Regional Policy Paper

A Mapping and Comparative Assessment of Youth Organizations in the Western Balkans

An Insight to Youth Organizations and Youth Policy in Albania, Montenegro and Serbia

ALBANIA
IN THE BERLIN PROCESS

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Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI) is an Albanian think tank focused in analyzing and contributing to public policy at national and regional scale. Established in 2000, it is a politically independent, not for profit, non-governmental organization. CDI's mission is to contribute to the quality of policy-making with open and fact-based research, analysis, advocacy and debate. Through research, publications, events and social media, CDI promotes a unique discussion space for everyone interested in improving the quality of evidence-based decision making. Our goal is to create the condition for systemic impact.

European Movement in Montenegro mission is development of democratic ideas, protection of human rights and freedoms and promotion of the best European practices in various areas. In addition, our team is committed to strengthening the rule of law, increase of transparency in state and local institutions in Montenegro and improve the level of democratization of the Montenegrin society.

Our actions are dedicated to Youth and talented professionals, willing to work on the development of a stable framework for cooperation between people, communities and countries.

Evropski pokret Novi Sad (European Movement Novi Sad) is independent a non-governmental and not-profit organization that constitutes an active branch of European Movement in Serbia and advocates for peaceful, democratic and full European integration and a democratic and modern Serbia as part of Europe. The main mission of European Movement Novi Sad is focused on influencing the Vojvodina public to commit itself to build a democratic pluralistic society, achieve equality among people and their communities and promote European values and heritage. The key approach in all our activities is based on full respect for human values and freedoms, the establishment of the rule of law and the appreciation of cultural differences

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is no common accepted definition of a youth organization (YO). In the three countries observed, i.e. Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, they vary from standard non-governmental organizations (NGO) implementing youth projects to informal youth initiatives. They may employ youngsters, or not; be legally registered or not; employ at least one permanent staff or go up to tens of employees. This diversity reflects mostly the national legal context, and the history of youth movements in the region. While most of them are relatively recent in Albania and Montenegro, they are more equally spread in time in Serbia. Regarding their geographical spread, Albania is an illustrative case of YOs being focused in the capital.

Staff. The number of permanent staff reported by YOs is low. Budgeting issues and administrative procedures make the employment of permanent staff challenging. Some YOs overcome this situation by not registering with Tax Authorities (14% of YOs in Albania). However, this diminishes their chances to obtain financing from donors. In Montenegro and Serbia the law allows YOs to function with only temporary staff; in Albania this is not possible. This practice, though facilitates the life of YOs in short term, penalizes them for the long term as the staff fluctuates depending on the project acquisition rate. Active voluntarism is present in the three countries, and it is this feature that should be capitalized upon to overcome staff issues as well as cost limitations.

Communication. In all three countries, YOs find to be very active within web. However this presence is assured more through Facebook than through websites. The most efficient organizations were those which paired their website with their FB page: the website was used to store content and the FB to communicate and reach efficiently the communities and with low cost. It is important to note that YOs use e-communication as well as the traditional public media.

Functioning. Funding is the main source of concern of polled YOs, followed by office infrastructure and logistic needs. Even if one third of YOs declare to have implemented no-cost projects, the financial support remains their main concern. The funding needs are filled mostly by international donors in Albania and Montenegro and by local authorities in Serbia. High dependence from foreign donors does not make constitute solid grounds for the sustainability of YOs. Governments (and local governments) of WB6 should pay the appropriate attention, translated into allocation of funding, to YOs and youth activities. Other alternative sources of funding should be considered such as business or donations. Students are the

most important target group reached by YOs mostly through non-formal education. Awareness campaigns and community activities are the main activity in which YOs engage in. Continuity of youth activities is also an issue - 1/3rd of YOs have not implemented any youth project during the last calendar year due to several facts that will be analyzed later within paper.

Networking. YOs are more connected regionally – through Western Balkans Six (WB6)- and EU-wide networks – then within the country where they are established. The percentage of YOs working on cross-border cooperation projects is very high. This may have to do with the channels of fund acquisition. While in the national field YOs compete amongst them, they are obliged to network/collaborate to be able to obtain regional funding. The donor logic based on "market principles and transparency of disbursement" needs to be revised to fight the atomization of the national scene. Nationally, regarding the cooperation factor, the poll identified the cooperation with Universities and Schools as the best one. This corroborates the target group of most YOs, which is "the students".

The Franco-German Youth Office (OFAJ) / Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO). All three countries share the feature of better knowledge for RYCO than for OFAJ. YOs want RYCO to be primarily in charge of capacity building, funding and finding partners.

II. METHODOLOGY

The methodology is based on a mix-methods approach, which aimed to define the profile of a "classical youth organization", identify the "population of youth organizations" in the country, contact & engage with them, collect, generate (where applicable), and analyze the data and evidence. The applied methodology was the same in the three partner countries, i.e. Albania, Montenegro and Serbia[1]. Due to their specificity, no young movement from any political party in any of the three countries was included in the sample.

II.1. Defining the "youth organisation"

The first phase of the intervention was steered by Cooperation and Development Institute (CDI) and consisted on desk research, with the aim to understand the features of a "typical youth organization". We couldn't find any authoritative definition of a youth organization. However, following a review of the existing literature and European practice, prior to starting the empirical research, the project team agreed on key concepts below so as to ensure a consistent approach to field research:

· NGO (registered entity) active in implementing youth projects; or / and,
· Youth organization (a registered entity where 2/3 of the team has less than 30 years old; or / and,
· Youth association (registered entity open to any youngster to join in by paying a membership fee); or / and,
· Informal youth initiative / movement; or / and,
· Civil society organization interested to implement youth projects

II.2. reaching youth organizations

The second phase of the project focused on the identification and mapping of youth organizations and informal groups operating in each of the three countries.

Albania

There is no specific law or status for youth organizations in Albania, nor a comprehensive database of youth organizations. The collection of the information

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[1]   In Serbia, the population of polled Youth Organizations is mainly focused in the Novi Sad region

started with official requests to the National Registry[2] of CSOs and to the General Directorate of Taxation (where all legal entities are registered for tax purposes). From their data[3] it results that there are approximately 9,100 civil society organizations registered in Albania, out of which 2,500 have paid some tax (local government, VAT, income tax and social insurance) in 2015. The number of registered organizations was then refined and cross-checked with the online databases of the Agency for the Support of Civil Society, the CSO Database of the Albanian Parliament, the available information produced by the EU financed service project on Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organizations (TACSO), and the data received from the Salto-Youth Resource Center.

Beside of the identification of legally registered Youth structures, the identification of informal groups dealing with youth actions and policy (i.e. non legally registered so not visible in official databases) was done through the collection of data from different sources, i.e. Youth Center in Tirana, National Youth Congress, interviews and randomized manual check on search engines and social media.

Overall, there were identified 174 organizational structures and informal groups involved and implementing with youth policy and youth activities in Albania. Due to lack of statistics and consolidated national registry of the CSOs, along with a widespread informality in the sector, the provided figure is not exhaustive and non-representative of the entire country.

Serbia

The extent of the sample size was defined by EMIM Novi Sad. The survey regarding the assessment of YO organizational capacities, experience and level of regional cooperation was at first developed together with CDI and conducted by EMIM NS.

Almost 500 YOs and CSOs were contacted in order to participate at the survey phase. In this phase the survey was promoted via web-site, Facebook page, twitter page and telephone contact. Out of the contacted YOs, 87 replied by filling in the questionnaire, with a pronounced concentration in Novi Sad as we will see latter. This over-representation of Novi Sad-based organizations will appear clearly in the results of the mapping exercise. At this point we believe that it bring very valuable knowledge that can be applied at regional level. The national level has been covered through the interview phase carried with umbrella structures such as the Serbian Youth Umbrella Organization (KOMS), NAPOR - National Association of Youth Work Practitioners, National Association of Youth Offices, The Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Youth Office Kursumlija.

During the project, we concentrated our research on Integrated Records on Youth Associations and their Federations. Those data were obtained at the Ministry of Youth and Sport. Since 2012, the Ministry has kept a unique database of youth

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[2]   This National Registry is managed by the Courts.
[3]   Both, Court of Tirana and General Directorate of Taxation, provided Cooperation and Development Institute with official answers to the request for information.

organizations, organizations for youth and their federations registered in Serbia. According to the last update from 31 December 2015, in Serbia are registered 1,088 Associations of Young People and for Young People.

The list of key stakeholders (The Serbian Youth Umbrella Organization (KOMS), NAPOR - National Association of Youth Work Practitioners, Youth offices, Youth media and state authorities) in the area were identified and contacted. Interviews with their representatives were conducted interviews in order to get additional information and recommendations with the goal to enrich the information received through the questionnaire.

