

REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY

Preamble

Based on

- The fundamental values of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the European Convention on the Protection of Fundamental Human Freedoms and Rights, the European Social Charter, the European Cultural Convention, the UN, European Union and Council of Europe policies in the sphere of youth-related issues,

Emphasizing at the same time that the Republic of Macedonia seeks to strengthen the connections and integration with these processes and the documents adopted at:

- The World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and the World Youth Forum in Portugal, 1998, the 1990, 1995 and 1998 European Conferences of Ministers Responsible for Youth and the European Youth Information Charter;
- The final Declaration of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth at the United Nations System and in consonance with the Youth Action Program beyond 2000;
- Recommendations of the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life;
- The White Paper on European Youth Policies of the European Commission;
- European Youth Pact
- Conclusions of the EU Lisbon Summit 2001, as well as
- The Declaration on the Protection of the Children's Rights adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia on 27 October 2004 which stipulates: With the aim of ensuring maximum child protection and overcoming the ever more present deviant occurrences, the Assembly believes that it is necessary to adopt a national youth strategy.

And starting from the principles of:

- solidarity and equality;
- dignity and equal treatment of and amongst all citizens
- building young people's personality upon the fundamental rights to freedom, justice and respect for the differences

Recognizing that

- youth is a separate social category which is the basis of the future development of the society
- youth strategy is necessarily associated with the human dimension of the European integrations and is the basis for the building of the concept of an active European citizen, never underestimating the awareness of the young people as participants in a peaceful, just and equal world;
- the individual has a central place in all social processes and institutions

Taking note of:

- the percentage of youth in the total population of the Republic of Macedonia;
- fundamental policy, number and significance of institutions of education and state universities;
- the number of young people in government bodies and local self-government units and representative bodies at local and national level;
- the existence, functioning and sphere of action of the state youth-related bodies;
- the associative life of the young people, their wish to join together, to participate in the activities of youth associations regardless of whether they are their members or not; the number, structure and operation of youth associations at local and national level; continuity of their operation;
- public interest and attitude to youth associations' existence and operation
- government and non-government sectors involvement in the international youth initiatives.

Saluting the key role of youth and youth NGO's in the creation of this Strategy,
The Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopts the

NATIONAL YOUTH STRATEGY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Young people are able to assume responsibility for their own lives and make decisions on all issues pertaining to them, at all levels. The development and strengthening of the civil society, voluntary and social associations are an indispensable step in the promotion of responsible citizenship and a guarantee of democracy. This capacity needs to be allowed the true form of expression with youth associations and activities undertaken by them playing the central role.

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. According to Macedonian society former historical, social, political and ethical practice, and in the absence of internationally recognized definition, the term youth as used in the Republic of Macedonia signifies a separate socio-ethical category of population aged between 15 and 24 that is particularly vulnerable to socio-economic changes in the society and which represents, due to its critical thought and the urge for changes and future progress of the society, a basic development resource.

1.2. In light of the consequences of the socio-economic crisis in the Republic of Macedonia, which has been thwarting the process of development of active and responsible individuals (prolonged time of education, inability to find job, inability to found a family, economic dependence on parents or absence of economic and thus personal independence), any serious youth action or program should take into account also the persons aged 24 to 30, with the aim of mitigating or eliminating the obstacles to their development as individuals and responsible citizens of the Macedonian society.

1.3. The duration of this Strategy implementation will be 19 years starting on the day of its adoption.

2. STRATEGY MISSION, GENERAL GOALS

The National Youth Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia aims to improve the general position and satisfy the needs and interests of the young people in the country. A particularly important part of the strategic determinations of the Strategy is the recognition of the role young people play in the development of the Republic of Macedonia, as a positive driving force and promoter of the new values in the society and in the state. The Strategy goals include:

- Recognition of young people values as a principal human potential of Macedonian society conducive to its cultural, economic and political development;

- Recognition and understanding of young people's needs and assignment of social resources towards meeting these needs;
- Integration of young people in the centre of the political, social, economic and cultural life of the Republic of Macedonia and their recognition as the vital element for the future of the society;
- Preparation of the young people to achieve their own and the objectives of their country in the competitive international environment;
- Affirmation of young people as a positive force in the recovery and development of the society;
- Assistance to young people in overcoming the inevitable challenges in the period of adolescence;
- Strengthening young people's moral and spiritual values;
- Respect for the rights and freedoms pertaining to young people as an integral part of the body of human rights and freedoms, as a fundamental value of the Macedonian society;
- The principal pillars of the Youth Policy of the Republic of Macedonia should be equal and free access to chances for all, transparency and participation.

