



Youth-Inclusive
Local Communities



2023



MONITORING REPORT

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW ON
YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND YOUTH POLICIES
IN THE SOUTH-EAST REGION



Funded by
the European Union



National Youth Council
of Macedonia



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PLATFORM



SFERA
INTERNATIONAL



ФОНДАЦИЈА
ЗА РАЗВОЈ НА
ЛОКАЛНАТА
ЗАЕДНИЦА



LOCAL
COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
FOUNDATION

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

The main goal of the "Youth Inclusive Communities" project is to engage youth civil society organizations to provide support to their local communities, to use the existing mechanisms for participation in local policies and decision-making processes that relate to their needs and the needs of their constituents.

The main activities of the project include: strengthening the capacities of youth organizations and local youth councils through a series of workshops, monitoring the implementation of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, evaluating the inclusiveness of young people in local governments in North Macedonia, drafting policy recommendations and support of youth advocacy initiatives that increase youth participation in public policy.

The project is implemented by the National Youth Council of Macedonia, in partnership with the Local Community Development Foundation - Shtip, SFERA International Bitola and the Youth Empowerment Platform (YEP) - Gostivar. The project "Youth Inclusive Communities" is supported by the European Union.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

NATIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL OF MACEDONIA

The National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM) is a platform that represents the interests and needs of young people as a link between all stakeholders and that ensures the inclusion and active participation of young people in the decision-making process at every level. NYCM was founded on 29 June 2013 by 55 organizations.

NYCM is a representative body of youth organizations in North Macedonia. The Council unites alliances, youth organizations, organizations for young people and other organizations in order to promote and represent young people and the rights of young people in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The membership of NYCM is diverse, uniting organizations working at the national and regional level, in rural and urban environments, student organizations, branches of international organizations and other types of associations. In the process of achieving its goals, NYCM represents the interests of young people in the Republic of North Macedonia regardless of their socio-economic position, gender, race, ethnic and cultural origin, political and religious belief, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other type of difference.

LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

The Local Community Development Foundation Shtip (LCDF) was established in December 2006 and is the legal successor of the Shtip NGO Support Center. The mission of LCDF is the effective participation of citizens in the creation of public policies and their consistent implementation. LCDF has established good cooperation with civil society organizations from Macedonia, local and national institutions, the business community and the media.

Domestic and foreign donors are partners of LCDF in supporting the development of civil society in Macedonia and the promotion of the principles of the rule of law and good governance. The foundation actively works in the following sectors: decentralization, good governance, rule of law, lobbying and advocacy, human rights, transparency and accountability, promotion of philanthropy, etc.

The Foundation's activities are used by citizens, civil society organizations, local and state institutions, the business sector, active young people, the media and donors.

SFERA INTERNATIONAL

The association for sustainable development SFERA INTERNATIONAL - Bitola was established in 2009 with a focus on the youth and all citizens in the municipality of Bitola to achieve their main goals, activities and actions as part of our mission, which is to raise awareness and educate the local communities, through informal educational methods, on topics such as environmental protection, cultural and natural heritage, healthy lifestyle, long-term sustainability of youth development and active participation of young people through volunteering in North Macedonia.

The vision of SFERA INTERNATIONAL is a clean, ecologically safe environment in the Republic of North Macedonia and the use of alternative energy sources.

Through informal education, SPHERA INTERNATIONAL encourages the practice of a healthy life, care for the environment, active participation of young people in the Republic of North Macedonia and volunteering.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PLATFORM

Youth Empowerment Platform - YEP, was established in 2015 with the aim to support the youth of Gostivar and the surrounding area by nurturing their leadership skills, encouraging their civic engagement and providing technical skills.

The mission of YEP is encouraging and empowering young people through various projects. Our goal is to inspire and train young people to take an active role in the decision-making process.



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ON THE LAW ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND YOUTH POLICIES

In 2018, following the initiative of the Club for Youth Affairs and Policies in the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, a process for drafting a Law on Youth was initiated. This was the second time this process was initiated, after in 2011, at the request of the youth sector, the stated withdrew the then Draft Law on Youth.

