unable to seek care prior to the onset of symptoms.

*Smoking:* Smoking is a major problem among young people in Serbia. About 24 percent of Serbia's students are smokers, and more than 97 percent of young people are exposed to secondhand smoke. While evidence suggests that smoking among young people may have decreased slightly over the past decade, it remains high, with between one in four and one in five youths smoking regularly.<sup>47</sup> Smoking is most pronounced among older

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47. Among young people aged 13 to 15, smoking has decreased slightly over the past decade, from 12.8 percent in 2003 to 9.3 percent in 2008. The decrease is particularly pronounced among young women, falling from 13 percent in 2003 to 9 percent in 2008. See Global Youth Tobacco Survey Data created by the Ministry of Health's

youths and least among those aged 15 through 19. Yet, surveys show that more than half of 13–15-year-olds have smoked at least once, and about one-third have smoked before the age of 10.<sup>48</sup>

*Alcoholism:* Alcohol use has been on the rise among young Serbians, with as much as 25 percent of the young population consuming alcohol on a regular basis.<sup>49</sup> But, while almost one-third of young people between the ages of 15 and 19 drink occasionally, close to 64 percent of young people aged 15 to 19 have abstained from alcohol consumption. Alcohol usage tends to vary according to gender, with about 9 percent of boys aged 15–19 consuming great amounts of alcohol, compared with 2 percent of girls.<sup>50</sup> Official statistics on alcoholism are, however, difficult to obtain, and alcoholism itself remains a taboo topic, with alcohol-related rehabilitation difficult to come by.

*Substance Abuse:* Data also suggest that substance abuse is on the increase. It is believed that about 7 percent of young people aged 15–19 abuse drugs. Evidence also indicates that the age of frequent drug usage is decreasing, with the average age of first use now 15. Experts claim that about 60 percent of the young—mostly high school students—have, at some point, been in contact with the drugs. According to law enforcement

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2006 Health Survey showed similar results. According to this, the frequency of smoking among young people aged 15–19 declined between 2000 and 2006, from 23 percent to 16 percent. However, recent surveys supported by the Ministry of Youth and Sport show that frequencies of smoking among teenagers (15–19) still stood at 22 percent. See Public Opinion Survey, RESOURCE, CeSID, funded by MYS (2009).

48. Health of the Serbian Population (2006), *Analytical study 1997–2007* (Belgrade: Public Health Institute).

49. Research about abuse of psychoactive substances among adolescents in Serbia in 2005 (Belgrade: Ministry of Health, 2006).

50. Prevalence is the proportion of young people aged 15–19 drinking alcohol at least once a week per 100,000 persons.

officers, as many as 80 percent of youths between the ages of 15 and 25 have been in contact with drugs.<sup>51</sup>

*Reproductive Health:* As in many countries, young people in Serbia are beginning to have sexual intercourse earlier than ever. The average age of a young person's first sexual encounter is 16,<sup>52</sup> though as many as 23 percent of boys and 4 percent of girls aged 11-to-15 years old report having had sex. Among the student population, about three-quarters of male students, and more than half of female students aged 19 to 21 are sexually active.<sup>53</sup> Despite the high rates of sexual activity among young people, lack of knowledge on reproductive health issues is widespread. As a consequence, teenage pregnancy is a significant issue, with about 50 pregnancies per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19; between 6,000 and 7,000 teenage girls have abortions annually.<sup>54</sup>

The frequency of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among young people in Serbia remains unknown, though the number is widely regarded by experts as high and growing.<sup>55</sup> Chlamydia, in particular, is a problem, with close to 64 percent of youth aged 20 through 29 believed to be suffering from the infection.<sup>56</sup> Accurate figures about the incidence of HIV and AIDs are lacking; however, as of 2007, there were 1,388 registered male cases of HIV and 520 female cases, the great majority of which (82 percent) lived in Belgrade and Vojvodina (about 10 percent).<sup>57</sup> Access to HIV treatment, via drugs and therapy, remains difficult

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51. Dragana Dulić, Svetlana Stanarević, Dragana Matović, and Vesna Nikolić (2008), "Safety of Youth" (Fund for Open Society).

52. TransMONEE and UNICEF (2009).

53. National Youth Strategy (2008).

54. Ibid.

55. TransMONEE and UNICEF (2009).

56. National Youth Strategy (2008).

57. Youth Count Serbia (2007), p. 203.



as a result of occasional shortages of medicine. Moreover, the stigma associated with the disease remains pronounced.

Several reasons account for the prevalence of STDs among young people in Serbia. The use of contraceptives such as condoms remains low, while young people—in particular young men—report frequent changes of sexual partners.<sup>58</sup> Just 52 percent of young people report having used condoms during their previous sexual encounters. Knowledge of good sexual health also remains low.<sup>59</sup> According to UNICEF, less than 50 percent of young people in Serbia have comprehensive knowledge of HIV prevention, with as few as 7 percent of Roma having such knowledge.<sup>60</sup> Condom use, too, remains modest, with many young people complaining that condoms “are not comfortable.”<sup>61</sup>

*Mental Health:* Reporting, let alone seeking treatment for, mental health issues remains taboo in many segments of Serbia’s young population—as a consequence, little precise data exist. Many mental disabilities, autism, for example, go entirely undiagnosed and untreated. Still, about one-third of secondary school and university students are believed to have mental health issues and/or suffer psychologically. Girls and adolescents in urban areas are believed to be most vulnerable.<sup>62</sup> The numbers of young people demonstrating psychological problems are believed to be increasing, as larger numbers of youth show signs of depression (including suicide) and behavioral disorders. Teachers, doctors, and parents in Serbia are often ill-equipped to identify the signs

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58. Health Survey of the Republic of Serbia (2006).

59. Vladimir Pejic (2003), “Young People in Serbia—Attitudes, Moral Values and Perspectives,” p. 76.

60. UNICEF (2007), “Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.”

61. Vladimir Pejic (2003), “Young People in Serbia—Attitudes, Moral Values and Perspectives,” p. 76.

62. Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia (2006), *Strategy for Youth Development and Health in the Republic of Serbia*, p. 18.

of depression and, if they do, are often reluctant to address the issue directly.

### 2.3.7 Participation

Youth participation—whether political, cultural, or economic—is vital to any society. Serbia has experienced major fluctuations in the past two decades with respect to youth participation. While youth were often at the forefront of the democratic changes of 2000—driving the call for democracy and the end to the Milošević regime—many are politically apathetic and a significant (and vocal) minority advocate for a xenophobic, nationalist ideology. On the whole, however, many of Serbia’s young are divorced from decision-making processes and are denied a stake in the very system that they claim as their own.

Youth participation takes many forms in Serbia. The most common form of participation is in sports, hobbies, and recreational organizations. Only a small minority of youth are actively involved in student organizations, such as high school parliaments, though as many as 23 percent of students are members of university parliaments. Union membership is also low.<sup>63</sup> Young people also tend to be divorced from civil society. As many as 41 percent of youth<sup>64</sup> report a lack of knowledge about the activities of youth NGOs in their communities, while only 4 percent have participated in programs as direct beneficiaries, and only 7 percent have taken part in the development and organization of NGO activities.<sup>65</sup> The situation is bleaker yet in Serbia’s south, where just 5 percent of youth participate in civil society. Still, of those who do opt to participate, their impact has been impressive, particularly in the realm of advocacy. It was, in fact,

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63. Inclusive Social Development Survey in South of Serbia; T. Cesid, and Azanjac Janjatovic (2011), Peacebuilding and Inclusive Social Development (MDGFund).

64. Civic Initiatives (2005), *Ispitivanjue položaja mladih u lokalnim zajednicama*.

65. Ibid.

young people's persistence in the civil sector that ultimately led to the establishment of the MoYS and the development of the national and local youth policy. Unfortunately, even young people involved in this process complain that they have little say over the decisions that most directly affect their communities and little knowledge of how to assume such control.<sup>66</sup>

The lack of youth participation is striking when one considers the legacy of the 1990s. Even amidst the hardship of the 1990s, Serbia's youth had maintained an active and vocal presence as opponents of Milosevic's authoritarianism. In the mid-1990s, for example, university students were at the forefront of nationwide protests in opposition to Milosevic's attempts to falsify local electoral results in cities and towns across Serbia. Several of these students went on to found Otpor (Resist!), a youth movement whose creativity and bravado would play an important role in mobilizing young people in opposition to the regime. It was, in fact, in part thanks to the determination of Otpor, that in September 2000 Milosevic was handed his stunning electoral defeat and, in October 2000, was ultimately unseated.<sup>67</sup>

Young people are now far removed from political life. In fact, being involved in politics has a negative connotation in Serbia. Few young people admit to sharing an interest or trust in their elected representatives, with as many as 57 percent of youth expressing no interest in political engagement. These data vary by age, with younger groups being least inclined to partake in politics. As a consequence, only about 52 percent of young people are believed to vote.<sup>68</sup>

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66. Focus groups conducted by research team with young people, October 2011.

67. For more on Otpor, see P. Ackerman, and J. Duvall. (2000), *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Resistance* (New York: Palgrave); M. Collin (2001), *This Is Serbia Calling. Rock 'N' Roll Radio and Belgrade's Underground* (London: Serpent's Tail); T. Rosenberg (2011), *Join the Club: How Peer Pressure Can Transform the World* (New York: W.W. Norton).

68. Precise figures on youth voting do not exist, as Serbia does not conduct exit polls following elections. Interview with Marko Blagojevic, CeSID, October 2011 in Belgrade, Serbia.

**FIGURE 2.5: PARTY MEMBERSHIP (BY %)**

	15-to-19	20-to-24	25-to-30	More than 30
Political party				
Not a member	88	85	85	85
Member	12	15	15	15

Source: CeSID (2009), Public opinion survey.

Despite such apathy, political party membership remains rather high—in part, no doubt, because of the strong participation of the political system and the widespread belief that party membership will enable job entry (see Figure 2.5).<sup>69</sup> High levels of party membership aside, however, young people continue to hold strongly negative attitudes toward political parties.<sup>70</sup>

Youth political activism is sensitive to several demographic factors. Young people who live alone and those living with peers (friends, roommates, siblings, etc.) show a higher degree of political activism. In the case of those youth, 53 percent consider themselves politically active. This suggests that independence, in particular economic independence, directly influences young people's willingness or ability to participate.

Significant differences also exist with respect to gender. Men are more politically active than women, and urban youth are more politically engaged than rural or suburban youth. Education is also a significant determinant of activism, with individuals

69. For more on participation, see V. Pestic (2007), "State Capture as the Cause of Widespread Corruption" (Open Society Institute).

70. Ibid.

who have attained university degrees five times more likely to be politically active than those with only primary school degrees.<sup>71</sup>

Political activism by youths has seen some headway in recent years when it comes to membership in Serbia's 250-seat parliament. By 2011, a total 17 young people under the age of 31 served as members of parliament. The large majority of these—a total of 11—were appointed by the ruling Democratic Party. The influence of these young people was recently institutionalized via the Parliament Committee for Sport and Youth.<sup>72</sup> The committee was charged with overseeing the final shape of all legislation in the field of sport and youth policy, including not only the Law on Youth but also the Law on Voluntary Work, the Law on Basic Education, and the Law on Higher Education.<sup>73</sup>

Participation extends beyond politics, however. Between 15 percent and 22 percent of young people in Serbia have voluntary work experience, though many young people report a lack of opportunity in this regard. While official data about rates of volunteerism are lacking, research suggests that nongovernmental organizations involve volunteers only sporadically, though as many as one-fourth say they engage volunteers in all their projects.<sup>74</sup> Young people volunteer for many reasons, including self-satisfaction, personal enjoyment, socialization, and employment prospects. Yet, there are many reasons young people do not volunteer, among them fear of abuse and manipulation, a lack of motivation, fear of failure, and dissatisfaction with the tasks assigned to them.<sup>75</sup>

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71. CeSID and Ministry of Youth and Sport (2007), *Research on Youth Activism in Social Life*.

72. The Committee's membership has varied, ranging between 11 and 17 members, of which most have been young people.

73. Interview with Tijana Nikolić, member of parliament and member of the Parliament Committee for Sport and Youth, June 27, 2011.

74. National Youth Strategy (2008).

75. *Ibid.*

### 2.3.8 Crime and Violence

Young people are often the most affected by crime and violence, whether as perpetrators or victims. This is certainly true in Serbia—the past two decades have been both turbulent and violent.

Serbia's youth are, in many instances, too young to recall the violence of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. Yet, they have been fully exposed to its repercussions. The 1990s were a period of interethnic strife throughout Yugoslavia, and sentiments of nationalism and xenophobia continue to permeate Serbian society. This was compounded by years of isolationism and sanctions, which fostered a vibrant gray economy in which criminals thrived and prospered. Although research indicates that young people's perception of security is increasing, crime and violence—in particular, hate crimes and hooliganism—continue to be a problem for young people in Serbia. Moreover, many young people—particularly those from minority and marginalized communities—lack full awareness of their rights with respect to the law and/or do not always receive equal treatment by the state. The government's decision not to proceed with Serbia's Gay Pride Parade in the fall of 2011, citing an inability to protect parade participants from extremist violence, was just the most recent example. Young people in prison, in particular, frequently face human right abuses but often do not have access to legal representation.

Still, there are some encouraging signs. Recent studies show that as many as two-thirds of young people report feeling safer than in the two years prior.<sup>76</sup> Even youth in multiethnic parts of the country, including Albanians, report a greater sense of security. It is noteworthy, however, that members of the Roma population and Bulgarian minority do not—with about half of respondents reporting that they feel *less* safe than in the past two years.<sup>77</sup>

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76. CeSID (2009), Public Opinion Survey.

77. Ibid.

Among the main challenges to their safety that young people in Serbia encounter are the following:

*Accidents:* By far the most frequent cause of death for Serbia's young people is accidents, particularly traffic accidents. Although the number of traffic accidents has decreased slightly over the past decade, it remains among the highest in Europe, with young people accounting for more than two-thirds of the traffic accident victims in Serbia.<sup>78</sup> The problem is exacerbated not merely by poor infrastructure, but also by a driving culture in which seatbelt use is frowned upon and driving under the influence is common.<sup>79</sup>

*Suicide:* Reported cases of youth suicide have fluctuated across Serbia. While suicide increased throughout the 1990s, from a low of 99 in 1990 to 192 in 1997, it appeared to be on the decrease in the early 2000s, falling to 106 in 2005. However, cases of registered suicide are believed to have risen in recent years, totaling as many as 120 in 2006.<sup>80</sup> About twice as many young men commit suicide as young women, and those with less education are more likely to commit suicide than those with more education.<sup>81</sup>

*Peer Violence:* Though violence among youths appears to have declined since the tumultuous decade of the 1990s, peer violence and bullying remain significant issues among young people in Serbia, with studies showing that psychological violence in particular is high. In 2006 alone, 40 students were seriously injured as a result of peer violence, while 331 students suffered

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78. Eurostat/EC. *Health in Europe (2005) Data 1998–2003*. (2005) (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities), p. 101. Available at [www.europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat).

79. *National Youth Strategy (2008)*, p. 36.

80. *Ibid.*

81. G. Penev, and B. Stanković (2007), "Suicides in Serbia at the Beginning of the 21st Century and Trends in the Past Fifty Years," *Stanovisto* Vol. 45, No. 2.

slight physical injuries.<sup>82</sup> According to UNICEF, as many as 40 percent of young people have been exposed to peer violence at least once. Young people have also been subject to mockery and insults (23 percent), threats and intimidation (5 percent), as well as shouting, teasing, and mockery (10 percent).<sup>83</sup> Many young students also report being the subject of teacher-led violence, with as many as 28 percent of students complaining of teachers hurling insults and ridicule and a further 13 percent complaining of threats and intimidation. Although thorough research has yet to be done on this topic, there is mounting evidence that new forms of media—such as social media sites or Internet chat rooms—offer a new outlet for youth bullying.

*Domestic Violence:* Domestic violence is a persistent problem in Serbia, with as many as one in four women having experienced physical or sexual violence from their partner.<sup>84</sup> Unfortunately, statistics about domestic violence among young people are lacking. If the general population is any indicator, however, the problem is significant, with close to half of all Serbian women suffering from psychological violence, including threats, insults, and verbal abuse. One problem inhibiting the gathering of reliable data on this subject is victims' reluctance to speak out on the topic. As many as 27 percent of female victims of domestic violence do not tell anyone about it. And, while a majority do confide in friends, parents, and/or siblings, just 5 percent report such crimes to the police or medical community. The vast majority of physically abused women (78 percent) never seek assistance, and the numbers of women entering shelters remain very low.<sup>85</sup> Although reported cases of domestic violence

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82. Ibid.

83. UNICEF, "[Schools without Violence](#)."

84. For more on sexual and domestic violence in Serbia, please refer to the website of Belgrade's [Autonomous Women's Center](#).

85. World Health Organization (2005), "Multi-Country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence Against Women," p. 3.



have increased since 2005 (an indicator that more women are coming forward), the issue itself remains deeply stigmatized.<sup>86</sup>

*Violent Extremism:* Violent extremism, xenophobia, and hooliganism—while practiced only by a minority of Serbia’s young people—represent a major problem. Serbia is still struggling to come to terms with its role in the wars of the 1990s. While the country has made significant headway in recent years—most notably by arresting and extraditing Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic—its citizens continue to grapple with the meaning of a Serbian identity and the fine line between nationalism and patriotism.

While most young Serbs profess political apathy, a vocal minority has found solace in Serbia’s extremist organizations, whether the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) led by International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) indictee Vojislav Seselj, or groups such as Otacastveni Pokret “Obraz” and Srpski Sabor “Dveri.” Right-wing extremism generally takes two forms among young people in Serbia: a religious Christian right, which espouses an ideology of clerical nationalism, political conservatism, and xenophobia; or a “racist extreme right,” with groups connected to international white supremacist networks and advocating the centrality of the white race, as opposed to Orthodoxy.<sup>87</sup> The former maintains a more active and vocal presence within Serbia.

There are few figures as to the precise number of young people who are members of or sympathetic to far right extremist organizations in Serbia. Suffice it to say that while their numbers may be small, they attract a great deal of attention and are

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86. B. Pekusic (2010), “[Studies: Half of Serbian Women Are Victims of Domestic Violence](#),” *SETimes*.

87. B. Wiesinger (2008), “[The Continuing Presence of the Extreme Right in Post-Milosevic Serbia](#),” *Balkanologie* 11, 2.

believed to share ties with the Serbian Orthodox Church and members of Serbia's parliament.<sup>88</sup> Formed in 1999, Dveri now has chapters in more than 20 towns and organizes public lectures and meetings throughout the country. More radical in its orientation than Dveri, Obraz claims to have several thousand activists throughout both Serbia and Montenegro. Obraz leaders are widely believed to engage in hate crimes and espouse a racist, anti-Semitic ideology. It is in large part because of the vocal and well-organized activities of Obraz that Serbia's 2011 Gay Pride Parade was banned.

Hooliganism is also a problem. In 2006 alone, the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported 159 cases of breaches of the peace during sports events, during which 13 persons suffered severe injuries and 146 suffered minor injuries. In 2007, there were close to 90 cases of breaches of the peace and 23 persons suffered severe injuries, while 172 persons suffered minor injuries.

## 2.4 Youth Visibility

The aforementioned dilemmas have had a tremendous impact on the visibility of youth, with young people having little say over how they are presented or perceived by the media or the general public. Indeed, 20 years after its transition from socialism, Serbia remains a highly traditional and paternalistic society. As a consequence, the country continues to suffer from a clear power division among age groups, which often does not work to young people's advantage. Simply put, in the game of power, youths are not perceived as equal players.

Part of the problem lies in the almost "schizophrenic" vision of youth that stakeholders have adopted over the course of the past decade. According to the mainstream view perpetuated by most policymakers and the media, young people fall into one of

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88. Ibid.

two categories: the worst or the best of society. For many, young people are perceived in either purely *negative terms*—according to which young people are destructive, passive, demotivated, unreliable, reactionary, and even spoiled—or in *exclusively positive terms*—according to which young people are perceived as the future or tomorrow’s leaders.

Both of these conceptions fail to recognize the great bulk of young people, who are neither all good nor all bad. Moreover, neither ascribes agency to young people in the here and now—which would enable them to partake in decision-making processes. Focus groups conducted for the purpose of this report demonstrated great frustration on young people’s part with respect to their own portrayal by elected politicians, their parents, and the media in particular.<sup>89</sup>

This portrayal has undoubtedly contributed to the large generation gap that exists throughout Serbia. Both young people and adults view each other with significant distrust and attempts by young people to assume a more active role in the decisions that affect their lives are regarded as suspect.<sup>90</sup> The opposite is also true: Many young people believe that any attempt to empower young people by government officials is little more than an electoral ploy designed to generate youth support come Election Day. Many young people see politicians as lacking insight into or empathy for the problems that affect them.

Serbia’s media have played a contributing role in this unfortunate dynamic, espousing an image of young people that is overwhelmingly negative. Media coverage often fixates on young people’s role in conflict, violence, and other negative trends, thereby perpetuating the view of “youth as a problem.” Where young people do receive positive attention, it is often as

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89. Data obtained in focus groups.

90. Statements of the respondents from the youth focus groups conducted during the field visit.

examples of extraordinary outliers: young people who achieve above and beyond what most accomplish. As a consequence, many of the issues and challenges that are relevant to the vast majority receive little treatment in the media and are thus largely unseen by much of the public.

Lacking power over the manner in which they are presented in the public sphere, young people tend not to identify themselves as part of a collective interest group. This, in part, stems from the fragmented nature of this 16-year span, with different ages confronting different realities. Still, many young people are well capable of defining the concrete problems that they confront and define as urgent, and there appears to be great consensus with respect to many of these issues, including unemployment, education, and mobility.<sup>91</sup>

Recent efforts by policymakers, in particular the Ministry of Youth, have sought to redress the negative perceptions of youth. Increasingly, decision makers refer to youth as a “societal resource” and laud the idea of investing in Serbia’s young people. The development of a National Youth Strategy was an important first step in laying out and identifying the key problems and issues confronting Serbia’s young people. While the negative images of youth are likely to prove persistent, both young people and civic activists express hope for the future. The large majority—close to 80 percent—of both these groups are confident that, in the coming years, youth influence over decision-making processes will grow.<sup>92</sup>

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91. These three issues were repeatedly identified during the focus groups by young people as among the most acute problems confronting young people in Serbia.

92. The questionnaire implemented by this research team revealed that 66 percent of young people sampled and 83 percent of NGO activists and policymakers were confident that young people would see greater access to decision-making processes in the future.

## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a general overview of Serbia's youth, as well as the challenges they confront as they transition from childhood to adulthood. As has been demonstrated, young people in Serbia continue to encounter numerous obstacles, whether it be their lack of say in decision-making processes, the dual legacies of criminality and isolationism from the 1990s, rampant unemployment, or the archaic education system.

Yet, daunting as such problems are, there are reasons for hope. As many as one in three young people would like to start their own business. Many young people speak several languages, whether English, German, and/or Russian. And Serbia's young people have a proven capacity for creative engagement and activism, with their role in the fall of Milosevic inspiring acts of civil disobedience throughout the globe.

Bearing such facts in mind, Serbia's government has engaged in a series of reforms—some recent, others years away—which have aimed to better secure young people's rights and help them realize their potential in the 21st century. The following chapters explore these efforts in depth.

# 3: Youth and Public Policy

## 3.1 Introduction

Serbia has made significant strides toward the development of youth public policy. In five years' time, it has established a Ministry to Youth and Sport, drafted and adopted a National Youth Strategy, adopted an accompanying Action Plan, and passed a Law on Youth. Several local communities have also adopted community-specific youth strategies aimed at empowering young people on the local level.

This chapter traces the development of youth public policy over the past two decades, paying specific attention to national youth policy. It begins by examining the competing definitions of "youth" that exist within Serbia, as well as the definition adopted throughout this report.