The youth dimension has to be taken into account in the initial formulation of all the activities defining future political, social and societal development of the Republic of Macedonia, including this Youth Strategy. Therefore, the National Youth Strategy of the Republic of Macedonia defines the following action priorities for the government institutions and youth citizen's associations.

1. Social development and social integration of young people by means of quality formal and informal education;
2. Youth economic development through youth entrepreneurship;
3. Improvement of young people's quality of life;
4. Active participation of young people in public life and in decision-making processes at national and local levels.

3. EDUCATION

3.1. REFERENCES

1. Conclusions of the EU Lisbon Summit 2001;
2. National Program for the Development of the Education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015
3. Strategy for EU Integrations
4. National Strategy for Information Society Development

3.2. LONG-TERM GOAL

Social development and social integration of youth through quality formal and informal education

3.3. TARGET INTERVENTIONS

3.3.1. Social integration of youth through and during the process of education

Objectives:

1. Build active, democratically oriented and responsible citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.
2. Promote ethics of peace, tolerance and co-habitation amongst young people.
3. Eliminate the segregation in the schools of young people of different socio-cultural origins.
4. Promote informal education in the schools.

Strategies:

1. Introduce continuous and standardized civil education for young people, from elementary to the end of the secondary education, identical for high schools and vocation schools, with a special emphasis on civil rights, freedoms and responsibilities.
2. Open schools to civil programs offered by NGO's;
3. Introduce programs for inter-cultural education of school and university students, to include:
 - introduction of integrative extra-curricular activities in ethnically mixed schools;
 - inter-school exchanges of students and reciprocal visits as part of schools extracurricular activities, with a special emphasis on inter-ethnic cooperation, expansion to rural communities and gender equality of participants;
 - inter-school sports activities and contests at inter-municipality and national level, with a special emphasis on inter-ethnic cooperation, expansion to rural communities and participants' gender equality.
4. Introduce voluntary work as part of regular school instruction;
5. Program for support to and stimulation of professional advanced training and promotion of talented young people, through scholarships and improved students' accommodation and standard, possibilities for promotion and internship during studies, possibilities to continue studies in the country and abroad, and graduates' quick employment in adequate jobs.
6. Organize social life, cultural, sports and social activities in pupils' and students' residence halls.

3.3.2. Youth active participation in the creation of the process of education

Objectives:

1. Involve pupils and students in the decision-making process.
2. Develop co-operation with pupils' and students' NGO's.

Strategies

1. Increase the number of pupils' and students' representatives on school councils, consequently on faculty and university councils and senates.
2. Regularly inform pupils and students about the operation of their institution of education and about the general processes of education, through consultation meetings and other forms of dialogue and provision of information.
3. Active inclusion of young people, youth and students' NGO's in the development, implementation and evaluation of the Laws on High/Secondary-School and University Students' Standard.
4. Inclusion, on an equal footing, of high/secondary-school students and university students' associations in the creation of local and national education policy.
5. Financial support to high/secondary-school and university students associations' project work.

3.3.3 Promotion of equal possibilities for young people's education aimed at encouraging their personal and individual development

Objectives

1. Complete horizontal and vertical cross-accessibility of the education system.
2. Use of new technologies with access to and use of latest information;
3. Provision of equal conditions for education regardless of the material status, sex, ethnic origin and place of living.
4. Reform of the educational process for persons with special needs and their complete integration in it.

Strategies

1. Development of information and counseling system with professional staff, young volunteers and information materials that will make it easier for the young people to choose their higher level of education.
2. Introduce mechanisms for the inclusion of, counseling and support to children and young people – pupils and students that are about to leave or have left early the system of education, as well as to children and youth that never entered the process of education.

