

SOCIAL DELIVERY STANDARDS

for NGOs in working
with youth at risk
in Western Balkans

Project ARYSE – At Risk Youth
Social Empowerment

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WHY THIS DOCUMENT

The aim of this document is to contribute to the development of social delivery standards for civil society organisations working with young people at risk of social exclusion in the Western Balkans. More specifically, the purpose of this document is to enable better protection of children and youth at risk of social exclusion through developing set of standards for provision of social services that target this social categories. The necessity and importance of common standards in this field are broadly recognised and welcomed. If standards are generally accepted, clear and understandable for stakeholders who should comply with them, the quality of service provided to young people at risk will be on higher level and impact on the societies shall be more visible as well.

For whom it is created

This document is designed primarily for civil society organisations who provide social protection and youth work services for young people at risk. Bearing in mind the diversity of these organisations in terms of their size, experience, organizational culture, financial support, and other peculiarities, document will tackle basic national and international legal practices, values and principles as well as minimum standards that need to fit every organisation that intends to work young people at risk.

The Project background

The initiative for creating such standards has been launched within the regional project supported by the European Commission: "ARYSE - At-Risk Youth Social Empowerment" which aims to improve the policies and practices of governmental and non-governmental organizations, in relation to different groups of young people. The overall objective of the Project is to contribute to regional achieving of social inclusion of most at risk youth by strengthening CSOs capacities, regional / national cooperation and advocacy actions. The specific objective is to support equal access to education, employment, justice and other related fields to most-at-risk young people in Balkan countries, by fostering the level of active participation and inclusion of CSOs representing young people in decision making and reform processes.

The Regional initiative and common interest

The need for such intervention is recognised by the group of Western Balkan non-governmental organisations which have years of experience in supporting young people at risk of social exclusion, sharing the common vision of empowering youth at the greatest risk of long-term social exclusion: NGO Juventas as project coordinator (Montenegro) and project partners ARSIS (Albania), Association Margina (Bosnia and Herzegovina), HOPS (Macedonia), NGO Labyrinth (Kosovo*), Prevent (Serbia) and SHL Foundation from Germany. Document contains the mapping of current situation in the Western Balkans in terms of civil society services that target young people at risk, but also the good practices that could help to boost organisation's capacities and improve the quality of services provided.

Vulnerability of young people

Nowadays, across the Europe it is wide accepted that young people are recognized as a vulnerable group. One third of young people in the European Union are at risk of social exclusion¹. Across the different dimensions investigated, a significant proportion of the youth population is living in marginalised and deprived conditions, which hinder them from exercising their fundamental rights and threaten their long-term future. The main determinants of social exclusion are rooted in social inequalities, such as obstacles to accessing quality education and training, securing adequate employment, suffering from discriminatory practices and attitudes, as well as being subject to exclusionary processes based on residence and/or citizenship.

Youth in Western Balkans

Having in mind the more challenging political, economic and social circumstances in Western Balkan, position of those young people is far more difficult, especially in terms of risk of unemployment, poverty, social exclusion and living in the environments that are not supporting enough. It seems that governments in this region are mostly aware of unfavorable environment for youth, especially when it comes to difficult transition from school to work. This recognition is an important step in bringing youth to the forefront of the policymaking agenda. Today, all governments in Western Balkans have developed youth policy aiming to promote wellbeing of young persons, usually underlying those at risk and with fewer opportunities.

CSOs and state actors as social service providers

Apart from national and local authorities that provide support for young people at risk, certainly the most important actors are civil society organisations conducting youth programs and projects who are trying to reach and deliver youth work or social services to the most vulnerable youth. One of the main principles in their work is social inclusion which means availability of services and equal opportunities for all young people to use them. However, some groups of youth are living in less favorable conditions, facing with social, economic, health or other barriers which requires additional efforts and support mechanisms for their successful transition to adulthood. Integrated and comprehensive social protection services are essential in that process. In order to provide services based on the youth needs, CSOs are the most important partners to the government institutions. They are indispensable source of support, in particular for youth facing poverty, deprivation, violence, exclusion, marginalisation, a lack of opportunities or poor living conditions. However, the infrastructure, network of services, their quality and availability vary from country to country, even within the national contexts, which is one of the factors that makes more difficult the creation of supportive and inclusive environment for every young person, especially those at risk.

Unlike the most of European countries where social delivery services have long tradition, state and civil actors in Western Balkans are still developing the sustainable models and mechanisms of specified, tailor made services for small groups of youth in needs. Their effects and benefits for individuals and communities still remain to be evaluated and their impacts measured. However, one thing is certain. The social protection and especially youth work services enable young person in risk to engage in social activities, to integrate better in local social environment, solve life's difficulties, and accept the positive social values and norms. The CSOs are crucial partner in this process since

¹ EUROSTAT at-risk-of-poverty or social exclusion indicator (AROPE) is based on three indicators: at-risk-of-poverty rate, severe material deprivation rate and households with very low work intensity. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion are defined as the share of the population being in at least one of the three situations. In 2014, the AROPE rate for young people aged 15–29 was 29.8 % in the EU-28, corresponding to about 25.9 million young people.

*All references to Kosovo should be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244

their approach is flexible, participatory, cost effective and outcomes oriented, presenting thus the complementary support to the traditional system of social protection services organised by the state actors. Although those CSOs services are recognised and in place, sometimes there are no common rules who is entitled to provide them, which competencies social or youth worker must have and level of service quality that must be fulfilled. Bearing in mind that neither system of quality standards nor accreditation / licencing of civil society organisations that deliver social services for youth at risk is equally developed in Western Balkan, this document aims to help them to better understand and meet this standards, placing the human rights of young person in the centre of their activities.

The importance of youth work

In order to effectively respond to risk of exclusion for many young people, youth work should not be neglected. It has been proven as a tool and powerful mechanisms that can make positive change in the life of young people. Thus, in the European policies and practices youth work has become the synonym for fostering education and training, offering concrete opportunities for integration in the labor market, fighting discriminatory practices by creating opportunities for real inclusion and, most important, finding youngsters who tend to be completely isolated and out of reach of traditional institutions and supporting their reintegration in the societies.

Key terms and their meanings

In order to provide common understanding of main terms, in the framework of this document terms shall mean as followed:

Code of conduct (or ethical codex)

Written set of guidelines issued by an organisation to its workers and management to help them conduct their actions in accordance with its primary values, responsibilities and ethical standards.

Child and youth safeguarding

The responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children and youth. All actions on child and youth safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount. Safeguarding usually refers to broad preventative and precautionary approach to planning, as well as procedures that need to be in place in order to protect children and young people from any potential harm or damage. Protection and prevention are two important aspects of safeguarding.

Social and welfare services

Provisions designed firstly to guarantee and protect the basic and fundamental rights of young people and secondly, to assure the care and protection of young people deemed to be personally or socially at risk. Youth welfare policies give special priority to bridging social and economic divisions by supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to overcome the obstacles they face. Methods commonly cut across a large variety of fields, including but not limited to youth work, social work, social pedagogy, guidance, counselling, monitoring, and psychology. Those services can be delivered by government, non-government or private actors.

Standards

Set of precise criteria, rules and guidelines on how the service is provided to achieve the best results for the user. Standards are means of guaranteeing the quality of social protection services. Standard represents the criterion, or the basic measure that must be fulfilled. The minimum standards are the basic requirements that must be met in order to provide social services. Usually they are written in laws, bylaws as well as in internal documents of organisations, always in accordance with main

principles and values proclaimed by adopted international conventions or treaties.

Social exclusion

Process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live. Discrimination occurs in public institutions, such as the legal system or education and health services, as well as social institutions like the household.

Social inclusion

The process of promoting the values, relations and institutions that enable all people to participate in social, economic and political life on the basis of equality of rights, equity and dignity.

Social work

Practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work.

Vulnerable youth

Young people who experience poverty, deprivation, violence, exclusion, marginalisation, a lack of opportunities, poor living conditions, a degraded environment and vulnerability to a higher degree than the majority of the population. Thus they are at higher risk of not achieving positive life outcomes. Vulnerable youth are more general term comparing to youth at risk.

Youth at risk

For the purpose of this document, a social category that includes the following target groups: youth and children in conflict with the law, youth and children who use drugs, young people living in families with a history of conflict with the law and/or drug abuse, street youth and children, young Roma and young people who were children without parental care.

Youth work

Activities with and for young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. The main objective of youth work is to provide opportunities for young people to shape their own futures. Youth work belongs to the domain of 'out-of-school' education, most commonly referred to as either non-formal or informal learning. The general aims of youth work are the integration and inclusion of young people in society. It may also aim towards the personal and social emancipation of young people from dependency and exploitation. Youth work belongs both to the social welfare and to the educational systems. Two important components of youth work are detached and outreach work. Detached youth work is a model of youth work practice, a form of street-based youth work provision, which operates without the use of a center and takes place where young people "are at" both geographically and developmentally. As opposed to detached youth work, outreach is seen as an extension to center-based work that takes place when workers who are usually center based go onto the streets with an agenda of their own to pursue, usually to encourage young people to attend their club.

Western Balkans

Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

International human rights law is the body of international law designed to promote human rights on social, regional, and domestic levels. As a form of international law, international human rights law is primarily made up of treaties, agreements between sovereign states intended to have binding legal effect between the parties that have agreed to them; and customary international law. Other international human rights instruments (declarations, conventions, charters, etc.), while not legally binding contribute to the implementation, understanding and development of international human rights law and have been recognised as a source of political obligation. Thus, the international human rights law presents global standards for all countries to promote respect of human rights, placing individuals in the focus of care and protection.