## 3.2 Key Definitions

How Serbian authorities have opted to define "youth" and "young people" is not without its share of controversy. Several competing definitions of "young people" and "youth" may be found within intersectoral legislation (see Table 3.1). This report has elected to adopt the definition laid out in the National Law on Youth, given that it was derived from the National Youth Strategy, which was itself adopted as a result of close consultation with a variety of stakeholders, including young people themselves.

Serbia's Law on Youth defines "youth" as the years from 15 through 30. This 16-year period is thought to represent the stage of life between childhood and adulthood, in particular the period of life that brings not merely biological and psychological maturation, but also the process of integration into the social community. According to policymakers, this is the period during which young people can be expected to develop the skills and capacities that enable them to assume independence. In this sense, the National Youth Strategy sees "youth" as socially rather than biologically determined.<sup>93</sup> Policymakers argue that in countries undergoing transition, such as Serbia, it takes longer for young people to assume independence than it would in more economically developed contexts—hence the long duration of youth.

### **3.3 Development of Youth Policy**

In recent years, Serbia's government has sought to address the problems facing youth by enacting a series of reforms targeting young people. Increasingly, policymakers say they view the issue of youth as a societal priority and one upon which they can reach some consensus. This was not always the case. The existing Youth Policy has, in fact, been decades in the making. Before outlining the contours of the current youth policy, this section provides an overview of the evolution of youth policy in Serbia. In so doing, it examines the ideological underpinnings of such policies from the fall of communism to 2012.

#### **3.3.1 Youth Policy in Tito's Yugoslavia**

To understand where Serbia stands in its youth policy in 2012, it is important to understand where such policy originated. To do so, it is necessary to start with the former Yugoslavia.

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93. National Youth Strategy (2008), p. 2

TABLE 3.1: DEFINITIONS OF "YOUTH"

Regulation/Law	Definition
The Youth Law ("Official Gazette of RS" no. 50/11.1*	15 up to and including 30 years of age
National Youth Strategy ("Official Gazette of RS" no. 55/2008)	15 and 30 years of age
National Youth Health Strategy ("Official Gazette of RS" no. 104/2006)	From 10 and including 26 years of age
The Criminal Law ("Official Gazette of RS" no. 85/2005)	Child: up to 14 years Underage person: 14–16 years
The Law on Underage Criminal Offenders ("Official Gazette of RS" no. 85/2005)	Underage person: 14–18 years Younger underage person: 14–16 years Older underage person: 16–18 years Younger lawful person: 18–21 years
Law on Employment and Insurance in a Case of Unemployment ("Official Gazette of RS" nos. 36/2009 and 88/2010)	Regular high school/university students younger than 26 are not considered "unemployed."
Law on Health Protection ("Official Gazette of RS" nos. 107/2005, 72/2009, 88/2010, and 99/2010)	Children: 0–15 Students: 16–26
Labor Law ("Official Gazette of RS" nos. 24/2005, 61/2005, and 54/2009)	Labor relations can be entered into with a person over 15. Employees below the age of 18 years shall not work at specified jobs listed within article 84 of the Law.  Employees between 18 and 21 may work at certain jobs only upon report of the competent medical authority substantiating that such work shall not be detrimental to their health.
Social Protection Law ("Official Gazette of RS" no. 24/2011)	Youth: 0–26

\*Because the National Youth Strategy pre-dates local youth strategies and development of local policies has been made possible by the Ministry of Sport and Youth officials, local youth strategies follow the definitions given in the National Strategy.

**Source:** Authors' compilation of existing legislation and policies in Serbia.



Despite the highly traditional and totalitarian character of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, the federation devised a series of protective and supportive policies that directly targeted young people. Whatever their strengths—and there were many—these policies were forged within an ideology that was largely paternalistic. Young people were regarded as recipients of policy, rather than as active and equal partners in the process of learning and development. While the period of socialism saw an array of republican and federal initiatives that catered directly to young people, it also set in place a paternalistic mindset toward youth that would have repercussions for youth policy for years to come.

That said, youth were a major source of concern for policymakers throughout the communist period, and they benefited from a wide array of programs designed to better their quality of life (and win their allegiance to the Tito regime). During this period, young people of all ethnicities, religions, and genders were provided access to free education, health care, leisure programs, and mobility. At both a federal and republic level, specific state bodies for youth were in place, while at the local level a variety of institutional mechanisms existed for the purpose of supporting young people.

In addition to these institutions, youth were specifically targeted within sectoral ministries, such as education, sport, and health. Infrastructure dedicated to youth was also developed, including a network of Youth Councils and Youth Cultural Centers. A great number of informal resources were also created to serve young people, including youth clubs, youth media, and summer and winter resorts for youth. Serbia alone was home to a developed network of more than 40 Local Youth Councils that oversaw a nationwide infrastructure and had separate funds to develop activities.

Yugoslavia's emphasis on young people was present for a number of reasons. First, young people were deemed important

for the stability and future of the Socialist Federation. Attaining the support of young people early on was seen as vital for the perpetuation of the socialist system, as well as to maintaining the integrity of the multiethnic Federation.

Second, the Socialist Federation was a major advocate of the concept of self-management, with direct citizen involvement in implementing government directives. Young people were thus encouraged to take an active part in their communities.

Still, the youth policies that developed during the socialist period were driven almost entirely from the top down. While young people could partake in their implementation, they were excluded from their development. Federal (i.e., Yugoslav) authorities—rather than young people themselves—dictated the forms such policies would take and the goals they would strive to achieve. This represented a highly paternalistic attitude toward youth, in which young people were passive recipients of policy, with little say in constructing the policies that affected them.

### **3.3.2 Youth Policy in Milosevic's Serbia**

The transition from one-party socialism to multiparty authoritarianism in 1990 had devastating consequences for existing institutional arrangements on both the federal and republican levels. Institutions supporting youth were not spared.

With Milosevic's assumption of power in 1990, all resources and infrastructure once dedicated to Serbia's young people quickly disappeared. Institutional capacities, including human resources, were lost. Almost overnight, the hostels, office spaces, equipment, funds, and property that had once belong to Serbia's 40 Local Youth Councils changed hands. They were transformed from "property of the society"<sup>94</sup> to property of Milosevic's party

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94. This term was distinctive to the former Yugoslavia. It implied that such property was not the government's, but, rather, belonged to associations, groups, companies, etc.

and his allies. By the 1990s, the issue of “youth property”<sup>95</sup> had thus become a Pandora’s box that few have dared to open since.<sup>96</sup>

But if Milosevic oversaw the disintegration of a once-bustling youth policy, he did not ignore youth entirely. As Milosevic drove Serbia from one war to the next, youth emerged as an important instrument of violence in the hands of Serbia’s foreign policy-makers. It was, after all, young men who were drafted into the Yugoslav National Army and sent to Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo. As L. R. Sherrod notes, “Many young men lived in fear of being drafted into military service and sent to fight a war they had nothing to do with.”<sup>97</sup>

To ensure that young men fulfilled the call of duty, Milosevic gave free rein to ultranationalist figures like Vojislav Seselj and Zeljko “Arkan” Raznatovic. Together, these characters promoted a youth culture based on violence and criminality. State-run media provided an uncensored outlet for ultranationalist heavyweights to sound the call for war, fuel xenophobia, and popularize hooliganism and other antisocial behaviors. Together with his wife—the beloved (and much despised) Turbofolksinger, Ceca—Arkan became the icon of a Serbian youth culture rooted in crime, sex, and violence.

Against this backdrop, a counterculture of Serbian youth emerged, represented by students and Otpor activists who spurned the violence and criminality that figures like Arkan and Seselj represented. These individuals were everything that Milosevic cronies were not. They promoted nonviolence and

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95. Although the Ministry of Youth and Sports intended to prepare an inventory of the resources once dedicated to youth, this has not occurred.

96. This may change with the adoption of the Law on Public Property. This law, still in draft form, should put an end to the issue of “unsolved property of the society.” Should the law be passed, many of the spaces once dedicated to young people should be returned to the public domain. What this will mean in practice remains to be seen.

97. L. R. Sherrod (2006), *Youth Activism: An International Encyclopedia*, Vol. 2 (New York: Greenwood Publishing Group), p. 565.

political activism. They used humor, not fear, to generate support. And, they advocated democracy rather than war. While these groups would ultimately prove victorious in October 2000, the ideology of crime and violence that Milosevic fueled would reverberate well into the 2000s.

### **3.3.3 Youth Policy, 2000–2007**

The changes of October 2000 brought many hopes for Serbia's future, among them the hope that Serbia's youth would once again become a policy priority. Because young people had played so pivotal a role in Milosevic's unseating, many hoped young people would top the new government's agenda. This did not turn out to be the case, however. In fact, the first action taken by Serbia's new democratic government was to close the department dedicated to youth issues at the republican (i.e., Serbian) level.<sup>98</sup>

Symbolically, this move sent a clear and ominous message to Serbia's youth: Serbian attitudes toward youth had not changed since the socialist period. Youth policy would be dictated to from above, leaving young people with little voice in the policymaking process. The period of paternalism thus reemerged.

From 2000 on, not a single republican institution was charged specifically with monitoring, examining, or addressing young people as an organized group.<sup>99</sup> As a consequence, from 2000 through 2007, youth become an all-but-invisible group to policymakers, lost in sectoral policies that only sporadically addressed youth. Those young people most vulnerable to societal exclusion were thus pushed yet further to the margins of society. Despite efforts to dedicate a Department of Youth within the scope of

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98. This step was ostensibly taken to get Serbia's fiscal house back in order.

99. On the provincial and federal levels, however, youth institutions did exist. There was, for example, a Youth-Province Secretary for Sport and Youth at the province level of Vojvodina and a Youth Department in the scope of the Federal Secretariat of Sport and Youth. This Federal Secretariat for Sport and Youth was closed in 2003, however, given the impending demise of the federation.

the existing Ministry of Education and Sports, such attempts invariably failed as the Ministry of Education and Sports was, itself, the subject of internal reorganization.<sup>100</sup> An effort on the part of the Ministry of Education and Sports to launch a National Youth Strategy also ended in failure.

Given policymakers' reluctance to address the issue head-on, the civic sector, in cooperation with international organizations including the Council of Europe and the European Commission, emerged as the sole champions of youth issues. They repeatedly advocated for greater government funds to support programs and organizations dedicated to youth.

Recognizing the necessity of establishing an institutional framework for youth, civil society organizations developed several initiatives aimed at drawing policymakers' attention to the unsystematic approach they had thus far devoted to youth development. The most successful of these initiatives was the creation of the Youth Coalition of Serbia (YCS).<sup>101</sup>

The YCS was established in 2003 at the initiative of Serbia's seven largest youth organizations: the Young Researchers of Serbia, the Scouts of Serbia, the Youth of YAZAS, the Student Union of Serbia, the Youth Information Centre, the Youth Council of Vojvodina, and the Youth Program of Civic Initiatives. This grassroots initiative advocated the establishment of an institution in charge of youth at the national and local levels.

The advocacy campaign was delivered in two stages, the first of which was to build a network of local advocacy campaigns over the course of 2003–2005 aimed at creating a basis for

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100. Within the scope of the Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Serbia, one employee was hired as part of the Department for Pupils' and Students' standard to deal with youth. However, the scope of this person's work was never approved and lacked any systematic oversight.

101. *Mladi (ne)briga države Srbije u publikaciji za sad bez dobrog naslova, Koalicija Mladih Srbije, podržano od strane Fonda za otvoreno društvo* (Youth [not] concerned about state of Serbia in publication still looking for good), March 2007, funded by FOS, Serbia.

future action and to collect good practices and develop support for the national campaign. This was complemented at the national level with an intensive awareness campaign aimed at informing and educating the public on youth positions, major problems, and appropriate methods of intervention.

The second stage, aimed at unfolding from 2005 through 2007, involved direct lobbying and negotiating for the establishment of a national state body charged with youth issues.<sup>102</sup>

The YCS initiative proved to be a success. In May 2007, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) was established. YCS, itself, helped to raise awareness of the importance of youth issues and produced research on youth and several documentaries. YCS became a template for how to conduct a nationwide, grassroots policy advocacy initiative. Key to its success, activists believed, was the joint effort of NGOs, youth organizations, and political party youth wings. Youth wings, in particular, played an important role during the final phase of negotiations, ensuring that pressure could be placed on party leaders to take youth sentiments seriously.<sup>103</sup>

### 3.3.4 Youth Policy, 2007–2011

The formation of the MoYS in 2007 was followed in 2008 by the adoption of the National Youth Strategy. The National Youth Strategy was the result of lengthy and in-depth consultation with a variety of stakeholders in the youth policy process, including young people themselves.

In the period leading up to the Youth Strategy's adoption, the MoYS held 167 round tables in 166 municipalities. A total of

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102. The Local Youth Coalitions developed successful campaigns in 13 towns that resulted in the development of local youth policies, the nomination of persons responsible for youth at the local governments, offices/space for youth activities, and allocated funds in local budgets.

103. Thanks to the representatives of the Youth Political Branches, the decision on the establishment of the new Ministry of Youth and Sport was included within the Coalition Agreement of the winning parties of Serbia's 2007 parliamentary elections.

4,077 participants were included in the process and 47 citizens' associations were actively involved. Overall, more than 16,000 young people participated in different stages of the development of the Youth Strategy. In addition, the MoYS invited youth organizations to agree on a common statement, a so-called Youth Manifesto, which was then integrated into the National Youth Strategy to serve as the "voice of young people." This process has been widely credited for rejuvenating efforts among youth organizations, encouraging them to cooperate, and to work collectively toward a shared organizational structure.<sup>104</sup> The National Youth Strategy was officially adopted by the Serbian government on May 9, 2008.

On the basis of the National Youth Strategy, an accompanying Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Youth Strategy was adopted by the government eight months later, on January 22, 2009. As with the strategy, a wide range of consultations were held among and between state bodies, nongovernmental organizations, and young people. Through its Zamisli Zivot website, the MoYS issued a public invitation for the creation of thematic groups that would participate in the Action Plan development process. Ten thematic working groups were ultimately formed on the basis of the Strategy: Participation; Equal Chances for All; Exceptional Results; Leisure Time; Education; Employment; Safety; Health; the Environment and Sustainable Development; and Informing Youth. Young people consulted during the process included high school students, university students, and activists. Each thematic group held 12-day meetings dedicated to establishing the outcomes and indicators of their applicability, as well as to designing activities that would help in the realization of the National Youth Strategy's goals.

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104. Y. Denstad (2009), *Youth Policy Manual: How to Develop a National Youth Strategy* (Brussels: Council of Europe Publishing), p. 50.

In line with the recommendations of the Youth Strategy and the Action Plan, Serbia's government officially adopted the National Law on Youth on July 5, 2011. As with the Youth Strategy and Action Plan, the law was designed in consultation with youth from across the country, including 1,492 young people representing a wide variety of youth organizations and local institutions. According to Ministry of Sport and Youth officials, the first phase for the drafting of the law included 45 meetings held in eight regional centers in cooperation with local youth offices with the participation of 1,492 young people. During the second phase, 29 roundtables were held across Serbia with more than one thousand participants. After a draft of the law was prepared, six additional round-tables were held to further develop a national public debate.

One reason for the large-scale participation of young people in the development of the youth policy was the widespread perception that former policies had been underpinned by paternalistic attitudes. An inclusive approach to policy development, it was thought, would result in a policy for which young people could feel ownership. By abandoning the paternalistic approach to youth policy, officials hoped to increase the policy's impact. Yet, as the following pages will show, these attempts—while in many respects admirable—have often conflicted with intersectoral laws and policies shaped by top-down policy prescriptions. For all its efforts, the MoYS has been unsuccessful in altering such dynamics. Moreover, young people themselves remain encumbered by what they perceive to be the paternalistic viewpoints of Serbian society. Whatever the intentions of officials, youth often feel their voices have yet to be heard. The many policies now in place have yet to change this.

The following pages present an in-depth overview of these policies, placing specific emphasis on the National Youth Strategy, Action Plan, and the National Law on Youth.



### 3.4 Youth Policy in 2012

The foundations of Serbia's national youth policy are found in three core documents: the National Youth Strategy, the National Action Plan, and the newly adopted Law on Youth. In addition, several local municipalities have taken the initiative to draft and adopt Local Youth Action Plans. The following pages will provide an overview of the ambitions and content of each of these documents, paying specific attention to national initiatives.

#### 3.4.1 National Youth Strategy

The adoption of Serbia's National Youth Strategy in May 2008 was heralded by the MoYS as "the first step towards a systematic solution to the problem of youth status."<sup>105</sup> It was designed as a means to clarify the state's attitude toward young people, the role of youth in society, and methods by which a partnership between youth and the government could be established.<sup>106</sup> In other words, the strategy was an important first step in putting young people back on the government agenda.

Indeed, the National Youth Strategy not only paved the way to the adoption of Serbia's Law on Youth, but it also set in motion the establishment of an umbrella organization of youth organizations, as well as national, regional, and local youth offices through which to implement the objectives set out in the strategy. It also called for the establishment of a National Youth Agency charged with mediating international cooperation. In so doing, it marked the start of a new emphasis on young people.

*Guiding Principles:* The National Youth Strategy explicitly recognizes young people as a source of "potential."<sup>107</sup> Along with this, the strategy identifies 10 key principles that it draws from the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, as well as from

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105. National Youth Strategy (2008), p. 1.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

107. *Ibid.*

international documents, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Council of Europe's Conventions on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These principles are laid out in Table 3.2.

*Objectives:* Following these principles, the National Youth Strategy seeks to achieve a total of 11 objectives. These objectives are laid out in Table 3.3.

Each of these 11 objectives are further elaborated and developed into more specific goals, concrete measures that will result in their accomplishment; in addition, the specific institutions charged with carrying them out are identified. These, in turn, are further elaborated in the Youth Action Plan.

*Classification of Youth:* The Youth Strategy acknowledges that youth between 15 and 31 are an eclectic group and face different concerns throughout this 16-year period. Accordingly, it provides further categorizations of young people into subgroups: by age and by vulnerability.

The Youth Strategy identifies three subgroups of young people by age (see Table 3.4). But, despite acknowledging these inter-youth differences, the goals and measures provided by the Youth Strategy target the entire youth population, rather than specific age groups within it.

The Youth Strategy further differentiates young people in accordance with their perceived vulnerability. It lists 10 distinct groups of "vulnerable" young people. These young people are said to have unequal life chances and are at risk of social exclusion and inequality.<sup>108</sup> Table 3.5 provides an overview.

More on the specific goals, measures, and institutions charged with overseeing these vulnerable groups is provided in Chapter 5.

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108. National Youth Strategy (2008), p. 15.

**TABLE 3.2: PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY**

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Content</b>
1. Respect for Human Rights	All young people have the same rights and equal opportunities for their development regardless of differences.
2. Equality	All young people have the right to equal opportunities, access to information, personal development, lifelong learning, and employment according to their specific personal characteristics, choices, and capabilities.
3. Responsibility	Young people's responsibilities will be encouraged and developed, in accordance with possibilities.
4. Availability	In general, all resources are provided and available to young people.
5. Solidarity	All types of solidarity, including intergenerational solidarity, and increasing role of young people in building up democratic citizenship are encouraged.
6. Cooperation	Freedom of organization and cooperation among youth is supported and provided.
7. Active Participation of Young People	All necessary resources will be provided to enable young people to participate in decision-making processes and in activities that contribute to building a better society.
8. Inter-culturalism	The respect for differences in all areas of human life is honored.
9. Lifelong Learning	Lifelong learning in which knowledge, values, and the gaining of competences is promoted.
10. Evidence-Based	All strategic concepts, principles, and activities that refer to young people are based on firm and relevant data and on the results of studies on youth.

**Source:** National Youth Strategy (2008), pp. 5–6.

**TABLE 3.3: OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY**

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Content</b>
Active Participation	To encourage young people to participate actively in society.
Youth Cooperation	To develop youth cooperation and to provide conditions for participation in decision-making processes through a sustainable institutional framework, based on the needs of young people and in cooperation with youth.
Youth Information	To establish a system of youth information on all levels and in all areas.
Equal Life Chances	To achieve the right to equality of opportunity for all young people in society and especially for those who live under difficult conditions.
Encourage Extraordinary Results	To encourage and evaluate the extraordinary results and achievements of young people in different areas.
Quality Leisure Time	To improve possibilities for youth to spend quality leisure time.
Effective Education	To develop an open, effectual, efficient, and justifiable system of formal and nonformal education available to all young people that is in line with world educational trends and the educational context in the Republic of Serbia.
Encourage Employment	To encourage and stimulate all forms of employment, self-employment, and youth entrepreneurship.
Improve Conditions	To improve conditions for a secure life for young people.
Improve Health	To protect and improve health, to decrease health risks, and to develop a youth-friendly health protection system.
Empower	To empower young people for initiatives and activities in line with the basic goals of sustainable development and a healthy environment.

**TABLE 3.4: CLASSIFICATION OF YOUTH BY AGE**

	Age
Subgroup 1	15–19
Subgroup 2	20–24
Subgroup 3	25–30

**Source:** National Youth Strategy (2008), p. 2

**TABLE 3.5: CLASSIFICATION BY VULNERABILITY**

Young people who are
1. Poor
2. Roma
3. Disabled
4. Refugees and IDPs
5. Returnees in Readmission Process
6. Women
7. Parents
8. Have Unresolved Housing
9. Lack Parental Care
10. Homeless

### 3.4.2 National Youth Action Plan

The Action Plan for the implementation of the National Youth Strategy was adopted in January 2009. The Action Plan lays out the implementation strategy for Serbia's youth policy over the course of 2009 through 2014. Its purpose is to support the Youth Strategy by providing the road map by which the objectives and goals of the strategy can be accomplished. This Action Plan lays out the activities that will be engaged in during this period, offering a detailed plan of the funding and resources that will be dedicated to each of these activities over the course of 2009, while cost estimates are provided for the period from 2010 through 2014.

For each of the specific objectives listed in the Youth Strategy, the Action Plan provides a separate set of activities, expected outcomes for each of these activities, and indicators (both quantitative and qualitative). Based on these, the implementation of the Youth Strategy will be monitored and the achieved outcomes evaluated. Each of these activities is further defined in accordance with a specified time frame, funding allocation,<sup>109</sup> and a method for monitoring implementation and evaluation.

Significantly, the Action Plan provided one short-term goal for 2009–2010: the adoption of a National Law on Youth that would define terms, including “young people,” “youth work,” and “a youth organization,” while also setting the criteria to distinguish between the plethora of local, national, and regional youth organizations, and organizations for youth. The Law on Youth would not be adopted within this time frame.

### 3.4.3 Law on Youth

The Law on Youth was adopted by the Serbian parliament on July 5, 2011. It covers the majority of topics set out in the Action Plan, with the notable exception of “youth work,” which, while defined

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109. Specific figures are only given for 2009.

in the law, was not sufficiently regulated because of disagreements over competencies with the Ministry of Labor and Labor Law. Additionally, several other topics identified as important during the consultative process—including such issues as formal education, youth health protection, employment, youth security—did not ultimately fall within the scope of the Law on Youth.

The Law on Youth consists of seven chapters:

- **Chapter 1—Basic Provisions:** This chapter establishes the general goals of the youth policy, gives definitions of relevant key terms, and outlines the principles of the youth policy.
- **Chapter 2—National Youth Strategy:** This chapter defines the Youth Strategy and provides the rules for its adoption and financing.
- **Chapter 3—Associations Implementing Youth Activities:** This chapter identifies the youth civil society organizations that are important stakeholders in the process of implementation of the Law on Youth and the Youth Strategy and gives the rules for their functioning and cooperation within the associations.
- **Chapter 4—Youth Councils, Offices, and an Agency:** This chapter gives the rules for the establishment of the National Youth Council and mandatory incorporation of the Provincial and Local Youth Councils and potential incorporation of local youth offices and the Agencies for Youth.
- **Chapter 5—Funding of Programs and Projects of Public Interest to the Youth Sector:** This chapter sets the rules on financing of programs and projects in the youth sector.
- **Chapter 6—Monitoring:** This chapter declares that the Ministry on Youth is responsible for monitoring.
- **Chapter 7—Transitional and Final Provisions**

The first chapter of the Law on Youth defines six key principles that are said to lay the foundation of Serbia's youth policy. Table 3.6 provides an overview of these principles.