At the national level, during the process of drafting the law, an expert working group composed of representatives of the youth sector was established, in order to contribute to the drafting of the content of the law, based on their experiences from working with young people, both at the national and local level. MPs from the governing parties and the opposition, representatives of the youth wings of political parties and representatives of the international community participated in the expert working group. The National Youth Council of Macedonia participated with five representatives, who represented the interests of the member organizations of the council. During this process, the National Youth Council of Macedonia with the support of its member organization and the NYCM Pool of Trainers conducted 17 consultations with young people at a local level with the aim of determining the requirements of the young people and what they would like to see implemented with the new Law on Youth.

On 14 January 2020, the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia passed the law under the name "Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies".

The Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies is the first legal solution in North Macedonia that guarantees youth participation and recognizes young people and forms of



youth organization. As such, the law makes a distinction between youth organization, organization for young people and youth umbrella organization, and delegates the obligation to the Agency for Youth and Sports to keep a Register of the forms of youth organization. The law also defines for the first time the terms young person, youth policy, youth participation, youth work and youth worker.

In terms of youth participation, the law foresees mechanisms at the national and local level for the inclusion of young people in policy-making and decision-making processes, that is, the National Advisory Body for Youth Policies and local youth councils in all municipalities.

From the perspective of youth policies, the law itself covers the adoption of a national youth strategy and local youth strategies, as key strategic documents for youth activities planned and implemented by institutions and municipalities. The national youth strategy is a strategic document that establishes med-term goals and priorities for the development of youth policies and the promotion of the interests of young people, and it is adopted for a period of five years. The local youth strategy is a strategic document that, in accordance with the National Youth Strategy, establishes med-term goals and priorities for the development of youth policies and the promotion of the interests of young people at the local level.

The Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies provides services for young people, that is, mechanisms for bringing institutions closer to young people and enabling their growth and development. As such, youth offices and youth centers are defined within the law, and with respect to state institutions and municipalities it foresees the appointment of a youth officer, i.e. a person responsible for the operation of the aforementioned youth office, as well as for coordinating, implementing and monitoring issues of interest to young people within the scope of the institution's competences. Within the Youth Services chapter, the Agency for Youth and Sports is envisaged to establish a research center for topics related to youth.

Finally, regarding the funding for the implementation of this law, the budget of the Republic of North Macedonia annually allocates funds in the amount of at least 0.3%, while funds in the amount of at least 0.1% are allocated from the budgets of the municipalities for youth on an annual level.

The law on youth participation and youth policies, in the shape in which it was adopted, covers many benefits for young people and youth organizations in North Macedonia, but leaves room for its expansion and improvement, especially in terms of creating mechanisms to supervise the implementation of the law at the central and at the municipal level, and ensuring the quality of the foreseen mechanisms for youth participation and youth services, as well as for the recognition of the NYCM as a National Youth Council, which is a practice in European countries, with the aim of using the already existing capacities and practices established through the NYCM towards creating improved high quality youth policies.

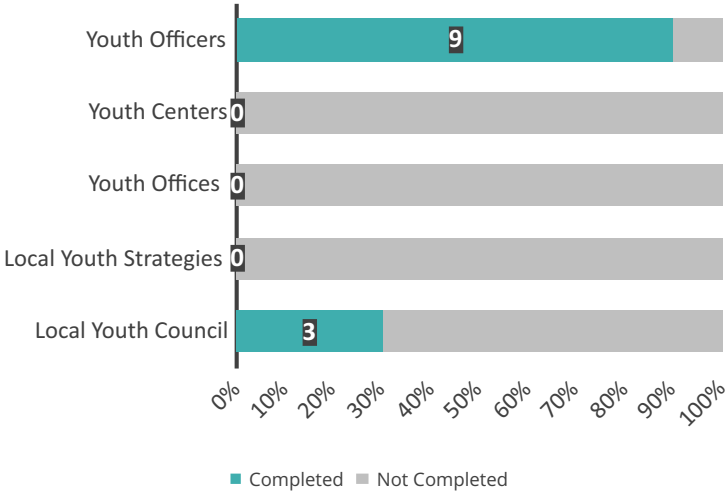
Three years after the adoption of this Law, in April 2023, a public hearing was held on the Law

on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, to discuss the aspects of the law that are working and the aspects that are not working - in order to determine the areas where there is a need for changes in the Law.