Ujedinjene nacije

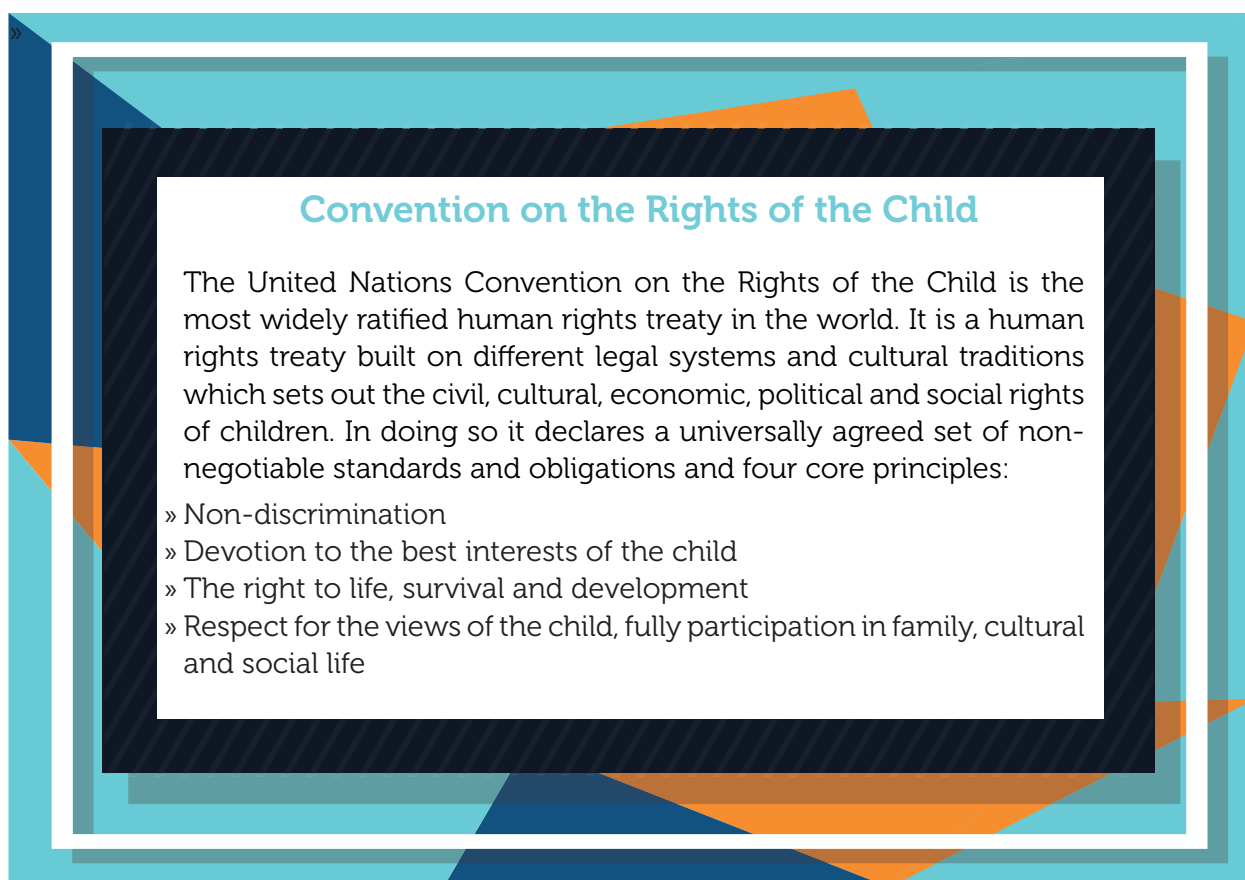
The international human rights movement was strengthened when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10 December 1948. Drafted as 'a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations', the Declaration for the first time in human history spell out basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all human beings should enjoy. It has over time been widely accepted as the fundamental norms of human rights that everyone should respect and protect. The UDHR, together with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, form the so - called International Bill of Human Rights.²

Over the years, the commitments have been translated into law, whether in the forms of treaties, customary international law, general principles, regional agreements and domestic law, through which human rights are expressed and guaranteed. Indeed, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has inspired more than 80 international human rights treaties and declarations, a great number of regional human rights conventions, domestic human rights bills, and constitutional provisions, which together constitute a comprehensive legally binding system for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Apart from Universal Declaration of Human Rights, within the United Nation system, the main conventions that tackle issues of human rights and fundamental freedoms are:

- » International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966
- » International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966
- » International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (and Optional Protocol)
- » Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979
- » Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- » United Nations Millennium Declaration, 2000

² <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/InternationalLaw.aspx>



Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the world. It is a human rights treaty built on different legal systems and cultural traditions which sets out the civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights of children. In doing so it declares a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations and four core principles:

- » Non-discrimination
- » Devotion to the best interests of the child
- » The right to life, survival and development
- » Respect for the views of the child, fully participation in family, cultural and social life

The Council of Europe

Social inclusion of youth, with particular attention to the most vulnerable, is a priority of the recent Council of Europe activities. For the Council of Europe, social inclusion and cohesion are firmly based on human rights as well as on acceptance of shared responsibility for the welfare of all members of society, especially those who are at risk of poverty or exclusion. In line with this, the youth policy of the Council of Europe aims at “providing young people with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society”, as stated in the ‘Agenda 2020’, which guides Council of Europe youth policy since 2008.

The Council of Europe’s work on inclusion of young people in vulnerable situations found its most recent expression in the adoption of the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on the access of young people of disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights (2015) and the proposed Action Plan on Inclusive Societies (2016-2019). The Council of Europe puts special focus and recognises the youth work as a valuable tool for decreasing social inequalities among young people. Recommendation to the Council of Europe member states on youth work, adopted in 2017, underlines that quality youth work is key to preventing a “lost generation” in Europe.

Other key Council of Europe conventions, treaties and strategic documents that address social rights, inclusion and social cohesion are:

- » European Convention on Human Rights, 1950
- » Revised European Social Charter, 1996
- » Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (charter without the status of a convention), 2003
- » New Strategy and Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion, 2010

Youth policies and youth age definitions in Western Balkans

The most of the Western Balkan six, targeted by the project (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), share a similar tradition in youth policy development and implementation, especially in recent times due to the efforts to comply with the European policies and practices.

In the Western Balkans, legal and strategical framework at national levels that is important for youth policy, including the social inclusion of young people is mainly represented by:

- » Laws related to youth;
- » Youth strategies and their action plans;
- » Local action plans for youth at the level of local self-governments;
- » Laws and protocols that are regulating social welfare / protection and social services in line with them, list of national strategies covering specific areas like: social welfare, family, child protection, non-discrimination etc.

The European Union

On the European Union level, social protection lies at the heart of the European social model. Social protection policy is largely the responsibility of individual Member States in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. However, at the EU level the 'Open Method of Coordination', a voluntary process for political cooperation based on agreeing common objectives and common indicators, has been established. Social protection systems vary widely across the Union. However, EU Member States are all in principle committed to providing universal access to social protection against the major lifecycle risks, in line with the guarantee contained in Article 34 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

European social protection systems have provided important buffers against risk and income poverty, as well as limiting inequality in Europe, but persistent economic difficulties due to the financial crisis have raised difficult questions about their affordability and efficiency. In response, the EU is seeking to develop new ways of delivering high levels of social protection at lower cost, including greater emphasis on activating young and elderly people. 'Europe 2020', the EU's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, was launched in 2010 with targets for increasing employment and reducing poverty and social exclusion³.

Within the EU Youth Strategy (2010-2018) one of the main proposed initiatives is in the area of social inclusion. The EU Youth Strategy aims to realise the full potential of youth work and youth centres as a means of inclusion, to address the issues of homelessness, housing, and poverty and to promote access to quality services such as health and social services. To address the risks of exclusion run by many young individuals, the Social Investment Package adopted by the European Commission (2013) seeks to improve the situation of young people by tackling childhood disadvantage, improving access to quality education and support services, helping young people develop skills relevant to the labour market, and ensuring work experience and on-the-job training and helping young people find a first good job.

³ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Social Protection in European Union Development Cooperation /* COM/2012/0446

Country	Youth in constitution	Law on Youth	Youth in other relevant social and welfare acts	National Youth Strategy
Albania	*		*	*
Bosnia and Herzegovina		*	*	
Kosovo		*	*	*
Macedonia			*	*
Montenegro		*	*	*
Serbia		*	*	*

Table 1. Normative and strategic youth policy framework in Western Balkan governments

Youth age definitions

Mostly, youth is defined as “the passage from a dependant childhood to independent adulthood” when young people are in transition between a world of rather secure development to a world of choice and risk⁴. Young people are certainly in a specific social position since they are not entitled to child benefits and protection any more, but need additional care since they still do not enjoy all the possibilities and opportunities available to adults. It is widely known that there is no clear-cut definition of who exactly young person is, since youth presents a very heterogeneous category with various social, economic, cultural and educational backgrounds, interests, challenges and needs. Thus, finding a commonly accepted definition of youth is always a challenging task. Age could be a useful, but insufficient indication to characterise the transition to adulthood. So far, age distinction has been mostly considered as prevailing approach in defining youth, but we should not neglect that social status and life situations may also play a role.