Having been established after most other intersectoral laws (i.e., the Law on Education, the Law on Labor, the Law on the Health) were already implemented, the scope of the Law on Youth is quite narrow. Given that such laws had already entered into force, the Law on Youth had to respect them and could not

**TABLE 3.6: PRINCIPLES OF YOUTH POLICY AS SPECIFIED BY LAW ON YOUTH**

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Content as defined by Law on Youth</b>
1. Youth Support	Proclaims social empowerment of young people
2. Equality and Nondiscrimination	Establishes equality and nondiscrimination between youth
3. Equal Opportunity	Proclaims equal opportunities for young people in all spheres of life in accordance with their own choices and abilities
4. Raising Awareness of the Importance of Youth	Maintains that everybody should encourage and raise awareness of the importance of youth policy implementation
5. Active Youth Participation	Proclaims that youth should be involved in decision-making processes
6. Responsibility and Solidarity	Imposes obligations on youth to be actively involved in the development of society.

**Source:** Law on Youth (2011).



address many of the issues central to young people's concerns that were identified during the consultative process. Rather than make significant alterations to the existing rules of the game, the Law on Youth is expected by members of the Ministry of Youth and Sport to secure existing achievements going forward, ensuring that future authorities will be legally bound to continue implementing the Youth Strategy.

The application of the Law on Youth was delayed for six months and did not enter into force until January 17, 2012. This was deemed sufficient time for institutions to enact required regulations and constitute bodies necessary for full implementation of the Law on Youth.

#### **3.4.4 Local Youth Action Plans**

The Law on Youth stipulates that the autonomous province and local self-government units will develop individual Action Plans for Strategy Implementation within their territories. These Local Youth Action Plans are responsible for outlining the use of funds for the implementation of such plans within their budgets.

To date, Local Youth Action Plans have been adopted by the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, as well as 107 local municipalities (more than 60 of which were adopted during 2010).

All Local Action Plans have been developed in coordination with the Ministry of Youth and Sport,<sup>110</sup> in accordance with a unified methodology, the National Youth Strategy, and local research. Each Local Action Plan has its own financial resources, which have been incorporated into its autonomous province/local municipality budget.

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110. The ministry financed more than 133 projects related to the establishment and implementation of local action plans.

### **3.4.5 Intersectoral Legislation Dealing with Youth**

Throughout the drafting process, the following Youth Strategy policy documents were taken into account:

- National EU Accession Strategy of the Republic of Serbia
- Poverty Reduction Strategy
- National Employment Strategy for the Period 2005–2010
- National Action Plan for Children
- National Strategy for Business Development of the Republic of Serbia from 2006 to 2012
- Millennium Development Goals in the Republic of Serbia
- Strategy for the Improvement of the Position of Disabled Persons in the Republic of Serbia
- Strategy for Mental Health Protection Development
- National Strategy for Fight Against HIV/AIDS
- Strategy for Encouragement of Childbirth
- Strategy for Youth Health Development in the Republic of Serbia
- Strategy for Regional Development of the Republic of Serbia for Period 2007–2012
- Strategy for Development of Professional Education in the Republic of Serbia
- Strategy for Education of Adults in the Republic of Serbia
- Strategy for Social Protection Development
- Strategy for Development of Rail, Water, Air and Intermodal Transport in the Republic of Serbia from 2008 to 2015
- Strategy for Fight Against Human Trafficking in the Republic of Serbia
- Strategy for Information Society Development in the Republic of Serbia

### 3.5 Institutions for Implementation

The MoYS is the primary institutional body charged with leading the process of policy reform, enactment, and implementation at the national level. In addition to the MoYS, however, a number of other institutions play active and important roles in a field of youth policy. These public bodies and institutions are the National Youth Council, the Autonomous Province Youth Council, Local Municipality Youth Councils, the Youth Office, Local Municipality Youth Offices, and the Agency for Youth.

#### 3.5.1 Ministry of Youth and Sport

The MoYS was established in May 2007, shortly after a new government was formed.<sup>111</sup> The MoYS was given jurisdiction over several of the responsibilities related to youth and sport that were previously under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Sport. With the establishment of the MoYS—a special government body to regulate and address youth issues—the institutional framework for work with youth in Serbia was created. MoYS may be further subdivided into three sectors: the sector for youth; the sector for sports; and sector for project management.

According to the Law on Ministries currently in force,<sup>112</sup> the Ministry of Youth and Sport is responsible for the following:

- Conducting public administration work related to the system
- Developing and improving youth policies
- Implementing the National Youth Strategy and Youth Action Plan
- Stimulating young people to organize and participate in society

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111. The establishment and scope of competences have been defined in article 19 the Law on Ministries ("Official Gazette of RS" no. 43/07).

112. Law of Ministries ("Official Gazette of RS" no. 16/11), Article 13.

- Protecting youth interests and helping youth to achieve their goals
- Consulting youth about employment and volunteer opportunities
- Stimulating nonformal education
- Facilitating cooperation between domestic and international youth organizations
- Enhancing international cooperation related to the youth
- Monitoring and evaluating the position and role of youth in the Republic of Serbia
- Supporting the establishment and operation of local and regional youth offices
- To accomplish these tasks, the MoYS has a budget of 4,178,005,000 RSD, or roughly \$52,000,000. In addition, youth civil society has been awarded about \$2,000,000 and local self-governments about \$400,000. The Serbian government has also contributed about \$27,500 for EU bodies dedicated to youth. It has also dedicated about \$7,400,000 to the stipends awarded via the Fund for Youth Talents.

### **3.5.2 National Youth Council**

The Law on Youth stipulates that the government will establish a National Youth Council. This council will serve as a cross-sectoral coordinator for the purpose of harmonizing activities related to the development and implementation of youth policies between different state bodies.<sup>113</sup>

Members of the National Youth Council include the following:

- Representatives of the MoYS
- Representatives of other ministries dealing with young people within their portfolios

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113. The Law on Youth, art. 16.

- The autonomous province secretariat responsible for youth affairs
- Prominent experts in the field
- Representatives of youth associations and nongovernmental organizations
- Representatives of local youth offices
- Joint representatives of national minorities
- Young people, who are to be no less than one-third of the Youth Council membership and represent youth civil society organizations

### **3.5.3 Local Youth Councils**

For the purpose of harmonizing activities related to the implementation of local youth policy, the autonomous province or local self-government unit may establish a provincial, city, or municipal youth council. These Local Youth Councils serve chiefly as an intersectoral coordination bodies, ensuring that provisions of the Local Action Plans do not conflict with local laws or statutes.

Local Youth Councils were formally institutionalized by the Law on Youth,<sup>114</sup> but the establishment of these councils began several years ago under the supervision of the MoYS. According to the Annual Report on the Youth Strategy for 2009, about 50 local self-governments had already formed Local Youth Councils.

Because of the independence of local authorities in establishing the competencies of Local Youth Councils, the specific makeup of such bodies varies across municipalities. As a rule, however, more than half of Local Youth Council members must be representatives of young people.

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114. The Law on Youth, art. 17.

### 3.5.4 Local Youth Offices

The Law on Youth also stipulates that local self-government units may opt to establish a Local Youth Office.<sup>115</sup> These offices are mandated to initiate and administer the development and implementation of local youth policy, as well as to coordinate the activities of local offices. In so doing, such offices often serve as a public space for young people dedicated exclusively to serving their needs, concerns, and interests.<sup>116</sup> While each Youth Office may have its own community-specific goals, the objectives of these offices generally adhere to the following:

- Provide conditions for active involvement of young people in the life and activities of the local community
- Empower young people
- Provide support for the organization of youth activities
- Support the creative expression of young people's needs
- In practice, many of the Youth Offices develop activities beyond their official mandate. They focus their efforts on helping young people in their communities find jobs (linking students with potential employers, providing résumé workshops, etc.), facilitating student exchange programs, providing nonformal education such as language classes or computer literacy, and promoting youth volunteer work.<sup>117</sup>
- In reality, the incorporation of the Local Youth Offices began even before the establishment of the ministry, though on an ad hoc basis. Before 2007, there were only five Local Youth Offices; now, Local Youth Offices number 123, most of which are located within municipality buildings.<sup>118</sup>

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115. *Ibid.*, art. 18

116. A. Poljak, and A. Piletic (2010), "A Report on Youth Offices in Belgrade: An Assessment of the Accessibility of Youth Offices for Youth Living in Belgrade," UNFPA, p. 2.

117. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

118. Statement of the Minister of Youth and Sport, Snezana Samarzic Markovic, on the occasion of International Youth Day, August 12, 2011.

Funding for the Local Youth Offices is a significant problem. Each Local Youth Office is meant to have an acting youth coordinator whose position is funded by the municipality. According to the MoYS, only 32 percent of the youth coordinators are full-time employees of the local administration, compared with 50 percent who are engaged only contractually. The remaining 28 percent are unpaid volunteers. Municipalities are responsible for dedicating funds to the Local Youth Offices, although not all municipalities have so allocated their budgets. As a consequence, many seek funds through tenders offered by the MoYS, apply for municipal grants, and/or incorporate unpaid volunteers. Many Youth Offices also seek out alternative funding by forging agreements with foreign NGOs and donors, such as USAID and the Council of Europe.<sup>119</sup>

### **3.5.5 Agency for Youth**

Once Serbia achieves EU candidacy, an Agency for Youth will be established for the purpose of implementing EU youth programs and other programs relating to young people.

### **3.5.6 Civil Society**

The Law on Youth recognizes youth civil society organizations as important stakeholders in the process of implementation of the Law on Youth and the Youth Strategy.<sup>120</sup> Namely, the Law on Youth provides that specific youth nongovernmental organizations may be established for the purposes of performing youth activities; improving conditions for young people's personal and social development, including youth in community social life; and increasing access to relevant information. These youth organizations should be established in accordance with the procedures

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119. A. Poljak, and A. Piletic (2010), "A Report on Youth Offices in Belgrade: An Assessment of the Accessibility of Youth Offices for Youth Living in Belgrade," p.4.

120. The Law on Youth, arts. 13–15.

laid out in the Law on Associations<sup>121</sup> and two-thirds of their members must be representatives of youth.

The Law on Youth also provides that youth organizations may, for the purposes of pursuing common goals, interests, and action, form youth federations. These federations must meet the following standards:

- Include at least 60 members.
- Have members from at least two-thirds of Serbia's districts that have performed activities for two years.
- Include at least 2,000 individual members, at least two-thirds of whom are young people.
- In 2008, the Krovna Organizacija Mladih Srbije (KOMS) was established as the first youth umbrella organization with the support of the Fund for an Open Society—Serbia. KOMS has been particularly active with respect to youth policy development, and, in March 2011, the organization was officially incorporated and is expected to fulfill all the necessary requirements to qualify as an official youth federation.

The MoYS has also been active in providing small grants to youth civil society organizations. According to MoYS officials, the ministry has thus far announced 39 public calls for grants and financed 557 projects implemented by 257 youth civil society organizations throughout the country. The total amount MoYS has distributed in this process since 2007 is about 759,000,000 RSD (approximately \$8,700,000).

### 3.6 Financing

The Law on Youth requires the government of Serbia to allocate a budget for programs and projects of public interest in the field of youth policy. It also specifies the goals that have to

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121. "Official Gazette of RS" no. 51/2009.



be supported by the budget.<sup>122</sup> It maintains that all supported programs and related activities should be implemented by state bodies and institutions as well as by youth NGOs, youth federations, youth associations, and representative associations of young people; local self-governments and institutions; science and research institutes; and other legal entities registered in Republic of Serbia.

With respect to the budget allocated to young talent, the Law on Youth states that such financing will be provided through a special budget fund (the Fund for Young Talents) established for this purpose in 2006.<sup>123</sup> The fund's inclusion within the law provides a guaranty for the fund's future financing and operation. To date, the fund has provided financial support to more than 6,000 young talents, of which 575 had the opportunity to continue their higher education abroad. These individuals are required to return to Serbia following their studies.

The Law on Youth also stipulates that autonomous provinces and local self-government units have an obligation to allocate funds in their budgets for the financing of young people.<sup>124</sup> Costs associated with the Local Youth Offices are to be funded (at least in part) by the budget of the local self-government unit, with additional activities to be covered by outside funders, including government ministries and foreign donors. Thus far, the MoYS has offered financial support to 115 Local Youth Offices via five public calls. This has supported 239 projects to the amount of 89,000,000 RSD (approximately \$1,000,000).

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122. Law on Youth, art. 20.

123. "Official Gazette of RS" nos. 71/2008, 44/09, and 37/11.

124. Law on Youth, arts. 25 and 26.

### 3.7 Monitoring and Evaluation

A special section of the Youth Action Plan has been dedicated to monitoring and evaluation of recommended activities provided by the Youth Action Plan. This plan contains mechanisms, forms, and methods by which to monitor activities. The goal of this framework is to establish a unified system that will make it possible to view the range, quality, and efficiency of the recommended activities, specific objectives, and overall strategic goals set forth in the Youth Strategy.

The Youth Action Plan recognizes that successful monitoring of activities requires relevant capacities at the republican and local levels for the monitoring, coordination, and management of the evaluation process. Owing to the character of the Youth Strategy (which connects several competent ministries) and the complexity of implementation, it is essential to ensure cooperation and coordination among all partners.

As a result, the process of monitoring and evaluation is divided into several phases: Data collection, analysis, reporting, and use. The focus of this process is on the activities specifically financed by the MoYS, as well as the capacities of youth civil society organizations. In this respect, the indicators have specified each particular of the Action Plan's goal and activities (for example, number of young people involved, geographical distribution, fulfillment of established goals, quality of program).

The MoYS plays a central role in the monitoring, coordination, and management of the Youth Strategy and Action Plan on both the national and local levels. According to the Youth Action Plan, the MoYS should establish a Youth Department that will serve as a coordination unit in charge of Strategy implementation. Furthermore, the Youth Action Plan provides that a Working Group for Strategy Implementation will also be established. The Advisory Body, formed in 2007 by the MoYS, is also poised to resume its work on implementing and monitoring the Youth Strategy. The MoYS, itself, however, is in charge of coordinating

the collection and analysis of data, while other competent bodies are in charge of preparing sector-specific evaluations.

Evaluations are to take place annually and take the form of a report. The first such report was published in 2009 and accepted by the government in July 2010. This report says that more than 1,000 activities were performed during 2009, affecting more than 700,000 users. According to MoYS, the drafting process of the annual report for 2010 began in March 2011 and should be completed shortly. Annual reports are transparent documents available to all interested parties.

### **3.8 International Support and Alignment with International Standards**

Serbia's desire to enter the EU and to reestablish itself as a member of the European community has no doubt played an important role in encouraging policymakers to give greater attention to youth issues. In the 2000s, external actors such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission played an important role in securing funds for youth activities, as well as providing support to civil society organizations in their efforts to advocate policy reform. In fact, international donor funds were the only source of support for civil society youth activities until as late as 2007.

More recently, international youth policy frameworks have also played a role in Serbia's youth policy, helping to provide a model for reform and giving policymakers standards toward which to strive. The international community even played a hands-on role in the development of the National Youth Strategy, with members serving on working groups and helping to oversee the policy's implementation.

At present, the international community continues to provide significant support in funds and expertise for youth issues. Although funds do not go directly to the MoYS, the two groups

consult closely on program development and funding priorities. In addition, the international community has played a critical role in setting an example for achievements in the domain of youth policy.

International standards played a major role in the current youth policy's concern for human rights. Among the human rights documents consulted throughout the formation of the strategy were the Universal Declaration on Human Rights; the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; UN World Youth Action Plans; the European Parliament's White Paper on Youth Policy; and the European Chapter on Youth Participation in Local and Regional Life.

With respect to specific international youth policies, the model provided by the EU has proven to be the most influential. Specific documents consulted during the policymaking process included the EU Strategy for Youth "[Youth—Investing and Empowering](#)"; *Strategy "EUROPE 2020"* adopted by the Council of Europe on June 17, 2010, which includes "[Youth on the Move](#)," a comprehensive package of policy initiatives on education and employment for young people in Europe; and a resolution by the Council and Representatives of Governments of the Member States regarding the framework of European cooperation in the youth field.

Other documents consulted include the following:

- EU Commission White Paper, [A New Impetus for European Youth](#), as of November 21, 2001
- [Youth Policy Papers](#), European Steering Committee for Inter-governmental Co-operation in Youth Field, as of October 15, 1998
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, and the Committee of the Regions, 2007
- EU Education, Youth Affairs and Culture Council, 2007

- Decision of the European Parliament and Council establishing Youth in Action Program
- Youth in Action program, Program Guide, 2009
- Guide for the preparation of National Action Plans on Youth Employment, ILO
- Resolution concerning youth employment, ILO, 2005
- Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life
- Copenhagen Declaration, education and training
- Declaration of the First European Youth Work Convention, Ghent, 2010
- However, it is important to emphasize that policymakers are of the opinion that the process of creation of the youth policy in the Republic of Serbia has been unique and shaped in accordance with national needs. Consequently, although the youth policy in Serbia fully complies with EU policy documents, established policy and vision are mainly the result of the wide consultative process, not the incorporation of the solutions from international documents or other national legal systems.

### 3.9 Conclusion

The adoption of the National Youth Strategy and the subsequent passage of the National Law on Youth were met with a great deal of enthusiasm by policy stakeholders. Among our conversations with young people, policymakers, and civil society activists, many regarded the implementation of policy documents to have been quite successful. Many also believed that the policy would have an important impact on future problem solving.<sup>125</sup>

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125. Information obtained from focus group questionnaires. Please refer to Appendix II for more details.

Much of this enthusiasm is no doubt justified. By ensuring that all future governments will have to view young people as a policy priority, the Law on Youth establishes an important precedent. Moreover, the policy itself ensures that youth organizations will have funding sources unrelated to external donors—many of whom are expected to leave Serbia in the coming years. An added accomplishment of the policy is its emphasis on local youth offices, which many see as a major potential for youth participation in small towns and cities across Serbia.

But can such expectations be fulfilled? The following chapter seeks to answer this question by offering an analysis of Serbia's current youth policy, placing specific emphasis on three key areas: employment, health, and education.

# 4: Intersectoral Coordination

## 4.1 Introduction

In 2008, Serbia adopted the first of what would be a series of documents regulating the country's policy toward youth. This document, the National Youth Strategy, laid out the vision of Serbia's national policy for young people, investing young people with rights and responsibilities, and identifying those young people most prone to exclusion. This policy did not come into being within a vacuum.

When the Law of Youth was finally adopted in July 2011, it came on the heels of a long series of laws and policies regulating sectoral issues of special concern to young people. Many of these laws—such as those pertaining to employment or education—address the issues and obstacles that are most critical to young people. How Serbia's National Youth Policy corresponds with, conflicts with, or bolsters these intersectoral laws will, thus, in large part determine the impact and effectiveness of youth policy in Serbia.

Accordingly, this chapter evaluates the influences, gaps, weaknesses, and strengths of the policy through the particular sectors of special concern to young people. It begins by offering an overview of the coordination mechanisms put in place to reconcile youth policy with sectoral laws before discussing the effectiveness of such mechanisms and the policy on youth in practice.

## 4.2 Coordination Mechanisms

Effective, efficient, and reliable intersectoral coordination is the precondition for the successful implementation of the National Youth Strategy and the Youth Action Plan. This is because the aims and goals provided in these documents invariably fall within the purview of several ministries beyond the MoYS, for example, the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education.

Well aware of such overlap, the representatives of relevant ministries were awarded an important role in the policymaking process even prior to the passage of the Law on Youth. These participating officials were assigned as members of working groups that were charged with drafting youth policy documents. Each relevant institution outside of the youth sector (whether ministries, agencies, or other public bodies) was also charged with implementing youth policies and assigned specific responsibilities as defined in the Action Plan. The Youth Action Plan also began the process of establishing a Working Group for Strategy Implementation, which consists of representatives of those ministries that are to coordinate youth policies.

The Law on Youth also recognizes the need for intersectoral coordination mechanisms. To that end, it mandates that the government establish a National Youth Council for the purposes of harmonizing activities related to the development and implementation of youth policies. Members of the body will consist of representatives of different government and other state bodies who deal with young people within their respective portfolios.<sup>126</sup>

The need for intersectoral coordination mechanisms has also been recognized on the local level. As a consequence, Local Youth Councils, which have been established in numerous

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126. Though not yet established, MoYS staff maintain that this council will be constituted in the coming months. According to the Law on Youth, art. 28, the general deadline for enactment of the regulation that would implement the Law is the beginning of January 2012.



municipalities, have been charged with overseeing intersectoral coordination.

Before evaluating the effectiveness of such mechanisms, the following pages offer insight into the mechanisms and policies at work with respect to three key areas of concern: employment, health, and education.

## **4.3 Employment**

Chapter 2 laid out the many obstacles young people face in finding work in Serbia. Young people themselves overwhelmingly identify unemployment as the major hardship confronting young people in the transition from childhood to adulthood. This, too, has been recognized by Serbia's youth strategy, thus it lists among its objectives the ambition to encourage and stimulate all forms of employment, self-employment, and youth entrepreneurship.<sup>127</sup> The following pages discuss the institutions and policies that directly affect youth employment before analyzing their effectiveness, strengths, and weaknesses.

### **4.3.1 Institutions**

The precise provisions by which to ameliorate the rate of youth unemployment are, however, only loosely elucidated within existing youth policy. This is largely because employment policies—even those targeting young people—fall under the prerogatives of competing ministries and agencies. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the institutions charged with overseeing various aspects of youth employment policies.

At the heart of the employment initiatives is the National Employment Service (NES). Organized around a nationwide network of 34 branch offices, 2 provincial offices, and 1 head office

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127. National Youth Strategy (2008).

**TABLE 4.1: INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICY**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Role</b>
SEC	Established in 2005, the Socio-Economic Council (SEC) is a tripartite body responsible for advising the government on economic, social, and education policy design. The SEC operates nationally and oversees a developed network of 119 Local Employment Councils at the level of local self-government.
MERD	The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development's (MERD) Employment Department is responsible for the development, monitoring, and evaluation of employment policies in general, including, but not limited to, policies for youth.
MLSP	The Ministry of Labor and Social Policies (MLSP) oversees the development, implementation, and monitoring of labor policy. It also oversees the social inclusion of vulnerable groups within the social protection system.
MES	The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) is tasked with the development of the educational curricula and monitoring and implementation of the educational processes aimed at providing individuals who are properly matched to the needs of the economy and labor market demands.
MoYS	The Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS) develops state policy toward youth aimed at improving their position in society.
NES	The National Employment Service (NES) is charged with implementing Active Labor Market Policy.

in Belgrade, the NES offers a number of active labor market programs. These include

- connecting demand and supply in the labor market, including selection, counseling, training for active job seeking, and job fairs;
- professional counseling and career planning;
- incentives for private sector employers for jobs creation;<sup>128</sup>
- self-employment incentives;<sup>129</sup>
- education and training programs;<sup>130</sup>
- public works programs for vulnerable unemployed groups; and
- incentives for users of financial welfare benefits to seek employment.<sup>131</sup>

### 4.3.2 Policies

Two key types of policies affect youth employment: policies directly targeting young people and policies that target the macro-level.

Within the realm of youth employment policy, two key documents stand out: the National Youth Employment Action Plan (2009–2011) and the National Action Plan for Employment 2012.

*National Youth Employment Action Plan.*<sup>132</sup> Adopted in September 2009 by the government of Serbia, the National Youth

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128. In the amount of 160,00 RSD and 80,000 RSD per user.

