



Capacity Development in the Youth Sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Youth Officers in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Professionalizing government employees to secure sustainable local youth policy



On behalf of

Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

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Introduction

National youth policies and action plans are often affiliated with one another. **Youth policies express the overall goals and visions of youth promotion** along with the political commitment to institutionalise services which support the youth. Youth action plans normally relate to these policies and elaborate steps for the concrete implementation of youth promotion.

Youth-related issues are cross-cutting rather than sector-specific issues. They therefore need to be articulated and integrated into a wide array of sector policies and structures at different administrative levels. Relevant youth policy structures must be established to mainstream youth issues and advocate for their rights, needs and interests. However, besides these policy structures, institutionalised services are also needed to implement integrated youth promotion at local, national and international levels.

The development of youth policies, their anchorage in the political, legal and administrative system and the establishment of the relevant structures must take youth into consideration as active stakeholders. Article 104 in the United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth assumes that the “capacity for progress of our societies is based, among other elements, on their capacity to incorporate the contributions and responsibility of youth in the

building and designing of the future” not least due to their unique potential and perspective.

Apart from a coherent and multi-sectoral youth policy, qualified staff is needed to ensure the best possible implementation and effectiveness of the action plans. For this purpose many **European countries offer degree courses in youth work and youth policy management** - something which is virtually non-existent outside the EU.

The establishment of youth promotion and youth participation structures must be linked to each other. Only through integrated youth promotion and the strengthening of young people’s capacities and self-esteem do they become able to use participation structures. Active participation is both the return of **successful investments into human resource** development through education and health as well as an asset for youth’s employment and social integration through youth empowerment. To promote active participation is also an input into sustainable civic engagement as social capital tends to be transmitted through generations. Social capital is a necessary complement to human resource development, as merely increasing the stock of human capital in a given society may not be sufficient to ensure economic and social progress “**Social capital is the fuel to make use of the assets in human capital**” (Robert Putnam 2000).



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GTZ Youth Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The overall objective is to establish a fully **functional governmental institution** at national level that is capable of dealing with youth issues and to put in place a system of effective coordination between all governmental levels in order to ensure implementation and program development amongst the key actors responsible for youth issues. And to assist the youth NGO sector in becoming **sustainable and a strong partner for government institutions** for community and national development.

On the state level the GTZ program gives financial and technical assistance to the government to create a youth policy for BiH and to develop mechanisms for inter-governmental co-ordination. For this purpose a Commission for the Co-ordination of Youth Issues was established as a **co-management body** within the Ministry responsible for Youth. Four governmental representatives and five members of non-governmental youth organisations are members of the Commission and are responsible for the development of the national youth policy and the youth action plan. Furthermore GTZ developed a youth law as a legal basis for local action plans.

On local level the development and implementation of local youth strategies mark an important milestone in the institutionalisation of structures for youth promotion. With these strategies a process of **stakeholder collaboration for a planned and systematic support of young people** is initiated. Most of the communities identified youth health, youth employment, culture, active social participation of youth, youth information and sport as priority areas where action was needed. So far more than a third (40) of the municipalities in BiH have a budgeted local youth strategy.

On the municipal level as well GTZ established the training and installation of Youth Officers. They are the persons in charge of youth issues in the municipal administration. Youth Officers serve as the interface between the administrations on the one hand and the youth and youth organisations on the other hand and are crucial for the development and implementation of youth strategies.

Additionally active young people are trained to become Youth Leaders. The trained **Youth Leaders** become responsible partners of the municipalities and are included into decision-making processes like the development of the youth strategies. Through youth centres and youth organisations they reach out to the children and young people living in the communities, organise activities and serve as the representation of interests for youth.

Duties of a youth officer

The dynamic of local youth policy creation and perpetuation depends on the quality of its implementers and the significance accorded young people by the municipality. Such a system survives provided the municipality administration employs a professional children and youth officer conscientious about doing his/her job. A youth officer is a **professional employed by the municipality** to be responsible for youth issues. This is primarily a mediatory function between the municipal council/administration, young people and adults, and ensures adequate support for young people in the municipality.





The main responsibility of a youth officer is to coordinate, plan and implement municipal youth strategies. This means that the youth officer is responsible for:

- 1) Conceptual planning, development and supervision of the implementation of the youth strategy,
- 2) Initiating and supporting activities and cooperation with other groups and institutions,
- 3) Development and assistance to groups or associations managing youth centres/spaces,
- 4) Represent youth interests,
- 5) Youth counselling, contact point for young people and groups,
- 6) Development of opportunities for youth participation, youth forums, youth advisory board,
- 7) Advising public institutions and committees,
- 8) Cooperation with schools, associations, councils, religious communities, institutions, as well as institutions outside the municipality that provide youth assistance,
- 9) Assisting youth associations and councils in conducting youth work.