Montenegro

In the survey phase circa 25% of the mapped YOs (22 out of 79 that were identified) did participate. On top of filling the web-based questionnaire, many face-to-face contacts with YOs were made during forums and public discussions currently held in Montenegro, during the RYCO establishment and the drafting of the Law on Youth. Those circumstances helped European Movement in Montenegro to target the main stakeholders for interview phase, which was successful in terms of participation, communication and exchange of opinions.

Through the phase of mapping YOs and NGOs dealing with Youth, it became apparent that there is no mechanism that allows recognizing active and visible YOs and NGOs dealing with the Youth. The register of YOs and NGOs that local municipalities posses is neither updated nor adjusted with the national register, in whose charge is Ministry of Interior. Also the data offered by national register is mainly out of date and it consists of many YOs or NGOs who are inactive or not registered in accordance with the new law on NGOs. Additionally, within national register of the NGO, there is no clear division of the sections – there is only one section dedicated to ''Social care for children and Youth'' where YOs or NGOs dedicated to Youth can be identified, across Montenegro, to a certain extent. Many YOs and NGOs, known as very active in youth sector, are registered within other sections because of their legal status, even though their vision, mission and actions are dedicated to Youth. The newly formed Administration for Youth and Sport will not start the mapping and collecting data on YOs until the new Law on Youth comes into force.

Through the mapping phase, it was very challenging to obtain the telephone number or email address of YOs. The preferred way was through social networks. This feature makes it very difficult in terms of better interaction, sharing information and possible cooperation.

In recent years, the number of youth organizations and initiatives is constantly increasing. Although youth participation in social life remains at a low level, youth organizations are actively working to increase the engagement of the Youth.

Today, almost all universities and colleges have active student parliaments and student organizations. Students are the ones that have established national

organizations such as AIESEC, MoMSIC, ELSA, MAPSS, BEST, EESTEC, AEGEE, which, when it comes to youth activism are recognized both nationally and internationally. This kind of organization of young people has brought many positive effects - more opportunities for training in specific areas and learning through practice, study visits, learning about different cultures, learning languages.

In this respect across Montenegro there is large number of student organizations. However, they still do not gather too many students (high school or graduates), but most often the same people are present in several places at once, in the eternal hunt for valuable additions to their resume. However, the situation is gradually getting better and the student activism that emerged a few years ago is slowly blooms, to reach the advancement in the functioning of YOs, there is an existing need to take into account the model of networking of youth organizations and youth structures that exist in Europe.

The presented fact speaks in favour of the need for YOs to be more visible and proactive and to establish Youth umbrella organization, who would be in charge of promotion and better visibility and inclusion of different YOs, on regional and even EU level,

On the other hand, the role of YOs must be recognized primarily at local level. Only when we achieve the first concrete results regarding the application of the Law on Youth and the different strategies within Youth organizations, it is possible to further analyze and strengthen their role at regional level.

The Law on Youth was drafted in 2013, the Government adopted its proposal in 2015 (the proposal went through many changes and not adopted as the WG initially proposed), and finally adopted in June 2016. The Law will provide legal support for the creation and existence of youth organizations, youth workers, establishment of youth clubs and the other forms of inclusion of young people, for the first time in the history of Montenegro. Still, there is a need to develop relevant by-laws and the National Youth Strategy, which is in progress.

Since, the Law on Youth will mainly refer to the Youth organizations in Montenegro, the definitions, within Law, are provided as following:

"Young people can freely and independently establish a youth organization. Youth organization is a non-governmental organization consisting of young people, which shall be established in order to improve the situation of young people, their personal and social development, participation in social processes and other areas of importance to young people. The work of youth organizations is public. Transparency of the work of youth organizations carried out in accordance with the law and statute youth organizations."[4]

"In order to support young people in organizing and social action, organization of the Youth can be established. Organization of the Youth is a nongovernmental organization whose members are not only members of the young population."[5]

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[4] Law on Youth, proposal, adopted by the Government of Montenegro, find at: file:///C:/Us-ers/User/Downloads/02_117_25_06_2015%20(4).pdf , page 4, Montenegro
[5] ibid.

> *"Young people, in order to ensure the implementation of youth policy can organize themselves in other forms, such as a youth club, youth centers, advisory centers for young, informal groups, info centers, info points, pupils and students Parliaments etc."* [6]

II.3. understanding youth organisations

During the third phase, project partners focused on the preparation of the questionnaire by the Lead Partner (CDI), its adaptation to the Montenegrin (EM Montenegro) and Serbian context (EM Novi Sad), the survey and the interviews. The questionnaire was composed of 33 questions, multiple-choice and open-end, and organized in 5 sections. There were two explicit questions targeting only the respondents from Albania and one question for the respondents from Serbia. The semi-structured questionnaire was built and posted on-line so as to adapt it to the affinity of youngsters with on-line instruments.

Once published, all the pre-identified partners were notified and constantly reminded to fill it, or offered explanations and help. It targeted all the identified organizations/informal groups and was shared on the social media. The snowball sampling methodology aimed at achieving a wider coverage and diversification of responses. When necessary a member of the team assisted the youth organization representative to fill the cases by responding to any eventual question. In many cases the questionnaire was printed, and after the interview with the YO representative it was project staff who filled up the form.

Overall, the questionnaire was filled out by 193 organizations, out of which 86 from Albania, 22 from Montenegro and 85 from Serbia.

The open questions served as a first scoping exercise for the qualitative interviews with the main youth organizations. They were designed to provide for a more in-depth discussion and to particularly bring out potential policy recommendations.

In the third phase project staff performed interviews with 25 selected organisations.

II.4. engaging with the system actors

The final phase of the research was concluded with the launching of an e-consultation process, aiming at the involvement of a wider spectrum of relevant stakeholders working with youth policies in the Western Balkans, in order to encourage and promote debate and draw joint recommendations. The received inputs were reflected in the present paper.

Note. In the rest of the study, the information and data will always refer to the situation in the three countries unless it is specified otherwise.

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[6]   ibid.
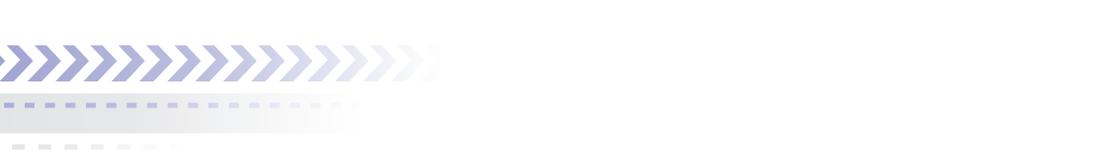
III. MAIN FEATURES OF YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS IN TARGET COUNTRIES

III.1. Structure and Staff

The dominant structure among respondents was the "Not for Profit Organization" as a registered entity which is active in implementing youth projects. This type of organization – generic NGO that implements youth projects - represent 3/4s of out YO population. Their employees are not necessarily "young" – in Serbia which has the highest percentage, young staff members reach 1/3rd. The coverage of youth field by generic NGOs is an indicator of the "project-based logic" of civil society structures/movements. The CSO traditional structures endeavor to implement projects that not necessarily are within its core activities and skills. By doing so, they crowd out genuine youth movements who may not have the finance and administrative power to compete for funding. Also the very low number of youth initiatives, movements and alike, needs to be addressed.

While in Albania and Montenegro there is a large number of recently registered YOs (mostly during the last 4 – 5 years), in Serbia their establishment is evenly spread in time. The short duration of existence penalizes young YOs when they apply for funding in Calls for Applications when past experience and turnover are "eligibility conditions/criteria". This handicap has being acknowledged by different donors and funding programs are slowly being adapted to respond to their needs.

Working for a YOs does not mean one needs to be young. Serbian YOs staff is the "oldest one" since more than half of their staff is older than 30 years old. This pattern fits with the Serbian YOs date of establishment, which is evenly spread in time and not concentrated during the last five years (2012 – 2016).

As expected, in Albania YOs are concentrated in the capital. This leaves virtually un-covered and renders "invisible" youth initiatives happening in the rest of the country. Or it is here that most phenomenon of unemployment, social unrest and radicalization have been noticed recently. CDI is implementing a pilot project in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) addressing this problem, through covering youth in two dis-advantaged and rural areas.

The problem is less acute in Montenegro. The case of Serbia is special. The fact that Novi Sad is the only city in WB6 region who is a candidate for European Youth

Capital for 2019 may have impacted the statistically high concentration of polled YOs registered in this city.

III.2. Communication with partners

One-fifth to one-third of YOs do not have a website. Some of them use Facebook to be visible on-line, and so they somehow compensate the absence of a website. Nevertheless, this is an indicator of the "missing written content" of those YOs. While Facebook is appropriate to communicate, create, mobilize and maintain communities, it does not offer a repository/archive function where products of YOs may be kept.