3. Programs to bring early school leavers back to schools, additional training or retraining for young people that have left school because of adjustment problems, behavior, substances abuse, early pregnancy or religious or social reasons. These programs will demonstrate respect for the differences and sensitivity to the needs, interests and traditions of the different communities in the Republic of Macedonia.
4. Program for support through peer education and peer volunteers to assist pupils/students prevented from regular school attendance due to prolonged absence for health reasons.
5. Infrastructure initiatives to eliminate architectonic and other spatial barriers in order to ensure equal access for young people with special needs;
6. Revise the criteria for accommodation in pupils' and students' residence halls, with special emphasis on youth in rural areas, socially impeded families and young people from the ethnic communities.
7. Promotion of dignified living standards and conditions for work in students' and pupils' residence halls.

3.3.4. Continuous professional development of management, professional and teaching staff

Objectives

1. Qualified teaching staff with capacity to respond to pupils and students needs.
2. Support to and promotion of reform initiatives.

Strategies

1. Management, professional and teaching staff training in accordance with the reforms in education and in the context of the time and needs of children and youth;
2. Establishment of a network of trainers for school teachers and university professors, with the aim of promoting reform initiatives;

3.3.5. Continuous support to and use of informal learning as complementary to formal education

1. On-going training for youth leaders.
2. Introduction of a permanent university course for youth work.
3. Recognition of skills and experiences acquired in informal education as additional and official qualifications when applying for a job.
4. Certification of informal education.
5. Public promotion and provision of information to young people on the types of programs and possibilities offered by the informal education, especially at a local level.
6. Program for financing of youth NGO's projects in the area of informal education;

7. Encouragement to cooperation between schools and youth NGO's with the aim of improving the quality of the extra-curricular programs and out of school activities.

4. YOUTH SELF-EMPLOYMENT, SUPPORT PRIOR TO EMPLOYMENT

4.1. LONG-TERM GOAL

Economic development through increased employment and self-employment opportunities for young people

4.2. REFERENCES

1. European employment guidelines
2. Economic program of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia
3. Republic of Macedonia Euro-Integration Strategy
4. Strategy for poverty reduction in the Republic of Macedonia

4.3. TARGET INTERVENTIONS

4.3.1. Development of youth entrepreneurship

Objectives

1. Training in small and medium size entrepreneurship and self-employment.
2. Development of real and virtual companies in secondary education schools.
3. Introduction of basics of entrepreneurship as an optional subject or extra-curricular activity in high-schools.
4. Increased number of small and medium size enterprises formed and managed by young people, particularly in rural communities.
5. Mandatory training for users of credits and tax reductions for small and medium size enterprises.

Strategies

1. Program for systematic and continuous training and crediting through private sector for young people wishing to open small and medium size enterprises, especially in the sector of agriculture.
2. Partnership between government bodies, civil society, institutions of education and private sector in the area of youth employment.
3. Tax reductions for start-ups of small and medium size enterprises by young people, especially in rural communities.

4.3.2. Fast transition from education to employment

Objectives

1. Elimination of transition time.

Strategies

1. Form a fund for scholarships and crediting of practical training for talented youth in relevant areas, with a possibility for regular employment in the company or institution providing the scholarship-credit and practical training;
2. Form youth labor market as part of the regular labor market.
3. VET reforms
4. Regular surveys of the effects of functional links between the VET system and the changes in the labor market.

4.3.3. Increased competitiveness amongst young people in the labor market

Objectives

1. Updated and transparent distribution of information about the labor market and the demand for labor force.
2. Additional and re-training for young workforce.
3. Entrepreneurship, computer skills and foreign languages training for young people.
4. Specialized training for young people from rural communities and their subsidized employment in the sector of agriculture.

Strategies

1. Ensure professional and financial support to young people and youth NGO's managing young people training and additional / re-training programs, learning the techniques necessary in looking for jobs, life-long learning and adult education.
2. Provide young people with adequate and timely information to help them decide on their future professional orientation.
3. Programs for funding of youth NGO's projects conducting informal education in the field of youth employment, self-employment and working skills improvements.
4. Scholarships and credits for young people, for their education and advanced studies in the country and abroad.
5. Program for youth information in the fields of employment, labor-market.

6. Sustainable coordination between youth self-employment training and re-training programs and the labor market needs at a local level.
7. Form trainers' groups to carry out regular trainings of Youth Center's staff, with the aim of unifying the programs and ensuring exchange of experiences and good practices at a national level.