GTZ training package

One of the tasks of GTZ in Bosnia and Herzegovina is to help establish structures that will improve the position of young people through targeted support. One of the basic **preconditions for sustainable and effective youth support is the quality and professional abilities of employees in this sector**. At the beginning of 2004, there were no professionals either in the government or in the non-governmental sector in BiH. Young people from the non-governmental sector had attended short seminars and were familiar with how the authorities should structure youth support, yet could do little to change the working procedures in local government or develop close cooperation with them. A few municipalities, as well as other institutions, employed officers who within their diverse portfolio also were responsible for youth issues, but were never trained for the job.

That is why at the beginning of 2004, GTZ decided to offer training for municipal staff to become professionals for youth issues. In order to acquire the basic information on the situation of potential trainees, **two focus groups** made up of representatives of municipal officers and youth association leaders were formed.

Osnovna obuka općinskih službenika/ca za mlade
Kurikulum s radnim materijalima

VIJEĆE
KOMISIJA ZA MLADOST
OPERATIVNA I NEKVALIFIKOVANA
FINANCIJE
STAVNA SLUŽBA
BEZBESNI I STRAŽARCI
F. BiH
ZAJEDNIČKI POSLOVI

Samostalno izdavanje materijala za mlade, uvo
vs. - izdavanje materijala za mlade

Materijali su dostupni za prikazivanje materijala
NVO - dostupnost
vs. - izdavanje materijala za mlade

→ OBRAZOVNE MREŽE
→ EKSPERTI
→ NEKVALIFIKOVANI
→ MLADI
→ MEDIJI
→ NEKVALIFIKOVANE ORGANIZACIJE

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OBRAZOVANJE ZA MLADU U BiH

The aim was to identify the areas of activity and the necessary qualifications for a municipal youth officer. GTZ's starting assumption was that the prospective youth officers (employed by municipal administrations) and the beneficiaries (youth association leaders) would best determine the necessary substance of training corresponding to the needs present in BiH.

The concept of the training thus brought together the professional elements of training and the practical needs of participants. Apart from that, it was determined that the curriculum must take into account the **diverse professional profiles of the municipal officers**. The developed material caters for training municipal officers without experience in youth and pedagogical work to become youth officers.

The course was implemented in **five modules**, each lasting five days. Between the modules, the trainees were assigned homework to better research their municipality and the position of young people in it.

Throughout the training, the trainees were able to express their opinions on its substance and methodology so that the needs of the target group could always be met. Just before the end of training, GTZ organised two study visits to

Germany for the trainees. In this way, each of the officers was directly introduced to youth work and was able to discuss the responsibilities of youth officers with German colleagues. The trainees assessed the study visits as an important and useful experience for generating ideas and directly encountering youth work.

Every module included elements from the following basic areas:

1. Youth work,
2. Administrative procedures of municipalities and authorities,
3. Project management,
4. Youth policy,
5. Communication, teamwork and leadership,
6. Lobbying and public relations,
7. Human rights and democracy.

The selection of these basic areas come from focus group interviews and are common elements for the training of youth officers. Many topics and methods are not new and have been used in trainings for other professions. A novelty here is the unification of old renowned methods for the needs of a new target group, the so-called youth officers.

Youth Officers' Association

On completion of the first youth officers' course, the municipal participants created an association to ensure that contact and exchange of information would not cease. Furthermore the goal was to ensure the establishment of the profession of youth officer in BiH as the focal person for youth issues and provider of support to young people at the municipality level.

The Youth Officers' Association is primarily open for membership to all youth officers in BiH but also for persons working in the field of youth support are all eligible. It sees itself as the **official partner to the government authorities** at all levels in regard to youth issues at the municipal level.

Activities

- 1) Provide basic and in-house training to persons pursuing this profession and to introduce new methods and theories in the municipal support for young people.
- 2) Secure regular governmental funding for the association,
- 3) Raise funds for projects to improve youth work,





- 4) Extend youth support measures to other sectors and
- 5) Keep pace with current needs of young people.
- 6) Extend opportunities for working in partnership with other organisations interested in the development of work with young people.
- 7) Advocate and do PR for the profession of youth officer as a focal person for youth issues

The youth officer's association provides activities which have proven to be effective in BiH and meets European standards in the field of assistance to young people at the municipal level. The youth officer is slowly being recognised as an important profession. Today there are approximately 47 working in different municipalities. It insures that the job description for the post of youth officer at the municipal level is standardised and that they receive technical training and peer support. With the assistance of the association and its members and the GTZ, it has been possible to develop 40 local youth strategies and contribute to the sustainable implementation of the State and municipal policy towards young people.

