



Youth-Inclusive  
Local Communities



# 2023

## MONITORING REPORT

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW ON  
YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND YOUTH POLICIES  
IN THE VARDAR REGION



Funded by  
the European Union



National Youth Council  
of Macedonia



ФОНДАЦИЈА  
ЗА РАЗВОЈ НА  
ЛОКАЛНАТА  
ЗАЕДНИЦА



LOCAL  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
FOUNDATION



## **PUBLISHER:**

National Youth Council of Macedonia  
st. Veljko Vlahovic, no. 7/1-1, 1000 Skopje  
www.nms.org.mk  
info@nms.org.mk

## **ABOUT THE PUBLISHER**

Filip Ivkovski, Acting President

## **AUTHOR AND EDITOR**

Filip Kulakov

## **ASSOCIATES**

Mariana Angelova, Nevenka Longurova Girova, Aleksandar Mihajlovic, Ana Naumoska, Dea Zdravkovska, Dejan Petrovski, Ivana Atanasovska, Ivana Hadji-Nikolova, Jordancho Minevski, Kristijan Panev

## **PROOFREADING**

Valentina Joshevska

## **DESIGN**

Andrej Badjukov

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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



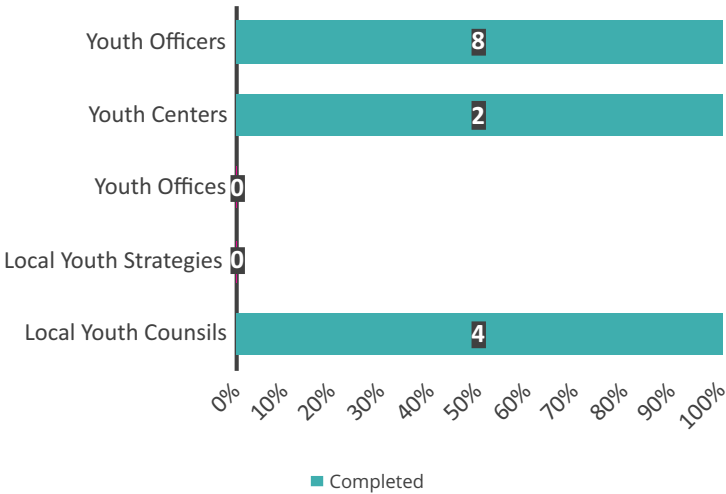
on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, to discuss the aspects of the law that are working and the aspects that are not working - in order to determine the areas where there is a need for changes in the Law.





# VARDAR REGION

The Vardar region includes the following nine municipalities, i.e. Veles, Gradsko, Demir Kapija, Kavadarci, Lozovo, Negotino, Rosoman, Sveti Nikole, and Chaska.



## LOCAL YOUTH COUNCILS

This region has established the largest number of local youth councils, in 4 out of a total of 9 municipalities. In this particular case, we are talking about the municipalities of Veles, Gradsko, Negotino, and Sveti Nikole.

## LOCAL YOUTH STRATEGIES

Despite the larger number of local youth councils, in this region, no local strategy for youth has been adopted in any of the municipalities.

## YOUTH OFFICERS

In terms of services for young people, as well as strategies, there is no youth office in any of the municipalities. In contrast to this data, in 8 out of a total of 9 municipalities, a youth officer has been appointed. The only municipality that has not appointed a youth officer is the municipality of Rosoman.

# YOUTH OFFICES

There are no youth offices in this region.

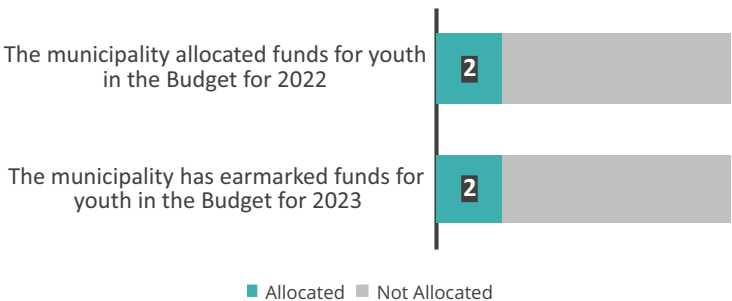
# YOUTH CENTER

Two youth centers have been opened in this region, i.e. in the municipalities of Veles and Kavadarci, and they are respectively managed by the organizations Local Development and Democracy Foundation "Focus" and the partner organization Scout Squad "Dimitar Vlahov" - Veles (Municipality of Veles), and the Youth Association – Creactive - Skopje in partnership with the Council for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency - SPPMD (Municipality of Kavadarci).

# FUNDING

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

When it comes to the municipalities of the Vardar region, some of them answered that since they have not established local youth councils, youth offices, and youth centers, they have not allocated specific funds. However, it's important to note that the Municipality of Veles and the Municipality of Sveti Nikola specifically allocated funds for the implementation of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies.





# CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies in the Vardar region is at a low level, as in a total of 9 municipalities, to date, 8 youth officers have been appointed, 2 youth centers have been opened, 4 local youth councils have been established, and local strategies for youth and youth offices still have not been drafted;

The Vardar region is particularly 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, given that there is no difference between 2022 and the fund earmarked for 2023.



# 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.