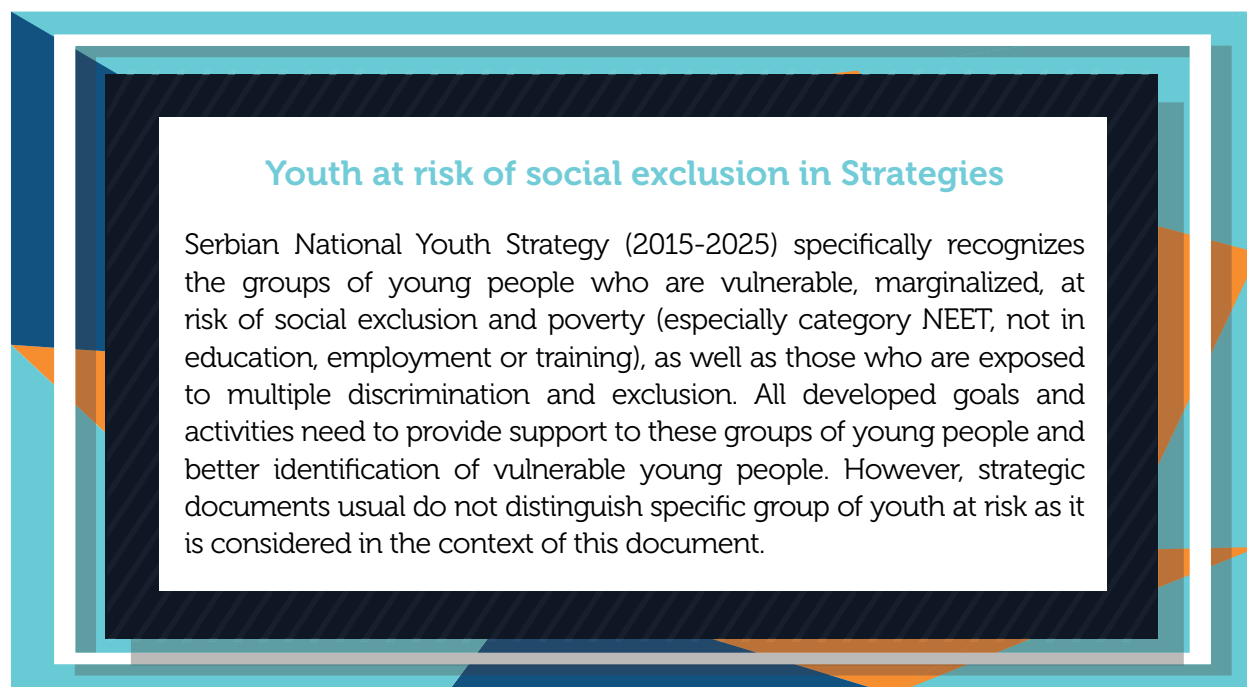
Bearing in mind regional similarities on youth policy development, social patterns and models of late family transitions to adulthood, governments in Western Balkans mostly define youth as the age group between 15/16 and 29/30 years old. The exception is only Kosovo since their Law on Empowerment and participation of Youth (2009) accept youth definition that refers to 15-24 age bend. However, the national definition of youth is sometimes sector or programme dependent and may vary from one officially adopted. For example, in the domain of housing, agriculture or employment policies, the upper age limit may be moved further towards 35 or even 40, allowing these young people to benefit from programmes and initiatives aimed to improve the wellbeing of young people. Within the scope of social financial support, the upper age limit is usually 26 years of age or limited until completion of formal education (Montenegro, Macedonia, and Serbia).

Definition on persons entitled to youth support, rights and measures of protections is usually part of standalone legal document on youth issues on the national level (Serbia, Montenegro,

4 Eurostat (2009), Youth in Europe, A Statistical Portrait, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, p. 17

Kosovo) or federal states level (Bosnia and Herzegovina, BiH), while those countries that still do not have such act provide youth definition in strategic document on youth policy (Macedonia, Albania). Apart from defining youth age, legal documents on youth policy usually prescribes youth policy principles (such as equal opportunities, non-discrimination and solidarity), relevant structures responsible for youth policy implementation at national and local level, ways of supporting the development of youth and improving their life quality and general position in the society. Laws related to youth do not particularly address working with young people at risk although Law in Federation BiH states that working with youth with special needs shall be an integral part of youth sector field. However, laws always recognise youth work and its purpose.

Albania and Macedonia do not have law on youth. Thus, principles, main terms and strategic goals of youth policy are defined within their strategic documents. Youth strategies are also adopted by all others Western Balkans governments (in BiH on the level of entities) and mainly encompass policy interventions, main objectives and activities in different areas, such as education, employment, welfare, culture, mobility, culture, etc. It is important to mention that the most of youth strategies in this region recognise as one of main objectives social inclusion of vulnerable youth.



Youth at risk of social exclusion in Strategies

Serbian National Youth Strategy (2015-2025) specifically recognizes the groups of young people who are vulnerable, marginalized, at risk of social exclusion and poverty (especially category NEET, not in education, employment or training), as well as those who are exposed to multiple discrimination and exclusion. All developed goals and activities need to provide support to these groups of young people and better identification of vulnerable young people. However, strategic documents usual do not distinguish specific group of youth at risk as it is considered in the context of this document.

Social welfare policies and social services

When it comes to the normative determination of youth welfare services, their provisions are designed firstly to guarantee and protect the basic and fundamental rights of young people and secondly, to assure the care and protection of young people deemed to be personally or socially at risk. By extension, youth welfare policies give special priority to bridging social and economic divisions by supporting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to overcome the obstacles they face. The public sector is the mainstream service provider, but measures may be implemented by a mixture of governmental structures, quasi-governmental organisations and non-governmental associations. On the whole, services are staffed by formally qualified and salaried staff, but voluntary workers continue to make their contribution in CSOs contexts. Approaches of youth welfare services may be informing, supporting, advising,

assisting, educating – but also protecting, controlling, intervening, limiting, excluding, and even patronising. Methods commonly cut across a large variety of fields, including but not limited to youth work, social work, social pedagogy, guidance, counselling, monitoring, and psychology⁵.



Regarding the laws, by-laws and protocols regulating social welfare and related social services, the most relevant is certainly set of laws on social (family and child) welfare, laws on family and anti-discrimination laws. Laws that address social and child protection/welfare (Montenegro, Serbia, Republika Srpska) often stipulate institutions, services and other mechanisms for providing care, accommodation, education, vocational training and protection of the health of children and youth in conflict with law, behavioural disorder, without parental care or at other types of risks, socially needy and excluded (e.g. institution / resource centres for children and youth, services of personal assistance, counselling, therapeutic and educational services, SOS hotline for different types of assistance, etc.). Other acts, rule books and protocols that regulate social care services, also stipulate the target groups, the purpose and activities of the service and the structural and functional minimum standards of services.

The majority of social welfare laws, apart from children, recognise young people as persons in need that should be supported with social services or financially. The exceptions are the Kosovo Law on social and family services and Federation BiH Law (Law on Basics of Social Protection, Protection of Civilian Victims of War and Families with Children) that regulate the provision of social and family services to persons who are in need, without mentioning young people as a specific target group.

⁵ <http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/glossary/-/glossary/Y#youth-welfare-services>

Services for youth in the field of social protection, the example from the Serbian practice:

In the field of social protection of the Republic of Serbia a total of 31 different local services are organised, out of which 14 are services for children and youth, 9 services are for adults and the elderly and 8 services are used equally by all groups of users, (i.e. services that are classified as family support or support services for victims of trafficking, or victims of domestic violence). Among the services for children and young people, the most often is day care for children and young people with developmental disabilities, followed by a day care service for children and youth with physical disabilities, and finally a support for young people to become independent.

The prerequisite for the sustainability of social care services is that they are institutionalised, meaning that there is a local government decision on their financing. The number of such institutionalised services is relatively small, especially when it comes to the number of municipalities in which they are provided. For example, the Shelter for children and youth exists in 9 municipalities, a Drop in shelter in 3 municipalities, while the Club for youth in the process of independence have been established only in one municipality.

Regarding service providers, data show that local governments more often choose and trust public sector welfare institutions than civil society organizations. Although associations are usually the pioneers in the establishment of social services at the local level, the institutionalization of these services by local governments for most cities / municipalities is still difficult.

Source: Local youth office Subotica, <http://kzm.subotica.rs/files/prikaz-prakticnih-politika-usluga-za-mlade-na-lokalnom-nivou.pdf>

Following the aforementioned international conventions and recommendations as well as national strategic and normative documents, the common values and principles of working with youth could be distinguished, being in the same time principles of youth policies.

All governments in Western Balkans recognise and emphasize young people and why their active role in the society is important. They are determined to work for youth and in partnership with youth in order to provide conditions in which young people can fulfil their potential as active citizens contributing to their personal and professional development but also to the development of the whole society, as well. Usually, national strategies or relevant laws sets out the basic principles that should lead to improvement in the social and economic situation of young people and the creation of an environment that will enable youth to fulfil their rights, needs and interests. This section shall deal with officially proclaimed youth policy principles and values, without questioning their implementation and the measures taken to put those principles into practice.

