

Youth Act (72/2006)

Part 1

General provisions

Section 1

Purpose

1. The purpose of this Act is to support young people's growth and independence, to promote young people's active citizenship and empowerment and to improve young people's growth and living conditions.
2. The implementation of the purpose is based on communality, solidarity, equity and equality, multiculturalism and internationalism, healthy life styles, and respect of life and the environment.

Section 2

Definitions

1. For the purposes of this Act:
 - (1) *young people* means those under 29 years of age;
 - (2) *active citizenship* means young people's goal-oriented activity in civil society;
 - (3) *social empowerment* means measures targeted at young people and geared to improve life management skills and to prevent exclusion;
 - (4) *youth work* means the promotion of active citizenship in young people's leisure time, their empowerment, support to young people's growth and independence, and interaction between generations;
 - (5) *youth policy* means improving young people's growth and living conditions;
 - (6) *national youth organisation* means a registered association which implements the purpose of this act and whose operations extend to the whole country;
 - (7) *national youth work service organisation* means a registered association whose primary purpose is to produce services geared to general improvement of youth work;
 - (8) *organisation doing youth work* means a registered association or other organisation whose operations at least partly consist of youth work and the extent of whose youth work is comparable to the activities of a national youth organisation.

Part 2

National youth work and youth policy

Section 3

Development and cooperation

1. The Ministry of Education shall bear the responsibility for the overall development of youth work and youth policy.
2. The provincial state offices shall be the regional authorities in matters relating to youth work and youth policy. The Ministry of Education shall adopt the performance targets for provincial youth services together with the provincial state office.
3. The Ministry of Education shall be responsible for coordinating youth policy at the national level and the provincial state offices at the regional level.

Section 4

Youth policy development programme

1. The Government shall adopt a youth policy development programme every four years. The development programme shall contain the national objectives for youth policy and provide guidelines for youth policy programme work at the provincial and local levels. The development programme shall be revised according to need.
2. The development programme shall be prepared by the Ministry of Education together with the other ministries concerned. During the preparation, they must hear major stakeholders in youth work and youth policy.
3. Further provisions concerning the development programme shall be enacted by Government Decree.

Section 5

Advisory Council for Youth Affairs

1. There shall be an Advisory Council for Youth Affairs appointed by the Government to act as an expert body on youth work and youth policy. The Council is attached to the Ministry of Education. The Council may have subcommittees for the preparation of matters.
2. The tasks of the Council shall be
 - (1) to issue a statement to the Ministry of Education concerning matters to be included in the development programme and review annually the implementation of the youth policy development programme;
 - (2) make proposals for programmes and measures concerning youth;
 - (3) produce up-to-date information about young people and their living conditions.
3. Further provisions concerning the Council shall be enacted by Government Decree.

Section 6

Evaluation and subsidy committee

1. In matters relating to national youth organisations and national youth work organisations the Ministry of Education shall be assisted by an evaluation and subsidy committee appointed by the Government. The committee may appoint subcommittees from amongst its members for the preparation of matters.
2. The tasks of the committee shall be
 - (1) To make a proposal annually to the Ministry of Education for the allocation of state subsidies to national youth organisations and national youth work service organisations;
 - (2) To issue a statement annually to the Ministry of Education concerning the eligibility of national youth organisations and national youth work service organisations for subsidies based on applications;
 - (3) To issue a statement annually on the allocation of subsidies to organisations doing youth work;
 - (4) To evaluate the activities of the subsidised organisations at the request of the Ministry of Education.
3. Further provisions on the committee shall be enacted by Government Decree.

Part 3

Local youth work and youth policy

Section 7

Development and implementation of youth work and youth policy

1. Youth work and youth policy are part of the local authority's responsibilities. The implementation of youth work shall be the responsibility of local authorities, youth associations and other organisations doing youth work. Youth services may also be produced by local authorities in cooperation.
2. The local youth work and youth policy shall comprise educational guidance of young people; facilities and hobby opportunities; information and advisory services; support to youth associations and other youth groups; sportive, cultural, international and multicultural youth activities; young people's environmental education; and, when needed, youth workshop services or other forms of activity suited to the local circumstances and needs.
3. Youth work and youth policy shall be implemented in multi-professional cooperation with local authorities and with young people, youth associations and other organisations doing youth work.