YOs are part of the e-generation. The most used electronic communication is via Facebook. Its positive angle is the public coverage and the low cost of spreading the messages. The off side is the limitation of the communities mainly into the virtual reality. The most efficient YOs were those that combined e-communication with groundwork and face-to-face activities.

Only a small number of YOs do not appear in the public media – varying from 5% to 10% of the polled ones. The affinity of YOs and the public media can be used to reinforce YOs presence and its message for the population target groups that are not familiar with e-media or that find it costly to get access to internet. Direct support to youth to get and stay connected is very important.

III.3. Functioning

Budgeting issues and administrative procedures make the employment of permanent staff in YOs a challenging experience. YOs overcome this situation by not registering with national Tax Authorities (14% of YOs in Albania). However, not having a tax ID drastically diminishes their chances of obtaining financing from almost all donors. In Montenegro and Serbia, the law allows YOs to employ only temporary staff, mostly project-based. In Albania a legally-registered organization should at least employ one permanent staff. This practice, even through the regular use of temporary staff facilitates the life of YOs in short term, it penalizes them for the long term as the staff number fluctuates depending on the project acquisition rate of the youth organization.

Very few YOs declare to not have active volunteers (Montenegrin YOs declare the largest number). This is very encouraging as it brings forward the non-market nature of youth engagements in all three Balkan countries YOs. Active volunteering is a youth feature that should be further investigated and supported.

On the other hand, Montenegro should follow successful path of Serbia and therefore establish umbrella youth organizations which would help in further functioning of

YOs in terms of better communication, cooperation and financing. Former such initiatives have unfortunately failed due to missing financial resources and existence of barriers in communication and cooperation among youth structures.

III.4. Activities

Serbian YOs seem to be the more continuous in their implementation of youth activities, as compared with their Albanian and Montenegrin homologues. For example 1/3rd of Montenegrin polled YOs declare not to have engaged in any youth activity at all in 2015. This brings in question the issue of continuity of engagement, as well as the unfortunately ever-popping feature of project-based YO existence.

Even if one third of Montenegrin YOs declare to have implemented youth projects with no enough budget sources, in the former question the same percentage declares not to have implemented any youth project last year. If the absence of funding has not been a problem to implement one to three projects, why such a large number of Montenegrin YOs did not do any youth-related activity in 2015? We can acknowledge however the high dispersion of projects thematic – from human rights school, no hate speech movement, eco calendar, amateur theatre up to research on improving of intelligence, informing Youth and the public on the process of negotiations of Montenegro with the EU, promotion of active communities for Europe etc.

Most common focus areas of activities is non-formal education – 9 on 10 Serbian YOs engage in one from or another in non-formal education. While awareness campaigns and community activities are the main activity in which YOs engage in. Another feature is the high dispersion of project thematic focus in Montenegro – from human rights school, no hate speech movement, eco calendar, amateur theatre up to research on improving of intelligence, informing Youth and the public on the process of negotiations of Montenegro with the EU, etc.

The "student" target group comes up as the most important in the work of polled YOs in all three countries (up to 68% in Montenegro, 83% in Serbia and 75 % in Albania). This flags up the need to take into account academic structures, student-related activities as entry-points for working with YOs. Also when planning to work with students, YOs seem to be the ones with the most access. Today, almost all universities and colleges in Montenegro have active student parliaments and student organizations. Students are the ones that have established national organizations such as AIESEC, MoMSIC, ELSA, MAPSS, BEST, EESTEC, AEGEE, which, when it comes to youth activism are recognized both nationally and internationally.

Funding is the main concern of polled YOs. Better office infrastructure and bigger logistic needs came second. For example, the most important by far in the list of concerns of YOs are the budgetary woes. One third of them singled out the

organization's budget as their main concern. The lack of cooperation with local/ national institutions and issues with staff/training appear surprisingly very low in their scale of priorities.

III.5. Funding and Sustainability

International donors remain the most important supporters of youth organizations in Albania and Montenegro. In Serbia we observe the very important role of local government in financially supporting YOs (this may have to do with the very strong representation of Novi Sad YOs in the sample polled). We estimate that a disproportionate dependence from foreign donors is not good for the sustainability of local organizations. Governments (and local government) of WB6 should pay the appropriate attention, translated into allocation of necessary funding, to YOs and youth activities.

The tendency to work on a project-base shows up in the high proportion of YO sworking in cross-border endeavors. The challenge would be to use those cross-border bridges and build up sustainable networks of YOs that cover sector-specific areas and communicate continuously (not only depending on specific project funding). Project funding should go beyond mentioning the importance of the "sustainability" factor after the project ends, and take into account local systemic factors that enable the youth initiatives initiative to last in time.

III.6. Local, National and Regional networking

Paradoxically YOs are more connected regionally – in partnerships with the WB6 and EU networks – than with their peers within the country where they are established. This may have to do with the channels of acquisition of funds. While in the national field YOs compete amongst them, they need to network / collaborate / establish formal partnerships to be able to obtain regional funding. The donor logic based on "market principles and transparency of disbursement" needs to be revised to fight the atomization and un-healthy competitiveness feature amongst partner YOs in the national scene. Encouraging through "competitive bidding processes" the spirit of competition amongst civil society actors, may go sometimes against the spirit of solidarity and community that should characterize the actors in the non-governmental sector. The application of pure market principles in resource allocation of civil society organizations should be complemented by innovative and more adapted ways of support for young initiatives.

Regarding the cooperation with other partners, the poll identified the cooperation with Universities and Schools as the dominant one. This feature fits with the profile of the target group of many YOs, which is "the students". Another interesting feature that appears strongly is the cooperation with Local Authorities, which is

almost as important as the one with Schools and Universities, even in Albania where local government appears at a very low position as a source of funding. This observation brings to fore the strategic role of local authorities in the existence and activities of YOs, as well as the contribution that YOs may bring into the local socio-development dynamic.

III.7. Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO)

Serbian YOs seem more attuned with the RYCO and OFAJ initiatives. All three countries share the feature of a better knowledge for RYCO than for OFAJ. In any case this data emphasizes the importance of the awareness raising activities on the rationale for youth cooperation and its practical implications.

YOs want RYCO to help them with capacity building, funding and finding partners. This is a bit dis-concerting when put in the context of "no staff problems" as declared by them above (see in Annex the replies to Q16). However, this can be interpreted as a need for their current staff to be better informed specifically about RYCO and its procedures. Additionally, the fact that finding partners makes up most three pressing requirements is again disconcerting when put against Q26 (most of polled YOs have already worked with WB6 partners). Here we would have expected more YOs to ask for increased support with their on-going endeavors in through an increase in their scope and financing. Nevertheless, the three top requirements - capacity building, funding and finding partners - fit very well within the project based / service provider (PBSP) logic used currently by international donors to support YOs.

During the interview phase as well as in informal contacts, RYCO is perceived as welcome to promote better cooperation. It is considered that promoting the creation of networks of YOs and NGOs dedicated to youth, will increase youth visibility, promotion of different ideas will be spread in a positive manner, and within that path - the positive models of networking across youth structures within EU can be promoted and supported. RYCO is expected to also positively impact non-YOs dealing with youth such as, public institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

III.8. Data availability

Finally, there is very few data available on youth and youth organizations. For the next youth policies and actions to succeed, more research into its environment, aspirations, resources, profile, policies at all levels, factors of risk and eventual synergies, need to be performed. We believe that for RYCO to succeed it needs to get out of the PBSP dynamic and tackle the systemic conditions of youth in the WB6.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER YOUTH POLICY STAKEHOLDERS

First and foremost there is a pressing need to create and update the register of youth organizations, especially in Albania and Montenegro. This will allow for an exhaustive overview of the youth actors and will create the basis for an informed policy making process adapted to the needs of the YOs. This registering exercise should be completed and enriched permanently with research on the ever-evolving profile and contextual conditions of YOs.

Also, the YO database for each country can be published online – if only selected data– so as to allow for greater visibility and possible partner findings throughout the region.

IV.1. Recommendations on the Structure

For an YO to be efficient and sustainable it should:
- ✓ Allow for the YOs to exist legally with a minimum of financial costs and cumbersome legal procedures. The registering of YOs should be allowed to follow a fast-track, require a minimum amount of documents, and / or legal requirements. Also fiscal reporting should be simplified.
- ✓ Consider the creation of umbrella / skill pools that would offer to YOs assistance in administering and managing their movements in the very beginning. This will allow the YOs to focus on their activities instead of administration.
- ✓ Allow for Youth Centers where YOs can use cost-free (or with a minimum cost) office facilities, communication, and other logistic aspects. This physical space can be twinned with the skills pool to create a critical mass of support for young initiatives. They can be limited in time and time out when the initiative ends or becomes sustainable.
- ✓ Provide intensive and prolonged support to rural and out-of-capital youth initiatives. Coaching or mentoring schemes are necessary to mobilize the youth energy in those distant areas.

