

Monitoring report of Political, Social, Economic Participation of Youth - 2022

Summary

NGO Prima, Montenegro

This monitoring report about Youth Participation Index is a part of NGO Prima activities implemented as part of the regular activities of the regional network “Youth Bank Hub for Western Balkan and Turkey”. It is a network of CSOs working on youth policy, created eight years ago as part of the regional project financed under CSF regional programme of EU, implemented by Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation from Serbia in partnership with NGO Prima from Montenegro, Partners Albania, Youth Alliance Krusevo from North Macedonia, and Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG) from Turkey.

Youth Participation Index was developed by the YBH4WBT Network in 2016. It provides insight into young people’s opportunities to get involved in society. It captures their involvement in decision-making processes, their access to the labor market and their participation in social life. This report comprises of political, economic and social participation indicators connected to youth in Montenegro. The report covers indicators from 2022. and it is based on data collected via desk research and answers to official requests for information sent to responsible institutions (MONSTAT, Parliament of Montenegro, Ministry of Education, Institute for the Execution of Criminal Sanctions, local self-government, etc.).

The Youth Participation Index plays a crucial role in understanding, assessing, and advocating for the involvement of young people in different aspects of society. It provides a structured framework for evaluation, informs decision-making processes, and contributes to the ongoing dialogue on enhancing youth participation in Montenegro and the broader regional context.

Upon analyzing the indicators, the NGO Prima team determined that enhancing the implementation of policies is crucial to address economic inequality, generate employment opportunities, and offer social support to vulnerable populations. This includes urgently addressing systemic issues within the social welfare system, criminal justice system and implementing rehabilitation programs and highlighting need for the prevention strategies, especially in area of violence. We also believe that it would be beneficial for advocacy efforts to prioritize initiatives focused on improving the quality of education and encouraging the promotion of non-formal education and training.

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Efforts should be directed towards expanding the presence of youth structures on both national and local levels to ensure broader engagement in the decision-making processes.

Data on Political Participation of Youth

Indicator	DATA	Female	Male
Young ministers in Government M/F	0%	0%	0%
Young deputy ministers in government M/F	0%	0%	0%
Young MPs in the parliament M/F	4%	0%	100%
Young mayors	0%	0%	0%
On-line tools for information and participation in decision making of government and parliament	100%		
On-line tools for information and participation in decision making of municipalities	100%		
Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on national level	0%		
Existence of youth structure (councils/parliaments/unions) on local level	56%		

The presence of youth structures at the local level suggests a more decentralized approach to youth involvement in decision-making. Addressing the lack of representation at the national level and promoting gender diversity in political roles could be areas of focus for enhancing youth political participation.

Data on Social Participation of Youth

Indicator	DATA	Female	Male
Young people at risk of poverty	23%	24.6%	21.5%
Young people in prisons	29%	/	/
Young people part of social welfare system (who receive financial support in Social Protection System) divided with the young people who are in the social welfare system	no data	no data	no data
Dropout from the secondary education	3%	2%	3%
Young people enrolled in tertiary education	32%	38%	27%
Young people graduated from tertiary education	14%	15%	12%
Participation Rate in Non-Formal Education and Training (last 4 weeks)	3.2%	3.4%	3%

Recognizing the multifaceted nature of youth-related challenges, fostering better cooperation among these sectors is seen as essential for creating more effective and holistic solutions for youth needs.

Data on Economic Participation of Youth

Indicator	DATA	Female	Male
NEET rate	23%	22%	25%
Youth unemployment rate	25%	22%	29%
Long-term youth unemployment rate	14%	12%	16%
Youth Labor force participation rate	55%	51%	59%
Youth Employment rate	41%	40%	42%
Young people that started their own business with the financial support of state	no data	no data	no data
Self-employed young people	8%	6%	10%

Structural issues within the labor market, such as a lack of diverse job opportunities, limited industries, or regional disparities, could be important factors that contribute to the challenges faced by young people in finding suitable employment.