129. In amount of 160,000 RSD, including counseling and training in business centers, entrepreneurship training, and specialized training.

130. This includes on-the-job training and retraining programs, prequalification programs, training required by employers, and basic elementary education programs for the unemployed, Roma, and readmission returnees.

131. If they are employed full-time, they are offered 30 percent of financial welfare benefits for the period they would otherwise use the benefit.

132. The Action Plan on Youth Employment was approved by the Government of Serbia's Conclusion 05 Number 11-5709/2009 of September 17, 2009.

Employment Action Plan is the central piece of legislation regulating youth employment. Its stated intention is to contribute to the achievement of full, productive, and freely chosen employment for young people.

The Employment Action Plan is the result of the collaboration between policymakers at the MLSP; MES; MoYS; as well as ministries of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management and representatives of the Deputy Prime Minister's Office for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the European Integration Office, the National Employment Service of Serbia, the Republic Statistical Office, and the employers' and workers' organizations of Serbia. The development process was coordinated by the Employment Department of MERD and is based on the framework proposed in the International Labor Organization's Guide for the preparation of national action plans on youth employment.

The Employment Action Plan outlines the five strategic objectives shown in Table 4.2. The Youth Employment Plan estimates the total cost for these objectives at €27,876,000 for a three-year period, excluding monitoring and evaluation costs. Approximately €17,244,000 has already been pledged and/or made available through the measures envisaged by the Government of Serbia (and already budgeted) or donor-funded technical cooperation programs.<sup>133</sup> The remaining €11,032,000 required (i.e., approximately €3.6 million per year) will be raised through multi- and bilateral technical cooperation assistance.

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133. Namely the ILO Project Youth Employment Promotion in Serbia (YEPS); the ILO package of technical assistance to the MERD; the joint ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF program [Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration Financed through the MDGFund by the Spanish Government and the Joint ILO, UNDP, and UNICEF Program](#) Strengthening the Capacity for Inclusive Local Development in South Serbia to be financed by the governments of Switzerland, Norway, and Sweden.

TABLE 4.2: EMPLOYMENT ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

Goal	Content
<b>Strengthen labor market governance</b>	<p><b>Objective:</b> To enforce an active policy on employment aligned with EU and international standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen the institutional framework for monitoring and evaluation by strengthening the role and capacities of MERD and facilitating intersectoral cooperation with the MLSP, the NES, the Labor Inspectorate, and other ministries in charge of economic and social policies</li> <li>• Mainstream NES reform throughout local branches</li> <li>• Decentralize the development of local partnerships for youth employment by providing capacities for coordinating the implementation of employment programs at the regional/municipal levels</li> </ul>
<b>Improve youth employability</b>	<p><b>Objective:</b> To improve the quantity and quality of education that will foster youth employability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align the education and training system to labor market requirements—indicating the necessity of the finalization of the educational reform</li> <li>• Support the establishment of a competency-based adult training system to remedy skills mismatches</li> <li>• Develop an accreditation and certification system for adult training and provide access to career development services</li> </ul>
<b>Foster youth employment through private sector development</b>	<p><b>Objective:</b> To support private sector development that will enhance youth employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invest in policies and plans that prioritize interventions with strong impact on high youth employment</li> <li>• Develop policies that promote human resource development and youth employment growth</li> <li>• Introduce work-training contracts</li> <li>• Adjust the system of waiving nonwage labor costs on the basis of impact evaluation results</li> <li>• Encourage employers' organizations to develop youth entrepreneurship services</li> </ul>

**Improve decent work prospects**

- Objective:** To promote quality employment and decent work.
- Strengthen the Labor Inspectorate and coordination among the various inspection services
  - Create a system of incentives to promote the transition from an informal to a formal economy
  - Increase awareness among young people of their rights at work

**Promote inclusion**

- Objective:** To promote and increase the employability of those groups recognized as the most disadvantaged within the labor market.
- Reform active labor market policies to target and finance policies for disadvantaged young people
  - Develop integrative services by connecting and integrating employment and social services
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*National Action Plan for Employment for 2012:* In 2011, MERD adopted the National Action Plan for Employment for 2012, specifying the activities and measures that are going to be a priority for 2012. The priorities for 2012:

- Encourage employment in less-developed regions and develop regional and local employment policy
- Improve the quality of the workforce
- Link supply with demand in the labor market and encourage job creation
- Achieve improvement of labor market institutions
- Encourage employing difficult-to-employ persons and greater social inclusion of vulnerable groups

For the implementation of the Action Plan in 2012, a 5,650,000,000 RSD is needed, or approximately €56,000,000. This is about 0.12 percent of GDP, while the average dedicated for this in Europe is 1.6 percent of GDP.<sup>134</sup>

*Macroeconomic and Sectoral Policies:* The state has developed a variety of macroeconomic and sectoral policies that affect youth employment. An overview of the most important of these can be found in Table 4.3.

### 4.3.3 Implementation and Outcomes

The development of the National Youth Strategy was an important first step in getting the issue of youth unemployment defined as a national priority. The decision to identify a variety of vulnerable groups particularly at risk of economic marginalization was also important. However, the utility of the Youth Strategy and Law on Youth will ultimately rest with their implementation. With respect to employment, coordination between the various ministries in charge of employment and social exclusion is absolutely key, as is a careful and deliberate monitoring and evaluation strategy. Unfortunately, several gaps might impede the policy's effectiveness in redressing youth unemployment. The following pages offer insight into some of these.

*Lack of Emphasis on Entrepreneurship:* Despite recognizing young people's economic vulnerability, the state has developed a largely defensive policy response. The majority of policy interventions are aimed at increasing youth employability and employment by providing educational and training programs, professional counseling and career planning services,

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134. Evaluation of the outcomes of Active Labor Market, EUNES Project, European Union (through IPA programming) (2008–2011).

**TABLE 4.3: MACROECONOMIC AND SECTORAL EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

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**Poverty Reduction Strategy (2003–2007)**

Builds on three pillars:

- Job creation
- Prevent new poverty through economic restructuring
- Design and implement programs, measures, and activities targeting the poorest and most vulnerable groups, particularly in the least-developed regions

Youth is recognized as one of seven vulnerable groups to be targeted and monitored.

**National Strategy for Economic Development (2006–2012)**

Includes the following strategic directions:

- Establish an attractive business environment as a precondition for the increase of competitiveness of the Serbian economy
- Development based on knowledge and human capital
- Establish an efficient economic infrastructure
- More equal regional development
- Align economic development to social equity objectives

**National Sustainable Development Strategy (2008–2013)**

Aims to achieve macroeconomic stabilization by prioritizing sustainable economic growth and social development through:

- Promotion of small-to-medium-sized enterprises and foreign direct investment
- Investment in human resources (adaptability of the labor force)
- Reduction of regional disparities
- Protection of the environment

Youth is recognized as a vulnerable group to be targeted and monitored.



### **Strategy for the Development of Competitive and Innovative Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises**

Aims to develop a knowledge- and innovation-based economy. Based on five pillars:

- Promote entrepreneurship and business start-ups
- Develop human resources for a competitive small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) sector
- Improve financing opportunities and the taxation system
- Advance the competitive advantage of small and medium-sized enterprises in the export sector
- Improve the legal, institutional, and business environment

This includes such measures as introducing entrepreneurial education in schools. However, the operational plan does not provide financial incentives for business startups and self-employment.

### **Strategy for Regional Development of Serbia (2007–2012)**

Aims to develop new institutional solutions and mechanisms to support balanced regional socioeconomic development by increasing the competitiveness of regions, decreasing regional disparities, eliminating poverty, and building institutional regional infrastructure.

- Provide long-term unemployed young people binding service involvement in active employment policy measures through the NES
- Create conditions for return and employment of citizens who are working abroad, especially young people
- Encourage the employment of persons with disabilities
- Adapt the education system focus to the needs of a market economy and, in particular, SME
- Create special tax incentives to stimulate employment

### **Strategy and Action Plan for Career Guidance and Counseling (2010–2014)**

Aims to do the following:

- Establish career guidance and counseling system
  - Develop and introduce career guidance and counseling in education
  - Introduce career guidance and counseling in employment
  - Promote career guidance and counseling
-

and mediating the interconnection between employees and employers.<sup>135</sup> By contrast, the state has done little to support youth entrepreneurial initiatives. The existing measures aimed at encouraging youth to start their own businesses are treated as self-employment measures and are primarily tailored to target those who are recognized as marginalized youth. These measures are not designed to provide significant support to young people eager to start their own businesses but lacking social and economic capital.<sup>136</sup>

The lack of a clear commitment to youth entrepreneurship is emblematic of the paternalistic attitude exhibited toward youth. Young people are still not perceived as a resource capable of bringing change by producing economic growth and participating in the development of the economy. Once again, the state is attempting to “solve the problems of unemployed youth,” rather than empowering young people to solve such problems themselves. Instead, the state should offer a more favorable tax policy toward youth enterprises for an initial period of more than one year. This has the potential to be a more efficient measure than the €1,600 state subsidy that the NES currently provides to start small businesses.<sup>137</sup>

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135. The majority of the activities can be found in the mandate of NES.

136. The package for self-employment provided by the NES is designed to offer short training on the development of a business plan and 160,000 RSD (€1,600) as startup credit. The mentoring component is more a provisional than substantial support to young entrepreneurs and it is a recently added service.

137. The subsidy amount of €1,600 is enough only to cover just one person’s employment taxes (including health and pension) over a two-year period. As such, this is an insufficient amount to qualify as true startup capital. The program provides no other support measure (e.g., mentoring or networking component) for young entrepreneurs. By contrast, if the state were to allow a tax-free period, or to reduce taxes for young entrepreneurs, this could have a stimulative effect on young entrepreneurs. The political repercussions of this—particularly as it affects the need for pension reform—have largely left such options off the table, however. An alternative would be the creation of mentoring programs for young entrepreneurs. Officially, both the NES and MERD recognize the need for mentoring and have said they will take such

*Empowering Youth in Decision Making:* Those (intersectoral) policies that have been developed for achieving the economic empowerment of youth have been developed exclusively by the Social Economic Council. This council includes representatives of public institutions, business associations, and unions, but does not include any members of the civil sector, youth organizations, or young people themselves. Ninety-four percent of the experts and activists surveyed in our questionnaire had not been involved in the policy development process. If this does not change, we cannot expect to make any shifts in the approach toward the economic empowerment of youth.

*Monitoring and Evaluation:* At the moment, two projects are being run to support the NES in developing a more accurate system for monitoring and evaluation:

- **EUNES Project:** Designed to improve the capacity of the National Employment Service to manage data, make forecasts, monitor, and evaluate; the EUNES Project was funded by European Union (2008–2011).
- **Support of National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration Serbia:** Provides technical assistance to improve the employability of youth with a focus on vulnerable youth groups. This is funded by the Spanish government and implemented through several UN agencies (UNDP, ILO, IOM, and UNICEF).

The latest results on the impact of NES youth measures show positive signs. In the scope of the project, the Evaluation of the

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needs into consideration going forward. However, there is little evidence that such programs are forthcoming. A new USAID program aimed at supporting local economic development has such a component and aims to develop mentoring opportunities.

Outcomes of Active Labor Market,<sup>138</sup> three chosen measures stand out as having been particularly effective: Job Club, Training for Labor Market, and Subsidies for Job Creation. Almost all users of these measures reported that the information and services they received from the NES were useful in helping them to find employment.

The First Chance Program is the largest program conducted for the youth population as a whole. Figure 4.1 provides an overview.

*Lack of Human Resources in the National Employment Service:* The NES is incredibly overburdened. There are thought to be as many as 1,500 clients per NES counselor. The new approach at integrating services<sup>139</sup> will prove to be a great burden on the NES's already limited resources. Of special concern is the new case management methodology, which will alter the current multiprofessional teams. A needs assessment study, *Improving NES Service Delivery for Disadvantaged Youth*, was conducted.<sup>140</sup> It identified several important limitations within the current system, among them a lack of flexibility in staffing and assignments, excessive counselor caseload, little case follow-up, understaffing, improper workload placed on counselors, and a lack of relevant labor market information.

## 4.4 Health

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the main ailments impeding good health among Serbia's young people. These included

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138. Evaluation of the outcomes of Active Labor Market, EUNES Project, European Union (through IPA programming) (2008–2011).

139. At the moment, it is developing in five pilot municipalities (Vranje, Vladicin Han, Novi Sad, Becej, and Backi Petrovac); it is expected to be mainstreamed and applied in every municipality from 2012.

140. Taken from study *Improving NES Service Delivery for Disadvantaged Youth, Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration Serbia*, MDGFund (2009–2012).

#### FIGURE 4.1: A LOOK AT SERBIA'S "FIRST CHANCE" PROGRAM

**About:** The First Chance Program, initiated in 2009, is one of the most massive programs conducted in scope of the Active Labor Market Programs (ALMPs) to directly influence the rate of employment among youth. It targets youth up to 30 years of age with at least a secondary education and aims to provide training and work experience to young workers by covering enterprises' training costs and the salaries of apprentices. It consists of several kinds of subsidies: apprentices receive monthly remuneration of approximately €100 for the period of practice (3 months) and the possibilities for apprentices to sign a one-year apprenticeship contract subsidized by the government (€200 a month for youth with tertiary education, €180 for those with a college degree, and €160 for those with a secondary school education, plus social security contributions). The employer is obliged to employ the beneficiary for an additional year and to preserve the total number of employees throughout the period.

**Results:** The number of participants increased from around 10,000 in 2009, to 17,000 in 2010, to the planned 20,000 young persons in 2011. The fall in total registered unemployment recorded since mid-2009 was attributable to a sharp decline in registered youth unemployment that coincided with the introduction of the program. The program was popular with both trainees and employers since there was no additional employment obligation at the end of the apprenticeship period.

**Controversy:** First, the target group is young individuals with a high level of education, thus it has no utility for those most prone to poverty or labor exclusion. Second, with limited monitoring and reporting, the subsidy is open to abuse. Third, since there are no incentives for employers to enhance the skills of apprentices for a longer employment relationship, the quality of training might be questionable. Finally, the program is costly, with growing commitments over time despite the slower pace of new entries. Discontinuation of the program, therefore, will be long and costly, most likely with increasing deadweight effects. Indeed, costs are escalating quickly from 1.3 billion RSD in 2009 to 2.6 billion RSD allocated in 2011.\*

\*M. Arandarenko, Supporting strategy to recover from crises in the south of Europe, Country Assessment Report Serbia (ILO, 2011).

smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, and STDs. The National Youth Strategy lists as one of its primary objectives to protect and improve health, to decrease health risks, and to develop youth-friendly health protection system.<sup>141</sup> The following pages examine how these objectives are being met and the obstacles that might impede their realization.

#### 4.4.1 Policies

There are four key policies affecting interventions in the realm of youth health. These include the [Strategy for Youth Health Development in the Republic of Serbia, 2006](#); the Law on Health Protection,<sup>142</sup> the National Youth Strategy, and the [Directive for Health Protection of Women, Schoolchildren and Students](#).

The Strategy for Youth Health Development in the Republic of Serbia is the main document for regulating youth health in Serbia. It is based on the basic principles and values outlined in international documents dealing with the development of public health and health development of children and youth, including the Millennium Development goals, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, etc. It has also been developed in correspondence with key national documents such as the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction, the National Action Plan for Children, the National Strategy for Combating HIV/AIDS, and the National Strategy for Mental Health.

The Strategy for Youth Health Development was conceived by the Ministry of Health. In 2008, it formed an expert group that developed the health strategy through a consultative and participatory process involving civil society organizations and youth groups' representatives. The Strategy for Youth Health passed in 2009 and was thus adopted prior to the National Youth Strategy.

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141. National Youth Strategy (2008).

142. *Zakon o zdravstvenoj zaštiti* (Law for the Protection of Health) ("Sl. glasnik RS," br. 107/2005, 72/2009—dr. zakon, 88/2010 i 99/2010).

It, in fact, represents the first document that the government developed and adopted with an explicit focus on youth.

The National Youth Strategy also lists youth health as a central concern, stating as its objective: To protect and improve health, to decrease health risks, and to develop a youth-friendly health protection system.<sup>143</sup> As such, an entire section of the National Youth Strategy is devoted to youth health. The document is in line with the Strategy for Youth Health Development and identifies the importance of strengthening primary health care, especially within the areas of reproductive health and substance abuse. The accent is also, as in the youth health strategy, on preventive health measures.

The main objective of Serbia's Strategy for Youth Health Development is to promote preventive health action among youth. This requires concerted action between government institutions and society as a whole. The goal is to change attitudes and behaviors while also creating the institutional conditions and support to make this possible. Such an ambitious institutional and social change requires legal preconditions and adequate financial resources for program development and implementation, systematic monitoring, and research.

Two main groups of youth have been identified as specifically vulnerable by the Strategy for Youth Health Development:

1. Youth with disabilities.
2. Vulnerable and marginalized groups including youth without parental care, the homeless, youth in institutions for social rehabilitation, the poor, members of national minorities, youth in need of special support, and refugees and IDPs.

#### **4.4.2 Implementation and Coherence**

Youth health policy is implemented by the Ministry of Health and a number of institutions that are directly responsible for

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143. National Youth Strategy (2008).

the provision of services outlined by the policies. The Youth Health Action Plan was prepared and adopted together with the strategy.

According to the Strategy for Youth Health Development and the Youth Health Action Plan, several institutions are directly involved:

- Primary health care providers (*dom zdravlja*)
- Student polyclinics catering for registered students up to 26 years of age
- Pediatricians for youth up to 19 years of age

According to past policies, youth 18 and above are “adults” and, as such, are not eligible to receive specialized health care advice. However, there are several major difficulties in implementing these policies as the national health care fund does not recognize counseling as a service that can be charged through health care insurance. This expense-centric system and approach do not encourage medical youth professionals and primary health care institutions to actively pursue counseling activities and implement a youth-friendly approach.

The Public Health Institute of Serbia has led the implementation of various programs affecting youth health. This is primarily accomplished through the involvement of institutions for primary health care (*dom zdravlja*), which are responsible for preventive health care activities. This is one of the primary objectives of youth health policy. Hence, most of the projects and activities are organized within primary health care institutions.

The formulated programs and projects address issues considered to be main risks for youth health. These include smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, and STDs. Other programs targeting youth include protection of reproductive health, aiming at educating health workers about working with youth on sensitive issues of sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive health; violence prevention among youth, aiming at educating health



and social workers who work with youth and establishing a social support network for youth in need; a national program for the prevention of abuse of drugs and alcohol, aiming at early diagnosis of drug and alcohol abuse, education of family members, etc.

The Ministry of Health initiated the project of youth-friendly health services within the primary health services system with the support of international donors (*savetovalista za mlade*). The strategy for the development of youth health included an educational component and the development and implementation of appropriate curricula in primary education and within medical schools (universities). The implementation of the health education curriculum in primary schools was discontinued with the arrival of the incumbent minister of education in 2008.

According to the health programs currently being implemented, major focal areas are

- Drug and alcohol abuse prevention,
- Reproductive health,
- Responsible parenting, and
- Violence prevention

These programs are largely funded by the Ministry of Health through the state budget, partly through donor money received through international development cooperation, and partly through funds acquired via the EU accession process. Health institutions at the state and city levels are fund recipients and responsible for implementation, monitoring, and reporting.

#### **4.4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The public administration in Serbia is not under any legal or other obligation to monitor and independently evaluate qualitative spending of public funds. There are, however, sporadic examples of evaluations and/or impact assessments that are usually initiated and funded by international organizations. Occasionally,

impact assessments are carried out in areas of specific concern or interest. One such example is the Impact Analysis of the Health Policies on the Healthcare of the Roma Population, conducted in 2009 by the Economic and Social Policy Institute in Belgrade.

There are no current plans for evaluating the implementation of the strategy of Youth Health Development. The Institute for Public Health is the main institution responsible for monitoring and analyzing health status and dynamics in Serbia. It has a set of indicators that it observes and produces periodic reports on. The main reference documents include the Health of the Serbian Population (*Zdravlje Stanovnika Srbije*), the Analytical Study 1997–2007, and the Research on Health in Serbia, 2008. These are comprehensive studies that aim to provide an overview of health dynamics and morbidity of the Serbian population. Data are disaggregated by age so that youth can be easily tracked. The data on youth health provided at the beginning of the document largely come from these two reports. Nevertheless, such data are centered on morbidity rather than on behavior and do not capture the essential information necessary for interventions in the area of prevention.

Throughout 2008, experts and youth representatives involved in the youth health program received funding from the Canadian CIDA program to work in concert with experts from the Public Health Institute and Canadian consultants to develop a set of indicators for monitoring youth health as well as a protocol and a questionnaire for data collection from beneficiaries of the youth-friendly counseling centers on the primary health care level. These documents have been adapted by the Ministry of Health Expert Group on Young People's Health and Development, a working group established for the purpose of enhancing youth participation.

In addition, a computer program was designed for importing data from the questionnaires and monitoring the indicators, pilot research was conducted in three youth counseling centers, and

a database was established at the Institute for Public Health of Serbia. The set of 11 basic indicators is a mechanism for monitoring health status of youth through three main areas:

- **Youth health behavior:** This is assessed through the percentage of sexually active youth who use condoms and other modern/reliable methods of contraception, monitoring prevalence of substance abuse (tobacco, alcohol, psychoactive medicines, marijuana, etc.), and the percentage of young people who experience violence and neglect.
- **Youth health status:** This is monitored through nutrition status, age-specific abortion rates, specific fertility rates, and incidence of syphilis, gonorrhea, AIDS, genital Chlamydia infection (especially among vulnerable groups), hepatitis B and C and prevalence of HIV, and by following suicide rates.
- **Usage of youth services:** This is monitored through the percentage of municipalities in the Republic of Serbia that have youth counseling centers inside primary health care centers, as well as through the evaluation of their work.

Unfortunately, these data have not been systematically collected since the end of the program funded by the Canadian CIDA. There are no sanctions for nonimplementation of policies. The influence of party politics seems to be the main criteria for the active pursuit or obstruction of policies.

#### 4.4.4 Outcomes and Effectiveness

Youth health is a significant concern for young people.<sup>144</sup> Young people are aware of health risks and identify alcohol, drug abuse, and violence among youths as primary risks. While young people express a general understanding of the necessity of a healthy lifestyle, there is also lack of opportunity for learning more. Overwhelmingly, the young people questioned during this report

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144. This was identified in the focus groups on youth.

acknowledged a general sense of lacking a reference point for such learning. Many young people expressed a lack of confidence in the *Dom Zdravlja*, questioning state-run health care providers' effectiveness and ability to attract young people. Outreach by the institutions is weak, and young people are largely left outside the care and vigilance of the appropriate institutions.

The youth health policy promoted through current strategies responds to the main needs of youth in Serbia. The process of policy development has been inclusive and participatory, incorporating the perspectives of civil society organizations, youth groups, and experts. It was an authentic process with a high degree of ownership by relevant institutional stakeholders.

That said, the lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation is a major concern. Objective indicators of success—while formulated—have not been included within a systematic monitoring system that would make them meaningful. The focus of the current monitoring practices emphasizes morbidity rates rather than the frequency of use of services and risky behavior.

Transparency with respect to resources dedicated to youth health is also lacking. Information on budgetary spending according to specific objectives defined by policy papers is largely unavailable. The national budget is planned according to spending projections based on previous years, rather than through a forward-looking program planning for the future. Furthermore, strategic documents and action plans remain largely unfunded precisely because of the problems associated with the financing system. Activities outlined in the policy papers are largely funded through international cooperation and international programs and do not receive sufficient financial commitment from the Serbian government.

Human resources in the health sectors concerning youth are pivotal for preventive activities. Most interlocutors have confirmed that medical personnel are often unqualified to work with youth. During the period 2007–2008, the Ministry of Health

supported the training of medical professionals working with youth. Between 3,000 and 4,000 individuals were trained, receiving a six-hour training over one day. World Bank loans will help to support additional efforts at improving a youth-friendly approach within the health services and strengthening youth counseling services at primary health centers.