IV.2. Recommendations on the Activities

Regarding the activities, we identified the following recommendations:
- ✓ Design support instruments that privilege genuine youth movements that have real contact with youth groups. This would need the review of eligibility criteria; of amounts disbursable, of procurement / contracting / reporting and closing of contracts;

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- ✓ Combine project support based on calls for proposals with flexible identification of change actors.
- ✓ Encourage movements that are born in schools, universities and other learning environments. Explore the connection with private businesses in setting up youth *parcour's* and common centers of interest.
- ✓ Support volunteering activities! Community activities through volunteering must become one of the major axis of action of youth policies. Pay special attention and establish concrete support measures (financial / logistic / etc.) for the involvement of young people with fewer opportunities in volunteering activities.
- ✓ Give visibility to YOs in the traditional media, all by encouraging innovative ways to reach all the strata of public. Learning can take place also through the media.
- ✓ Reinforce and promote youth networking nationally and internationally. Support activities encouraging cooperation, networking and exchanges of practices in the field of youth, such as seminars, conferences, workshops, meetings, training courses, study visits and job-shadowing, involving all WB countries in a balanced way in order to develop competences and skills that increase young peoples' employability or self-employment prospects, foster their active participation in society and reinforce their mutual understanding, sense of solidarity and tolerance.

Support pairing up of youth organizations with other structures such as think tanks, specialized NGOs, local and central institutions, business actors, etc. This will allow for cross-fertilization and synergies amongst all actors involved. It will make YO more visible.

IV.3. Recommendations on Youth Policies in WB6

Regarding the youth policies at national or EU level, we highlight the following recommendations:
- ✓ Improvement in policies aiming youth is highly related to the availability of quality data on the number of youth structures and initiatives, mapping of visible and active ones, identification of tailored support for their actions, supporting initiatives for cooperation and communication, and monitoring practice via regular surveys in order to do research and evaluate progress.
- ✓ In all three countries there is a need for improvement of monitoring and evaluation system of non-youth specific strategies and laws. The youth component should be more present while designing policies in education, research, employment and even in areas such as local government strategies or migration, support to businesses or even radicalization & violence. An evaluation of past youth strategies and their effectiveness in addressing youth needs must be done to identify improvement potential.
- ✓ There is a need for enhancing communication amongst different stakeholders engaged in drafting by-laws, strategies and other strategic document so as to allow a high quality, applicable and adapted legal base for youth initiatives

to take place. Greater involvement of creators of media content is needed. Media actors should engage in the promotion of good practices and visibility of Youth structures.

✓ The training and involvement of Youth workers / specialists in YO activities should be encouraged, supported and properly planned.

IV.4. Recommendations on System Actors

The system actors are very varied in structure, in activities, size, etc. Nevertheless they share some common features needed to succeed, such as:

✓ Clear definition of tasks, competencies and role of each stakeholder involved in youth -from LGU, central government, international donors, business, political parties, etc.

✓ Budget – state / donor / other - properly planned and distributed on all levels and for all the actors.

✓ Streamline and harmonize information on YOs amongst system actors. Identify synergies and avoid overlapping;

✓ Instead of shooting wide, identify low-cost, urgent and concrete needs to focus there the attention and efforts. Here the footwork becomes way more important that workshops and / or seminars;

✓ Try pilot projects that respond to precise needs and local context. Make conditional their support by tying the completion of the activities with the immediate follow up step, either through expanding the action or through extending its scope;

✓ Public institutions should strengthen administrative capacities of units that deal with with Youth structures and policy;

✓ The donors should be partners with YOs and not only financing sources: this requires structured, inclusive and permanent communication channels not driven only by financial support;

✓ The government should move its stance from "dialogue" to "partnership": this implies YOs to participate in all the stages of policy-cycle and not only during the consultation;

✓ The Parliament should consider using permanent mechanisms of consultation, that will start from the electoral area of the MP.

The three top requirements emerging from YOs poll - capacity building, funding and finding partners - fit very well within the project based / service provider (PBSP) logic used currently by international donors to support YOs. We believe that for RYCO to succeed it needs to get out of the PBSP dynamic and tackle the systemic conditions of youth in the WB6.

IV.5. Recommendations to RYCO

The Agreement on establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) of the Western Balkans has officially been signed during the Western Balkans Summit in Paris on 4th of July 2016. RYCO should become operational beginning of 2017 and will have a 3 year Strategic Plan and an annual operational plan. Some recommendations to RYCO f

- ✓ National financial commitments to RYCO should not affect existing national youth policies in the countries;
- ✓ "Use" RYCO to expand Erasmus+ in the region and allow access to other EU youth programs for youth in the region.
- ✓ "Use" RYCO to map youth organizations frequently and establish online registration platform that can serve as database for RYCO, public use and as a networking resource.
- ✓ "Use" RYCO to educate on tolerance, non-discrimination and community values and principles.
- ✓ RYCO should also pursue to tackle youth unemployment by empowering youth cooperation, networking and non-formal methods of learning activities fostering efficient management and leadership of youth work in organizations.

Post Face

With the Regional Policy Paper 'A mapping and comparative assessment of the Youth organizations in the WB'', Cooperation and Development Institute, European Movement in Montenegro and European Movement Novi Sad aimed to provide initial data in a poorly explored field yet very strategic for the countries involved. Our goal was to provide practical and useful findings on the internal functioning of youth structures, their actions, future activities, sustainability and development in national and regional context. The main findings presented in the paper are common for Albania, Montenegro and Serbia, but they can also be analysed by country. All in all we believe that in general they reflect the situation in the wider region of the WB6. Therefore, we hope that the findings within paper will be useful to our colleagues and fellows from the WB as well as other stakeholders involved in youth policies and / or activities towards an evidence-based policy-making approach. More important, we hope that youth organisations will use the findings to better situate themselves in the large field of non-governmental action and eventually adapt their vision and strategies.

We remain available for any question, further clarification or information that the reader may have.

ANNEXES

Annex 1. Questionnaire

This questionnaire is composed of five parts and is addressed to representatives of youth structures and NGOs active in youth activities. The partner organizations commit to duly respect the principle of anonymity and data protection for the collected data.

PART 1: TECHNICAL DETAILS

This section aims to collect technical details on the existing structures, being those youth organizations, youth associations, NGOs involved in youth projects, informal youth initiatives, etc.

1. Please state the official name of your structure.

    _____ (insert name)

2. In which category do you think your structure can be classified: (please choose only one option)

    ☐   Youth organization (a registered entity where 2/3 of the team has less than 30 years old)

    ☐   Youth association (registered entity open to any youngster to join in by paying a membership fee)

    ☐   NGO (registered entity) active in implementing youth projects

    ☐   Informal youth initiative / movement

    ☐   Other (please specify) _____

3. When was your structure registered (if you are not legally registered, when did it organize its first activity)? _____ (insert year)

4. In which country is your structure based?

    ☐   Albania

    ☐   Montenegro

    ☐   Serbia

5. In which city is your structure located? _____ (insert city)

6. Is your structure registered at the Court? (only for Albanians) YES / NO

7. Does your structure have the NIPT code? (only for Albanians) YES / NO

8. Does your organization has a number of registration/classification in Uniform records of associations of young people, associations for young people and their federations in the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia? (only for Serbians) YES / NO

9. Please insert the website of your structure: _____ (if you do not have any, write N/A)

PART 2: ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

This section aims at evaluating the organization's capacities at the domestic level and performing a comparative assessment between the three partner countries.

10. How many permanent employees does your structure officially employ?

    _____ (insert number)

11. How many employees are less than 30 years old?
    - ☐ 0
    - ☐ 1
    - ☐ 2 - 3
    - ☐ 4 – 5
    - ☐ More than 5

12. How many active volunteers does your structure have (not officially employed but engaged / regularly contributing to the structure's activities)?

    _____ (insert number)

13. How does your structure reach the youngsters: (you can choose more than one option)
    - ☐ Website
    - ☐ Facebook
    - ☐ Social and other media (other than FB or website)
    - ☐ One to one / word-of-mouth
    - ☐ Educational institutions
    - ☐ Public events
    - ☐ Communities (neighborhood / political / religious / etc.)
    - ☐ Other (please specify)_____

14. In which of the following media is your structure active: (you can choose more than one option)
    - ☐ National television(s)
    - ☐ Local television(s)
    - ☐ National radio station(s)
    - ☐ Local radio station(s)

☐ Press
☐ Media online (i.e. Youtube, etc.)
☐ N/A

15. If yes, in how many appearances have you showed up in 2015?

_____ (insert number)

16. Which are the main problems that your structure has been facing in terms of organisational capacities?

☐ Office space
☐ Budgetary resources
☐ Accounting
☐ Legal issues
☐ Qualified staff
☐ other_____ (insert keywords)

PART 3: ACTIVITIES

This section aims at collecting data on the activities that both youth structures and NGOs perform at the domestic level, so as to provide a general assessment between the three countries.