5. LIFE QUALITY

5.1. LONG -TERM GOAL

Increased overall level of quality, standard and ethical values of young people's life in the places of their living

5.2. REFERENCES

1. Economic Program of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia
2. Republic of Macedonia Euro-Integration Strategy
3. Strategy for Poverty Reduction in the Republic of Macedonia
4. European Commission: White Book on European Youth Policy
5. EU European Youth Pact
6. Framework Agreement for the Implementation of the European Youth Map
7. National Strategy for the Development of Information Society
8. Strategy to increase public awareness on environment

5.3. TARGET INTERVENTIONS

5.3.1. POPULARIZATION OF SPORTS AND SPORT ACTIVITIES AMONGST YOUNG PEOPLE

Objectives

- improved quality of sports infrastructure;
- active cooperation between government bodies, schools and sports associations

Strategies

1. Interventions in the existing infrastructure intended for sports activities of the young population and their associations at a local level.
2. Inclusion of sports NGO's in the development and implementation of school programs for physical education.
3. Inter-school sport contests program at national level.

4. Mandatory inclusion of youth sports associations in the Program for sports financing and support to sports associations and activities;
5. Renewal of sports equipment in the schools

5.3.2. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CARE FOR AND PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT

Objectives

- increase young people's concern and action for environment protection;
- ensure young people's active contribution to their own psycho-physical state and to environment protection;
- raise young people's awareness.

Strategies

1. Include young people in the Program for Public Education and Raised Awareness.
2. Disseminate information and enable young people's active participation in the creation of the environment protection strategy.
3. Add contents and specific actions to schools' and universities' curricula to include project mandatory activities in the area of ecology and environment protection.
4. Program for support to NGO's projects dealing with environmental issues, to support also environmental projects undertaken by youth environmental associations.
5. Introduce extra-curricular activities in the schools dealing with the protection of the natural environment.

5.3.3. SOLIDARITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Objectives

- Increase the level of solidarity, tolerance and equal opportunities for and treatment of all young people.
- Develop creative useful and socio-educational uses of young people's leisure time.
- Develop feelings of solidarity amongst young people, especially towards those in need of special care, as well as towards younger– children, and older ones – senior citizens.
- Create spirit of self-confidence, leadership and belief that through one's personal abilities one can realize one's potential in the society.
- Increase the awareness of responsibilities and duties to one's family, other people and society, rights and freedoms of young people.

Strategies

1. Youth training for voluntary work in all areas of social life.
2. Youth voluntary work programs as part of the formal system of education, in accordance with the pupils/students' educational programs (medical students – hospitals; students of law – courts and work with juvenile delinquents etc.).
3. Programs for the inclusion of young people as facilitators of projects for young and old people with economic or social problems: in this manner the principle of solidarity is promoted as well as the socio-cultural exchange and learning about the different social strata in the society.
4. Adoption of the Law on Voluntary Work to regulate volunteers' rights, obligations and duties in the above mentioned programs.
5. Recognition of the certificates and references attained during the voluntary work as a basis for increased competitiveness when looking for job.

5.3.4. YOUTH MOBILITY

Objectives

- develop serious, broad view and understanding of the world, one's own society and the different human cultural values;
- build awareness and a mature view of the broader European environment and integration, based on mutual respect and understanding, awareness of the common European culture and values;
- improve youth economic position;
- enable financial, information and logistics support in traveling in the country and abroad;
- enable access to a number of benefits and institutions in cultural, recreational, sports and societal areas, as well as appropriate discounts for personal insurance, transportation and accommodation for individual and group travels in the country and abroad.

Strategies

1. Introduce young people to and build their awareness of the process of EU integration, and consult them as a category of population most affected by today's isolation of the country.
2. Include the concept of European citizen and promote European values as part of the extra-curricular activities of the formal system of education.
3. Institutional support for the participation in, or organization of, youth exchange programs, particularly in the field of culture, with the aim of developing interactions between young people in border regions and neighboring countries, with the idea of building knowledge and understanding of each other.