“Youth Policy is a cross-sector, integrated policy aimed at young people, with young people and starting from the needs of young people. Its aim is to improve and develop the living conditions and participation of young people, encompassing the whole range of social, cultural and political issues affecting them and other groups in the society.”

European Youth Forum perspective on European Youth Policy, 1998, Lithuania

Youth policy principles

When it comes to common values, all national youth policies are:

- » **based on rights and democratic principles** – designed and implemented in accordance with fulfilment of human rights and fundamental freedoms prescribed by the state and in accordance with the global obligations.
- » **inclusive** – enabling equality and equal chances to all young people to achieve their full potential in life, and especially measures for overcoming barriers for inclusion of vulnerable groups and measures for ensuring civil participation of all young people.
- » **participatory** – developed, implemented, monitored and evaluated with concrete participation of young people and with involvement of all interested parties.

Four categories of main, common principles of the youth policy could be distinguished:

Equality and Non-Discrimination Principle

All young people shall be equal and shall enjoy equal status and equal protection regardless of their personal characteristics. Any kind of discrimination or unequal treatment of young people, direct or indirect, on any grounds, particularly on the grounds of age, race, sex, national origin, religious belief, language, social background, financial standing, affiliation with political, trade

union or other organisations, mental or physical disability, health, physical appearance, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other actual or assumed personal trait shall be prohibited.

Discrimination further exacerbates the barriers to active citizenship that many young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods experience because of social prejudice, isolation, etc. Measures which promote cohesion and positive relations between people from different backgrounds, have been effective in preventing and redressing discrimination.

Equal Opportunity Principle

Young people shall be entitled to equal opportunities and participation in all spheres of life in accordance with their own choices and abilities. Personal and social development of young people shall be encouraged by ensuring the respect for diversity, gender equality, rights, freedom and dignity. Young people shall have the right to objective, adjusted and easily accessible information in order to develop and make fully informed decisions. Access of young people, notably those from disadvantaged groups, should be secured to information which concerns them and using locations and media that are popular with young people (social media, youth organisations and centres, sport clubs, public spaces they frequent), for the purpose of informing and consulting young people on planning processes relevant to them. Young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods have limited access to information and counselling because of their location and lack of resources. However, they are among those who need such services the most.

Active Youth Participation Principle

All actors engaged with young people shall ensure a stimulating environment and offer active support in the performance of youth activities in their meaningful involvement in decision-making processes. Freedom of association, cooperation with peers and intergenerational cooperation at the local, national and international level shall be supported and encouraged. Young people learn about active citizenship through introduction to the concepts and values underpinning citizenship in a democracy, by being active and responsible members of their community. It is at the same time a human right and a responsibility. Young people experiencing barriers to accessing social rights are also more likely to experience barriers to exercising active citizenship and participating responsibly in society.

Principle of Youth Responsibility and Solidarity

The responsibility of those who work with young people, as well as the responsibility of young people arising from their obligations in society shall be encouraged and developed. Young people should actively contribute to the building and upholding of social values and to the development of their communities, especially through various forms of volunteer activities. They should express intergenerational solidarity and actively work on creating the conditions for an equal and full participation in all the aspects of social life.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision - making

Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate action

Rung 6: Adult - initiated, shared decisions with young people

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed

Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed

Rung 3: Young people tokenized*

Rung 2: Young people are decoration*

Rung 1: Young people are manipulated*

*** Note:** Hart explains that the last three rungs are non-participation

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship.

Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre

Picture 1: Ladder of Youth Involvement

Source: Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship, UNICEF, 1992

Levels of youth participation

The 'Ladder of Youth Involvement' as pictured below, is a model conceptualised by Roger Hart (1992) that demonstrates the degrees to which young people can be involved in organisations, with the bottom three rungs (Manipulation, Decoration and Tokenism) referring to non or low involvement and steps four to nine representing increasing degrees of youth participation, where youth initiate ideas and share decisions with adults. The model makes it clear that youth can be involved in many different ways within programs and organisations.⁶

⁶ <http://mypeer.org.au/design-implementation/youth-participation-2/levels-of-youth-participation/>

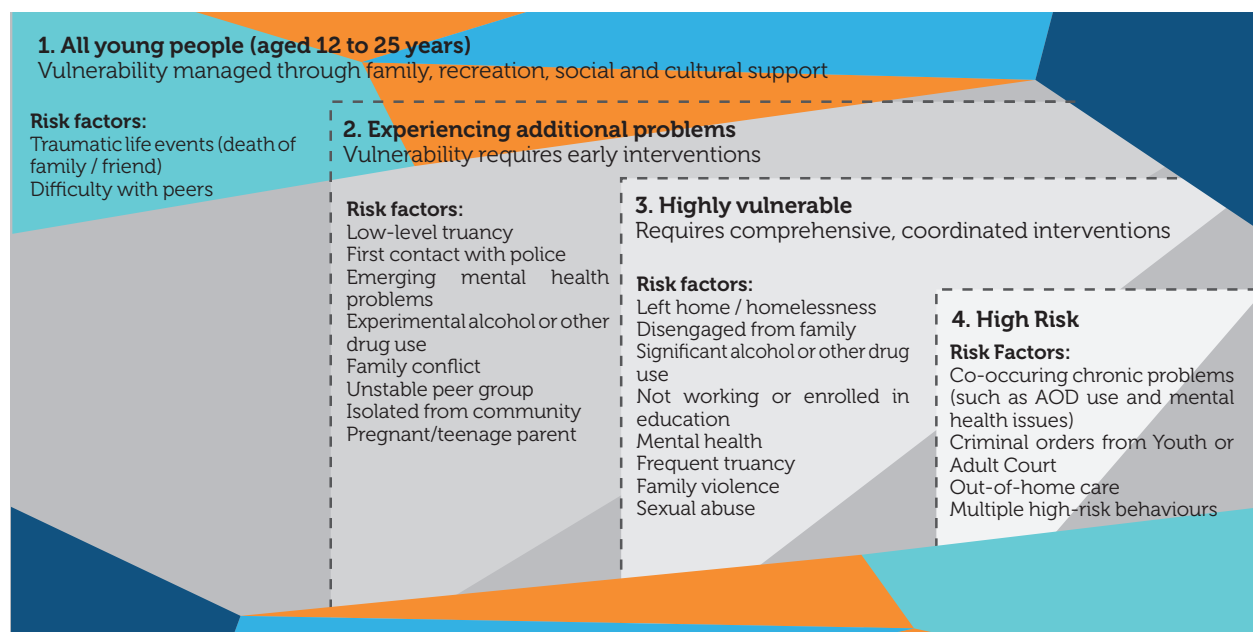
Social protection principles

When it comes to the welfare laws, principles are endorsed by the state and they are in accordance with the ratified international conventions, national legislation and best applied practices. Sometimes the main principles for providing welfare services specifically to child and youth are not so clearly stated. According to the laws where that is acknowledged (Montenegro, Serbia), child and youth welfare is mainly based on the several core principles for both public and non-public service providers:

- » respecting the best interest of the child/young person;
- » non-discrimination;
- » respect for the integrity and dignity of the beneficiaries;
- » active participation of the beneficiaries in developing goals and activities;
- » individual approach;
- » confidentiality;
- » diversity of providers, activities, forms, methods and services;
- » partnership of different activity and programme providers, particularly on the local level;
- » informing beneficiaries about their rights; and
- » transparency of services provided.

Working with the youth at risk

Developmentally, adolescence and youth age can be characterized by periods of difficulties in relationships and communication as young people develop their identities and transition to adulthood and independence. This period is more stressed for those who have experienced significant loss or trauma in their lives and lack supportive relationships to assist with these transitions. Young people at risk of not achieving positive life outcomes often face greater barriers to education, employment, social inclusion and health services. Particularly, high-risk youths may have spent some time in multiple placements, including locked facilities (e.g., jails, mental health services, young offender's institutions). These youths are get used to face ongoing rejection, abandonment and violence, making it increasingly difficult to allowing anyone into their lives, let alone an adult stranger who is an authority figure.



Picture 2: Vulnerable youth framework – example from Australian Office for Youth

Source: Development of a policy framework for Victoria's vulnerable young people, Victorian Government, 2008 p12.

For youth in conflict with the law juvenile justice services are not enough

Many of the circumstances leading young people to different societal conflicts are of a social nature. Children or youth in conflicts with the law often live in families facing difficulties such as poverty, substance abuse or separation; they may be excluded from school or be without a job; they may be involved in risky behaviors such as drug use or prostitution. When these persons enter into contact with the police, the main purpose of juvenile justice systems should be to enable them not to reoffend.

As stated in Article 40 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child in conflict with the law has the right to be treated in a manner that takes into account "the desirability of promoting [his/her] reintegration and [his/her] assuming a constructive role in society." Tailored support for each child and his/her family should be provided throughout the system but obviously, justice systems alone are neither equipped nor mandated to fulfil this role and need to work hand in hand with the social and youth sector. In the absence of such intersectoral cooperation, juvenile justice services would miss the opportunity of supporting a sustainable change in the youths' behavior, circumstances and environment.⁷

The added value of social and youth work with young people at risk

Through fostering honest relationships based on respecting the rights and individual circumstances of each young person, workers develop an understanding and mutual trust with the young people they work with. Workers focus on young people's unique skills, talents, interests, abilities, experiences and competencies in ways that build their personal skills to actively participate in the society. Strengthening the young person's linkages with their peers, families, school, local community and culture are equally important. The professionals always take care that young people are actively involved in planning and working towards the goals they decide to achieve.