17. With which youth group do you work the most? (Choose more than one option if applicable)

☐ Disabled persons
☐ Drug consumers
☐ Illness affected people
☐ Migrants
☐ Students
☐ Researchers
☐ Young Women
☐ Minorities
☐ Other _____ (insert text)

18. Which is/are the focus area(s) of your structure? (Choose more than one option if applicable)

a) Non-formal education
b) Art and culture
c) Democracy and human rights
d) European integration
e) Reconciliation
f) Sport

g) Active citizenship and volunteering

h) Social affairs and health

i) Monitoring and research

j) Environmental issues

k) Other (please specify) _____ (insert text)

19. Which kind of activities does your structure engages in? (Choose more than one option if applicable)

☐ Awareness campaigns

☐ Community activities

☐ Leisure activities (art / sport / other)

☐ Advocacy

☐ Exchange programs

☐ Networking

☐ Training

☐ Other (please specify) _____ (insert text)

20. How many projects dedicated to youth did your structure run in 2015:

_____ (insert number)

21. What is the average budget of a youth project that you have implemented?

_____ (insert number)

22. Please write the title of the most relevant youth project for your target group that you have implemented: _____ (insert text)

23. What was the source of support for the youth activities?

☐ Central government / Agency

☐ Local government

☐ Non-state local donor

☐ International donor

☐ Own funding

☐ Other (please specify) _____ (insert text)

PART 4: NETWORKING

This section focuses on the level of cooperation between youth structures and related state/private entities.

24. Is your structure part of any national 'umbrella' / association of youth organizations?

YES / NO

25. Is your structure part of / affiliated to any: (Choose more than one option if applicable)

- ☐ Regional network
- ☐ European network
- ☐ international network
- ☐ N/A

26. Does your structure implement (has implemented) activities with partners from other Western Balkan countries? YES / NO

27. If yes, in which of the following country (s) is/was located your partner(s)?

    (Choose more than one option if applicable)

    - ☐ Albania
    - ☐ Bosnia and Herzegovina
    - ☐ Kosovo*[7]
    - ☐ Macedonia
    - ☐ Montenegro
    - ☐ Serbia

28. How do you assess the level of interaction/cooperation between your structure and the following entities:

	0 (N/A)	1 (lowest mark)	2	3	4	5 (highest mark)
Similar youth structures located in the capital						
Similar youth structures located in other cities						
NGOs active in youth projects						
Similar youth structures located in the region						
Schools and/or universities						
Local authorities						
Ministries and other state institutions						

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[7] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence

PART 5: FINAL REMARKS

29. Have you heard about the Franco-German Youth Office initiative? YES / NO

30. Are you familiar with the upcoming initiative on the establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO) of the Western Balkan countries? YES / NO

31. Which kind of initiatives would you like RYCO to be in charge of? (Choose more than one option if applicable)

   ☐   Capacity building activities
   ☐   Funding projects
   ☐   Assistance in finding partners
   ☐   Exchange programs
   ☐   Internships/apprenticeships
   ☐   Fellowships
   ☐   All the above
   ☐   Other (specify) _____

32. Please add any additional comment, suggestions and/or remarks on youth engagement, activities, networking and RYCO initiative in the Western Balkan countries.

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

33. If you are interested in the findings of the project, please insert your e-mail contact.

   _____

Annex 2. List of Organizations interviewed

Country	Organizations	Type of Organization
Albania	National Youth Congress	Youth umbrella organization
	National Youth Service	Public institution
	Avokati i Rinise	CSO
	Beyond the Barriers	CSO
	Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania	CSO
	European University of Tirana	University
	Durres Municipality	Local Government Unit
Montenegro	Administration for Youth and Sport	Public institution
	Ministry of Science	Public institution
	UNICEF Montenegro	International Organisation
	French Embassy	Embassy
	Faculty of Political Science	Academic institution
	Montenegrin Association of Political Science Students	YO
	Association for Democratic Prosperity ZID	YO
	Juventas	CSO
	Mladiinfo Montenegro	CSO
	Prima	CSO
Serbia	The Serbian Youth Umbrella Organization (KOMS)	Youth umbrella organization
	NAPOR - National Association of Youth Work Practitioners	National Association of Youth Work Practitioners
	National Association of Youth Offices	Association of Cities and Municipalities that have Youth Office
	The Konrad Adenauer Foundation	Political foundation
	Youth Radio O	Youth Public Media Broadcasting Service of Radio Television of Vojvodina (RTV)
	Youth Office Kursumlija	Local Government Unit
	EDIT center	CSO
	BiznisNova – Center for Proactive Business	CSO

# Annex 3. Detailed responses per country and graphics

Q2. The dominant structure among respondents was NGO (a registered entity), which is active in implementing youth projects. But, their employees are not necessarily "young". This is an indicator of the unfortunate "project-based logic" of civil society structures/movements. The very low number of youth initiatives, movements and alike, needs to be addressed.

·   In ALB, most of structures qualify as "NGO (a registered entities) that are active in implementing youth projects" (YOs hereinafter) (72,1%). Youth organizations, (registered entities where 2/3 of the teams have less than 30 years old) represent 12%, Youth associations represent 7% and informal youth initiatives 9,3%;

·   In MNE the % of YOs, declared as NGOs implementing youth projects is relatively higher (77,3%), while no youth association based on fee membership figures in the population polled;

·   In SRB the number of associations employing youngsters reaches 28,2%, much higher than in Albania or MNE.

Albania			Montenegro		Serbia		
NGO (72%)			NGO (77%)		NGO (60%)		
							Other (6%)
Youth organization (12%)	Informal youth initiative (9%)	Youth association (7%)	Youth organization (18%)	Informal youth initiative (5%)	Youth organization (28%)	Youth association (4%)	Informal youth initiative (2%)

Q3. While in Albania and Montenegro, there is a concentration of recently registered YO (mostly during the last 4 – 5 years), in Serbia their establishment is evenly spread in time. The short duration of existence penalizes young YO when they apply for funding in Calls for Application, when past experience and turnover are "eligibility conditions/criteria"

·   ALB. Around 38,4% of YOs are less than 4,5 years old – have been registered after 2012;

·   MNE. One in five YOs were registered in 2015 (18,2%);

·   SRB. There is no pattern in the longevity of Serbian YOs.

	before 2000	2000 - 2011	2012 - 2016
ALB	13%	47%	40%
MNE		55%	45%
SRB	12%	54%	34%
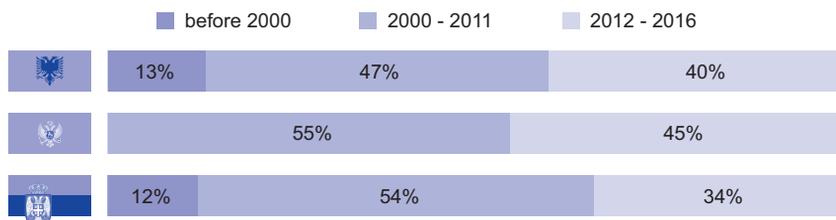
Q5. As expected, in Albania YOs are concentrated in the capital. This leaves virtually un-covered and "invisible" youth initiatives happening in the rest of the country. CDI is addressing this problem through an initiative, which is being implemented in collaboration with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and covering youth in dis-advantaged and rural areas.

The problem is less acute in Montenegro. The case of Serbia is special. The fact that the polling partner was situated in Novi Sad may statistically explain the high concentration of polled YOs registered in this city.

·   ALB. 2/3rds of YOs are registered in the capital;
·   MNE. One third of YOs are registered in the capital;
·   SRB. More 1/3rd of polled YOs were registered in Novi Sad, and only 20% in Belgrade, and 3,5% in Nis.

Tirana 67%

Podgorica 32%

Novi Sad 36%

Belgrade 20%

.

Q8. 57,6% of the polled YOs had a number of registration / classification in Uniform records of associations of young people, associations for young people and their federations in the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Serbia.

Registration Number

No, 42%

Yes, 58%
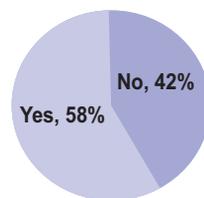
Q9. One-fifth to one-third of YOs do not have a website.
Some of them use Facebook to be visible on-line, and hence compensate the absence of a website. Nevertheless, this is an indicator of the "missing written content" of those YOs. While Facebook is appropriate to communicate, create & maintain communities, it does not offer a repository/ archive function where products of YOs may be kept.