#### **4.5 Formal Education**

An equal, accessible, and nondiscriminatory education is guaranteed in Serbia by the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia and the Law on the Foundations of the Education System. Separation of children on the basis of gender, social, cultural, ethnic, or religious affiliation, place of residence, material and health condition, developmental defect or disability is legally prohibited. The system of education is obliged to ensure quality education adjusted to the needs of children and adults, equal possibilities for all children at all education levels, and acquisition of capacities to practice professions and jobs, as well as ensure participation, appreciation of personalities, specificities, and talents.<sup>145</sup>

In practice, however, quality education is often hard to come by in Serbia, and young people overwhelmingly identify education as a major concern that negatively impacts not only their intellectual development but also their job prospects. As a result, the National Youth Strategy lists as an objective the ambition to develop an open, effectual, efficient, and justifiable system of formal and nonformal education available to all young people that is in line with world education trends and the educational context in the Republic of Serbia.

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145. The Law on the Foundations of the Education System, "Official Gazette of RS," No. 12/72/2009.

Unfortunately, Serbia continues to struggle in this regard. At present, it has failed to meet the needs of a modern society. It continues to graduate students with low educational achievements. And, the system itself suffers from inefficiency, a lack of decentralization, and a lack of intersectoral coordination—as a consequence of which it has failed to meet the EU’s goals for education.<sup>146</sup>

The following pages examine Serbia’s efforts to address these challenges.

#### **4.5.1 Policies**

According to the Constitution of Serbia, everyone shall have the right to education. The Constitution stipulates that the establishment of schools and universities will be regulated by law. These laws include the Law on the Foundations of the Educational System (“Official Gazette of RS” no. 72/2009 and 52/2011) and Law on Higher Education (“Official Gazette of RS” no. 76/2005, 100/2007, 97/2008 and 44/2010). In addition, the Law on Youth provides the legal stipulations for nonformal education.

Serbian law mandates that all foreign citizens and persons without citizenship shall be entitled to education under the same conditions as citizens of the Republic of Serbia. The Law on Higher Education also provides that the right to higher education shall apply to all persons who have completed their secondary education irrespective of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin or social background, language, religion, political or any other opinion, property, birth, or existence of a mental or physical handicap.

Additionally, higher education institutions are obliged to establish transparent and justifiable requirements that will be used in the process of selecting successful applicants. Article 9

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146. *Education in Serbia: How to Achieve Better Results* (2010) (National Education Council).

of the Law on Higher Education provides that education will be delivered in the Serbian language except in the case of national minorities, who have the right to receive education in their native language. Where necessary, the law also provides an opportunity to deliver education either bilingually, only in Serbian, or another foreign language in certain situations.

The law also stipulates that education shall be provided in sign language or special script or formats for those who need it. In higher education institutions, the law prescribes that studies will generally be organized in the Serbian language. However, it is possible to organize and implement studies and/or certain parts of studies in the language of a national minority or in a foreign language.

The Law on Foundations of the Educational System states that all children, students, and adults must be provided with the following:

- **Equity and accessibility:** Education must be provided without discrimination and segregation based on gender, social, cultural, ethnic, religious or other background, place of residence or domicile, financial or health status, developmental difficulties and impairments and disabilities.
- **High-quality education:** Education must be based on the achievements of modern sciences, adapted to the age of a child, student, or adult.
- **Democratic:** Education must be provided democratically and in a socially responsible manner.
- **Child and student oriented:** Education and pedagogy must be oriented toward children and students.
- **Equal opportunities:** All young people must have equal opportunity for education and pedagogy at all levels and types of education.
- **Adequate work-related training:** Students and adults should have access to work-related training that is in line

with modern requirements of the profession they are preparing for.

These are the objectives of the Law on Higher Education:

- **Teach** scientific, professional, and artistic knowledge and skills.
- **Develop** science and promote artistic creativity.
- **Ensure** a source of young researchers, professionals, and artists.
- **Provide** equal access to higher education to individuals and opportunities for education and training throughout life.
- **Increase** the number of people with higher education.

Furthermore, the National Youth Strategy provides seven specific goals (together with adequate measures) relating to education:

1. To increase inclusion of young people within all types of formal and nonformal education.
2. To increase the level of participation of young people in decision-making processes in the area of education.
3. To ensure the quality of formal and nonformal education of youth through standardization.
4. To provide mechanisms and incentives for increasing the efficiency in formal and nonformal education of youth.
5. To continuously harmonize the development of a system of education and training with actual and envisaged requirements of the labor market.
6. To stimulate program development in nonformal learning and education as well as professionalism regarding the work with young people.
7. To empower young people to actively, responsibly, and efficiently pursue their professional careers.



Yet the newly adopted Law on Youth does not cover any educational issue except nonformal education.

#### **4.5.2 Institutions**

Education in the widest sense of the word falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and Science (MES). The Education Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia is in charge of education at the legislative level of government. The areas of jurisdiction are further divided in terms of level of education—the National Education Council for Compulsory and Secondary Education, the National Council for Higher Education, and the Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance at the higher education level. Adult education falls under the jurisdiction of the MES, but there is no specialized service for adult education or lifelong learning.

The [Institute for Education Quality and Evaluation](#) and the [Center for the Improvement of Education](#) are engaged in the development, monitoring, and assurance of education quality (including standards, evaluation, and training of participants in the education system).

In addition to these, there are bodies with an advisory role such as grammar school (gymnasia) forums and vocational school forums, pupils' parliaments, and parents' councils at the pre-university level. At the university level, there are student conferences of universities and academies, as well as institutional conferences of universities and academies.

#### **4.5.3 Implementation and Outcomes**

Serbia's education system has made some headway in recent years. It has succeeded in increasing greater accessibility to instruction and has sought to show greater concern for education's relationship to the labor market. More so than ever, Serbian authorities have demonstrated the will to confront the problems afflicting their education system.

Nevertheless, a serious, comprehensive effort to tackle education reform in Serbia has not yet been implemented. There are, as of yet, no action plans or national strategies on education. Although in 2006, a National Educational Council was appointed by Serbia's parliament, the supreme body responsible for education and quality assessment remains the Ministry of Education.<sup>147</sup> As a result of these fragmented efforts at reform, education in Serbia remains of poor quality and is largely impractical. It is also nondemocratic and non-student-centered. As a consequence, the education system is insufficiently accessible to all students, fails to increase employability, and suffers from a high student dropout rate. Vulnerable groups who find themselves in the system of education experience both overt and covert discrimination.<sup>148</sup>

Serbian students consistently score well below the regional average, let alone the OECD average (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3)—despite the progress Serbia has made in the field of quality control. Many of the methods relied upon for instruction involve memorization, which does not encourage or develop critical thinking skills, nor does it adequately prepare young people for the demands of a democratic society or the quickly changing labor market. Both young people and civic activists express great frustration at an education system that they believe is ill-equipped to meet the demands of the 21st century.

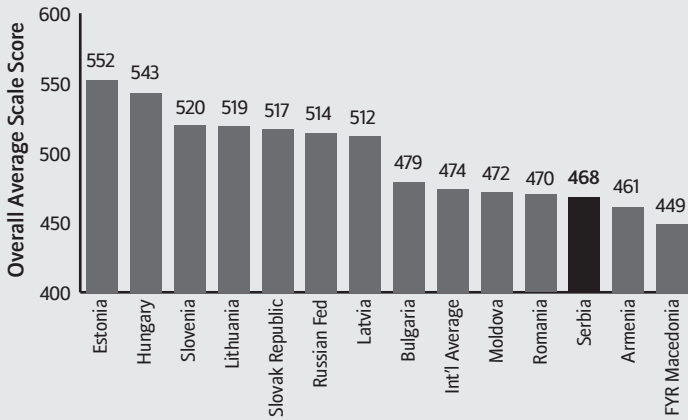
In a subsample of youth consulted for this report, as many as 80 percent said that those who finish formal education systems are not able to get a job and to meet job requirements. A large majority (82 percent) of young people and decision makers did not believe that the formal educational system supports

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147. UNICEF, "Education in Serbia."

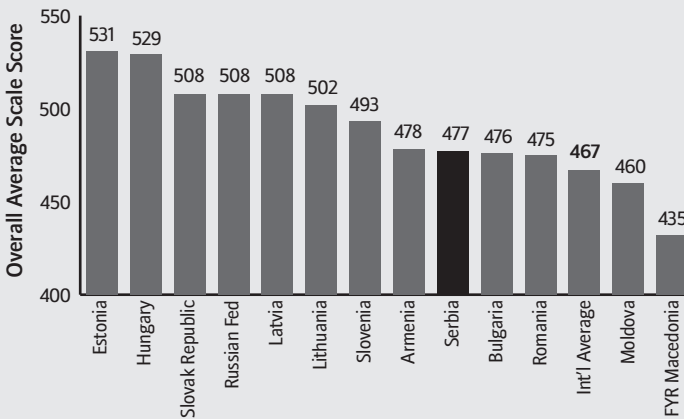
148. According to *Roma Children in "Special" Education in Serbia: Overrepresentation, Underachievement and Impact on Life* (2010) (New York: Fund for an Open Society, Open Society Institute).

FIGURE 4.2. SCIENCE TIMSS GRADE 8 SCORES



Source: UNICEF, "Education in Serbia."

FIGURE 4.3: MATH TIMSS GRADE 8 SCORE



Source: UNICEF, "Education in Serbia."

democracy; a similar number did not believe that formal education serves an important function in Serbian society.

The education system also fails to show sufficient sensitivity to cultural, social, ethnic, physical, or mental differences among pupils. Minorities and other marginalized groups continue to be the least likely to complete their education and the most likely to suffer from high rates of illiteracy, unemployment, and poverty. Existing policies have failed to take sufficient steps to incorporate these individuals within the formal education system.

This perception was also confirmed in the focus groups held for this report. Young people and decision makers both agreed that the formal education system does not promote interculturalism (see Table 4.4).<sup>149</sup>

Another significant problem is resources allocation. Serbia devotes about 3.5 percent of its GDP to education—down from 4.3 percent in 1999. This spending is considerably lower than the regional average of 4.4 percent of GDP.<sup>150</sup> The vast majority of the funding allocated by the Ministry of Education—a total of more than 90 percent—goes to employee salaries. Thus, less than 10 percent of the education budget is spent on curriculum development, teacher training, equipment and textbook purchases, infrastructure repairs, etc. Despite this, teacher compensation remains small—teachers on average earn just €350 per month.<sup>151</sup> Without adequate funds to ensure that Serbia’s teachers have the training, curriculum, and resources they need to effect change in the classroom, Serbia’s education system will continue to fall behind that of its regional counterparts.

To help redress this, foreign donors and creditors have invested in education in Serbia, channeling their funds into

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149. Information acquired from focus groups.

150. UNICEF (2002), “Primary Education in FRY,” cited in *A Brave New Generation, Youth in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Findings and Recommendations* (Belgrade: UNICEF).

151. B. Milanovic, “[Serbia to Revamp Education System](#),” *SETimes*, June 5, 2011.

**TABLE 4.4: QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS ON FORMAL EDUCATION**

	Educates in accordance with market demands for education profiles	Educates professionals capable of getting the job and respond to workplace demands	Supports youth for democracy	Promotes inter-culturalism	Educates for IT skills
<b>YES</b>	14 28.6%	14 28.6%	8 16.3%	19 38.8%	16 32.7%
<b>NO</b>	34 69.4%	35 71.4%	41 83.7%	30 59.2%	33 65.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	48	49	49	49	49

teacher training, infrastructure, vocational education, inclusion, quality assurance, and more. These donors include, but are not limited to, the EU, IPA, TEMPUS, GIZ Kultur Kontakt, SDC, UNICEF, OSCE, and the World Bank.

## 4.6 Nonformal Education

Given the deficiencies of the formal education system, increasing numbers of Serbia's young people are turning to nonformal forms of personal and/or professional development. Nonformal education is seen as a significant chance for all those who have lost touch with the formal education system, as well for those seeking new skills in this turbulent economy.<sup>152</sup> The Youth Strategy thus establishes as one its primary goals the development of an open, efficient, and just system of nonformal education. This section examines the growing industry of nonformal education and the government's attempts to respond to it.

### 4.6.1 Institutions

The nonformal education scene is populated by both organizations and businesses:

*Nongovernmental Organizations:* It is widely acknowledged that the number of users of nonformal education has increased in large part thanks to nongovernmental organizations. While most NGOs focus on youth and human rights, compared with 2005, NGOs are increasingly committed to environmental protection, legislation, and public policies, as well as protection of national minorities.<sup>153</sup> These organizations have, in many respects, led the development of nonformal education—offering trainings,

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152. S. Medić, K. Popović, and M. Milanović (2008), *National Report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education*, Confintea Sixth International Conference on Adult Education.

153. According to Civic Initiatives, [www.gradanske.org](http://www.gradanske.org).

extracurricular educational activities, and other educational resources to young people across Serbia.<sup>154</sup>

*Major companies:* Many major companies also offer seminars and training for employees as well as the unemployed.

*National Employment Service:* A part of the MERD, the National Employment Service (NES) has taken a recent interest in non-formal education. NES, which has a long tradition of training employees and the unemployed, has the most important role in advancing employability and employment through regular programs for interns, volunteers, junior staff, and practitioners. It trains them in foreign languages and information technologies and offers various professional trainings tailored to the needs of the job market and familiar employers; it also offers functional literacy programs for adults.

In addition to these programs, the state, through the NES and the National Agency for Regional Development, offers stimulative programs for employers to hire new workers, ensuring loans from the Development Fund of the Republic of Serbia. The National Employment Bureau (NEB) also offers tax exemptions and deductions for employers who hire young people, the Roma, the disabled, or other vulnerable groups.

Such measures are not frequently used, however. Only a small number of employers take advantage of these stimulative measures.<sup>155</sup> The NES, which organizes educational programs for individual users, also offers financial assistance for starting businesses after completed training or for employment of those who have completed NEB training. Furthermore, the [National Agency for Regional Development](#), in cooperation with regional devel-

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154. S. Medić, K Popović, and M. Milanović (2008), *National report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education*.

155. There are no data; based on an assessment by M. Milanović, Ministry of Education and Science.

opmental agencies and regional centers for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, offers programs of nonfinancial support to develop entrepreneurship throughout Serbia.

*People's, Workers', and Open Universities:* These "people's" universities once served as the pillar of adult education, with more than 200<sup>156</sup> such institutions operating in Yugoslavia. Most have disappeared—a mere 20 to 25 are still in existence. They lack adequate premises, financial means, and staff.

*Formal Education:* Schools and universities often support nonformal education through making available premises and staff. In 2005–2006, there were 2.79 percent part-time students (8,241) who had dropped out of the regular school system. Furthermore, retraining programs organized in 95 secondary vocational schools (with 2,477 students in 2006–2007) have afforded young people a second chance to acquire education and employment.

In secondary schools, programs are organized with the aim of providing knowledge and skills for company management. One example is a MES-accredited program, The Achievements of the Young, that has been carried out in 150 secondary schools in 60 municipalities in Serbia since 2002. Another program, The Development of Youth Entrepreneurship, was provided in these schools from 2003 to 2010 by the Norwegian organization Business Innovation Program.

#### 4.6.2 Policies

Nonformal education is perceived through the prism of lifelong learning and legally regulated through adult education and learning. This perception was first integrated into policy with the 2006 enactment of the Strategy of Development of Adult

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156. S. Medić, K Popović, and M. Milanović (2008), *National Report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education*.



Education in the Republic of Serbia. Ironically, it is through adult nonformal education that youth nonformal education will most likely be regulated.

The Adult Education Strategy defines educational policy for categories of people who have dropped out of the formal education system and have not acquired primary or vocational education. Together with the Strategy for the Development of Vocational Education as well as the Strategy of Career Guidance and Counseling, the Adult Education Strategy is harmonized with the concept of lifelong learning valid in the EU as well as the Lisbon Declaration and the Copenhagen Process. These three strategies also contribute to the harmonization of the educational system.<sup>157</sup>

The Law on Adult Education has yet to be adopted. If passed, however, it will provide a major opportunity to enact standards, accreditation, and certification, and introduce order into the nonformal education arena. The Law on Adult Education defines institutions and mechanisms for providing nonformal education, the process of standardization, accreditation, certification, quality control, and acknowledgment of nonformal education.

Foreign donors have played a major role in setting the tone of Serbia's nonformal education policy. Structural EU projects like the Functional Primary School Education of Adult Roma and the project [Second Chance](#) have given Serbia the opportunity to not only reinvent programs of formal education, but to establish links between formal and nonformal systems of education, draw connections with the labor market, and to introduce, for the first time, programs and certificates of controlled quality. These projects have been introduced in schools as models through regional training centers by establishing cooperation at the local level among secondary vocational schools, local self-governments, local branches of the NEB, and other local and international

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157. Ibid.

educational institutions. Through Second Chance alone, 4,000 adults aged over 15 will acquire functional primary education and around 2,000 adults will acquire professional education in the next three years.

### 4.6.3 Resources

Financing for nonformal education is drawn largely from foundations, personal donations, international NGOs, and membership fees. The share of the government and the public sector in financing the work of nongovernmental organizations is modest.<sup>158</sup> Despite hopes for the contrary, the “481 budgetary line” in the budget of the Republic of Serbia, as well as of budgets of local self-governments and Government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, did not increase government support for civil society organizations, instead, it increased government support for sports associations, political parties, and religious organizations, as well as museums, archives, and schools.

According to the draft Law on Adult Education, resources for financing adult education will be ensured through the budgets of the Republic, the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, local self-government budgets, and European Union funds, as well as companies, chambers of commerce and other organizations, donations, and foundations. The budget will be allocated on the basis of an annual plan for adult education to be drafted by the Center for Qualifications. The funds will be allocated in accordance with identified needs laid out in strategies and action plans or data collected by competent state administrative bodies and approved by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. The local autonomous units can establish separate funds to finance programs suited to their own needs. This very flexible solution is supposed to introduce order into the sphere of financing nonformal education.

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158. Ibid.

Resources for nonformal education extend beyond budgets, however. The staff providing nonformal education has thus far been left unmonitored and unaccredited.<sup>159</sup> Many nonformal education teachers have not received special training in the fields they are instructing, and many lack experience in teaching the specific demographics. Until recently, the nongovernmental sector has also been left unregulated. Many nongovernmental organizations dealing with education offer no data about either the structure or quality of their staff charged with providing nonformal education.

## 4.7 Conclusion

Intersectoral coordination is perhaps where Serbia's youth policy suffers most. As this chapter has explained, a lack of coordination and communication among competing ministries charged with overseeing youth policy has the potential to render any policy's impact moot.

Yet, there are other challenges afflicting Serbia's youth policy. At the forefront of these is how the policy will address and redress Serbia's minorities and marginalized youth. As the following pages show, Serbia has taken some important steps in recent years to address the economic disadvantage at which many young people find themselves. It has done less, however, to address the social and cultural inequalities that continue to impede the rights of Serbia's marginalized youth.

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159. Research conducted by the Institute for Pedagogy and Andragogy of the Philosophical Faculty in Belgrade and the Adult Education Society in 2001/02, according to: S. Medić, K. Popović, and M. Milanović (2008), *National Report on the Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education*.

# 5: Vulnerable Groups

## 5.1 Introduction

National policy papers define “young people” as a vulnerable category of the Serbian population. Their vulnerability has been identified via several criteria, but primarily those of an economic nature. The logic is that a lack of access to economic opportunity increases young people’s chances of being socially and economically marginalized.

Young people are not a homogenous group. Not all young people face social and economic exclusion equally. Not all enjoy equal protection before the law and not all experience the same protection of their human rights. This report treats marginalization in each of these terms. Rather than view “marginalization” in purely economic terms—as does the National Youth Strategy—this report understands marginalization in its most basic sense.

A marginalized youth is someone who is pushed to the periphery of society, treated as insignificant, and made to feel as “other.” A young person can be marginalized in any number of ways, whether economically, socially, psychologically, or physically. The National Youth Strategy identifies 10 groups of youth that it says are most prone to marginalization. This report adds three more to this list—the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, intergender (LGBTI) community; young people in the prison system; and young people from rural communities. In so doing, this chapter examines the policies that affect Serbia’s most vulnerable groups and the gaps that continue to impede their implementation.

## 5.2 Groups Recognized in Policy

The National Youth Strategy highlights 10 key groups as what it calls “vulnerable.” These groups include the poor, the Roma, the disabled, refugees and IDPs, returnees in the readmission process, women, parents, people with unresolved housing, orphans, and the homeless. These specific groups were selected largely for economic reasons, given that they are the young people most likely to experience poverty and protracted unemployment.

Several of these groups are also the focus of intersectoral laws dealing with marginalized groups, including the following:

- Poverty reduction strategy of the Government of the Republic of Serbia
- Law on gender equality<sup>160</sup>
- Law on the Foundations of the Education System<sup>161</sup>
- Antidiscrimination Law<sup>162</sup>
- Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities
- National Strategy for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons 2011–2014
- National Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma

The following pages present an overview of the specific groups identified as “vulnerable” within the Youth Strategy and the accompanying measures designed to improve their life chances as put forward by the Government of Serbia.

*Young People Facing Poverty:* The National Poverty Reduction Strategy, adopted by the Government of Serbia in 2003,<sup>163</sup> identifies young people facing poverty as particularly at risk for poor

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160. Law on Gender Equality, *Službeni glasnik* RS, 104/09.

161. “Official Gazette of the RS,” No. 12/72/2009.

162. Law on Protection from Discrimination, *Službeni glasnik* RS, 22/09.

163. Specific goals 4.4.8, 4.6.4, and 4.7.1.

health and hygiene habits. According to the strategy, young people facing poverty represent 17 percent of all welfare recipients in the country. How the strategy deals with these young people, however, is largely unclear, as poverty falls under the domain of the Poverty Reduction Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

*Young Roma:* Roma have been defined as marginalized by a number of national policy documents, including, the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction, the National Youth Strategy, the Strategy for the Enhancement of the Position of Roma in the Republic of Serbia, etc. Roma are marginalized in many respects—economically, educationally, physically, and/or socially.

According to the data and evaluation of the Serbian Statistical Office, young Roma represent close to 6 percent of the population aged 15–20 and about 5 percent of the total population. The social exclusion of Roma youth runs particularly deep. According to a recent report released by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Belgrade, close to 40 percent of high school students in Serbia hold “extremely chauvinistic and racist attitudes” toward Roma.<sup>164</sup>

The poor situation of Roma is compounded by a lack of enrollment in and access to education. Roma are underrepresented on all education levels compared with their peers, with only 66 percent of Roma children attending primary school (compared with 94.4 percent of other children in Serbia). Many young Roma—especially young women—also fail to complete their education. Only 14 percent of Roma men attend secondary school and 6 percent of Roma women (compared with 88.9 percent of others). Among students enrolled at university, the number of Roma

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164. Attitudes and Value Orientations of High School Students in Serbia (2011), Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, *Helsinki sveske* 3.

is staggeringly low (less than 1 percent in 2006–2007).<sup>165</sup> The inclusion of Roma in the education system and the provision for continuity in their education have been supported as a goal in the Action Plan for the Decade of Roma (2005–2015) as well as within the Youth Strategy.

Young Roma also face greater health risks than the rest of the Serbian youth population, particularly with respect to STDs and HIV. According to a study conducted in 2008 and 2010 by the [Institute for Public Health of Serbia](#), only 22 percent of young Roma in Belgrade and 33 percent in Kragujevac know how to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV and reject major misconceptions related to the transmission of HIV. Not one person in Belgrade reported being included in a preventive program in the previous 12 months, while in Kragujevac less than 3 percent participated in preventive programs. Two percent of Roma in Belgrade and 4 percent in Kragujevac reported having been tested for HIV in the last 12 months. Seventy-four percent of the respondents in Belgrade and 56 percent in Kragujevac used a condom during their last sexual intercourse with a random partner. Half of the young Roma surveyed in both cities said that they had had more than one sexual partner in the past year, with a similar number reporting having used a condom during their last sexual intercourse. The survey results indicate the need to further strengthen preventive programs targeting this population, as well as the need for further research to assess the effectiveness of implemented preventive programs.