Having in mind peculiarities of youth as a beneficiaries of social services, especially youth at risk, it is important that the work with young people is flexible and innovative. Thus, a youth or social worker needs to be ready for changes that stem from the nature of the young people itself. Workers should seek to develop services that are relevant, innovative and responsive to the needs of young people in their community context, taking into account

⁷ The role of social work in juvenile justice, UNICEF, 2013 https://www.unicef.org/eca/UNICEF_report_on_the_role_of_social_work_in_juvenile_justice.pdf

their organization's resource capacity. It requires taking into account the young person's age, life experiences, beliefs, identity and circumstances when providing support. When workers access they cannot offer the proper assistance and support young people, they need to refer young people to other agencies or service provider. This transition needs to be done at the young person's pace, as change may trigger uncertainty and mistrust.⁸ Additionally, young people at risk often get attached and professionals have to be careful not to develop personal relationships with them, as well as to make sure that their behavior outside the work place does not negatively impact their professional integrity. Strict observance of ethical principles is especially important because of the disproportion in power between the service beneficiary and social/youth worker.

Here are some principles and strategies that social or youth workers should comply dealing with young people at risk:⁹

- » Value youths and believe they're worth the effort
Youths' voices should be heard, and social/youth workers must commit to being creative and flexible.
- » Be available
Social/youth workers need to be available both physically and emotionally to accommodate youths at risk when they're ready to work on improving their situation.
- » Go the extra mile
A small thoughtful gesture challenges youths to ask themselves why somebody cares about them and to adjust to this reality.
- » Be self-aware
Social/youth workers must know who they are both as people and professionals, especially with respect to their beliefs, values, judgments, and power. This can help practitioners to become allies in the lives of high-risk youths. Given their life experiences, these youths typically can easily detect others' genuineness, truth, and integrity.
- » Communicate a consistent message: "I will not give up on you."
Youths at risk constantly have experienced people giving up on them, so they won't expect the relationship with their social/youth worker to be different.
- » Expect to be tested
Given their life experiences, youth at risk have the right to be skeptical and suspicious. They won't easily risk being hurt again and will want to know whether the social/youth worker will abandon them or follow through. Social/youth workers must avoid falling into the youths' beliefs and reinforcing that adults can't be trusted.
- » Explore youths' motivation to change
Fear of failure and change often can be mistaken as lack of motivation. Labels can contribute to this in the form of learned helplessness. It's often necessary for social/youth workers to hold these youths' hands at first and to "check in" to ensure the youths feel safe.
- » Be patient
Youth at risk may not know how to develop healthy relationships, so this will take time. Many youths expect to fail and feel unworthy of help.
- » Allow trust to evolve naturally
If youths perceive this is one of the social/youth worker's goals, they may feel threatened

8 Working with Vulnerable Youth – Key Concepts and Principles, Government of South Australia, p. 14, http://www.officeforyouth.sa.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/15771/Working-with-Vulnerable-Youth.pdf

9 Smyth & Eaton-Erickson, 2009, p. 126-139

and pull back. Some youths may not develop the capacity to trust, so getting to the point where they know their social/youth worker won't harm them can be significant and allow for progress.

» **Create healthy confusion**

Social/youth workers should be attuned to the needs of youth at risk and show that there are people who worry about and care for them. The youths' view of the world as lonely, frightening, and unsafe can be challenged over time, allowing for deeper conversations regarding relationships.

» **Inspire hope**

Social/youth workers should celebrate even the smallest successes and allow these youths to define success as experts of their own lives.

» **Intentionally interact**

Every action and conversation should be carried out in a purposeful, thoughtful, respectful way.

» **Changing Expectations**

Many youth at risk have shared that they expect the relationship with their worker to be problematic. Despite this, the workers believe that all youths want connection. Thus, attempting to connect with youth at risk is a risk-filled journey that requires patience.

Important to remember about the main values and principles

- ✓ Always put the best interests of the child/young person first by promoting and protecting their wellbeing;
- ✓ Ensure that the service will not lead to direct or indirect harm;
- ✓ Be responsive and flexible;
- ✓ Foster participatory approach which encourage child/young person to share their views, thoughts and wishes being open and flexible to include them in and development of activities. Their participation can lead only to the better decisions and activities;
- ✓ Build trusting relationships based on respect of individual circumstances of each young person.

The children/youth have valuable opinions as members of society that adults can learn from and together with them. In practice, all those principles should guide social and youth workers how to inspire hope and be attuned to the needs of high-risk youths showing that there are people who worry about and care for them. Thanks to the specialised services and engagement of social/youth workers, the youths' view of the world as lonely, frightening, and unsafe place should be challenged over time. Given their life experience, high-risk youths may not know how to develop healthy relationships, so this will take time and patience. Many youths expect to fail and feel unworthy of help. Thus, social and youth workers should allow trust to evolve naturally ensuring the youths feel safe. One of their main goals must be to communicate consistently aforementioned message: "I will not give up on you".

SAFEGUARDING POLICIES

Protection of the rights of children and youth to be safe from discrimination, physical abuse, exploitation, substance abuse, injustice and conflict are among their key rights. In recent years the awareness of the vulnerability of children's and youth's safety have become more evident which has made the CSOs as service providers more committed in their duties and responsibilities related to the prevention of child and youth abuse as well as their protection and well-being. On the level of policies and main principals, there is consensus that young people should be given the opportunity for their personal and social development in a safe environment. Developing and implementing a child/youth protection policy shows that CSOs that provide social services and youth work are actively involved in safeguarding children, young people, volunteers and staff.

Safeguarding children and young people usually refers to broad preventative and precautionary approach to planning, as well as procedures that need to be in place in order to protect children and young people from any potential harm or damage. Child and youth protection is one important aspect of safeguarding. Another important aspect is preventive action, not just reaction.

All actors that work with and support children and young people do so in many different ways and have a responsibility to keep them safe. Children and young people need safe environments in which they can grow with confidence. Thus, social and youth work good practice requires that all practitioners working with youth are thorough in their recruitment, management and risk assessments so that children, young people and volunteers are safe and confident in the work being delivered. "Do no harm" is a principle that refers to organisations' responsibility to minimise the harm they may be doing inadvertently as a result of their organisational activities.

It is difficult to define "harm" to children and youth because they can be abused in so many ways depending on the context and culture. Vulnerability of children and youth, their marginalised position in societies, lack of information and support give space for different sort of treats and risks they could potentially be exposed such as:

- » Abuse from family, acquaintances and strangers (including domestic violence or sexual abuse, as well as physical or emotional abuse or neglect)
- » Other children and young people (eg. bullying);
- » Themselves (self harm, risky behaviour, alcohol and drug abuse);
- » Internet risks;
- » Immigration issues;
- » Unsafe activities and environments;
- » Crime;
- » Homelessness;
- » Victimisation due to race, sexuality, religion, gender, disability, etc.

All social services, projects and programmes targeting children and youth must be designed to minimise the risk of harm to the beneficiaries they come into contact by taking sufficient account of their safety. Safeguarding children and young people is more than just a set of policies or procedures. It means working with staff and volunteers to ensure that a young person-centred approach to keeping them from harm is translated into reality. In practice it means list of things to consider when planning the event or activity for young people (safe location, transport, facilities, accessibility, security arrangements, dietary requirements, allergies, medical conditions, knowledge/ history of the group, relationships, conflicts, consideration

of alcohol, permission to take and use photos/ video, event timings, safe internet access, consent form completed by the parent or carer if under 18, etc).¹⁰

In order to create safe environment and reduce various spectrum of risk for young people, safeguarding policies and best practices should be used. Where risks do need to be taken, safeguarding policies will ensure that they are calculated, carefully managed and communicated to both children, young people, their parents or carers and to paid staff and volunteers. They are not designed to stifle activities, eradicate all spirit of adventure from your work programmes, or to replace the trust between the people in your organisation with that of suspicion.¹¹

One of the main principles in designing safeguarding policies should be adopting a youth-centred approach and youth participation in the development and implementation of safeguarding policies since they often know best when they feel safe and what can be done to prevent harm. Additionally, it will also help a child or young person recognise that their voice and views are important and valued which, in turn, will mean they are more likely to feel able to raise any worries or concerns. Another important principle of safeguarding policy and procedures should be transparency, meaning that statements should be published widely and brought to the attention of children, young people, their parents or carers, staff, volunteers and anybody else who needs to know.

“The best way to protect children is to empower them to protect themselves”

ChildHope UK

The measures that organisations are putting in place to protect young people and prevent potential harm may be different and vary from the size or service providers, their target group, type of activity etc. Some of the common measures are certainly:

- » Increasing awareness and training of staff and volunteers;
- » Ensuring policies and procedures are living documents;
- » Attaining quality marks and standards for organisations, particularly for safeguarding;
- » Building health and safety and risk assessment into the culture of organisation;
- » Involving children and young people.