·   ALB. one third (or 28%) declare not to have a website;
·   MNE. one third YO declare not to have a website (31%);
·   SRB. A quarter of Serbian YO do not have a website.
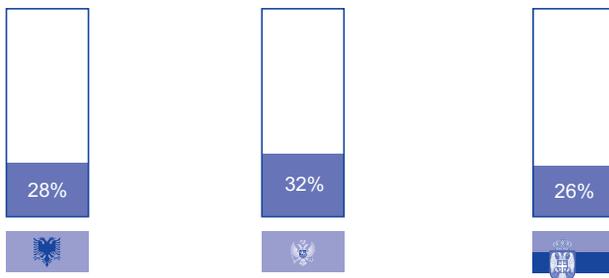
Q8 & Q10. Budgeting issues and administrative procedures make the employment of permanent staff challenging. YO in Albania overcome this situation by not registering with Tax Authorities (14% of YOs). However, this drastically diminishes their chances of obtaining financing from donors. In MNE and SER, the law allows YOs to employ only temporary staff (or project-based). This practice, though facilitates the life of YOs in short term, penalizes them for the long term as the staff fluctuates depending on the project acquisition rate.

·   ALB. It is interesting to observe that 9,3% do not employ any permanent staff. In Albania once one registers with tax authorities (obtains a Tax ID number), one must employ at least one staff. The reason why this is not done is mostly because of the cost of employment (taxes & social security) and paper-work;

Permanent employees

·   MNE. In MNE almost half of YOs do not employ any permanent staff (45,5%). Their staff is financed on project basis;

·   SRB. The same situation is in Serbia where 44,7% of YOs do not employ permanent staff.

Q11. Working for a YO does not mean one needs to be young. Serbian YOs are the "oldest ones" since more than half of their staff is older than 30 years old. This pattern fits with the Serbian YOs date of establishment which is evenly spread in time and not concentrated during the last five years (2012 – 2016). In Serbia each Local municipality has selected coordinators of Youth Offices and hires them according to the Serbian Law. It means that somehow this fact can influence the share and % of employing of permanent staff. Regarding to the YO-s reality it is the totally different situation.

·   ALB. 14% of youth organizations do not employ any person under 30 years old;
·   MNE. More than 1/3rd of MNE YOs (36,4%) do not employ staff that is under 30 years old;
·   SRB. More than half of SRB YOs (55,3%) do not employ staff that is under 30 years old.
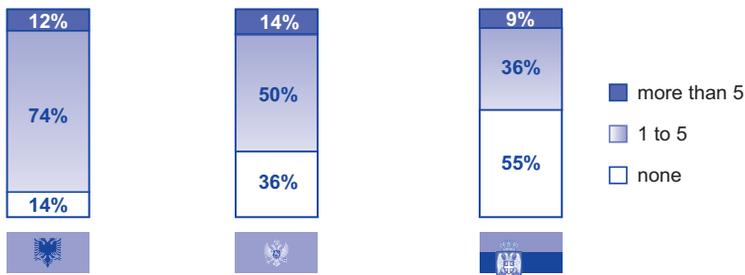
Q12. Only a non-relevant number of YOs declare to not have active volunteers (MNE YOs declare the largest number). This is very encouraging as it brings forward the non-market nature of youth engagements in all three Balkan country YOs. Active volunteering is a youth feature that should be further investigated and supported.
·   ALB. It is very encouraging to notice that only 2,3% do not report any active volunteers;
·   MNE. Around 2/3rds of MNE's YOs engage 11-50 volunteers, which is quite encouraging;
·   SRB. Only 1,2% (or one polled SRB YOs) declared to have no active volunteers, which is quite encouraging.
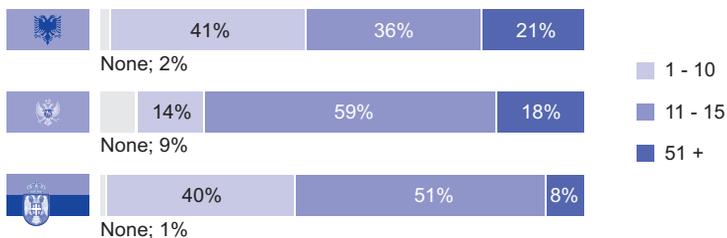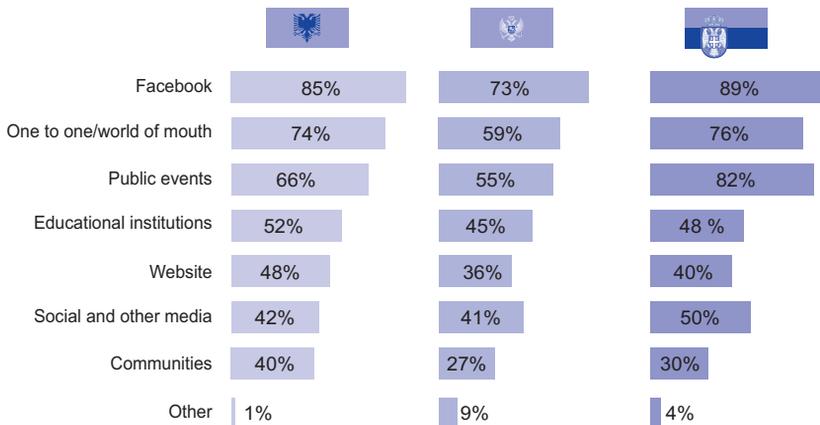

Q13. YOs are part of the e-generation. The most used electronic communication is done via Facebook. The positive angle is the public coverage and the low cost of spreading the messages. The off side is limitation of the communities only on the virtual sphere.
·   ALB. The main channels of communication with the youth target group are websites and Facebook: website is the first choice for 47,7% and FB for 85%. However one-to-one / word of mouth comes up as relatively important when

2nd choices are taken into consideration. Score quite low "Communities (neighborhood / political / religious / etc.) and public events;
· In MNE according to YOs, FB remains the preferred way of reaching out;
· Idem for SRB. FB is the first choice for 89% and website for 40%. Word of mouth is 3rd (as in Albania)

	Albania	Montenegro	Serbia
Facebook	85%	73%	89%
One to one/world of mouth	74%	59%	76%
Public events	66%	55%	82%
Educational institutions	52%	45%	48 %
Website	48%	36%	40%
Social and other media	42%	41%	50%
Communities	40%	27%	30%
Other	1%	9%	4%

Q14. No pattern: in ALB = Online media; in MNE = National TV; in Serbia = Local TV.
· ALB. Logically, it is through online media that YOs show their presence in the general media (32,6% of 1st choice). Second appears national television respectively with 25,6% as a first choice
· MNE. Interestingly 45,5% quote the national television as the main channel through which they are present in the media. Followed by local television and press as a first choice;
· SRB. Logically it is Local Television with 51,8% that is the preferred mean of outreach. Next preferred mean of outreach is "Online media" with 24%.
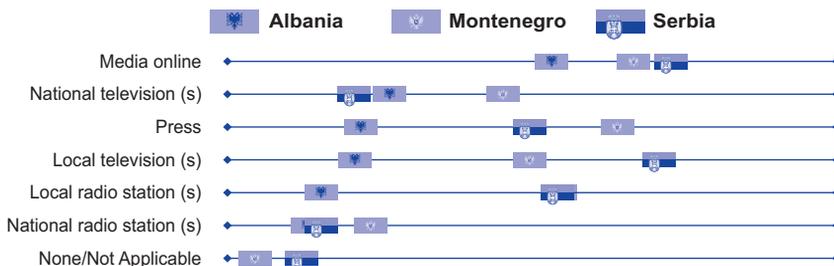
Q15. Only a small number of YOs do not appear in the public media. The affinity of YOs and the public media can be used to reinforce YOs presence and its message for the target groups that are not familiar with e-media.
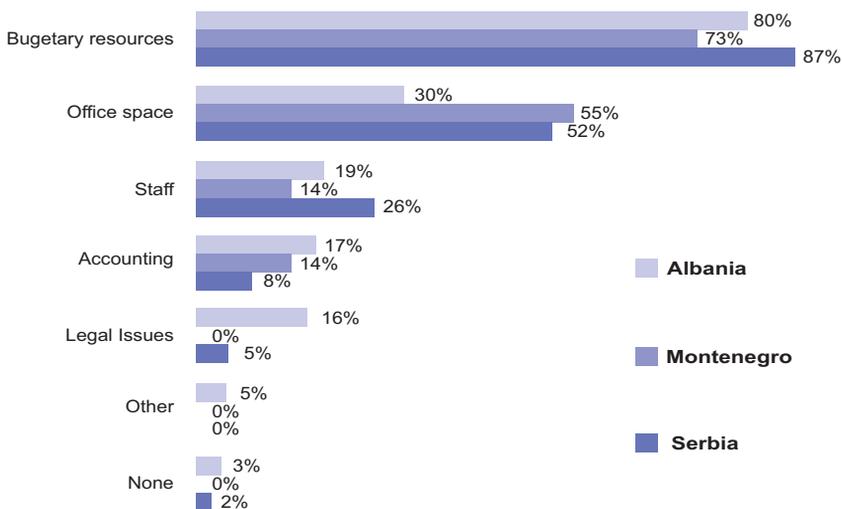
· ALB: 11,6% of YO did not show up in public media;
· MNE: 4,5% of YO did not show up in public media;
· SRB: 11,8% of YO did not show up in public media.