Article 22 of the Law on Health Insurance, in force since January 2007, allows Roma to exercise their rights to health care. However, this provision has been enacted only recently and only 2,174 of Roma have exercised this right over the past

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165. UNDP (2006), *At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma, Refugees and IDPs in Serbia*, p. 6.

18 months.<sup>166</sup> Many young Roma remain either unaware of the health opportunities afforded them by the government or unable to access them. According to the Living Standard Measurement Survey data from 2009, some 17 percent of Roma do not have a health card—thus, they have no access to the health care system.

The Ministry of Health supports the implementation of projects within the framework of Programs for the Improvement of Roma Health of the Roma Decade through partnerships with health care institutions and the civil sector. This program targets extremely vulnerable groups within the Roma population, namely women, children, and inhabitants of unhygienic settlements. Although there are no specific data, it is assumed that the majority of the vulnerable fall into the category of children and youth. However, because of the modest inclusion of the most vulnerable, these projects and programs have a weak impact on improvement of health care access and usage among the Roma. Impact assessments exploring the access of Roma to health services show that affirmative policies have only a modest impact on increasing accessibility. More must be done to reach out to Roma within their communities.<sup>167</sup>

Both the financing of Roma programs and the monitoring and evaluation of their impact remain ongoing problems. A downward trend of available budget for financing programs and projects of the Roma Decade has been observed over the past three years.<sup>168</sup> The impact assessment produced by the Economic Institute concludes that the key reason is the poor timing of the publication of tenders for participation in projects and, accordingly, the impossibility of implementing projects during the period planned, poor utilization of the approved funds, and

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166. M. Dinkic, K. Ognjenovic, and S. McClelland (2009), *Impact Analysis of the Health Policies on the Accessibility of Healthcare for the Roma Population in Serbia*.

167. Ibid.

168. Ibid.



a resulting inability to obtain higher budget allocations in the following year. Furthermore, project implementation monitoring did not result in establishing databases and systematization of data per relevant criteria, which would provide for continuity in the assessment and evaluation of policies and regulations. Also, the state statistics do not yet provide databases for the calculation of key indicators of impact assessment of health policies and accessibility of health care services to the Roma population and other vulnerable groups.

The National Strategy for Improvement of the Status of Roma identifies as one of the most important objectives the better inclusion of young Roma in the education system and provides specific objectives and measures. The National Poverty Reduction Strategy has developed four action plans for Roma—on education, health, housing, and employment—with the aim of improving the socioeconomic conditions of Roma in Serbia. But it is unclear from the action plans what should be the source of the funding allocated for the various activities. Projects have been developed and funded mainly by the EU. The change of practice is not visible in the development of national policies and activities that are funded from the national budget. Nor is there a comprehensive plan to address the social exclusion young Roma face, particularly with respect to other young people in Serbia.

*The Disabled:* Physical and mental disabilities continue to be stigmatized within much of Serbian society, with many families preferring to keep the disabled behind closed doors. As a consequence, most young people with disabilities remain uncounted in the general population and are forced to go without the special care and support they need to improve their situation. While the Serbia Education Act says disabled children and youths are to be mainstreamed wherever possible, the reality is that prevailing attitudes and practices leave most disabled young people far

from the reach of government.<sup>169</sup> Many NGO initiatives targeting young disabled people are similarly met by underutilization, as many parents prefer to keep their children indoors.

The 2002 Census identified around 700,000 to 800,000 disabled persons living in Serbia, with 21 percent of them being younger than 24 years. About 63 percent of disabled young people are reported to have finished high school, while about 26 percent are said to have completed some form of higher education.

The unemployment rate among the disabled, however, is around 79 percent.<sup>170</sup> Many who do not have work face chronic unemployment, with one in two unemployed persons looking for a job for more than 10 years. The lack of employment prevents many young disabled people from establishing families. Close to 70 percent of unemployed disabled people live with their parents and other family members.

It is not the case that Serbia's disabled do not wish to work. The demand for employment among the disabled far outstretches the supply. Between two surveys, 42 percent of persons interviewed were actively looking for a job, while only 14 percent ultimately found a job. Many disabled face a number of obstacles in finding work, among them access to transport, access to the premises of National Employment Bureau, lack of orthopedic aids, and disabled-accessible facilities in the workplace. A recent research report by the Centre for Independent Living<sup>171</sup> states that one-third of its interviewees had difficulties with access when going for a job interview. Still, the news is not all

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169. UNICEF (2002), *A Brave New Generation, Youth in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Findings and Recommendations* (Belgrade: UNICEF).

170. Publications: *Handicap is the human rights issue* (2006); *Position of disabled youth in high school education* (2007); *Promotion of the inclusive high school education in South East Europe* (2006).

171. B. Ljubinkovic, G. Zalic, G., M. Stanojevic, D. Tatic, and I. Janiciljevic (2010), *Employed Invalids in Serbia: Opportunities and Challenges* (Belgrade: Center for the Independent Living of Invalids in Serbia).

bad. One-fourth of unemployed disabled people surveyed say job opportunities are better now than they were in previous years.<sup>172</sup>

Surveys also suggest that persons with disabilities are well informed about the Law of Professional Rehabilitation and the Employment of Disabled Workers. They tend, however, to be more familiar with measures and activities that are supported on a national level, rather than those that take place on the local level.

The Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities provides that young people with disabilities must have equal opportunities in education and development as a specific goal. In addition, the National Poverty Reduction Strategy provides specific objectives regarding young disabled persons in the education process. Specific provisions have been adopted in the area of employment. The Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (2009), for example, introduced a quota system as a means of increasing employment opportunities for this category of workers and used funds levied from penalties to invest in professional rehabilitation services. The expected influx of funds from penalties is projected to reach 2 billion RSD in 2011.<sup>173</sup>

Such financial efforts will serve to subsidize employment, as well as expand the scope of rehabilitation services for workers with disabilities. There is a long-standing initiative to support employers by awarding them subsidies for the creation of new jobs. The subsidy is available to enterprises creating up to 50 new jobs. The level of subsidy depends on the development level of the municipality and the characteristics of the unemployed recruited (long-term unemployed, low-qualified workers, laid-off workers, persons with disabilities, Roma population groups, and so on). According to UNDP, such initiatives are having a

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172. Ibid.

173. Ibid.

positive impact, with disabled employment increasing fourfold from 2009 to 2010.<sup>174</sup>

While an important start, such financial opportunities must be accompanied by a strategy to incorporate disabled young people within mainstream society at an earlier time. Moreover, many forms of nonresidential care continue to conflict with norms of social inclusion and perpetuate the de facto segregation of young disabled people in Serbia.

The situation of social exclusion continues to be particularly acute with respect to the mentally disabled. A widely cited 2007 report by Mental Disability Rights International exposed the horrors inflicted upon mentally disabled children in Serbia's state-run psychiatric facilities.<sup>175</sup> Rampant human rights violations were witnessed in several key facilities, with patients facing threats to their health and life, inhumane treatment and torture, and arbitrary detention. While Serbia's Social Affairs Minister Rasim Ljaljic has since ordered the facilities mentioned to stop admitting children, misdiagnosis among and stigmatization of the mentally disabled remains a major problem, with many mental illnesses falling through the cracks entirely.

*Youth Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP):* The wars of the 1990s led to an influx of young refugees and internally displaced persons within Serbia. There is no current data on the number of youth among the IDP and refugee population, although the total population of refugees and IDPs is estimated at 86,000 and the total number of IDPs is thought to be 35,000 (4,200 of which continue to reside in collective centers).<sup>176</sup> That

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174. UNDP (2011), "[Serbia's disabled get jobs boost from anti-prejudice actions.](#)"

175. Mental Disability Rights International (2007), *Torment not Treatment: Serbia's Segregation and Abuse of Children and Adults with Disabilities* (Washington, DC: MDRI).

176. Novi Sad Humanitarian Center, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Serbia. Available at [http://www.nshc.org.rs/eng\\_nshc/eng\\_refugees.htm](http://www.nshc.org.rs/eng_nshc/eng_refugees.htm).

makes Serbia home to the highest number of refugees and IDPs in Europe and 13th in the world.

These young people continue to perform below the national average, with high rates of high school dropouts and little university enrollment. Young refugees and IDPs are not well-integrated socially, suffer from low self-esteem, and many live in poverty.<sup>177</sup> The unemployment rate of refugees and internally displaced persons is high (approximately 32 percent), with some 49 percent of the unemployed lacking any form of work experience.<sup>178</sup>

The Youth Strategy acknowledges the disadvantages confronting the IDP and refugee population. The National Strategy for Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons for the period 2011–2014 identifies youth as a specific vulnerable group and imposes specific objectives and measures in relation to young refugees and IDPs in the areas of education, employment, and social protection.

A solution to the IDP and refugee issue, however, rests largely with the Commissariat for Refugees, a special institution established by the Law on Refugees in 1992. Among its primary goals is the provision of proper households for those in need. According to the Commissariat, as many as 3,442 housing units were provided by 2009, with aid provided by the UNHCR, the Swiss Development Council, and the Norwegian Council proving critical.

In November, a regional declaration to find a long-term durable solution to the refugee and IDP issue was announced by the

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177. S. Joksimovic, and S. Milanovic-Nahod (1997), "School Children in Exile," in *Children in the Time of Social Crisis*, ed. G. Zindovic-Vukadinovic, B. Trebješćanin, and Z. Krnjajic, 22–36 (Belgrade: Institute for Educational Research); Z. Krnjajic, and S. Omcikus (2004), "Perspectives of the Students Displaced from Kosovo and Metohija," in *Education and Social Crisis: Document about One Period*, ed. D. Plut, and Z. Krnjajic, 135–185 (Belgrade: Institute for Psychology); T. Pavlov (2007), "Family in Displacement and School," in *Cooperation Between School and Family*, ed. N. Polovina, and D. Bogunovic, 156–173 (Belgrade, Institute for Pedagogic Researches).  
 178. UNDP (2006), *At Risk: The Social Vulnerability of Roma, Refugees and IDPs in Serbia*, p. 6

leaders of Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, and Montenegro. The declaration guarantees access to housing and the restoration of former (pre-war) property rights.<sup>179</sup> The declaration comes after years of pressure by foreign authorities, particularly the EU, which views a resolution to the IDP and refugee issue as central to these countries' accession to the European Union.

*Young Returnees in the Readmission Process:* In addition to IDPs and refugees, since 2008 Serbia has also experienced an influx of its citizens from Western European countries, mostly Roma from Kosovo, whose request for asylum was denied or temporary protection cancelled by EU member states. According to the estimates of the Council of Europe, between 100,000 and 150,000 persons will return to Serbia.

A significant number of these do not speak Serbian. Of the young returnees, many will never have set foot in Serbia and will thus likely face enormous social, economic, and education obstacles in integrating into the society. Because many lack appropriate documentation, the process of their inclusion in schools, the health care system, etc., is expected to be particularly slow going.

In light of this, the Council for the Integration of Returnees was formed as a separate government body. It is currently in the process of developing a Strategy for the Integration of Returnees. There is very little information or systematically collected data on this specific group. The National Strategy for Returnees in the Readmission Process, adopted by the Government of Serbia in 2009, for example, does not identify young people as a specific group requiring particular measures.

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179. B92, International Conference on Refugees Held in Belgrade, November 7, 2011. Available at [http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2011&mm=11&dd=07&nav\\_id=77223](http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2011&mm=11&dd=07&nav_id=77223).

*Young Parents:* The National Youth Strategy identifies young parents as particularly at risk for educational exclusion. According to the Youth Strategy, this contributes to poverty, housing problems, and unemployment among both young parents and their children.

Apart from listing young parents as a separate vulnerable group, however, the Youth Strategy does little to specify how young parents will be aided to increase their access to educational opportunities and jobs.

*Young People with Unresolved Housing Issues:* The National Youth Strategy also identified young people with unresolved housing issues as a group of special concern. This designation includes young people aged 14 to 19 who still have not initiated the process of complete independence and lack separate rooms and places for learning. Certain groups of young people are also faced with a long distance between their home and public services (young people who live in “wild settlements”) or lack basic equipment (this tends to include the Roma, refugees, and displaced individuals in collective centers).

Young people aged 20–30 are in the intense process of gaining independence, directly expressed through employment and housing. Among employed youth, about 50 percent continue to live with their parents, while the figure is closer to 70 percent among the unemployed.<sup>180</sup> The lack of a possibility for solving their housing status represents one of the chief obstacles to family formation.

*Young People Without Parental Care:* 1,450 children and young people are believed to be growing up in orphanages in Serbia.<sup>181</sup> Of these, 60 percent are adolescents, and 10 percent are in the

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180. Strategy of Youth Health Development in the Republic of Serbia (2006).

181. Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (2006).

final phase of becoming independent. Orphans are, however, less capable of leading an independent life and often face enormous social and economic exclusion. As a consequence, young people without parental care have been named as a vulnerable group in the National Youth Strategy.

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 20), orphans must be protected by placing them in a foster or adopted family. Where this fails, such youths should be placed in a registered institution. There has been some progress in that respect.

In 2001, there was an even 50:50 ratio between children/youth in foster families versus those in institutions. By contrast, in August 2005, the ratio had improved to 65:35 in favor of children placed in families. In addition, the National Youth Strategy states that an additional 700 trained foster families are waiting to receive children.

Research indicates that children and youth in institutions engage in more risky behaviors compared with their peers, particularly in the area of sexual behavior and reproductive health. Many start having sex at a younger age, and boys, in particular, frequently have several sex partners. Also, boys are said to begin having sex at a younger age (14) than girls (15).<sup>182</sup>

There are 15 institutions in Serbia that house children without parental care. According to data offered by the Ministry of Labor and Social Care, some 1,500 children reside in those institutions. Every year, about 100 children age out of the institutions because they reach the legal age limit of 18 years. About 60 percent of institutionalized children are adolescents according to data presented in the National Youth Strategy. As defined by the Youth Strategy, youth without parental care meet criteria

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182. Website of the [Institute for Public Health in Serbia](#).



for vulnerable group status because they lack the appropriate social capacities necessary for adaptation, integration, and independent living.

Since 2007, the Ministry for Labor and Social Policy began implementing a project called “half-way house” (*Kuca na pola puta*) that aims to provide accommodation in a socially protected environment for youth who are leaving institutions for children/youth without parental care. So far about 50 youth have benefited from this project.

*Young People Living and Working on the Street:* The National Youth Strategy also lists the homeless among the most vulnerable youths in Serbia. According to police data, about 400 young people live and/or work on the street; about half of these young people live in Belgrade. It can be assumed that the estimated number of unreported cases is significantly higher.

The homeless lack organized help and support, and are at great risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. Currently, there is a shelter that offers a day-rest resource with food, medical attention, and a place to get a change of clothing. This shelter is predominantly funded through private donations and by international organizations.

*Young Women:* “Gender” is also listed as a vulnerable group within the National Strategy, with the greatest reference being given to young women. There is a deep lack of public awareness about the obstacles that young women face in Serbia. Among the greatest are socioeconomic and domestic violence.

Female unemployment is consistently higher than male unemployment, despite the fact that women have higher educational levels than men—8 percent of men have a college degree, compared with 15 percent of women.<sup>183</sup> Among unemployed per-

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183. Strategy for Reducing Poverty (2002).

sons with a university degree, 53 percent are females and 47 percent are male. Of those who are employed, women tend to hold lower positions and earn significantly less than their male counterparts.

Women also face domestic violence and widely held societal preconceptions about their role and value. According to a 2011 report released by the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, as many as 1 in 10 Serbian high school students approves of the notion that a woman should be beaten.<sup>184</sup> According to B92, one in three women face domestic abuse in Serbia, and one in two faces some form of psychological abuse. Women also encounter sexual harassment in the workplace. Too often, institutions of law stand aside, essentially condoning the general attitude that domestic violence and sexual harassment are a normal part of the social dynamics of the country.

While efforts have begun to bring this issue to public attention, the hard work of prevention and intervention has yet to begin in earnest. Safe houses for women and child victims of violence have been established in Belgrade and other major cities in Serbia. However, these are mainly civil society initiatives and are funded by private donations. Moreover, they remain little used in practice, receiving just a handful of women seeking help<sup>185</sup>—in part because of the stigma and perceived “normalcy” of domestic violence. While the National Strategy for Improvement of Position of Women and Gender Equality, adopted by the Government of Serbia in 2009, states that special attention must be paid to this issue, it remains a major concern that authorities have yet to deal with head-on.

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184. M. Skrbic (2011), *Oražavajuće: Svaki deseti srednjoškolic smatra da žene treba tući* (Every Tenth High School Student Believes a Woman Should Be Beaten), Blic.

185. B. Barlovac, “Women’s Refuge Opens in Nis,” *Balkan Insight*, August 24, 2011.

### 5.3 Groups Overlooked by Policy

Serbia's national strategies and policies focus on groups that are vulnerable by economic criteria. Yet economic exclusion is not the only way young people experience marginalization. Social forms of exclusion can be particularly acute within youth populations, and intimidation, harassment, and violence may prevent these individuals from fully realizing their human rights. This report identifies three key groups as facing systemic marginalization: the LGBTI population, rural youths, and young people in the prison system.

*LGBTI population:* The National Youth Strategy makes no specific mention of the LGBTI population in Serbia. Instead, it makes a highly guarded reference to the issue, stating only the following: "Sexual orientation can bring young people sometimes into a sensitive and vulnerable position. Therefore, we are familiar with the cases of discrimination and different forms of violence encountered by young people with a different sexual orientation, namely orientated to their own gender."<sup>186</sup> The terms "gay" or "lesbian" are noted a total of once throughout the strategy in acknowledgment of the fact that international organizations say such groups are the victims of hate speech.<sup>187</sup> The report itself does not discuss the issue nor does Serbia have a systematic policy aimed at addressing it.

Homosexuality officially became legal in Serbia only in 1994, after having been illegal since 1977. Still, Serbia's youth LGBTI population suffers from considerable social prejudice and exclusion, with many of its basic human rights infringed upon. One in three Serbian high school students expresses some form of homophobia and as many as 60 percent say violence against gays and lesbians is justified. LGBTI youth regularly face hate

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186. National Youth Strategy (2008), p. 20.

187. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

speech, violence, and discrimination.<sup>188</sup> Their right to assembly has also not been respected. A 2010 Gay Pride Parade ended in violence, while a 2011 Gay Pride Parade was canceled entirely, with Ministry of the Interior authorities claiming that they would not be able to keep the peace.

Until 2002, gays and lesbians had virtually no protections within Serbian law. In that year, however, the Broadcasting Law was approved, with Article 21 preventing the on-air dissemination of discriminative information based, among other things, on sexual orientation. In 2005, discrimination in the workplace based on sexual orientation was also banned in accordance with the Labor Law. In that same year, the Law on Higher Education was adopted, which also guaranteed equal rights regardless of sexual orientation. The most significant legal achievement, however, came in 2009 with the approval of the Anti-Discrimination Law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and transgender status. In 2010, the Serbian army also declared that gays can serve openly in the military.

Despite this, however, several legal impediments to the realization of LGBTI rights remain. For example, Serbia's Constitution, ratified in 2006, took the step of explicitly defining marriage as between a man and a woman (Article 62). And, same-sex households are not eligible for the same legal protections that straight couples are.

No strategy exists through which to address LGBTI issues. According to activists, many LGBTI youths continue to struggle in silence with their identity and do not feel comfortable or safe in coming out to their friends, families, or colleagues. Fewer still wish to take part in organized LGBTI activities.

That said, the LGBTI movement has grown in both numbers and organization in recent years. The decision to ban the 2011

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188. M. Skrbic (2011), [\*Oražavajuće: Svaki deseti srednjoškolic smatra da žene treba tući.\*](#)

Gay Pride Parade sparked a nationwide discussion on LGBTBI issues, with many organizations like GayTen and the Gay-Straight Alliance taking a more prominent advocacy role than ever before. Such organizations continue to struggle, however, to get their issues on the government's agenda.

*Rural Youth: Though issues affecting rural youth in Serbia are hinted at throughout the National Youth Strategy, they do not receive systemic attention. This is a significant omission, as rural youth often confront problems that are very different from those confronted by urbanites. These problems required different solutions and, thus, a separate focus for policymakers.*

Rural youth are frequently identified as a vulnerable group among youth themselves. While rural youth face more frequent health and economic concerns than do their urban counterparts, they also face issues of a noneconomic nature.

Rural youth often lack access to cultural and intellectual opportunities, whether theaters or museums. Many do not have the opportunity or means to travel to urban areas and are thus excluded from the intellectual opportunities afforded Serbia's urban youth. They also often lack the chance for professional advancement, with rural young people facing bleak job prospects in their home communities.

*Young People in the Prison System: Serbia's prison system is overcrowded and under-resourced. In 2010, close to 12,000 people were incarcerated in a prison system that safely accommodates just 7,000.<sup>189</sup> This has significant implications for all prisoners, but young prisoners in particular.*

Prisoners between the ages of 15 and 30 make up the plurality of inmates in Serbia's prison system. Because of limited

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189. Belgrade Center for Human Rights (2011), *Human Rights in Serbia 2010* (Belgrade: Belgrade Center for Human Rights), p. 327.

space, many of these inmates are forced to live in just two square meters of space. Many prison units lack beds, with mattresses placed on the floor.

Prison guard units and health care areas are severely understaffed. Too many staff members perform administrative functions, with too few working directly with prisoners. Health care providers working within the penitentiary system earn far less than their colleagues outside the prison system, while guards are expected to work overtime and often suffer from stress and exhaustion.<sup>190</sup> In some prisons, there is just one guard for every 150 prisoners.

Because of this underresourcing, some prisons are unable to separate adults from juveniles. Thus, children and youths below the age of 18 are forced to share living quarters with older felons in what are often small, cramped spaces that are poorly regulated by prison guards.

Although in July 2010 the government adopted its Strategy to Reduce the Overcrowding of the Penitentiaries, the overcrowding of Serbia's prison system during the years 2010 to 2015 is only expected to increase. Nor is there a workable system in place to enable the reintegration of young felons back into society once they have served their sentences. No adequate mechanisms are in place to offer them education within the prison system or to reintegrate them into the job market. Instead, prisoners are offered irregular access to prison "educators," who oversee hundreds of patients and often have to act as both educators and psychologists.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Serbia's National Youth Strategy takes the important step of identifying those young people most vulnerable to exclusion.

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190. *Ibid.*, p. 329.

Too often, however, national policy lacks a clear strategy for how to address the vulnerabilities facing such youth.<sup>191</sup> Moreover, many of the social issues that have led to their exclusion are left unaddressed. In addition, the policy fails to take note of young people who are excluded in noneconomic ways. This is a significant omission that requires further attention on authorities' part.

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191. In the Focus Group on Education, for example, respondents overwhelmingly agreed that marginalized groups face enormous educational barriers. This was blamed, in part, on the speed with which social inclusion policies were promulgated. Respondents felt that social inclusion policies were enacted without sufficient awareness raising or participation on the part of relevant stakeholders. Authors' Focus Group on Education, held on October 7, 2011.

# 6: Conclusion

## 6.1 Introduction

Serbia has taken several important steps toward the realization of a cohesive, effective, and inclusive youth strategy. The process through which this policy was brought to fruition has been participatory. It engaged stakeholders from all across the country. Many experts consulted for this report were convinced that the strategy will give a meaningful way forward and are confident that young people's rights will improve in the coming years.