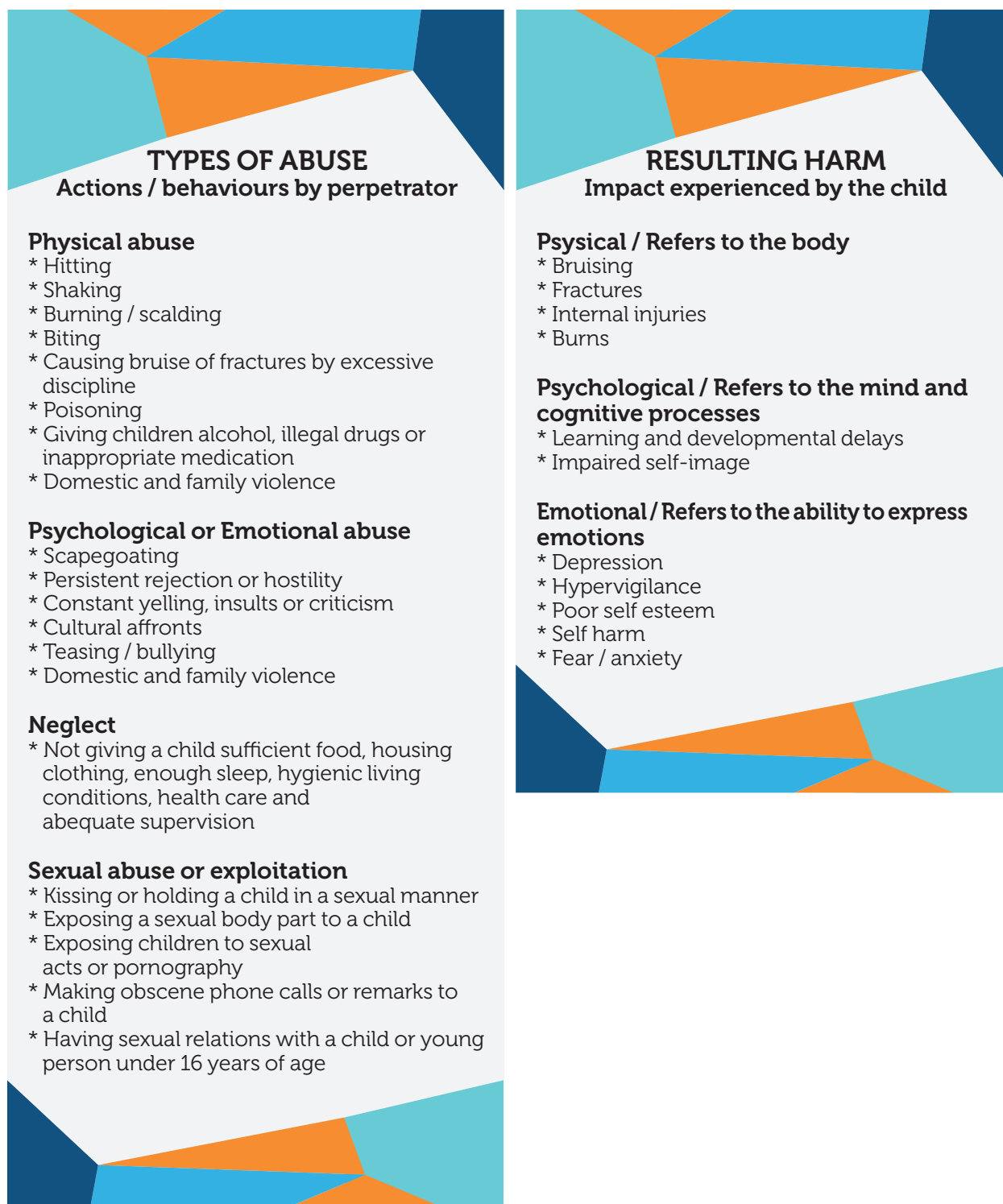
Risk assessment

Risk assessment is an important factor in keeping children and young people safe. The organisation providing services is under the obligation to take all reasonable steps to ensure a child's or young person's safety. Risk assessments should include any activity that might be taking place within organisation or project, as well as those that will take place away from your usual meeting place. Usually, risk assessment should involve identifying:

- » The potential hazards;
- » All the people who might be affected by the hazards;
- » All the necessary safety measures that are needed to deal with the potential hazards;
- » What existing safety measures are in place and what else can be put into place;
- » What steps will be taken in an emergency.

¹⁰ participationworks.org.uk/files/webfm/shop_files/how%20to%20safeguard%20guide%20lowres/index.pdf

¹¹ Ibid.



Picture 3: How to identify harm – different types of abuse which can occur and the harm which can arise
Source: Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit – Queensland Government, 2015, p. 31

Organisations that provide services for children and young people should have clear, transparent and accessible statement aiming to underline their commitment to safeguarding their beneficiaries from abuse and to ensuring that action is taken to support and protect them wherever and whenever abuse is suspected. The statement should also contain mechanisms for alert if signs of harm is recognised as well as responds if abuse is discovered or suspected.

The good example for Child Safeguarding Standards in European policy and practice are Keeping Children Safe International Child Safeguarding Standards¹² defined as:

Standard 1: Policy

The organisation develops a policy that describes how it is committed to preventing and responding appropriately to, harm to children.

Standard 2: People

The organisation places clear responsibilities and expectations on its staff and associates and supports them to understand and act in line with these.

Standard 3: Procedures

The organisation creates a child-safe environment through implementing child safeguarding procedures that are applied across the organization.

Standard 4: Accountability

The organisation monitors and reviews its safeguarding measures.

Those Standards are based on the following set of core principles that may be widely accepted:

- » All children have equal rights to protection from harm.
- » Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
- » Organisations have a duty of care to children with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.
- » If organisations work with partners they have a responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on protection.
- » All actions on child safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

When it comes to marginalized groups of young people, especially those in risk of using drugs, conflict with the law and street youth, safeguarding policies within the CSOs must be prioritized and well developed since the scope of risks are broader and their certainty is higher. For example, it is essential for volunteers and youth and social workers to know how to deal with aggressive behaviors of young people and how to react in such situations; how to act in case of suspicion of abusing and neglecting; how to deal with serious incidents / problems that impair welfare of young person, etc.

Still, in Balkan region not all social and youth work service providers have developed and transparent policies for the protection of youth and children in their programs and activities. It is still depending on organisations to recognise, develop, publish and work in line with proclaimed values, principles, procedures and rules. However, some of good practice examples can be find within the internal safeguarding policy documents of CSOs such as Somborski edukativni centar¹³ and SOS Dečija sela Srbija¹⁴.

12 Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them, Keeping Children Safe, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/rights_child/standards_child_protection_kcsc_en.pdf

13 Politika za zaštitu i sigurnost dece i mladih u programima i aktivnostima Somborskog edukativnog centra, <http://sec.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Politika-za-zastitu-i-sigurnost-dece-i-mladih-SEC.pdf>

14 Politika zaštite dece, Sigurnost dece je svačija briga, SOS Dečija sela Srbija <https://www.google.rs/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=5&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwjuzarZgavXAhUQIewKHajoDNoQFghB-MAQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.sos-decijasela.rs%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2F2016%2F11%2FPolitika-zas-tite-dece.doc&usg=AOvVaw2kPT19tATssoDaq1UkvBTW>

Do's and don'ts

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do use other organisations' child safeguarding policies to inform yourself.• Do work with a group of relevant staff to develop and disseminate the policy• Do make a child friendly version for children you work with | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• But don't just replicate it! |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't develop a policy document that just sits in the office |

An example of policy statement¹⁵

This ... group/ organization/ club/ project is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people, by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect.

Paid staff and volunteers will, at all times, show respect and understanding for the rights, safety and welfare of children and young people they work with, and will conduct themselves in a way that reflects the principles of ...group/organization/ club/ project.

We do this by:

- » Ensuring that all our paid staff and volunteers are carefully selected, trained and supervised
- » Carefully assessing all risks that children and young people encounter and taking all necessary steps to minimize and manage them
- » Letting parents/carers and children and young people know how to voice concerns or complaints about anything that they may not be happy with
- » Giving parents/carers, children and young people, volunteers and staff information about what we do

Things to consider when writing a safeguarding policy¹⁶

- » What are the potential risks to children/young people - who may pose a risk? What situations may increase risk?

¹⁵ Objavio Participation Works, konzorcijum koji se sastoji od British Youth Council (BYC), Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE), National Children's Bureau (NCB), National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), The National Youth Agency (NYA) i Save the Children-England, 2007.

¹⁶ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/safeguarding/writing-a-safeguarding-policy/>

- » How do you check people who work or volunteer for the organisation currently and new starters?
- » What are the different ways someone might raise a concern?
- » How should you respond to concerns or allegations of harm?
- » How does this policy link up with other policies and procedures?
- » Should you provide training for staff and volunteers? How will you raise awareness for everyone involved with the organisation?

Examples and useful models of safeguarding policy development:

- » Samplechildprotectionpolicystatement,source:<http://mantellgwynedd.com/downloads/280114-sample-safeguarding-policy-statement.pdf>
- » NSPCC, Example of a safeguarding policy, source: file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Safeguarding-policy.pdf
- » Cornwall Council, Safeguarding Policy for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults, source: https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/3623591/Cornwall_Safeguarding_Policy-_December_20112.pdf

SELFEVALUATION: QUESTIONS TO HELP CREATE SAFE ENVIRONMENTS FOR CHILD AND YOUTH¹⁷

CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT – CHECKLIST				
	YES	NO	PARTIAL	COMMENTS
Does Your Organization Have...				
A working group to lead the development and integration of policies, procedures and systems for safe environments?				
A designated focal point to help coordinate and execute policies, procedures and systems for safe environments?				
A code of conduct? If yes, does it...				
» Define key terms such as child abuse?				
» Prohibit discrimination based on age, gender, disability, religion/faith, sexuality, ethnicity, language, family status, or political beliefs?				
» Outline the rights and responsibilities for all personnel?				
» Prohibit inappropriate/unsafe behavior related to media and technology platforms?				
» Include special provisions for the protection of children and youth?				
» Include a clear reporting structure for any breaches of the code of conduct?				
» Outline disciplinary, grievance and appeals procedures?				
A child protection policy?				
A safe, clear, confidential and accessible reporting structure?				
» A clear, well-defined investigation process?				