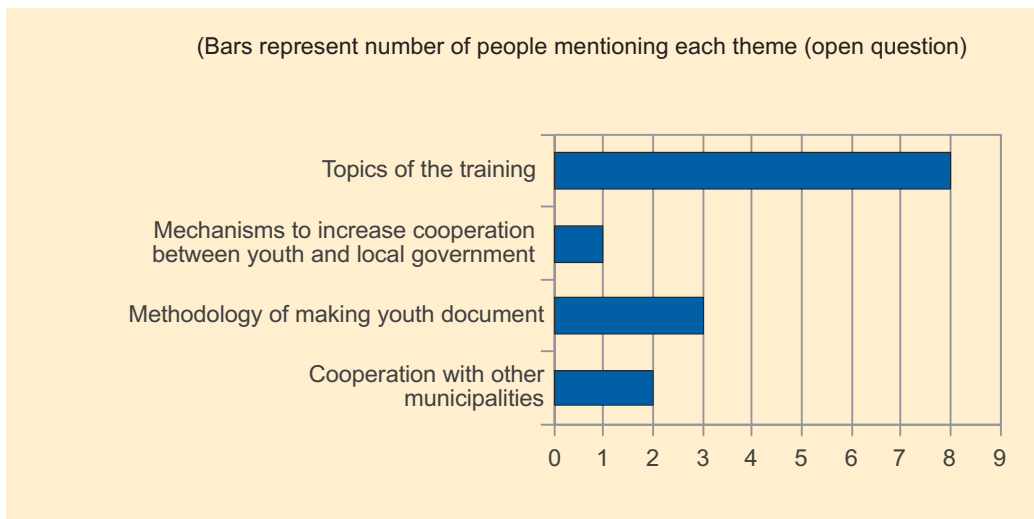
Impact of the training

Most youth officers, before the training, didn't have a clear picture on what a Youth Officer is and what his/her tasks are. Today, after completing the training and after a few years of work on implementing youth policies, youth officers are recognized in their environments as the persons young people address for their needs.

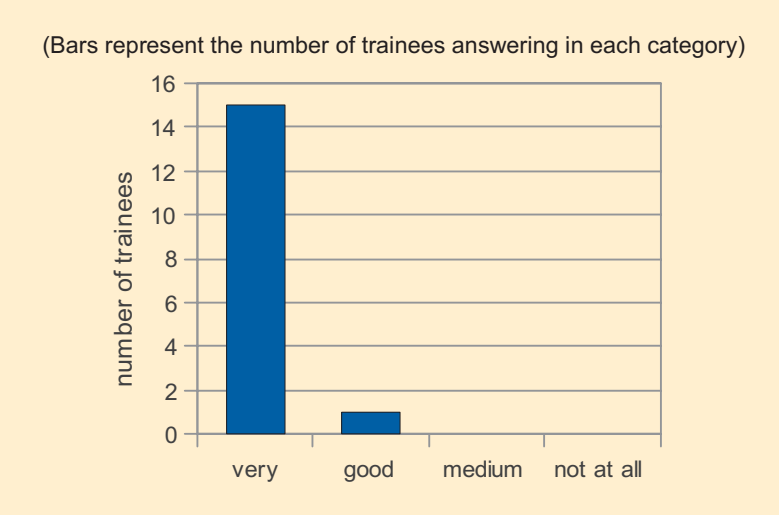
Youth officers say that the GTZ training increased their capacity both on a personal and professional level. The capacity development refers to getting knowledge about youth policy and mechanisms for the work of a youth officer, as well as developing personal skills and abilities. What made this GTZ training special, according to the youth officers, is the concept of training which enables practical application and everyday usability of what was learned.



Graph 1. Themes mentioned by the participants on the training of Youth Officers - areas where they had learned something very new and important



Graph 2. Has your knowledge and capability for planning and implementation of youth support programs improved through this training?



Most municipalities which employ a youth officer completed and adopted a Youth Strategy. Youth Officers were the main initiators of the development of a youth strategy, as well as coordinators for all actors who participated in its creation. Young people were given a possibility of taking part and contributing in the process of making the youth strategy.

