

Institute for Youth Development KULT



Our mission

Citizen involvement in social trends

Bearing in mind that all citizens have equal rights and that we live in a society based upon the principles of democracy, it is of great importance for them to be part of all social events, especially of those that concern them. The basic idea of an open civil society is to ask the citizens to identify the needs and the problems they struggle with, enable them to directly or indirectly take part in decision-making processes, give them the opportunity to join the efforts to improve the environment they live in.

Empowering citizens to take civil action

The citizens have to be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to become responsible participants in their social lives. To furnish them with such knowledge and skills means to enable them to be not only the observers of changes that are taking place, but to contribute to both the personal and social development, in accordance with their interests and capabilities. In view of the concept of civil society, the role of the non-governmental sector, among other things, is for the most part to enable the citizens to become actively involved.

Young people as the initiators of the democratisation of society

Nowadays, young people form a key component of the population that can and should steer the process of democratisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region. They have grasped best assumptions and reasons to improve the surrounding circumstances. To make this possible, they need affirmative legal solutions, strategic orientation of politics and society, as well as structures and capacities that will be available to them for taking their actions. In summary, it is the commitment of decision makers that is important for developing and maintaining a successful and sustainable youth policy.

Our **vision** is an open society with the empowered citizens who participate in all decision-making processes in public life.

The mission of the Institute for Youth Development KULT is to create and advocate legal and other strategic solutions, as well as to build and strengthen the capacities of associations and governmental authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, for a successful and sustainable youth policy.

The opportunity

Striking position of youth

In developing countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, young people account for a marginal population which is mainly neglected. The least frequently heard voice is that of young people and their role is considered to be insignificant. All available statistical findings reveal devastating circumstances young people have been coping with: The largest portion of the unemployed is recorded among young people, they are the ones who mainly and most commonly leave their country for good, the existing approach to the education and health sectors is not aligned with their needs, young people are for the most part drawn into the criminal milieu, there is a shortage of customised supply of concepts eligible for spending their free time doing meaningful work, they do not show keen interest in devoting themselves to a family life because they lack the basic essentials of everyday existence, young people also show a tendency to stress unfavourable attitudes towards the progress of the society in which they live.

Young people are not in any sense whatsoever encouraged to become entrepreneurial, their participation in the labour market remains unequal, they are not provided with the opportunities to be equally politically active, they are not trained or encouraged to strive towards social inclusion, and if neglected by their own families, which is often the case, they are left alone to take care of themselves.

Non-strategic government care for youth

Governmental authorities do not perceive young people as the source of any potential capacities suitable for becoming developed, but as the source of problems that have to be resolved, thus they have not prompted the feeling of socio-political and moral responsibility to ensure sustainable planning and investment in young people, thereby the improvement of life quality for all citizens. Legislative and strategic solutions are deficient and often exist on paper only, never having been implemented. They do not offer a long-term problem solving approach, but only superficially alleviate the current burning issues. A youth policy, mainly at higher levels of authority, has been reduced to such a minimum which has resulted from strenuous efforts made by the international community and local non-governmental organisations, usually by local youth organisations. There are very few political decision makers who are inclined to invest more in young people and truly fight for their equal position in society.

The role of youth organisations

Youth NGOs are active mostly at grass-roots level which young people distinguish as the only concrete and accessible one. They establish cooperation with local authorities aspiring to improve the position of youth. Such organisations primarily volunteer, are not professionalised and have no developed capacities. Youth NGOs often do not have the least possible requirements needed for conducting their work (space, equipment, funds for basic existence, etc.), are not always confident of getting understanding from governmental authorities, are not sustainable and are dependent on donations and projects, provided either by local authorities or by international institutions.

Since there is the lack of networking among local youth organisations, they do not perceive each other as the power conducive to facilitate mutually conducted activities but as unhealthy competition.

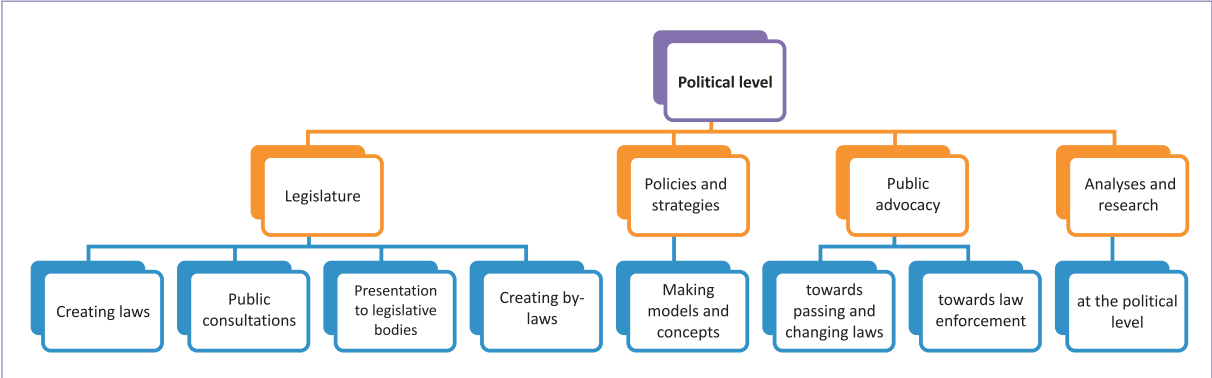
Our strategy

Vision: An open society in which the citizens are trained and included in all decision-making processes in public life