¹⁷ Ten Steps to Creating Safe Environments for Children and Youth, 1st Edition, A Risk Management Road Map to Prevent Violence & Abuse, Canadian Red Cross, 2007, p.36-38

CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT – CHECKLIST

	YES	NO	PARTIAL	COMMENTS
» Support and monitoring systems to hold personnel accountable?				
» A policy on gender and diversity?				
» A policy on preventing and responding to bullying and harassment?				
» A policy on preventing and responding to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence?				
» A policy on appropriate and inappropriate touching of children and youth?				
» Policies on the appropriate use of media and technology?				
Are Personnel...				
» Required to sign a code of conduct?				
» Required to complete a standardized application form?				
» Provided a clear position description?				
» Asked questions about working with children, youth or vulnerable groups in the interview process?				
» Given an interview, including at least one in-person interview, during the application process?				
» Required to submit personal references during the application process?				
» Required to submit a criminal record check?				
» Provided a copy of the code of conduct with clear instructions on how to access advice or report breaches?				

CHILD AND YOUTH RISK MANAGEMENT – CHECKLIST

	YES	NO	PARTIAL	COMMENTS
» Supported and monitored in implementing the code of conduct?				
» Educated on the code of conduct?				
» Educated on the Convention on the Rights of the Child and about abuse, violence, and bullying and harassment prevention?				
Participants				
» Are there policies for in-program contact with children and youth?				
» Are there policies for out-of-program contact with children and youth?				
» Are children and youth provided information and/or education on abuse, violence, bullying and harassment prevention?				
Parents, Visitors and Partners				
» Are parents, visitors and partners provided information on the organization's safe environment policies and procedures?				
» Are parents provided information and/or education on abuse, violence, bullying and harassment prevention?				
» Do visitors have to sign in and/or carry identification when on the organization's premises?				
Are Premises...				
» Assessed for areas where children and youth may be isolated or at increased risk of harm?				
» Used to visibly display information on safe environments, such as preventing abuse, violence, bullying and harassment?				

The Code of Conduct or ethical codex is a written set of guidelines issued by an organisation to its workers and management to help them conduct their actions in accordance with its primary values, responsibilities and ethical standards. It is not about operational details, but more about core principals of work of the profession that should guarantee high quality standards in delivering services to client as well as their impact. It is usually voluntary code but consists of all the obligations that professionals must respect when carrying out their duties. Sometimes it is obligatory code, being integral part of working contact.

In European practice, the code of conduct usually intends to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social or youth workers. This Code may include some of the sections:

Preamble

Summarizing the social/youth work profession's mission and core values.

Purpose of the Code of Ethics

Providing an overview of the Code's main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social/youth work practice.

Ethical Principles

Presenting broad ethical principles, based on core values that inform social/youth work practice.

Ethical Standards

Includes specific ethical standards to guide social/youth workers' conduct and to provide a basis for adjudication.

The following ethical standards relevant to the professional activities of all social/youth workers concern:

- (1) ethical responsibilities to clients,
- (2) ethical responsibilities to colleagues,
- (3) ethical responsibilities in practice settings,
- (4) ethical responsibilities to the social/youth work profession, and
- (5) ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

The formats of Code of Conduct vary and may follow the structure of the legal document (articles defining basic provisions, values, ethical standards and rules of behaviour, relations between professionals and beneficiaries, etc.) or statement document (e.g. "As a staff member of organisation name, I commit myself to treat all young people and other persons of concern fairly, and with respect and dignity...").

Example

The good example of code of ethics in youth work can be found within the United Kingdom where organisations¹⁸ are guided with followed ethical principles of profession:

- » We have a duty of care to young people. In the youth work relationship the best interests of young people have priority.
- » We do not seek to advance ourselves, our organisations, or others – personally, politically, or professionally – at the expense of young people.
- » Our relationship with young people remains within professional boundaries at all times, to protect the young person and the purpose of the work.
- » We work in a fair and inclusive way, promoting justice and equality of opportunity, challenging any discriminatory or oppressive behaviour or practice.

We seek to enhance young people's personal and social development by:

- » Enabling them to make informed decisions and pursue their choices;
- » Supporting their participation and active involvement in society;
- » Helping them to become independent and move on when the time is right.
- » We promote the welfare and safety of young people, while permitting them to learn through undertaking challenging educational activities. We avoid exposing young people to the likelihood of harm or injury. This includes implementing safeguarding policies and procedures.
- » When we receive or collect personal information about young people, we make them aware of with whom and for what purpose that information will be shared. We do not disclose confidential information unless this is necessary to prevent harm or is legally required.
- » In our engagement with young people, and in our resulting relationship, we strive to be honest and non-judgemental.
- » We respect the contribution of others concerned with the welfare and well-being of young people and will work in partnership to secure the best outcomes for young people.
- » We encourage ethical reflection and debate with colleagues, managers, employers and young people.
- » We make sure we have the knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively with young people. We work in a reflective way to develop our abilities. We take account of the impact of work on ourselves.
- » We maintain consciousness of our own values, beliefs and interests, are aware when these conflict with those of others, and approach difference respectfully.

¹⁸ Institute for Youth Work, <https://iyw.org.uk/code-of-ethics/>

In Balkan region, CSOs working with young people mostly do not have a standalone ethical codex and often accept the ethical codex of some umbrella organisation or leading institution. In Serbia, for example, the National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) adopted the Ethical codex¹⁹ as a separate document in order to underline the importance of ethical aspect of the profession when it comes to quality assurance. This document is widely accepted, not only among NAPOR members but also other organisations dealing with young people. It prescribes very briefly the main ethical and professional principles that youth workers have to follow. It is important to mention that NAPOR does not require from its members and licenced youth workers to sign the Ethical codex which is one of the regular procedures in the numerous organisations having the same document.

However, in Balkans it can be found youth organisations or structures that have their own code of conduct, based on specifics of their mission and services provided. According to the research findings on assessment of the capacity of Serbian youth policy actors within NGOs for social inclusion of vulnerable youth, half of the organizations that participated in the survey stated that it adopted an internal document that clearly shows the ethics, principles and values of organisation.

Codes of Conducts – Balkan experience:

NAPOR's Code of Ethics in Youth Work is a document that is most often referred to not only by CSOs but also by the local youth offices²⁰ when it comes to documents that operationalize principles and values. NAPOR also has a Council for Ethical Issues as well as a set of internal mechanisms such as contracting procedures, equality values embedded in the accreditation process, developed mechanisms for discrimination, etc.

In Montenegro, the Code of Ethics is adopted by the government Institute for social and child protection and applies to all employees in the field of social and child protection (national and local institutions and CSOs as well). The goal of this Code of Ethics is to preserve, affirm and promote the dignity of employees in institutions of social and child protection and to strengthen the confidence of citizens to the work of social and child care institutions.

In Republika Srpska, some organisations working with youth, such as the Association of parents of children and youth with special needs and persons with disabilities "Moja luka", have their own ethical codex as a model of the behaviour of its members in all activities related to the work of this association.

19 <http://www.napor.net/images/pdf/etiki%20kodeks%20u%20omladinskom%20radu.pdf>

20 Local Youth Office is a part of the municipal administration in charge of coordinating local youth policy in line with the specific needs of its local community. The person responsible for managing and coordinating the office is the local youth officer

The Code is an attempt to clarify what types of behavior are appropriate, particularly in situations where difficult choices need to be made. A strong code of conduct will provide clear guidelines for everyone involved in the organisation about what is expected of them and the consequences if they fail to meet the expectations. When a code of conduct is well established and implemented, it promotes a transparent and accountable service environment. Thus, involving all stakeholders in the development of your code of conduct, especially children and young people, will encourage greater ownership and adherence to the code.²¹

Why it is important to have adopted Code of Conduct?

- » To guarantee protection, inclusion and wellbeing of beneficiaries
- » To guarantee delivery of high standards services

Code of conduct should apply to all people involved with organization, namely:

- » o employees (permanent, temporary and casual)
- » o volunteers
- » o children and young people
- » o parents
- » o consultants and contractors
- » o board/committee members
- » o students on placement and people undertaking work experience
- » o visitors and spectators

For a code of conduct to be effective, it is essential that systems be in place to support it. This requires procedures that ensure²²:

- ✓ all personnel sign the code of conduct and signatures are documented by the organization;
- ✓ personnel receive training on the code of conduct;
- ✓ there is a clear reporting mechanism that all personnel understand and to which they all have access—providing options for multiple reporting lines can be effective to ensure all personnel feel safe and comfortable and do report any concerns. Reporting of any concerns of violence, abuse, harassment and bullying is mandatory;
- ✓ an investigation process is understood by all personnel, especially managers, so when concerns do arise, there is a clear process to follow;
- ✓ confidential information is stored securely;
- ✓ managers have a particular responsibility for making sure that those who are accountable to them are familiar with the Code, and for helping to promote the honoring of its provisions. Managers also responsible for communicating the Code's principles to everyone they work
- ✓ staff are monitored and supported in achieving their commitments as outlined in the code of conduct – this can include having information and support accessible through a focal point and integrating the code of conduct into performance appraisals;
- ✓ all personnel, without exceptions, are held accountable for following the code of conduct.