Comparisons of data during 4 years of monitoring

High rates of youth unemployment, and of NEET could be indicative of broader economic challenges in Montenegro. Economic downturns, limited job opportunities, or a mismatch between education and labor market needs can also contribute to these issues.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Unemployment rate (15-29)	29.2	28.8	26.5	26.0	22.3	30.7	32.5	25.4

The percentage of young people aged 15–29 years who are neither in employment nor in education or training in 2022 is much better than last 2 years, like 2015. As in the previous year, it is higher for young men than young women (24.6 vs 21.7).

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
NEET (15-29)	23.4	22.3	21.4	21.0	21.3	26.6	26.5	23.2

The youth labor force participation rate indicates that a significant portion of young people may not be actively participating in the labor market, probably due to factors like pursuing higher education, taking part in vocational training, or facing other type of barriers to entry. The relatively high long-term youth unemployment rate suggests that some young people may be struggling to secure stable employment, potentially due to factors like a lack of experience, skills, or available positions.

Policy recommendations and issues for advocacy

Understanding the specific dynamics and root causes behind these indicators is crucial for designing effective policies and interventions to improve the overall situation for young people. If we consider economical participation, structural issues within the labor market, such as a lack of diverse job opportunities, limited industries, or regional disparities, could also contribute to the challenges faced by young people in finding suitable employment.

The situation that for all the years we have the absence of data on young people starting their own business with state financial support could be indicative of challenges in the entrepreneurial ecosystem. It might suggest a need for more supportive policies, accessible funding, or entrepreneurship training for young individuals or more coordination in data collection, since there are different programs funded by the state. Relatively small proportion of young individuals are opting for self-employment probably be due to various factors, including limited access to resources, challenges in starting a business, or a preference for traditional employment.

It would be important to improve implementing policies to address economic inequality, create job opportunities, and provide social support to vulnerable populations, including addressing systemic issues within the criminal justice system, providing rehabilitation programs, and focusing on prevention strategies e.g. Advocacy efforts should be made towards implementing initiatives to improve quality of education, and promote non-formal education and training.

It is also necessary to advocate for ensuring the effectiveness and inclusivity of the social welfare system to provide adequate support to those in need. System needs to track data on that support but if we want the positive change, it's crucial to have a holistic approach that addresses multiple factors simultaneously to create a more supportive and inclusive environment for young people. NGO Prima continuously promote the active involvement of young people in decision-making processes related to education, employment, and political participation. This includes advocating for the creation of functional mechanisms that ensure youth voices are heard in policy development. Over time, NGO Prima standing point is that it is necessary for all

stakeholders, especially CSOs, to be actively engaged in advocating for enhancements to the policy framework aimed at safeguarding young individuals, particularly young women, against gender-based violence and domestic violence. This effort involved a campaign to further enhance the legal framework, specifically within the Criminal Code of Montenegro, focused on criminalizing activities such as "revenge pornography," which involves the unauthorized sharing and distribution of photos and videos of individuals through social media and online groups without their consent.

NGO Prima has consistently advocated and consider this as important for the future as well, for the enrichment of investment in youth policy and the establishment of sustainable funding for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and networks actively involved in implementing programs for youth. This advocacy aligns with the comprehensive national youth policy framework, encompassing the Law on Youth, Youth Strategy, and the Program on achieving public interest in the field of youth policy.

Additionally, the organization want to emphasize the importance of strengthening local CSOs and youth services at the community level. This focus is aimed at facilitating the meaningful and ongoing implementation of activities that are specifically tailored to address the distinctive needs of young people within their local contexts. We want improved collaboration and coordination among various sectors engaged in the implementation of youth policy initiatives throughout Montenegro.

Another crucial aspect of the organization's advocacy is the call for an increase in the number of Local Councils as integral mechanisms to encourage and facilitate youth participation in decision-making processes. This emphasis on local engagement is fundamental in ensuring that the voices of young people are actively heard and considered in shaping policies that directly affect them.

Recognizing the multifaceted nature of youth-related challenges, fostering better cooperation among these sectors is seen as essential for creating more effective and holistic solutions for youth needs.