Despite such accomplishments, significant obstacles remain, particularly as they affect policy implementation. Too often, the vertical and horizontal linkages that are necessary for successful policy implementation are absent. This weakens the intention of any policy, threatening to render it useless. The current legal and policy environment dealing with youth is also unclear and fails to define young people's responsibilities and obligations clearly enough. Funding mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation also lack transparency or significant resources. Too often, policy appears reactive, rather than preventive, encouraging a slow response to social and often very personal issues.

This section lays out the strengths and weaknesses of the current youth policy. It lists the many steps forward the process has taken, as well as the significant gaps that remain. Finally, it concludes with a brief list of recommendations that might help to redress such outstanding issues.



## 6.2 Steps Forward

Serbia has taken several steps forward with respect to the creation of a national youth policy. These steps include the following:

*A Participatory Process:* The process that led to the development of the National Youth Strategy, Action Plan, and Law on Youth was broadly inclusive. The government engaged experts, civil society organizations, youth groups, and young people themselves from all across Serbia. Rural and urban communities alike were consulted, and the Youth Strategy was actively promoted. This was a significant first step in ensuring that the youth policy that ultimately emerges is one that is owned by the very people it most affects: young people in Serbia.

*Recognition of Civil Society:* Civil society formed an important partner throughout the development of Serbia's youth strategy, and it has been reflected in the Law on Youth itself. The Law on Youth recognizes youth civil society organizations as important stakeholders in the process of implementation of the legal framework and policy documents. The law regulates their establishment, operations, financing, and involvement in youth policy. This is an important and meaningful first step, though civil society groups must be wary that it does not end there.

*A Foundational Framework:* The passage of Serbia's Law on Youth in 2011 represents a major step forward in the creation of a national youth policy. The adoption of the Law on Youth ensures that Serbia's youth policy will not be bound to one government alone. Rather, it establishes a whole new set of legal directives that will provide guidance for the further development of youth policy throughout the coming years. This ensures the continuity of interventions and a certain level of sustainability in the pursuit of policy development and implementation. Already

significant success has been achieved on the local level. Indeed, before the establishment of the MoYS in 2007, there were only 5 local youth offices—as of January 2012, there were 123 offices. These local offices are now guaranteed in law and are poised to grow throughout the coming years.

*Informed by International Standards:* The development of the legal framework and policy documents on youth closely followed the standards set out in international human rights instruments. These models—particularly those supported by the Council of Europe—offered general guidance for the establishment of youth as a national priority. Therefore, it seems that developed policy complies with international standards, in particular EU standards, although established policy and vision are mainly the result of the wide consultative process not solely the incorporation of the solutions from international documents or other national legal systems.

### 6.3 Gaps

While Serbia has taken important steps in laying the foundation of a solid youth policy, significant questions remain about the implementation of the policy. To have a positive impact on the problems affecting Serbia's youth, the current Law on Youth and accompanying Action Plan will need to be monitored closely. Moreover, sufficient resources need to be invested in related activities, while the MoYS needs to have sufficient leverage over its ministerial partners to ensure that intersectoral incoherence does not render the policy ineffective. This section explores the gaps in the current policy and the obstacles that—if left unaddressed—may impede its implementation.

*Role of Youth as a Resource:* In recent years, both the government and the media have come to speak of youth as a resource

rather than a problem. The current youth policy strongly advocates this positive and constructive attitude through the formulation of policies and the development of a youth participation mechanism.

Many young people remain unconvinced by such overtures. The analysis completed during this research confirms the conviction of both experts and young people that such pronouncements are primarily declarative in nature. This opinion may well be explained by the many intersectoral laws and regulations that directly affect the lives of young people. The great majority of these laws and policies do not treat youth as a resource for or agent of future prosperity. Instead, these policies treat youth almost exclusively as a problem to be “fixed” rather than a group to be engaged. Many of the policies with the greatest impact on young people’s lives continue to view young people as passive recipients of services rather than as the formative element for society’s development.

*Intersectoral Cooperation on Implementation:* The MoYS is charged with overseeing Serbia’s youth policy. To date, both the persistence and dedication of the MoYS have ensured that the policy that has been crafted is largely in line with international standards. Going forward, however, the MoYS will have to rely extensively on its colleagues in other ministries to realize the fruits of its labor.

There are considerable limitations to the ability of the MoYS to position itself vis-à-vis major stakeholders. These limitations can be observed even in the powers vested with the ministry, as listed in its mandate, as compared with the responsibilities attributed to the rest of the institutions in public administration. The MoYS relies heavily on the good will and commitment of its colleagues to enforce the policies that it has helped create.

Thus far, intersectoral ministries (i.e., Health, Employment, or Education) are under *no* obligation to allocate funds to

ensure the implementation of the activities listed in strategic documents.

Nor are there necessarily signs that the MoYS is able to exert pressure on these ministries. As a small and comparatively weak ministry, the MoYS has few resources and a small staff. As a consequence, it does not enjoy significant leverage over its colleagues in other ministries. To establish such leverage, it will have to think creatively, perhaps by partnering more closely with the civil sector and private companies. Unfortunately, it does not appear that the MoYS has taken steps to begin this process.

Also worrisome is the current composition of the intersectoral working groups charged with overseeing policy implementation. Many of the representatives nominated as members of these bodies are not decision makers. Consequently, they are confronting major problems in forcing their institutions to either implement the Youth Action Plan or change the regulations and policies within their competencies to better comply with the youth policy. While some hopeful signs exist—such as the Law on Children and National Strategy for Gender Equality—these working groups must have more power if the policies they draft are to be implemented.

*Intersectoral Cooperation on Monitoring and Evaluation:* Key to ensuring that Serbia's youth policy is properly implemented and that all outstanding problems are identified is an effective monitoring and evaluation plan. Unfortunately, the monitoring and evaluation plan that now exists has only a few weak groups of indicators, which are primarily quantitative and fail to capture important dynamics of institutional change. There are no specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) indicators in monitoring and evaluation. The key document for reporting on policy delivery is an annual report, which is mandatory for all public institutions. This report is, however, primarily concerned with providing an overview of activities engaged in

successfully in the previous year. It is not results-oriented and lacks analytical views on the cost and general effectiveness of applied measures (i.e., the quality of services provided). This is a significant omission and must be redressed if the policy is to be amended as needed.

*Participation Going Forward:* The level of participation of youth and civil society organizations in the development of Serbia's youth policy has been incredibly substantive. A wide array of stakeholders, including young people, were included in setting the policy's priorities and objectives. What is unclear, however, is whether such participation will continue in earnest throughout the implementation stage.

This is particularly important with respect to intersectoral working groups. While some sectoral policy groups have included expert groups (namely that on health), civil society organizations have largely been excluded from the process. Some sectoral policies (in particular, those on employment) do not recognize youth or civil society as a partner in the policy-development process.

*Social Inclusion Beyond Poverty:* Since 2003, young people have been recognized as a vulnerable group in Serbia. While such recognition is an important step in bringing youth to the forefront of the policymaking agenda, such vulnerability has been defined almost exclusively in financial terms. As a consequence, the National Youth Strategy's attempt to further identify "most vulnerable" young people has also been defined in terms of economic vulnerability.

As a consequence, some young people who are marginalized in Serbian society have gone unnoticed by the Youth Strategy. This includes the LGBTI population, young prisoners, and even rural youth. In particular, the LGBTI and prisoner populations face human rights violations and need special attention in any policy going forward.

In the coming years, the team for social inclusion, which operates within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, is said

to be planning to include human rights standards in its vulnerability assessment. This is an important first step, but it should not end there.

*Changes in Government:* The effectiveness of Serbia's youth policy may in large part be attributed to the convictions of the MoYS and its openness to nongovernmental stakeholders. The future of the MoYS—both its existence and its composition—is by no means guaranteed, however. Both the ministry itself as well as the party that now controls it (the G17 Plus) may not be part of the next Serbian government.

Ministries within Serbia often change following election cycles, particularly when the party in power changes. The MoYS was formed in 2007 and survived one round of elections without a significant change to its competencies.<sup>192</sup> The last reconstruction (i.e., downsizing) of the Government of Serbia—which took place at the beginning of 2011<sup>193</sup>—also left the MoYS largely unaffected. It cannot be ensured, however, that, with a change in Serbia's government expected in 2012, the MoYS will continue to exist. Nor is it certain that the G17 Plus will continue to run it. Serbia's ministries are infamously prone to partification, with each political party in government having monopolistic control over their respective ministries. It is unclear how MoYS run by another party would affect youth policy. Nor is it clear how an alternative ministry would prioritize youth policy.

*Linking National with Local:* By May 2011, 96 municipalities had prepared and adopted Local Youth Action Plans, while 15 more are in the adoption phase. These action plans have almost uniformly prioritized unemployment issues and the preparation of young people for the job market. With few exceptions, however,

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192. Law of Ministries ("Official Gazette of RS" no. 65/08).

193. Law of Ministries ("Official Gazette of RS" no. 16/11).

such plans do not offer concrete objectives or activities. Moreover, clear linkages between National Youth Employment Action Plans and Local Youth Action Plans are missing. Funds allocated for the implementation of the Youth Action Plans remain very modest. As of yet, there is no means to ensure real commitment from local governments that Action Plans are implemented.

## 6.4 Recommendations

Given the aforementioned gaps, this report offers the following recommendations for policymakers and youth civil society organizations in the months and years ahead:

- **Maintain Pressure on Intersectoral Ministries:** Both civil society organizations and the MoYS must maintain a watchful eye over the work of intersectoral ministries. Civil society organizations, in particular, should take steps to monitor resource allocation and hold ministries accountable for promises made in the National Youth Strategy. Youth civil society organizations have the potential to serve as a watchdog, naming and shaming those ministries that do not comply.
- **Demand a Role in Implementation:** Civil society organizations have not been adequately included in the work groups responsible for implementation. Young people, in particular, must demand a greater say in the decisions that will affect the policies they have helped draft.
- **Stay Focused and United:** Civil society organizations in Serbia have a tendency to split and fracture. Much has been accomplished thanks to their unity on youth issues, and now is not the time for such alliances to fray. If necessary, young people should play a role in ensuring that such organizations stay united in their efforts to see a national youth policy realized in practice.

- **Rethink Monitoring and Evaluation:** More emphasis must be given to developing a cohesive, impact-based monitoring and evaluation methodology. The MoYS should rethink the resources it is devoting to monitoring and evaluation and involve young people in ensuring that expectations are being met and problems resolved.
- **Expand the Terms of Vulnerability:** The MoYS should expand its understanding of youth vulnerability to include social as well as economic exclusion.
- **Incentivize Youth Entrepreneurship:** Steps should be taken not only to improve access to good education but access to entrepreneurship. Such activities may include providing a favorable tax policy for youth enterprises for an initial period of more than one year. Policy measures might also be taken to support interconnections among young and senior entrepreneurs through mentoring programs, business clubs, or associations.
- **Develop an Education Strategy:** Ensuring that Serbia's young people are better able to join the job market necessitates a wholesale rethinking of formal education in Serbia. The Ministry of Education, working hand in hand with the MoYS, should engage in a participatory process to redesign Serbia's educational system, beginning with an inclusive and comprehensive national youth strategy.



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# Appendix I: Research Plan

The research conducted for this report unfolded in several stages, beginning in May 2011 and ending in October 2011. Below is an overview of how the research progressed throughout this six-month period.

## **Stage 1: Team Meeting**

The five-person research team met for the first time in Belgrade, Serbia, in May 2011. Over a four-day period, they worked to contextualize the Youth Evaluation Matrix for the Serbian case; clarify roles and responsibilities of each team member; assemble a list of all the stakeholders to be consulted throughout the project; and establish the methods and methodology to be used throughout the months going forward.

In contextualizing the matrix, it was agreed that the Serbian case could be defined by a number of characteristics, among them: substantial outward and rural-urban migration; a gray-ing population; a post-conflict legacy; multiple transitions; and substantial ethnic minorities. Team members opted to devote one entire chapter to minorities and marginalized groups. Rather than focus exclusively on the topic of participation, they decided to treat it as a cross-cutting issue that would be an integral part of each of the topics covered. Finally, the team members also agreed that they would consider focusing on three cross-sectoral issues, the precise topic of which would be decided during the course of the research.

Roles and responsibilities were decided in accordance with individuals' expertise and self-identified preferences.

The stakeholders were divided into four key groups: youth; nongovernmental actors; state actors and policymakers; and political parties. These groups were further differentiated to ensure full representation.

On methods and methodology, the team elected to employ a multiple methods approach that would rely primarily on qualitative but also quantitative data. Because the period under review was too brief to allow for a meaningful discussion of causal impact, the researchers chose to evaluate process-related factors and to examine stakeholders' expectations for future steps on implementation. It was agreed that the first draft of the report would rely largely on secondary data collected by the local research team. This would be complemented, as needed, by one-on-one interviews with stakeholders to fill in gaps in facts. Once this phase was completed, the researchers agreed to conduct a series of focus groups, interviews, and to implement a questionnaire for all focus group participants. The analysis thereof would allow the researchers to form a quantitative assessment of the perspectives of a broad range of youth policy stakeholders.

Finally, the local researchers agreed to submit a first draft of their report, pending desk research and preliminary interviews, by August.

## **Stage 2: Data Collection and Desk Research**

From May through June, the local team collected data and conducted the desk research needed to draft a preliminary report. The team consulted a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, including legislative documents, policy reports, and policy evaluations. During this period, the National Youth Strategy, the National Action Plan, and the National Law on Youth were instrumental to the authors' research, as were local action plans. To ensure the adequate coverage of cross-sectoral policies, the research team also conducted a lengthy review of the laws and

policy documents that pertain to areas such as health, employment, crime, and education. Where documents were not readily available, the local research team consulted relevant sources to ensure that they were reflected within the report. For a comprehensive account of the documents consulted for this review, please refer to the bibliography.

### **Stage 3: Preliminary Interviews**

Where documents were not forthcoming, or data were not available, the local research team conducted interviews as needed. Four such interviews were conducted in the period leading up to the field visit (see Appendix IV for further details). These interviews helped clarify outstanding questions and were used to collect data rather than gauge opinions. These interviews were recorded by handwritten notes.

### **Stage 4: First Draft**

In July, the local research team began drafting the preliminary report. The first draft provided an overview of the documents relevant to the Serbian case. It consisted of a lengthy background on the state of Serbian youth in 2012, an overview of the chronological development of a national youth strategy, a basic summary of minorities and marginalized groups, and an examination of cross-sectoral issues. Having conducted extensive research in the cross-sectoral policy domains, the team opted to concentrate on three key areas: employment, health, and education. These areas were deemed to be most significant to young people in Serbia and had considerable ramifications for the success of the National Youth Strategy. The first draft refrained from drawing any conclusions, though it did begin an assessment of possible gaps, strengths, and weaknesses.



## **Stage 5: Preparation for Field Visit**

Once a comprehensive first draft had been produced, the team began its preparations for the field visit, which was to take place in September. Local researchers assembled a first draft of relevant stakeholders, with contacts details, to be interviewed one-on-one or in small groups, together with the International Advisor.

During this period, the research team also agreed to organize focus groups and to develop a questionnaire. To ensure the geographic diversity of the relevant stakeholders, the team agreed to hold focus groups in Belgrade, Nis, and Novi Sad. In addition, the team opted to hold separate focus groups for youth, Roma youth, policymakers and NGO activists, and experts in education, health, and employment. The focus groups were used to gauge stakeholders' perspectives on a variety of issues rather than to obtain specific information. A more in-depth discussion of the topic covered in the focus groups may be found below.

## **Stage 6: Field Visit**

The field visit was held from September 26 to October 7, 2011. It began with a meeting of the entire research team, followed by a series of focus groups and interviews held in Belgrade, Nis, and Novi Sad.

### **Focus Groups**

The research team conducted a total of nine focus groups, each of which lasted between 1.5 and 2 hours. Two focus groups were held in central Serbia, in the city of Nis, on October 3, 2011. One of these focus groups involved young people and another involved NGO activists engaged in youth issues. Three focus groups were also held in Novi Sad, in northern Serbia, on October 4, 2011. One of these focus groups involved young people, another involved NGO activists engaged in youth issues, and a

third involved young Roma. Four more focus groups were held in Serbia's capital, Belgrade, on October 6 and 7, 2011. These concentrated on three specific sectors of interest for the report: education; employment; and health, as well as one focus group that targeted policymakers and NGO activists. Close to seventy-five people participated in these focus groups.

Focus groups for youth experts, NGOs, and policymakers centered largely on three separate topics: (1) perceptions of youth and their position in society; (2) youth participation in society, politics, and culture; and finally; (3) youth policy and intersectoral coordination. Questions were agreed on by the research team in advance, but focus group participants were free to discuss different issues.

Focus groups for youth and Roma youth concentrated on six key issues: (1) perceptions of youth and their position in society; (2) youth participation and policy development; (3) migration and mobility; (4) employment; (5) education; and (6) health.

Focus groups on health, education, and employment each included an examination of experts' perceptions of youth and their position in society, their evaluation of the policymaking process, and specific intersectoral questions.

The focus groups proved to be a critical source of information. Young people, in particular, were eager to discuss their impressions of the role of youth in Serbian society and the many problems they face. Civic activists, too, appeared well informed about the struggles confronting young people and were eager to discuss their impressions of the policymaking process. Unfortunately, policymakers were less forthcoming. As discussed throughout the report, few attended the focus groups despite having expressed interest in doing so.

## **Interviews**

In addition to the focus groups, a total of 27 interviews were conducted during the field visit. These interviews were primarily

conducted by one or two members of the research team and often went into considerable depth, lasting more than one hour. Interviews were semi-structured, allowing the research team to ask questions as the situation demanded.

Wherever possible, interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. Where a recorder was not employed, written notes were taken instead. Following each interview, a summary and/or full transcript of interviewee responses was made.

Interviewees included young people under the age of 31, civil society representatives active in the youth sector, experts on youth engagement, and policymakers working in fields either directly or indirectly related to youth.

For a full list of interviewees, please refer to Appendix IV.

### **Questionnaire**

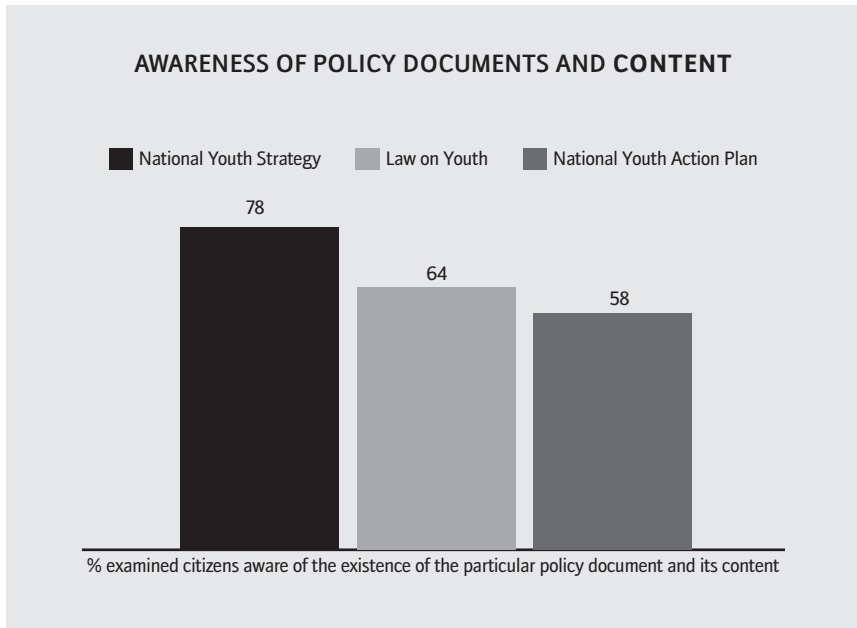
All focus group participants were asked to complete a questionnaire evaluating their knowledge of and opinions on subjects of concern to young people and public policy in Serbia. The questionnaire was developed by the local research team in tandem with the International Advisor, as well as an independent researcher with a background in psychology.

The Serbian version of the questionnaire may be found in Appendix III, with an analysis of results attached in Appendix II.

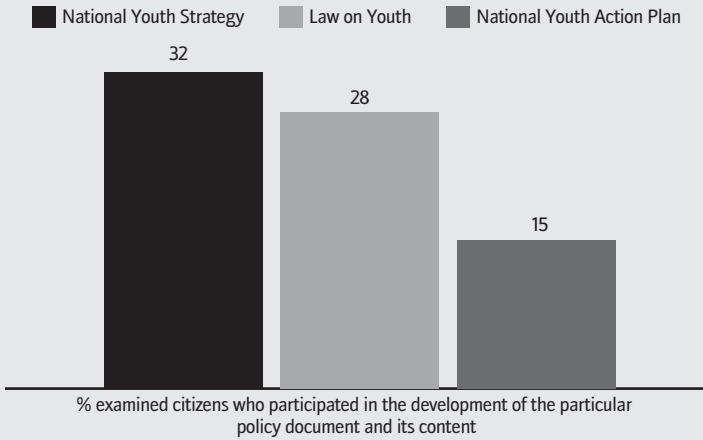
### **Stage 7: Final Draft**

In November, the research team submitted the final draft of the research report.

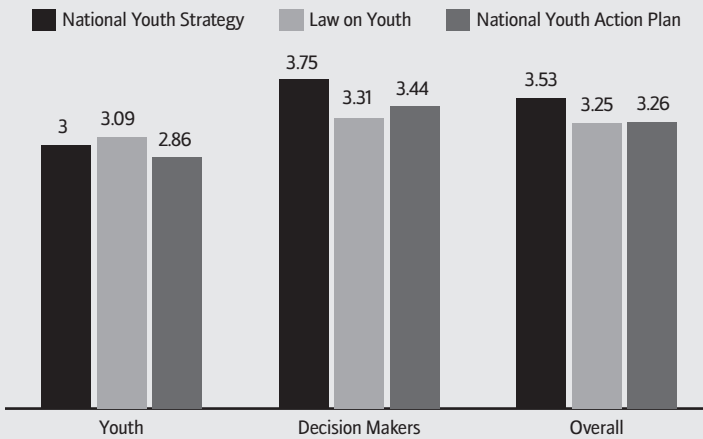
# Appendix II: Focus Group Results



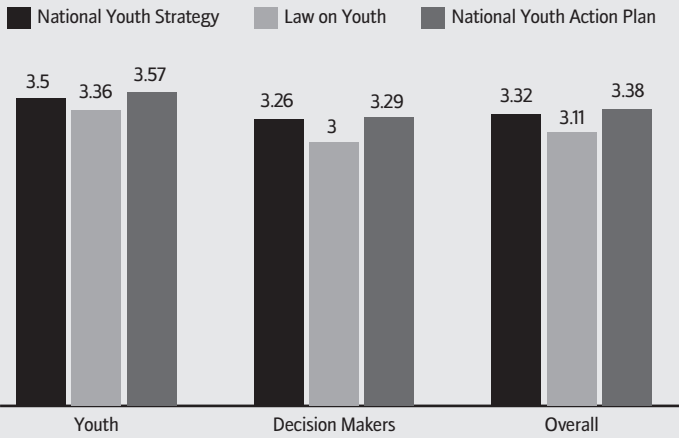
### PARTICIPATION IN POLICYMAKING PROCESS



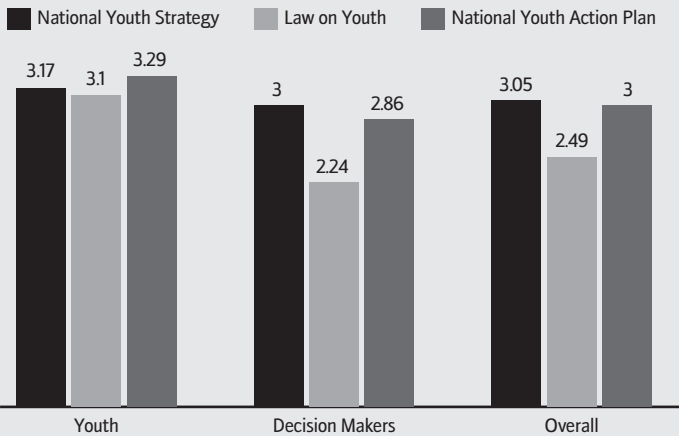
### PARTICIPATION IN POLICYMAKING PROCESS (average grade rated by youth and decision makers on the scale 1-5)



**SUCCESS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY DOCUMENTS**  
 (average grade rated by youth and decision makers on the scale 1-5)



**IMPACT OF POLICY DOCUMENTS ON PROBLEM SOLVING**  
 (average grade rated by youth and decision makers on the scale 1-5)



# Appendix III: Questionnaire

Pred vama se nalazi upitnik u kome se dodatno upoznajemo sa Vašim stavovima o temama diskutovanim na grupi. Ispitivanje je anonimno, sve informacije se upotrebljavaju isključivo za namene istraživanja.