Average number of public appearances in 2015:

4 Albania **13** Montenegro **11** Serbia

Q16. Funding is the main concern of polled YOs. Office infrastructure & logistic needs came second. It should be noted that cooperation with authorities is not a relevant problem in Albania, and not a problem at all in MNE and SER. Good cooperation with authorities is very important for the work carried out by YOs, especially advocacy.

· ALB. The most important by far in the list of concerns of YOs are the budgetary woes. 80.2% of them single out the budget as their main concern. The lack of cooperation with local/national institutions and issues with staff/training are surprisingly very low in their scale of priorities;
· MNE. Budgetary resources are their single main problem for 73% of YOs, followed by office space;
· SRB. Idem for SER YO - 73% list budgetary resources. Office space remains a main concern as well, listed in the 2nd place.

Category	Albania	Montenegro	Serbia
Bugetary resources	80%	73%	87%
Office space	30%	55%	52%
Staff	19%	14%	26%
Accounting	17%	14%	8%
Legal Issues	16%	0%	5%
Other	5%	0%	0%
None	3%	0%	2%

Q17. The "student" target group comes up as the most important in the work of polled YOs in all three countries. This flags up the need to take into

account academic structures, student-related activities as entry-points for working with YOs. Also when planning to work with students, YOs seem to be the ones with the most access.

·   ALB. "Students (75%)" and "young women" (41%)" come up as the main target groups of the YOs,

·   MNE. Students, (with 82%), followed by "young women" as most mentioned target groups ;

·   SRB. Idem with students (with 83%), followed by young women
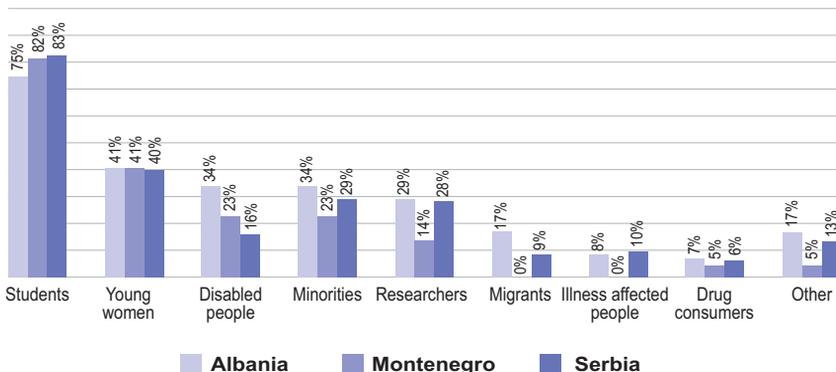
Q18. Most common focus areas of activities is non-formal education

·   ALB. "active citizenship and volunteering" pops up as the most common focus area of the polled YOs structures (72%). It is followed by Democracy and human rights as a first choice (66%).

·   MNE. Non-formal education is overwhelmingly indicated as the most common area with 81,8% of responses. Follow active citizenship and volunteering (73%).

·   SRB. Non-formal education is overwhelmingly indicated as the most common area of activity with 90,6% of YOs engaging in there. Follows active citizenship and volunteering (71%).
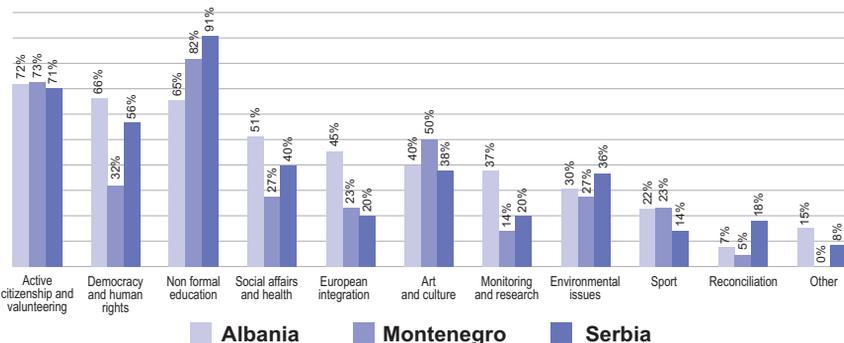
Q19. Awareness campaigns and community activities are the main activity in which YO engage in

· ALB. As regarding the activities YOs engage in, the first choice goes to awareness campaigns (82,6% mention it as their first choice). Follows community activities, trainings and exchange programs).

· MNE. A more equilibrated sample of 77% mention Training, followed by Community activities with 73% ;

· SRB. 72% mention Awareness campaigns, followed by Community Activities (65%)
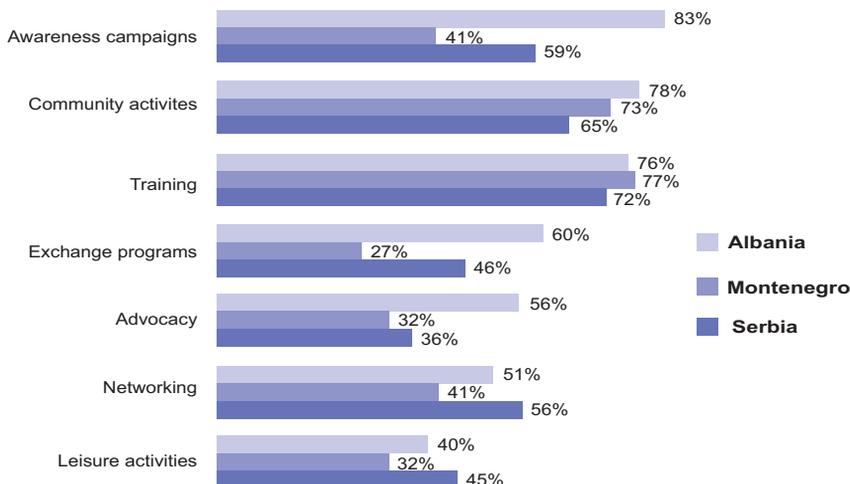
Q20. Serbian YOs seem to be the more continuous in their youth activities, as compared with their Albanian and MNE homologues. 1/3rd of MNO polled YOs declare not to have engaged in any youth activity at all in 2015. This brings in question the issue of continuity of engagement, as well as the unfortunately ever-present feature of project-based YO existence.


· ALB. 15,1% of polled YOs have not done any youth project in 2015;

· MNE. Twice the number of Albanian YOs (31,8%), declare to not have implemented any youth project last year.

· SRB. Only 7,1% of polled YOs have not implemented any youth project in 2015
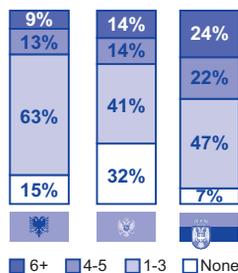
Q21. Even if one third of MNE YOs declare to have implemented youth projects with no budget, in the former question the same percentage declares not to have implemented any youth project last year. Thus, understanding the reason why youth activities were interrupted for a whole year requires further enquiring.

- ALB. Interestingly 12,8% of YOs reported projects with no financial implications (11 in total, out of which three declared less to EUR 501). This may be explained by the voluntary nature of those activities.
- MNE. 27,7% of MNE YOs declared zero (including two other less than 501 EUR budget);
- SRB. 11,7% of SER YOs declared zero (including four other less than 501 EUR budget);

**5% Trimmed Mean

Avarage budget for youth projects
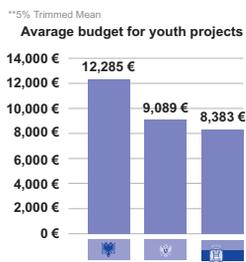
Q23. International donors remain the most important supporters of youth organizations in Albania and Montenegro. In Serbia we observe the very important role of local government in financially supporting YOs (this may have to do with the very strong representation of Novi Sad YOs in the sample polled). Dependence from foreign donors is not good for sustainability of local organizations. Governments (and local government) of WB6 should pay the appropriate attention, translated into allocation of funding, to YOs and youth activities.