Youth Officer: *"The youth strategy was made through communication and coordination with young people, representatives of local organizations and different municipal department. We also had the support from the Mayor. 90% of the projects and activities defined in the youth strategy have been implemented so far."*

By adoption of the youth strategy, not only the implementation of youth action plans was improved, but also the position of youth officers. The position of youth officer is now recognized in the local community. Most interviewed youth officers say that, ever since there is the position of the Youth Officer in the municipality, problems of young people are taken seriously and priority is given to their solution. Thanks to the youth strategy, financial funds for youth are planned annually in the municipal budget.

Youth Officer: *"It helped in a way that the youth problems are treated equally like all other problems we are dealing with, and these are maybe the most important problems that need solving. In the last two years, maybe more, youth work has become very active. With various projects and their implementation, whether with the assistance of the municipality or other donors, they show seriousness in their work, and thereby, facilitate the work of the person in charge of, among other things, working with young people."*

The youth officers point out the importance of support and assistance they had from GTZ also after the completion of the training. The advisory and material assistance which was given by GTZ was necessary for youth officers both in the process of completing the youth strategy and in the process of its implementation.

Youth Officer: *"Because GTZ is a partner you can rely on and whose help you can count on also after the end of training which is extremely important for each youth officer."*

Snapshot of a youth officer

Amra Bojicic is a professor of sociology. She is an employee of a Bosnian municipality since September 2003, and is responsible for work with youth and cooperation with the NGO sector. This position is within the Department of Education, Culture, Sport and Information.



Ms. Bojicic undertakes the following primary activities within her position:

- 1) Identification of needs and problems of youth in the local community,
- 2) Coordination of the process of establishment and implementation of youth policy on the local level,
- 3) Cooperation with youth organisations and associations of youth,
- 4) Preparation of proposals for the municipal budget for the youth, and
- 5) Ensuring of information flow between youth and municipal structures.

Ms. Bojicic believes that her position is of great importance **“because it gives a face to the municipal, someone whom the youth can contact directly.”** An officer for the issues of youth is the liaison between the youth and the Mayor, i.e. the Municipal Council, and this person provides proposals for improvement of the situation of youth, based on communication with young people.

Ms. Bojicic participated in the training programme for youth officers on the local level, organised by the GTZ in the period 2004-2006. She believes that this training programme has largely helped her. It is a program which cannot be found in the formal education system of BiH and this made the training even more valuable. Ms. Bojicic stated that she recommends participation in this programme to all those working with the youth on the level of municipal government in BiH.

Ms. Bojicic is currently engaged in completion of a research on in Ilidža Municipality, which is the basis for creation of the strategy for youth for the period 2010-2012. **This is the second research and the second strategy for the youth** carried out in this municipality.

Implementation of Children and Youth Rights in German Development Cooperation

Strengthening the partner countries' **institutional capacities is considered a main requirement for the promotion of good governance**, political stability, democracy and thus poverty reduction. As the youth play a decisive role in the development of a society it is essential to support the institutional capacities for youth promotion and participation at all levels.

It is a requirement of many international, regional and national documents and programmes that a process be put in place to promote dialogue between the youth and government at all levels.

An important concern is to connect democratisation and good governance with the realisation of human rights. Young people are an essential target group of German Development Cooperation's human rights concept. Thus promotion and protection of young people are also important for institutional development in the

partner countries. German Development Cooperation has long experience in the establishment of structures for youth promotion and empowerment in several regions and countries.

The GTZ Sector Project "Implementation of Children and Youth Rights", commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, promotes the realization of children and youth rights in all aspects of German as well as international development cooperation. To achieve this, the sector project supports the generation and distribution of good practices from country projects and makes them available for other stakeholders. In addition, it utilizes the experiences from country projects to develop new methods and approaches for the implementation of children and youth rights, with a specific focus on young people's social and economic inclusion as well as youth violence prevention. All approaches take into account the need for capacity development in the children and youth sector, including governmental as well as non-state actors at macro, meso and micro levels. In doing so, the sector project strives for the sustainability of all approaches and the strengthening of both, rights holders and duty bearers.

Profile of the GTZ

As an international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development with worldwide operations, the federally owned Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH supports the German Government in achieving its development-policy objectives. It provides viable, forward looking solutions for political, economic, ecological and social development in a globalised world. Working under difficult conditions, GTZ promotes complex reforms and change processes. Its corporate objective is to improve people's living conditions on a sustainable basis.

GTZ is a federal enterprise based in Eschborn near Frankfurt am Main. It was founded in 1975 as a company under private law. The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is its major client. GTZ works on a public-benefit basis. All surpluses generated are channelled back into its own international cooperation projects for sustainable development.

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