4. Educational and cultural exchanges of pupils and students of different local communities, to help them acquire knowledge about the different cultural values in the country, to cherish cultural traditions, learn about the sights of historical and cultural value, and about the different life styles.
5. Establish a fund and programs for increased support to non-profit bilateral and multilateral projects and youth exchanges which:
 - contribute to the establishment of contacts between young people of different cultures;
 - develop inter-cultural education;
 - create youth exchange and young people's participation in seminars, conferences and other types of meetings of international or intercultural character;
6. Build support funds through campaigns, donations and grants;
7. Build a budget and programs for financial support to projects that will enable:
 - equal access for young people to all information;
 - use of modern means of communication and new technologies as a means of learning about others' values and cultures.
8. Join EU youth, cultural and educational programs, with the aim of gaining direct access to institutions and NGO's, as well as to youth, educational and cultural programs and grants of the Union;
9. Include one youth representative in the national delegation of the Republic of Macedonia at the UNESCO and UN General Assemblies;
10. Ensure participation of one representative of "non-organized youth" in the work of the European Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and sports at the Council of Europe.
11. Initiate signing of the Framework Agreement for the European Youth Map at the Council of Europe and implementation of the Youth Map EURO<26 in Macedonia.

5.3.5 YOUTH INDEPENDENCE – HOUSING ISSUES

Objectives

- Eliminate the situation of financial dependence, whether on the family or any third party;
- Build independence, develop the sense for active and independent creation of one's own financial independence;
- Facilitate the process of acquiring one's own home;
- Form young people as responsible consumers.

Strategies

1. Counseling program for young people and young couples to help them take over financial responsibilities and over the responsibility to provide a home for themselves.
2. Program for support to young people in establishing their own decent place of living and to spare them from assuming long-term financial obligations (earmarked and favorable credits) with a special emphasis on the following criteria:
3. Change of conditions and improvement of material-financial and legislative conditions for renting apartments/houses, in cases of young people in the process of education, young married couples and self-supporting young parents;
4. Enabling access to social (council) apartments with a minimum monthly rent and other forms of subsidized solutions to the housing problems of young people with low incomes and youth with special needs.
5. Building of social (council) apartments for purchase or rent by young people in the process of education, young married couples and self-supporting young parents, with government support and subsidies.
6. Approval of privileged interest rates on credits and approval of credits with privileged repayment conditions in general for young people in the process of education, young married couples and self-supporting young parents renting or purchasing a home to live in.
7. Program for continuous training for real estate agencies' staff with the aim of raising their awareness of the challenges encountered by young people, and their transformation into facilitators of views held by young people and young married couples on rented or purchased homes.

5.3.6. FAMILY CARE AND PROTECTION

Objectives

- Institutional support to the family as a fundamental cell of youth socialization;
- Children and youth protection against any degrading treatment

Strategies

1. Overall regulation of children's and youth's rights and protection in the family within the framework of the Law on Family and Inheritance, by inclusion of the following measures:
 - improved quality of providing for, support to and upbringing of parentless children or children whose parents no longer live together;
 - counseling and education on children's and adolescents' rights in the family;
 - counseling and education for fostering families and their specialized training in accepting specific categories of children.

2. Realization of the process of de-institutionalization of children and youth fostering to promote and stimulate alternative forms of fostering of parentless children and children without parental care, children with disturbed behavior, children with educational-social problems and children with special needs.
3. Establishment of a network of local and national counseling offices to offer help on all issues related to the rights, protection and adequate development of children within the frameworks of their families.
4. National campaign to raise the awareness and develop institutional protection and re-socialization of children and youth to protect them against any kind of child pornography, sexual abuse, pedophilia, and children and women trafficking.
5. Develop a program for work with children and youth in homes for parentless children and homes for children with educational-social problems, children with disturbed behavior, and homes for children with special needs, that will include:
 - defined new relationship between the educators and wards;
 - new curricula that will aim at social cohesion and re-integration into the society;
 - keeping up with and introduction of new technologies;
 - access to all information for young wards;
 - programs enabling higher mobility to young wards, with the aim of ensuring their cultural and ethical maturing; and
 - continuous education of the staff in these institutions.