Section 8

Young people's participation

1. Young people must be given opportunities to take part in the handling of matters concerning local and regional youth work and youth policy. Further, young people shall be heard in matters concerning them.

Part 4

Government funding

Section 9

Government transfer to local authorities

1. Government transfers shall be made to the local authority for operational costs incurring under this Act as provided in the Act on the Financing of Education and Culture (635/1998). The statutory state aid must be used for activities referred to in 7 Section.

Section 10

State subsidies for youth organisations and youth work organisations

1. An appropriation may be annually included in the state budget to be allocated as general subsidies to national youth organisations and national youth work service organisations. The national youth organisations may allocate subsidy they receive to their registered district organisations for their operations. Further, national youth organisations may allocate special subsidies to their local associations for a specified purpose. General subsidy shall not be allocated to a youth organisation whose main mission is to promote studies in a single field of education, study or corresponding. Nor shall general subsidy be allocated to a youth organisation primarily promoting trade unionism.
2. Organisations whose activities or subsidies are governed by separate statutes or whose state subsidy comes from an earmarked appropriation in the state budget shall not be entitled to general subsidy under this Act.
3. The subsidies to national youth organisations and their district organisations shall be allocated on the basis of performance. The performance criteria shall be the quality, extent, and cost-effectiveness of operations. The allocation of the subsidy shall also take account of the social relevance of the activities and the need for subsidy.
4. Costs incurring from business activities shall not be counted as acceptable expenditure.
5. The Ministry of Education shall approve the organisations entitled to subsidy under this Section.

6. Further provisions concerning the performance criteria, acceptable expenditure, the procedure for approving the eligible organisations and other grounds for subsidy may be enacted by Government Decree.

Section 11

State subsidies to organisations doing youth work

1. An appropriation for general subsidies to organisations doing youth work may be annually included in the state budget. The allocation of the subsidies shall come under Section 10 (2) and (3).
2. Further provisions concerning the subsidy criteria may be enacted by Government Decree.

Section 12

State subsidies to national youth centres

1. An appropriation for subsidies to be allocated for the operation and construction of national youth centres may be annually included in the state budget. The subsidies for operation shall primarily be based on performance, determined as the degree to which the centre is used by young people and the operational idea of the centre. For centres initiating their activities, the subsidy may, however, be granted on the basis of an estimate.
2. The centres must implement the purpose of and the principles underpinning this Act and work on a non-profit basis. Possible proceeds of the centres shall be used to develop the centres and their services. The Ministry of Education shall approve the centres entitled to subsidies under this Act based on applications.
3. Further provisions concerning the criteria for approving the centres and the organisation of the operations and finances of the centres may be enacted by Government Decree.

Section 13

Other state subsidies

1. An appropriation may be included in the state budget for the development of youth policy research, international youth cooperation, the construction, renovation and equipment of youth facilities, and youth work.

Part 5

Miscellaneous provisions

Section 14

Competent state subsidy authority

1. The competent state subsidy authority in matters referred to in this Act shall be the Ministry of Education.
2. The Ministry of Education may transfer budgetary subsidy appropriations to be allocated by the provincial state offices.

Section 15

Financing of statutory state aid and discretionary subsidies

1. The government transfers and state subsidies referred to in this Act shall primarily be allocated from the proceeds of national lottery and pools.

Section 16

Application of the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers

1. The state subsidy referred to in Sections 10-13 shall otherwise come under the provisions of Sections 10-13 of the Act on Discretionary Government Transfers (688/2001).

Part 6

Coming into force and transitional provisions

Section 17

Coming into force

1. This Act shall come into force on March 1st 2006. However, Sections 10 and 11 shall come into force on January 1st 2007.
2. This Act repeals the Youth Work Act of 24 February 1995 (235/1995) with subsequent amendments. However, Section 8 of the repealed Act shall be applied until the end of 2006.
3. Measures needed to implement this Act may be taken before the coming into force of this Act.

Section 18

Transitional provisions

1. The Advisory Council for Youth Affairs and the Youth Organisation Subsidy Committee appointed before this Act comes into force shall continue to operate until the end of their terms.

2. The youth organisations and youth work service organisations approved for subsidies before this Act comes into force shall maintain their entitlements until the end of 2006, unless the Ministry of Education amends or repeals its decision before that.
3. The national youth centres approved for subsidies before this Act comes into force shall maintain their entitlements at the entry into force of this Act.