Pre odgovaranja na pitanja u upitniku, molimo Vas nam date par informacija o sebi:

FG: \_\_\_\_\_ Mesto i datum \_\_\_\_\_

Godina rođenja: \_\_\_\_\_ Pol:    Ž    M

Mesto rođenja: \_\_\_\_\_

Trenutno mesto boravka: \_\_\_\_\_

Stečen nivo obrazovanja:

- a) Osnovnaškola
- b) Srednjaškola
- c) Gimnazija
- d) Viša škola
- e) Fakultet

Zapo slenje:

- a )Državnom sektoru
- b) Privatnom sektoru
- c) Civilnom sektoru
- d) Nisam trenutno zaposlen/a

Na grupi učestvujete kao:

- a) Predstavnik/ca civilnog sektora
- b) Predstavnik/ca mladih
- c) Ekspert/kinja
- d) Predstavnik/ ca donatora
- e) \_\_\_\_\_

## PARTICIPACIJA

1. Pred Vama je lista dokumenta/programa koje država razvija u cilju unapređenja pozicije mladih ili regulisanja njihovih prava. Molimo Vas da pročitate listu i da ukažete koliko svaki od dokumenata poznajete, odnosno da li ste učestvovali u njihovoj izradi.

*Na svako pitanje odgovarate odabiranjem između odgovora DA ili NE.*

Naziv dokumenta	Upoznatost		Učestvovao/la u donošenju	
1 Nacionalna strategija za mlade	DA	NE	DA	NE
2 Zakon o mladima	DA	NE	DA	NE
3 Nacionalni akcioni plan	DA	NE	DA	NE
4 Nacionalna strategija za zdravlje mladih	DA	NE	DA	NE
5 Zakon o zdravstvenoj zaštiti	DA	NE	DA	NE
6 Nacionalni akcioni plan zapošljavanja	DA	NE	DA	NE
7 Nacionalni akcioni plan zapošljavanja mladih	DA	NE	DA	NE
8 Strategija karijernog vođenja i savetovanja	DA	NE	DA	NE
9 Zakon o radu	DA	NE	DA	NE
10 Projekat "Prva šansa"	DA	NE	DA	NE
11 Programi podrške Pokretanju sopstvenog posla (NSZ)	DA	NE	DA	NE
12 Obuke Centra za informisanje i profesionalno savetovanje (NSZ)	DA	NE	DA	NE
13 Zakon o obrazovanju odraslih	DA	NE	DA	NE
14 Zakon o obrazovanju	DA	NE	DA	NE

*Komentari vezano za dokumenta navedena u tabeli:* \_\_\_\_\_



2. Pred vama su dokumenti i projekti koje država realizuje u cilju unapređenja pozicije mladih po pojedinačim pitanjima. Koliko procenjujete njihovu uspešnost u odnosu na sledeća 3 kriterijuma: 1) stepen uključivanja aktera u procese izrade, definisanja (stepen participativnosti) 2) koliko procenjujete da je uspešna njihova implementacija (uspešnost implementacije) i 3) koliko su navedeni dokumenti i programi doprineli rešavanju konkretnih problema mladih (efektivnost). Molimo Vas da date svoju procenu za svaki od kriterijuma na skali od 1 do 5.

*(1 – potpuno nezadovoljan/na, 2 – nezadovoljan/na, 3 – niti sam zadovoljan/naniti sam nezadovoljan/na, 4 – zadovoljan/na sam, 5 – izuzetno zadovoljan/na)*

Naziv dokumenta	Participativnost u procesu izrade	Uspešnost implementacije	Uticaj na rešavanje problema
1 Nacionalna strategija za mlade	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
2 Zakon o mladima	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
3 Nacionalni akcioni plan	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
4 Nacionalna strategija za zdravlje mladih	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
5 Zakon o zdravstvenoj zaštiti	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
6 Nacionalni akcioni plan zapošljavanja	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
7 Nacionalni akcioni plan zapošljavanja mladih	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
8 Strategija karijernog vođenja i savetovanja	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
9 Zakon o radu	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
10 Projekat "Prva šansa"	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
11 Programi podrške Pokretanju sopstvenog posla (NSZ)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
12 Obuke Centra za informisanje i profesionalno savetovanje (NSZ)	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

13 Zakon o obrazovanju odraslih	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
14 Zakon o obrazovanju	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

*Komentari vezano za dokumenta navedena u tabeli:* \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Kako procenjujete uticaj koji mladi ljudi u Srbiji danas imaju na političku situaciju

*(1 – potpuno nemaju uticaj, 2 – imaju malo uticaja, 3 – niti imaju niti nemaju uticaj, 4 – mogu da utiču u nekoj meri, 5 – mogu veoma mnogo da utiču)*

	Na odluke koje se donose u lokalnim zajednicama					Na odluke koje se donose na nacionalnom nivou				
1	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

### 4. Smatrate li da će u budućnosti mladi imati više uticaja nego trenutno na procese donošenja odluka?

DA

NE

## MIGRACIJE/MOBILNOST

**5. Koliko puta ste putovali van granica Srbije i gde ? (Molim Vas odgovorite tako što ćete uneti broj puta koliko ste u poslednjih pet godina napustili zemlju)**

- 
- 1 Regiona (teritorija bivše Jugoslavije )
  - 2 U zemlje Evropske Unije
  - 3 Van Evrope
- Molim Vas navedite gde ste putovali tom/tim prilikom/a*
- 

**6. Da li ste upoznati sa postojanjem inicijativa koje omogućavaju lakša putovanje? (fondovi, stipendije, međunarodni projekti)**

DA

NE

**7. Da li razmišljate o napuštanju mesta gde trenutno živite?**

- 
- 1 *ne nikada,*
  - 2 *retko razmišljam,*
  - 3 *niti razmišljam niti ne razmišljam,*
  - 4 *ponekad razmišljam,*
  - 5 *da i preduzimam konkretne korake ka odlasku*
- 

**8. Ako ste doneli odluku da napustite mesto gde trenutno živite, gde ste doneli odluku da odete da živite?**

- 
- 1 *U susedno mesto,*
  - 2 *U jedan od većih gradova u Srbiji,*
  - 3 *U inostranstvo,*
-

9. Šta je to što bi doprinelo Vašem ostajanju u Srbiji? Rangirajte navedene faktora prema stepenu upisivanjem ocena od 1 do 5. (ocena 1 predstavlja faktor koji je najmanje značajan dok ocena 5 predstavlja najznačajniji faktor)

- 
- 1 Zaposlenje
  - 2 Zaposlenje koje bi mi omogućilo kvalitetan život
  - 3 Imam porodicu ovde
  - 4 Ovde su mi zadovoljene osnovne potrebe
  - 5 Osim zaposlenja mogućnosti da zadovoljim dodatne potrebe (kulturne i obrazovne)
  - 6 Ne osećam potrebu da napustim Srbiju
  - 7 Doneo sam odluku da napustim Srbiju
- 

## ZAPOŠLJAVANJE

10. Nezaposlenost predstavlja jedan od vodećih problema mladih u Srbiji. Rangirajte šta je to što, po Vašem mišljenju, najviše utiče dobijanje posla. Molim Vas da dole navedene faktore rangirajte na skali od jedan do pet, a da rang 1 predstavlja faktor koji je najmanje značajan, dok rang 5 predstavlja najznačajniji faktor.

- 
- 1 Formalno obrazovanje (školska sprema)
  - 2 Neformalno obrazovanje (dodatno obrazovanje, kursevi i konferencije)
  - 3 Poznavanje stranih jezika
  - 4 Prethodno radno iskustvo
  - 5 Preporuka (poslodavca, profesora, prijatelja)
  - 6 Veza
  - 7 Atraktivan fizički izgled
-

## OBRAZOVANJE

**11. Po Vama koliko smatrate da formalno obrazovanje u Srbiji doprinosi osposobljenosti mladih u posedovanju karakteristika potrebnih za nošenje sa navedenim zahtevima savremenog društva.**

1	Obrazuje stručnjake u skladu sa tržišnim potrebama tim profilom	DA	NE
2	Obrazuje mlade koji su sposobni da se zaposle i uklope na zahteve radnog mesta	DA	NE
3	Podržava razvijanje demokratičnosti kod mladih	DA	NE
4	Promoviše interkulturalnost	DA	NE
5	Obučava veštinama primene novih tehnologija	DA	NE

**12. Da li ste upoznati sa reformama srednjeg i stručnog obrazovanja koja je izvedena u Srbiji?**

DA

NE

**13. Kako procenjujete efekte izvedenih reformi?**

1	<i>izrazito loše,</i>					
2	<i>loše,</i>					
3	<i>niti su dobri niti su loši,</i>	1	2	3	4	5
4	<i>dobri su efekti,</i>					
5	<i>izuzetno su dobri efekti</i>					

- 14. Koliko je obrazovanje dostupno ugroženim grupama mladih? Milim Vas da na skalu od 1- 5 ocenite dostupnost obrazovanja za svaku pojedinačnu grupu. (1 – obrazovanje je nedostupno, 2 – ograničena je dostupnost obrazovanja, 3 – nitiim je dovoljno dosuptno, niti nedostupno, 4 –obrazovanje je delimično dostupno većini pripadnika ove vurneabilne grupe, 5 –obrazovanje je u potpunosti dostupno)**

1 Mladi Romske nacionalnosti	1	2	3	4	5
2 Mladi sa invaliditetom	1	2	3	4	5
3 Mladi koji žive u izbeglištvu	1	2	3	4	5
4 Mladi povratnici u procesu readmisije	1	2	3	4	5
5 Osetljive grupe s obzirom na pol (ženskog pola)	1	2	3	4	5
6 Mladi roditelji	1	2	3	4	5
7 Mladi drugačije seksualne orijentacije	1	2	3	4	5
8 Mladi sa nerešenim stambenim pitanjem	1	2	3	4	5
9 Mladi bez roditeljskog staranja	1	2	3	4	5
10 Mladi ulice	1	2	3	4	5
11 Siromašni mladi	1	2	3	4	5

- 15. Po Vama kakva je uloga neformalnog obrazovanja u edukaciji mladih. Molimo Vas da na skali od 1-5 ocenite kakav značaj NFO ima po sledećim pitanjima: (1 – u potpunost je bez značaja, 2- bez značaja je, 3 – niti ima niti nema značaja, 4 – značajno je, 5 – izuzetno je značajno)**

1 Podrška u zapošljavanju mladih	1	2	3	4	5
2 Obezbeđivanje dodatnog obrazovanja mladih	1	2	3	4	5
3 Vaspitanju i usmeravanju mladih	1	2	3	4	5
4 Konitnuranom obrazovanju i razvoju ne samo mladih, već i odraslih	1	2	3	4	5
5 Sticanju veština aktivnog građanstva	1	2	3	4	5

- 16. Neformalno obrazovanje prepoznaje se u odgovornostima različitih institucija. Po Vama koje su posebno značajne i odgovorne za definisanje programa i mera usmerenih na razvoj neformalnog obrazovanja (moguće je izabrati više ponuđenih odgovora):**

1	Ministarstvo prosvete	1	2	3	4	5
2	Ministarstvo omladine i sporta	1	2	3	4	5
3	Kancelarije za mlade	1	2	3	4	5
4	Univerzitet	1	2	3	4	5
5	Nešto drugo?	1	2	3	4	5

- 17. Da li postoje mehanizmi koordinacije rada institucija koje su odgovorene za sprovođenje programa i razvoj NFO?**

1	DA Koji? (Molim Vas unesite koji)	1	2	3	4	5
2	NE, ali smatram da bi ih trebalo što pre urediti i definisati (Molim Vas unesite način)	1	2	3	4	5
3	NE, zna se koja institucija je prevashodno odgovorna, a to je. . . (Molim Vas unesite koja)	1	2	3	4	5

## ZDRAVLJE I ZDRAV ŽIVOTNI STIL

- 18. Kako procenjujete koliko su navedene teme relevantne i bitne za mlade u Srbiji. (1 – potpuno beznačajan problem za mlade u Srbiji, 2 – nije puno značajan problem za mlade u Srbiji, 3 – niti je značajan niti je beznačajan problem, 4 – značajan problem za mlade u Srbiji, 5 – izuzetno značajan problem za mlade u Srbiji)**

1	Prava mladih prestupnika i mere resocijalizacije	1	2	3	4	5
2	Nasilje u porodici	1	2	3	4	5
3	Seksualno nasilje	1	2	3	4	5

4	Huliganizam	1	2	3	4	5
5	Ekstremizam (nacionalni, prema LGBT grupama i verski)	1	2	3	4	5
6	Vršnjačko nasilje	1	2	3	4	5

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**19. Sa aspekta zdravih stilova života, koliko procenjujete da su sledeće pojave štetne i rasprostranjene i utiču na zdravlje mladih u Srbiji**

*(1 – potpuno neznačajan problem za mlade u Srbiji, 2 – neznačajan problem za mlade u Srbiji, 3 – niti je značajan niti je neznačajan problem, 4 – značajan problem za mlade u Srbiji, 5 – izuzetno značajan problem za mlade u Srbiji)*

1	Pušenje	1	2	3	4	5
2	Konzumiranje alkohola	1	2	3	4	5
3	Konzumiranje narkotika	1	2	3	4	5
4	Vođenje računa o sopstvenom zdravlju	1	2	3	4	5
5	Briga o seksualnom i reproduktivnom zdravlju	1	2	3	4	5
6	Redovna fizička aktivnost	1	2	3	4	5
7	Preventivno i sistematsko praćenje svog zdravlja (redovne posete lekaru i stomatologu)	1	2	3	4	5

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## MARGINALIZOVANE GRUPE

**20. Nacionalna strategija za mlade prepoznaje određene grupe mladih da su više ugrožene (sa aspekta siromaštva ili prava) od drugih. Procenite stepen ugroženosti tih grupa na skali od jedan do pet i ukoliko smatrate da su neke grupe izostavljene molim vas da dodate i procenite stepen njihove ugroženosti**  
*(1 – uopšte nisu ugrožena grupa, 2 – nisu ugrožena grupa, 3 – niti jesu niti nisu ugrožena grupa, 4 – ugrožena su grupa, 5 – izuzetno su ugrožena grupa)*

1	Mladi Romske nacionalnosti	1	2	3	4	5
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2	Mladi sa invaliditetom	1	2	3	4	5
3	Mladi koji žive u izbeglištvu	1	2	3	4	5
4	Mladi povratnici u procesu readmisije	1	2	3	4	5
5	Osetljive grupe s obzirom na pol (ženskog pola)	1	2	3	4	5
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8	Mladi sa nerešenim stambenim pitanjem	1	2	3	4	5
9	Mladi bez roditeljskog staranja	1	2	3	4	5
10	Mladi ulice	1	2	3	4	5
11	Siromašni mladi	1	2	3	4	5

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**21. Da li ste upozntai u kojoj meri Nacionalna strategija za mlade i Nacionalni akcioni plan za mlade prepoznaju i odgovaraju na potrebe svake od navedenih ugroženih grupa ?**

*(1 – uopšte nije usmerena njihove potrebe, 2 – nije usmerena na njihove potrebe, 3 – niti je usmerena ka njihovim potrebama niti nije usmerena ka njihovim potrebama, 4 – usmerena na njihove potrebe, 5 – u potpunosti je usmerena je na njihove potrebe)*

1	Mladi Romske nacionalnosti	1	2	3	4	5
2	Mladi sa invaliditetom	1	2	3	4	5
3	Mladi koji žive u izbeglištvu	1	2	3	4	5
4	Mladi povratnici u procesu readmisije	1	2	3	4	5
5	Osetljive grupe s obzirom na pol (ženskog pola)	1	2	3	4	5
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9	Mladi bez roditeljskog staranja	1	2	3	4	5

10	Mladi ulice	1	2	3	4	5
11	Siromašni mladi	1	2	3	4	5

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**22. Da li biste imali nešto protiv da neko od pripadnika sledećih nacija. . . (Molim Vas da odgovate unošenjem znaka X zaodnose koje ne biste prihvatili i štikanjiranjem odnosa koji su prihvatljivi)**

	Srpske naci- onalnosti	Homo- seksualne orijentacije	Romske nacional- nosti	Albanske nacional- nosti
1	Stalno živi u državi			
2	Da Vam bude komšija			
3	Da Vam bude saradnik na poslu			
4	Da bude vaspitač Vašoj deci			
5	Da se sa njim/njom posećujete i družite			
6	Da Vam bude šef			
7	Da ima rukovodeći polo- žaj u državi			
8	Da budete u srodstvu putem vlastitog ili braka dece			

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**23. Da li vi lično imate prijatelje koji rođeni i ne žive u Srbiji?**

DA

NE

**HVALA NA UČEŠĆU!**

## Appendix IV: List of Interviews

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
1 Zorana Antonijevic	Gender Advisor	OSCE	September 29, 2011
2 Miahil Arandarenko	Professor of Labor Economics; President of FREN	Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade, and Fund for the Advancement of Economics (FREN)	October 10, 2011
3 Nenad Belcevic	Project Manager	National Democratic Institute	September 26, 2011
4 Marko Blagojevic	Program Director	CeSID	September 30, 2011
5 Ines Cerovic	Project Manager	International Management Group	October 5, 2011
6 Sonja Curic	MA Student	Sitel Srbija	September 30, 2011
7 Miljenko Dereta	Executive Director	NGO Civic Initiatives	October 7, 2011
8 Ilir Gasi	Founder	U Pravo Si	September 28, 2011
9 Bojan Gavrilovic	Program Coordinator	Belgrade Center for Human Rights	September 28, 2011
10 Vukasin Gvozdenovic	President of Serbian Youth Umbrella Association (KOMS)	Serbian Youth Umbrella Association (KOMS)	October 4, 2011
11 Dr. Dragan Ilic	Director	JAZAS, Belgrade	September 24, 2011
12 Marija Ilija	Program Officer	Na Pola Puta	October 5, 2011
13 Dragica Ivanovic	Head of Department for Active Employment Policy	Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Government of Serbia	September 26, 2011

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
14	Ivana Karlejić	Former Student	Independent Consultant	September 30, 2011
15	Igor Kostić	Founder	NGO Initiatives	September 5, 2011
16	Irma Lutovac	National Project Officer	"Support to National Efforts for the Promotion of Youth Employment and Management of Migration," UN MDG Achievement Fund	October 13, 2011
17	Jelena Marković	Coordinator for Monitoring and Evaluation	Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, Government of Serbia	May 11, 2011
18	Borko Milošević	Student	Employed	September 20, 2011
19	Biljana Mladenović	Economic Analyst	Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit, Government of Serbia	May 11, 2011
20	Tamara Nikolić	Officer	Ministry of Youth and Sport	October 7, 2011
21	Tijana Nikolić	Member of Parliament	National Assembly of Serbia	June 27, 2011
22	Bojana Perović	Support Team Staff	Ministry of Youth and Sport	October 7, 2011
23	Lidija Prokić	Senior Program Manager	National Democratic Institute	October 6, 2011
24	Marija Raković	Program Officer	UNFPA	May 19, 2011
25	Maja Rodić	Project Coordinator; Youth Worker	NGO Center for Youth Work	October 4, 2011
26	Marija Rudić	Advisor Democratization	OSCE	September 29, 2011
27	Dubravka Saranović	Advisor to the Minister of Health	Ministry of Health	September 26, 2011

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Date of Interview</b>
28	Dragana Trifunovic	Director	Dom Zdravlja Zvezdara, Belgrade	September 21, 2011
29	Madis Vainomaa	Program Coordinator for Human Rights	OSCE	September 29, 2011
30	Vojislav Vujic	President of the Youth Wing	Democratic Party	October 5, 2011
31	Jelena Zajeganovic	Project Officer for Adolescents	UNICEF Belgrade	October 21, 2011

# Appendix V: About the Authors

**Tanja Azanjac** has more than 13 years of experience in the development and management of projects aimed at improving the position of youth in Serbian society through promotion, education, and support of youth participation. From the very beginning of her work in Civic Initiatives—Citizens' Association for Democracy and Civic Education (1999), she has been in charge of projects targeting youth, including participation of youth on local and national levels, civic education, economic empowerment of youth, and public policy development for youth. As one of the cofounders of Youth Coalition of Serbia, Azanjac was involved in advocating for and supporting the establishment of institutions for youth, including the MoYS and local youth offices. Upon the establishment of the MoYS, she was involved in the development of youth policy at the national level. She actively took part in the development of the National Youth Strategy as a member of the Working Group on Active Participation of Youth, and she was appointed to the Working Group on the Development of the Draft Law on Youth. Azanjac holds a university degree in psychology.

**Donatella Bradic** is an economist with an MSc in development and planning from the University College London. Since 1992, she has been working in international organizations, including the European Union and the United Nations, specializing in project management and strategic planning and risk assessment in postconflict emerging economies. As of 2003, she has been

working as an independent development consultant specializing in project evaluation and policy formulation. Recently, she evaluated projects for the European Union, the United Nations, and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Bradic is particularly knowledgeable about development projects in the region of the western Balkans and the EC intervention policy and priorities.

**Djordje Krivokapić** is associate lecturer at the Faculty of Organizational Sciences at the University of Belgrade, where he teaches courses on business law and IT law. Before holding this faculty position, Krivokapić was employed as a legal associate at the Karanovic & Nikolic Law Office, the leading commercial law office in Southeast Europe, where he was involved in numerous successful transactions and projects in Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before joining Karanovic & Nikolic, he graduated with a degree in law from the University of Belgrade and then received an LLM from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. Krivokapić is currently enrolled in his third year of a PhD program at the Law Faculty of the University of Belgrade, with a focus on private international law and Internet law. He has also been an activist for the last 15 years involved in children's rights and youth policy work in Serbia.

**Marlene Spoerri** is a PhD student at the University of Amsterdam and a visiting scholar at the Harriman Institute of Columbia University. Her research explores the intersection of foreign aid, democratization, and youth mobilization. Spoerri's articles have appeared in international peer-reviewed journals, including *Democratization*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, and the *Journal of International Relations and Development*. Prior to pursuing her doctorate, Spoerri worked for the Balkan Trust for Democracy, the U.S. Embassy in Zagreb, and the Humanitarian Law Center. In 2011, she was awarded a summer fellowship by the National

Endowment for the Humanities and, in 2010, won the Award for Best Doctoral Student Paper at the Association for the Study of Nationalities. Spoerri is a contributing editor for the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs.

**Tatjana Stojic** is currently employed by the Fund for an Open Society Serbia, where she has worked since 1993. As the Education and Youth Program Coordinator, she develops programs that improve conditions for better access, especially for marginalized groups, and better quality of education as well as more significant participation of the stakeholders in developing education and youth policies. Ms. Stojic graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade, in the Department of Adult Education. Additionally, she attended a six-week course on early childhood education at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., and finished a course on Evaluation of International Education Projects at the Teachers College of Columbia University, New York. She is the editor of *A Guide for Advancing Inclusive Education Practice* (Belgrade, 2009), and coauthored the *Center for Local Community Learning* (Belgrade, 2005).





## YOUTH AND PUBLIC POLICY IN SERBIA

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