6. HEALTH AND PREVENTION

6.1. LONG-TERM GOAL

Youth education and promotion of healthy life styles

6.2. REFERENCES

1. National strategy on HIV/AIDS prevention
2. Program for protection against HIV/AIDS, supported by the Global Fund
3. Program for population immunization – Ministry of Health
4. Program for population health protection - Ministry of Health
5. Poverty reduction strategy
6. Strategy for reforms in education.

6.2.1. OBJECTIVES

- broad education of children and youth;
- practice of healthy life styles on the part of the young people;
- active participation of the young people in the implementation of health and prevention programs;
- prevention of sexually transmissible diseases, especially education and prevention of sexually transmissible infections, types of infections, ways in which they can be transmitted, consequences and prevention;
- protection of and respect for the individual and his/her private life.

6.3. TARGET INTERVENTIONS

6.3.1. Broad education of children and youth

Strategies

1. Program for regular and thorough provision of information to youth in schools and universities and NGO's, as well as through public media, with the aim of raising their awareness of the dire health consequences of modern diseases such as HIV/AIDS, the situation in the world and in the country and the ways to prevent such diseases.
2. Program for youth education on personal health and hygiene, sexual and reproductive health, prevention of drugs, alcohol and tobacco abuse, all aimed at reducing youth health risks by learning and accepting healthy life styles, concern and care for one's own health.
3. Program to raise the awareness of and educate the youth on the risks from drugs, alcohol and tobacco consumption.
4. Increase the inspection service capacity and range of activities, Ministry of Internal Affairs, in relation to enforcements of laws, control and punishment of consumption of alcohol by underage persons.
5. Raise the awareness of and train the teaching staff, pedagogues and psychologists, and social workers in particular, on issues related to drugs, alcohol and tobacco consumption among young people;
6. Introduce programs for re-socialization and integration of youth with alcohol abuse problems.
7. Strengthen the measures for control of bans on public advertising of cigarettes and alcohol drinks, especially in points of purchase.
8. Campaign to raise the awareness of the entire population about the growing problems related to drugs addiction in the Republic of Macedonia.
9. Promotion of healthy life styles to be used in young people's free time;

10. Invest in a system of permanent, active health treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, and their re-integration in the society.
11. Special program for inclusion of children and youth of the Roma community and youth from the rural communities in the primary health protection and population immunization programs.
12. Financial support to youth NGO's active in the field of prevention of diseases and promotion of healthy life styles.
13. On-going program for increased safety in traffic, with the aim of raising the awareness of the public, and especially of the youth, about the consequences of unscrupulous participation in the traffic.

7. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

7.1. LONG-TERM GOAL

Active participation of young people in all social and public processes of decision-making

7.2. REFERENCES

1. Republic of Macedonia Euro-Integration Strategy
2. Economic Program of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia
3. White Paper on European Youth Policy
4. 11 indicators for the youth policy of the Council of Europe
5. National program for development of education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015
6. National strategy for information society development.

7.3. TARGET INTERVENTIONS

1. Encourage young people to take an active part in the society.
2. Eliminate all obstacles (administrative, generation-gap, lack of trust, legislations etc.) to youth active participation in the public life of the country.
3. Establish channels for youth participation, expression of their views and acceptance of such views by administrative bodies of the state and local self-government.
4. Promotion of youth's right to associating.
5. Youth participation in the work of government bodies and agencies.

Strategies

1. Program for youth familiarization with and information on their rights, freedoms and responsibilities as individuals and citizens, and in particular on their right to active participation in the processes of decision-making and youth education in the role and values of the civil society.

2. Inclusion of youth representatives and representatives of youth NGO's in the work of all government and parliamentary bodies and committees, public institutions and enterprises dealing in spheres of interest to the young population, through development of structures of co-management based on the principle of consultations at national and local level, with the aim of involving youth and their forms of associating in the making of all decisions affecting them, while respecting the autonomy of the associations and the prerogatives of the public institutions.

8. YOUTH INFORMATION

8.1. LONG-TERM GOAL

Pluralism and equal opportunities in providing information to young people

8.2. REFERENCES

- Republic of Macedonia Euro-Integration Strategy
- Economic Program of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia
- White Paper on European Youth Policy
- 11 indicators for the youth policy of the Council of Europe
- National program for development of education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015

8.3. TARGET INTERVENTIONS

Objectives

- right to unlimited access to free, independent, clear, easily accessible and quality information of interest and need to young people;
- promotion and protection of youth image in the media;
- openness and transparency of national and local institutions;
- formation of youth information services;
- on-going upgrading of the quality and functioning of students' and pupils' libraries, functioning, renewal, accessibility and provision of books and textbooks.