SOUTH-EAST REGION

The South-East region includes a total of 10 municipalities, that is, the municipalities of Bogdanci, Bosilovo, Valandovo, Vasilevo, Gevgelija, Dojran, Konche, Novo Selo, Radovich and Strumica.



LOCAL YOUTH COUNCILS

The municipalities of Bosilovo, Valandovo and Gevgelija are the only municipalities in the South-East region that have established local youth councils.

LOCAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH

In this region, until now, none of the legally-defined policies for youth have been adopted, that is, the local youth strategies are still missing.

YOUTH OFFICERS

In youth services, just like the trend at the national level, the obligation to appoint youth officers has been met to the highest degree. In this particular region, we are talking about 9 youth officers appointed, out of a total of 10 in the region.

YOUTH OFFICES

In this region, according to the data from the research, one youth office was established in the municipality of Novo Selo, but according to the answer from the municipality, we can conclude that it is an office space assigned to the youth officer, which includes other municipal officers.

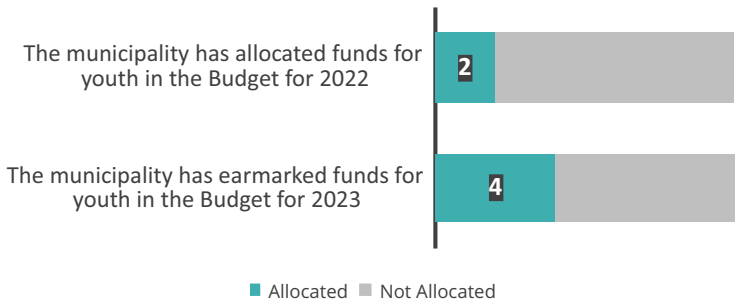
YOUTH CENTER

Regarding the youth centers, only in this region the municipality of Strumica has given a positive answer about the existence of a youth center, but from the publicly available data we can conclude that the youth center is still in the construction phase and it will be opened soon. Here, it is also important to note that the municipal council has made also made decision regarding the establishment of a youth center.

FUNDING

In terms of funding at the local level, municipalities have an obligation to set aside at least 0.1% of their own budgets annually.

When it comes to the municipalities of the South-East region, for 2022, 2 municipalities have specifically allocated funds for the implementation of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, that is, the municipalities of Strumica and Valandovo. And in terms of earmarking funds for 2023, the number increases to 4, i.e. Valandovo, Gevgelija, Novo Selo and Strumica. Here, it is important to note that while the Municipality of Valandovo had allocated funds in 2022, they remained unused.





CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies in the South-East Region is at a low level, as in a total of 10 municipalities, to date, 9 youth officers have been appointed, 3 local youth council have been established, and regarding local youth strategies, youth centers and youth offices, they have not been drafted/established yet;

The South-East Region is especially lagging behind when it comes to allocating funds from the municipal budgets for the implementation of the provisions of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, however there is a positive development, i.e. the number of municipalities that earmark and allocate funds for the Law has gone up.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Immediate implementation of the provisions in the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, especially at the municipal level;

Professionalization of the youth officers in order for them to become familiar with their competences and obligations, and at the same time to ensure the stability of this position, and avoid rotation among the employees of the institution, that is, the municipality.

Creating and implementing programs to strengthen the capacities of the representatives of local youth councils and youth officers.

Creating manuals for the administrative procedures for establishing and managing the mechanisms and services under the jurisdiction of the Local Self-Government Units.

Introducing a special budget item for youth within the budgets of the municipalities, with the aim of transparency and accountability to the young people in terms of how they are spent and whether the funds defined in the law are really allocated.