- ALB. International donors provide the lifeline to YOs: 77% of them declare them as their source of support for youth activities. Follows Own funding, s, non-state local donor and local Central Government / Agencies;
- MNE. International donors are again the most important source of funding: 53% declare them as most important. What is striking though is that this is exactly the same number declaring Local Government as most important donor.
- SRB. Local government comes as first donor for 54% of YOs.
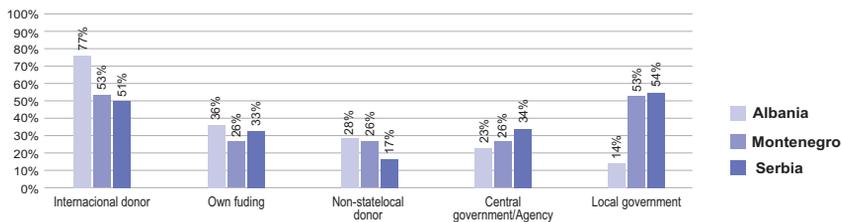
Q24 & Q25. Paradoxically YOs are more connected regionally – in the WB6 and EU networks – than within the country where they are established. This may have to do with the channels of acquisition of funds.

While in the national field YOs compete amongst them, they need to network / collaborate to be able to obtain regional funding. The donor logic based on "market principles and transparency of disbursement" needs to be revised to fight the atomization of the national scene.

Encouraging through "competitive bidding processes" the spirit of competition amongst civil society actors goes against the spirit of solidarity and community that should characterize the non-governmental sector.

- ALB. While for 60,5% of YOs are not part of any national umbrella / association

of youth organizations, 41,9% declare not to be affiliated in any network at all being it local, regional or national;

· MNE. 77,3% are not part of any national umbrella/association of youth organizations; and 54,5% is not affiliated in any network at all;

· SRB. 52,9% are not part of any national umbrella/association of youth organizations; and 44,7% is not affiliated in any network at all.

Regional Network, 33%

European Network, 31%

International Network, 21%

55%   45%

■ Affiliated
□ Not Affiliated
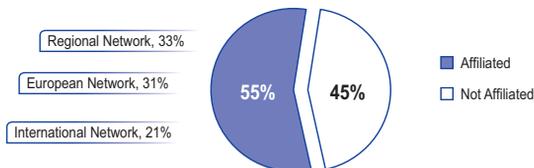
Q26 & Q27. The tendency to work on project-base is reinforced in the high proportion of YO working in cross-border endeavors. The challenge would be to use those bridges and build up sustainable networks of YO that cover sector-specific areas and communicate continuously (not depending on project funding)

· ALB. However 2/3rds (or 65,1%) of polled YOs declare to have implemented activities with partners from other Western Balkans countries. It is interesting to note that 59% have worked with Macedonia-based partners, whereas 49% with Kosovo;

· MNE. Less than the half – 45,5% - declare though having worked with partners from WB6;

· SRB. Circa 2/3rds (or 61,2%) declare having worked with partners from WB6


Albania

Montenegro

Serbia
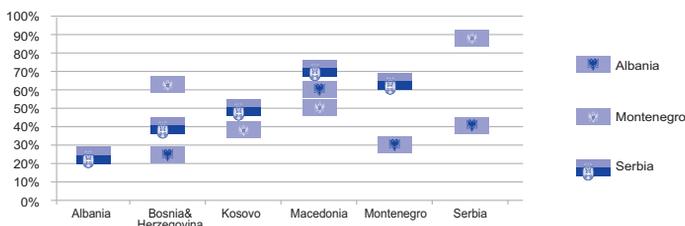
Q28. Regarding the cooperation factor, the poll identified the cooperation with Universities and Schools as the best one. This corroborates the target group of most YOs which is "the students". An interesting feature is the cooperation with Local Authorities, which is almost as important as the one with Schools and Universities, even in Albania where local government appears very low as a source of funding. This observation brings to fore the strategic role of local authorities in the existence and activities of YOs, as well as the contribution that YOs may bring into the local socio-development dynamic.

· ALB. *With similar youth structures in capital*: 73,3% have a good to very good cooperation amongst them. 9,3% do not cooperate but are interested to get involved;

· ALB. *With similar youth structures located in other cities*: as expected the cooperation is less intense. Good to excellent is 59,6%, while sporadic contacts appear at 15,1%;

· ALB. Regarding the cooperation with *universities & schools*, good to excellent relations shoot up to 79,1%, while the number of those not involved is only 3,5%;

· ALB. 73,3% declare to have good to excellent relations *with local authorities*, while with national authorities (ministries and / or other state institutions at central level), this number goes to 62,8%;

· MNE. With *similar youth structures in capital*: 59,1% declare them to be good to excellent;

· MNE. With *similar youth structures located in other cities*: 63,6% declare them to be good to excellent (but the excellent ones are 4 times less than for central government);

· MNE. Regarding the cooperation *with universities & schools*: 72,7% declare them to be good to excellent

· MNE. *Local authorities*: idem

  ❖ SRB. With similar *youth structures in capital*: 63,5%% declare them to be good to excellent;

  ❖ SRB. With similar *youth structures located in other cities*: 69,4% declare them to be good to excellent;

  ❖ SRB. Regarding the cooperation with *universities & schools*: 72,9% declare them to be good to excellent

  ❖ SRB. *Local authorities*: 72,9% declare them to be good to excellent
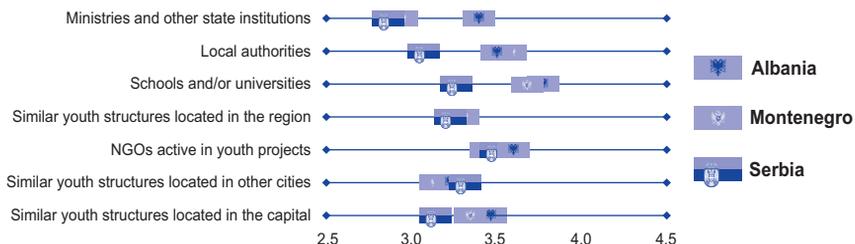
Q29 & Q30. **Serbian YOs seem more attuned with the RYCO and OFAJ initiatives. All three countries share the feature of better knowledge for RYCO than for OFAJ. In any case this data emphasizes the importance of the awareness raising activities on the rationale for youth cooperation and its practical implications.**

· ALB. Less than one third (29,1%) have heard about Franco-German Youth Office Initiative, while 44,2% know RYCO;

· MNE. Less than one third (31,8%) have heard about Franco-German Youth Office Initiative, while 40,9% know RYCO;
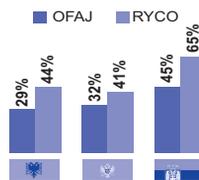
· SRB. More than half (44,7%) have heard about Franco-German Youth Office Initiative, while 64,7% know RYCO;

Q31. YOs want RYCO to help with capacity building, funding and finding partners. This is a bit dis-concerting when put in the context of "no staff problems" as declared in Q16. However, this can be interpreted as a need for their current staff to be better informed about RYCO and its procedures.

Additionally, the fact that finding partners makes up most three pressing requirements is again disconcerting when put against Q26 (most of polled YOs have already worked with WB6 partners). Here we would have expected more YO to ask for increased support with their on-going endeavors in through an increase in their scope and financing.

Nevertheless, the three top requirements fit very well within the project based / service provider (PBSP) logic used currently by international donors to support YO. We believe that for RYCO to succeed it needs to get out of the PBSP dynamic.

The wishes of YOs regarding what RYCO can do for them concerns:
· ALB. Funding projects: 71% (as first choice) would like RYCO involved.
· ALB. Capacity-building activities comes 2nd (as second choice) – this is logical given their concern on budgetary issues;
· ALB. It is interesting to note that as third choice the "assistance in finding partners" as an emerging trend in the needs statement of YOs – 42% of polled organizations express this as the fourth most important needs. Here we can also include the need for assistance in exchange programs and apprenticeship.
· MNE. Funding projects comes first with 59% of YOs mentioning it as a requirement;
· MNE. As second choice, Capacity building activities comes with 55%;
· MNE. As third choice, Assistance in finding partners, with 50%
· MNE. As fourth choice, Exchange programs arrive fourth with 45%
· SRB. Capacity-building activities comes first with 47,1%
· SRB. As second choice, Funding projects comes with 46%
· SRB. As third choice, Exchange programs comes with 40%
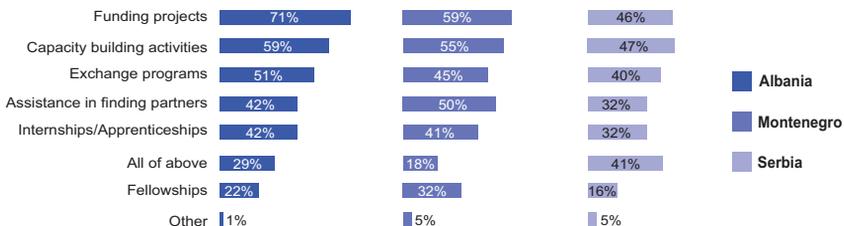
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