Strategies

1. Development of program recommendations on:

- Improving the image and view of youth held currently by the media;
- Monitoring correct use of young people in advertising;
- Ensuring youth participation in the creation of the image presented by the media;
- Encompassing the needs and interests of the young people from the rural communities, marginalized groups of young people and young people from ethnic communities (avoid elitism in information).

2. Program for access to information about the activities of national and local authorities, their openness and transparency.
3. Establishment and support to youth information services within the local youth centers, with the aim of facilitating the access to information on available jobs, educational, recreational and cultural institutions, mobility, training, re-training and traveling, cultural and sports activities.
4. Program for assistance and counseling for all young people in trouble or in need of assistance of any kind, as well as for all marginalized young people.

9. CULTURE

9.1. LONG -TERM GOAL

Active participation of youth in the cultural life through expression of their creative potential

9.2. REFERENCES

1. Republic of Macedonia Euro-Integration Strategy
2. White Paper on European Youth Policy
3. 11 indicators for the youth policy of the Council of Europe.
4. National program for development of education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015
5. National program for culture in the period 2004-2008

9.3. TARGET INTERVENTIONS

Objectives

- Encourage young people to participate in artistic activities, presentations of projects, as part of their education, profession and leisure time;
- Encourage youth creative capabilities in the field of culture;
- Learning about the cultural values of the other ethnic communities in Macedonia; and
- Expand possibilities for personal understanding, advanced learning about and appreciation of Macedonian, European and world cultural heritage.

Strategies

1. Support to projects with creative activities, recognition, development and promotion of young people's talents and artistic potentials and promotion of a system for early recognition of talented young people and their guiding to artistic professions;
2. Program for fostering the culture of tolerance amongst young people;
3. Promotion of the participation of secondary school pupils and university students in the work of the cultural institutions;

4. Participation of youth and their associations in the programs for financing of institutions and associations in the field of culture.
5. Inclusion of young people, as individuals or members of NGO's, in the monitoring or implementation and evaluation of the national cultural policy.
6. Introduction of a system of early discovery of talented young people and their guiding to artistic professions.

10. LOCAL YOUTH WORK

10.1. LONG-TERM GOAL

Active participation of young people in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the local community

10.2. REFERENCES

1. Law on local self-government units;
2. Republic of Macedonia Euro-Integration Strategy;
3. White Paper on European Youth Policy;
4. 11 indicators for the youth policy of the Council of Europe;
5. National program for development of education in the Republic of Macedonia 2005-2015;
6. National program for culture in the period 2004-2008; and
7. European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life of the Community.

10.3. TARGET INTERVENTIONS

Objectives

- Establishment of mechanisms for implementation of local youth strategies;
- Support to local youth NGO's.

Strategies

1. Adjustment of Macedonian legislation to the provisions of the European Charter on Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life in Europe.
2. Municipality administration training in developing local youth strategies, by adapting or modifying this Strategy to the local needs and interests of young people, as well as to the local developmental needs and municipality priorities.
3. Introduction of training programs for employment, self-employment, starting up small and medium size enterprises at local level with employment and professional counseling services.
4. Scholarship and internship programs for students of local universities and faculties.