In order to contribute to the fulfilment of this vision, the Institute for Youth Development KULT performs its activities in accordance with two strategic directions, at:

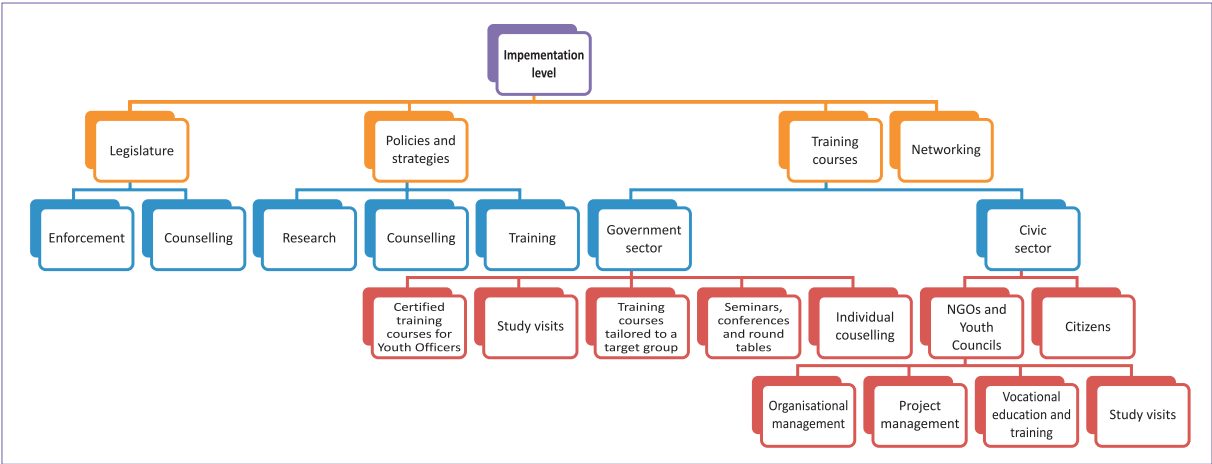
- 1) Political level and
- 2) Implementation level.

Political level



In order to reach long-term sustainability in terms of the consequences of our actions, we strive towards pursuing cooperation with all levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region upon proposing changes to and adopting legislative and other political solutions (policies and strategies) that will legally and systematically regulate youth care and their institutional constitution. The process of adopting such documents asks for making analyses of the current state of affairs and needs, organising public consultations with the citizens and stakeholders (non-governmental and international organisations, public institutions, etc.), public advocacy towards political entities, as well as the media promotion in the aftermath of the entire procedure of adoption. Our role and cooperation with legislative and executive authorities are being maintained in the course of drafting by-laws, law enforcement programming, counselling and keeping others informed.

Implementation level



Political decision-making as such will not give rise to any noticeable improvement, if decisions remain unimplemented. The Institute endeavours full enforcement of adopted documents and therefore encourages the competent institutions to do the same by providing them with necessary information and advice, and frequently technical support.

In addition, we deliver certified training courses to the representatives at all levels of governmental authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region in order to enable them to professionally carry out their work in the field of youth care. We organise training programmes and study visits for local youth organisations, youth councils and youth leaders to build up and strengthen their organisational and project related capacities, and cultivate their networking to cooperate on similar activities and share their experiences. Numerous national and regional conferences and round tables contribute to the enhancement of cooperation between the government and non-governmental sectors, elimination of prejudice, exchange of experiences and raising the level of awareness of all stakeholders. Media campaigns raise awareness among the citizens, especially among young people, of their entitlement to participate in social processes that affect them, which is their responsibility as well.

The challenges

The act of allocating funds, generally speaking, and specifically to address youth issues, is an important indicator of the priority level assigned to this target group, but also of the progress range that can be reached. It will eventually be unavoidable to convince governmental authorities that greater financial investments will be needed for resolving youth issues.

Since Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region have encountered the insufficiency of formal educational institutions that would be in charge of training people for the position of youth officer, this position is often assumed by persons who are willing to enthusiastically do their work, however they lack the competences to develop and manage a youth policy. What lies ahead is the promotion of our certified training programme for youth officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, which has already been recognised by some government institutions.

The process of advocating towards decision makers to comply with the existing legislation in the field of youth work and thus pursue achieving measurable and sustainable results is often demanding. Both horizontal and vertical cooperation among government institutions is left out. We will aspire to build even stronger partnerships with decision makers, both among them and with the non-governmental sector.

Young people predominantly do not show a considerable and long-term interest in seeking social inclusion, although this ambition also offers encouragement important for starting their own career, which is something that can easily be expected in view of a high youth unemployment rate. The Institute adheres, by means of laws regulating the culture of volunteering, to encourage youth taking an active role in the community and increase their competitiveness in the labour market after they have acquired their work experience.

Additional information

Institute for Youth Development KULT was founded in 2002 under the name Association KULT, by a group of young people who had gathered to highlight the existing youth issues and contribute to finding the corresponding solutions. Nowadays, the Institute has approximately 25 full time staff members and over 20 part time outsourced associates, as well as nearly 15 active volunteers.



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