5. Local programs for youth housing: development of policy on the type and rent/purchase price of apartments, construction;
6. Local programs or campaigns for information, awareness building, youth and population training on support to voluntary work, promotion of solidarity, equality, inter-cultural education and cooperation;
7. Programs to include and re-integrate young people from marginalized groups, especially within the framework of the active policy for rural communities development;
8. Information or training programs for the promotion of healthy lifestyles in young people, especially with regard to sexual education, early pregnancy prevention, protection against sexually transmissible diseases, struggle against the use of narcotics, traffic accidents prevention;
9. Awareness building programs, training and specific actions in the area of environment protection.
10. In accordance with the cultural needs and specifics of the community, creation of programs in the form of grants, credits, scholarships, training courses, cultural and entertainment activities, with priority being given to young people, such as exhibitions, concerts, contests, seminars, round-table discussions, excursions etc.
11. Support to, construction, reconstruction and maintenance of local sports infrastructure with a special emphasis on free and equal access for all young people to use them, organization of different sports activities, contests, support to sports societies and organizations;
12. Organization of youth exchange programs with other local communities, as well as programs for youth exchange and cooperation with regions and communities in other countries;
13. Support to young people associative life by supporting their organizations from different sectors' budgets.
14. Youth information programs, as consolidation of youth information services, creation of research centers providing information and documentation, promotion of youth magazines, youth radio and TV programs;
15. Programs for juvenile delinquency prevention;
16. Creation and support of local infrastructure to be bestowed on youth organizations;
17. Financial support to local youth coordination representative bodies, youth associations and youth centers for informal education.
18. Formation of special coordination bodies for cooperation with youth NGO's with the aim of designing, monitoring and implementation of a variety of local youth programs.

11. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STRATEGY

11.1. The Agency for Youth and Sports of the Republic of Macedonia and the representatives of youth coordination associations play the central role in the implementation of the Youth Strategy. The interpretation and periodical evaluation of the national Youth Strategy are in the competence of the National Management Committee.

11.2. Youth forms of association seek to achieve specific goals of young people, which are the subject of their association, and are autonomous and independent of external influences in their operation, while introducing new ideas and approaches in the political debate and in the national institutions political agenda affecting young population.

Forms of coordination and cooperation

11.3. The Agency for Youth and Sports of the Republic of Macedonia will form a National Management Committee, consisting of an equal number of representatives of all relevant Ministries dealing with youth needs and representatives of youth associations, for the purposes of:

- consultations on determining the basic courses and methods in defining and implementation of systemic integrated youth development strategies and programs;
- development of Action Plan for Strategy Implementation;
- defining the indicators for Strategy Impacts Evaluation;
- consultation and building of proposals on legislation in the area of this youth policy;
- strategy for development, strengthening and independence of youth associations and networks.

11.4. The Agency for Youth and Sports will publish regular annual National Report on the position of youth in the Republic of Macedonia, which will represent a survey of the results of the entirety of actions conducted towards implementation of this youth strategy, and will be based on statistical data on the overall position of the young population in the country. This Report will also serve as a starting point in assessing the successfulness of the Youth Strategy, as well as in identifying the priorities for the future development period.

Local youth coordination representative bodies

11.5. With the aim of building coordination, cooperation and focus on financial and material interventions, local associations working with young people will start forming local youth coordination representative bodies of youth associations and their members that will:

- represent voluntary forum of youth associations and groups for the purposes of exchange of ideas, experiences and views and for development of local youth policy, in accordance with the needs of the local community;
- encourage good practices and successful work of young people through exchange of information and experiences;
- identify the needs of youth in given local communities and develop strategy and action to meet such needs;
- develop and implement joint programs and research at youth level;
- strive to develop the active role of youth in their own local community at all levels of their participation;
- have active cooperation with the local communities and elementary schools, with the aim of developing extra-curricular educational activities for young people;
- actively contribute to the development of local community in general.

Capacity Building

11.6. The Agency for Youth and Sports in consultation with all Ministries and government institutions dealing with youth and youth NGO's will develop an Action Plan for the implementation of a comprehensive training system, to:

- develop effective and responsible youth leaders and teams;
- develop and organize associations, centers and clubs;
- organize courses for leaders of youth associations;
- organize special skills training, such as project organization, management, financing, structural development of the organization;
- organize courses for work with young people for public employees and social workers working with and for the young people
- organize interactive courses for public employees and youth leaders in cooperation and implementation of this youth strategy; and
- develop international cooperation, participation in international organizations and organization of projects of international character and youth exchanges.

Coordination

11.7. The coordination between youth related local strategies or action plans and the National Strategy should be based on horizontal and vertical linking and coordination of all stakeholders through:

- establishment of a joint body of all local bodies of co-management or local government employees working with or for young people within the framework of the Community of Local Self-Government Units, with technical assistance from the Agency for Youth and Sports;
- establishment of a permanent cooperation between the National Management Committee and the Community of Local Self-Government Units of the Republic of Macedonia.

Skopje, 29 November 2005