21 Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy Toolkit – Queensland Government, 2015, <https://www.bluecard.qld.gov.au/pdf/rmst/201610-Child-and-youth-risk-management-strategy-toolkit.pdf>

22 Ten Steps to Creating Safe Environments for Children and Youth A Risk Management Road Map to Prevent Violence & Abuse, Canadian Red Cross, source: <http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/53517/Canadian%20RC%20Ten%20Steps%20to%20Creating%20Safe%20Environments%20for%20Children%20and%20Youth.pdf>

Although both Code of Conduct and Children/Youth Protection Policy are essential documents for organizations that work with children and youth, the difference exists. While the Code of Conduct addresses issues related to safety in a general way, Children/Youth Protection Policy is more specific document about special vulnerabilities of child/youth to violence, abuse and exploitation, the roles and responsibilities of adults in the organization towards children/youth and reporting options for concerns of children/youth safety.

Each program, intended for different groups of youth at risk, has to have clearly defined goals. Furthermore, it has to be in line with the needs of the said youth, which are established via consultation with those comprising various groups of youth at risk. Moreover, it is necessary to align the goals of specific programs with broader goals (the goals of the local community, goals of the local, regional and national action plans for youth).

Involving youth into the program planning process calls for the application of different approaches depending upon the age, maturity and independence, as well as interests of the young person involved. By participating, young individuals develop personal and group responsibility for the realisation of the project.

When the program is developed and adapted to the needs of youth at risk, the organisation planning to implement it in practice as some form of social welfare service to youth at risk needs to go through the licensing period, while youth workers and experts that implement it need to go through accredited training programs and also receive licenses.

That is the next step.

What you should know about the system of provision of social protection in the local community

The concept of provision of social protection services is an approach to satisfying the users needs. That approach puts the type and content of the services that can answer the users' needs in the forefront. This approach is based in the respect for human rights and the empowerment of the service user.

In case you are entering the social protection service provision system, you ought to know that your job partially depends on the licensing system. The system of licensing organisations that want to focus their activities on the provision of social protection services and of licensing experts is different.

According to the Law on Social Welfare in Republic of Serbia, a **licensed service provider** means **licensed organisation**

In order to provide social protection services, you are formally required to possess a license. If you intend to work in an organisation that provides social protection services, regardless of whether you are a social worker or working with young people, it is important that you check the following first:

Has the organisation that you intend to work for submitted a request for a license to provide social protection services within the timeframe provided for in national legislation?

What is a license?

A license is a public document confirming that a social protection organisation, or rather an expert fulfils established conditions and standards for the provision of certain services in the field of social protection. It is in fact a certificate from a competent authority which allows the interested organisation to provide social protection services. Upon receiving it, the organisation acquires the rights to provide concrete social protection services, but it cannot transfer that right to others.

Licensing, accreditation and social protection provision standards
form a triangle which gives the quality system stability

What is the difference between standards, licensing and accreditation?

- » Services are standardised,
- » Organisations that provide certain forms of social protection services are licensed, as are expert employees working therein,
- » And programs are accredited.

One of the requirements for receiving a license is that the organisation have a **licensed expert** working for it in certain capacity. For experts to be licensed, they have to have completed **accredited training programs**.

In order to receive a license certifying that you are an expert, you need to have completed an accredited training program. In order to renew a license, an expert needs to gather a certain number of points, as prescribed by the regulations governing issues related to expert licensing. Points are gathered by completing certain accredited training programs.

What every individual working with youth at risk needs to know

In case you are a social worker or youth worker providing social protection to youth at risk, you are obliged to abide by certain **standards** in your work, which are first and foremost **universal**, and guarantee the quality of said work. Beside the universal ones, there are also **specific standards** focused on specific groups of youth at risk. Universal standards are applicable to all types of social services and to all those who provide them, regardless of where they work.

Standards generally describe what quality services should look like, while at the same time they represent the basis on which the quality of a given service can be evaluated, and on the basis of which a precise evaluation of each service providers' service can be made.

There are 15 general or universal standards which you should be mindful of in your work:

1st Standard: availability of information

In your work, you should strive to provide all current and potential users with all information on the services they are entitled to, so that they could make an informed decision on which services suit their needs best.

2nd Standard: availability and adaptability of services

In your work, you should make sure that all service users have access to all services they are entitled to, while at the same time assessing their needs and available resources, in line with the activities and programs your organisation is licensed to implement.

3rd Standard: Connecting and cooperation (maintaining social contacts)

Users should be encouraged and aided in their efforts to maintain and improve relations with their biological families, friends and acquaintances, as well as in developing interpersonal relationships in their local communities.

4th Standard: Evaluation and planning

All users' needs should be thoroughly and effectively evaluated, while ways in which different needs are to be met should be described in service delivery plans.

5th Standard: Decision-making and self-determination

When working with users, you should strive to encourage each and every one of them to actively impact their own lives, while they should at the same time be enabled to independently choose and make decisions in regard to all aspects of their lives.

6th Standard: Privacy and confidentiality

When working with users, you must at all times take care to protect their privacy, confidentiality of information which you acquire through working with them, and especially the dignity of each user, the respect of which must always be ensured in all aspects of their lives.

7th Standard: Safety from exploitation

When working in this field, you are at all times obliged to create an environment in which the user feels safe from neglect, abuse, intimidation and exploitation, and in which his human and other guaranteed rights are respected.

8th Standard: Appeals and complaints

You are obliged to at all times provide all users and their families, guardians and other interested parties access to mechanisms through which they can appeal the decisions of competent authorities, and file complaints on the work of individual staff members, so as to ensure that their appeals and complaints will be decided upon in writing, without having to fear that they will be denied services due to the submitted complaints and appeals.

9th Standard: Leadership

Leaders and others responsible for managing and directing work and operations are obliged to apply good management methods, thereby achieving a satisfactory outcome of the work for service users.

10th Standard: Management

Social service providers are obliged to create, promote and spread good practices in the wider community, to encourage innovation and to advocate for a more open and inclusive society.

11th Standard: Securing necessary staff

Social service providers are obliged to possess competences necessary for their work, i.e., to be adequately licensed in regard to all activities with service users. There also needs to be a sufficient number of providers so as to adequately respond to the needs of all their users. Furthermore, service providers are usually obliged to guarantee the quality of the provided service.

12th Standard: Volunteering, internships and traineeships

Policies related to the provision of social protection services and work organisation for volunteering, internships and traineeships must at all times be in line with the users' needs, and fully respectful of their rights.

13th Standard: Availability of services and service provider spaces

Service providers are obliged to ensure that all service users and their families have access to areas wherein these services are provided, while the services as well have to be provided in a way which is mindful of the different needs users may have.

14th Standard: Conditions adapted to users' needs

When providing services, you must at all times take care to ensure that all spaces and equipment used to that end are adapted to the specific needs users may have.

15th Standard: Health, security and protection

Service providers are obliged to guarantee for the health and safety of all users and their families, staff and the wider community, applying adequate risk control methods to that end.

Availability of information

You are obliged to take care at all times that written guidelines on the availability of information on services for users, their families and other interested persons that your organisation provides are posted in the premises wherein your organisation provides the said services.

- » You should strive to supply service users with exhaustive information on the services you provide and the conditions for realising their rights to that service.
- » You should strive to make information on the availability of social services that similar service providers and some experts from the local community provide known to service users and their families.
- » You should strive to continuously and regularly exchange information on the availability of social services and the possibilities for their application and use with other service providers.
- » You should provide information on the work you do in various modalities, so that they can be related in a way that is clear and understandable to various groups of users (regardless of their age, education, health condition and national minority group belonging)
- » All media outlets should be used to inform current and potential users, their families and interested parties on the on the work you do so as to inform the widest variety of individuals
- » You need to update information on your work diligently, so as to ensure their veracity and contemporaneity. This should be done at least annually.

Availability and service customisation

- » As service providers, you should strive to have guidelines on the availability of services provided in written form, and those should clearly define the target group at which your services are aimed, the types and content of services you provide, as well as the criteria for realising rights to that service.
- » Criteria for realising the right to the service that you provide should be available to users, potential users, their families and other interested parties in written form.
- » Service providers should always make themselves available to service users in times of urgent and crisis situations.
- » The services that you provide must be made available in places and times that satisfy the needs of your users and their families, and, when possible, they should be provided in the users' homes or in their local communities, if the service as such permits it.
- » Information on the types of services that you provide should be clear and understandable to the users, potential users and their families.
- » In case you decide to deny access to services to your users, potential users, their families, guardians, foster care providers or similar, you will need to clarify your actions in written.
- » In case you are not in the position to provide your services to a person who is eligible, try to refer them to another suitable service provider.

Connecting and cooperation

In your work, you should strive to encourage service users to use all public services available to other citizens (health services, educational, employment, sports and/or recreational services, cultural services, and similar), thereby ensuring that they receives support which is to a reasonable degree adapted to their individual needs and capabilities.

- » You should make plans with other service providers so as to improve access to services which help users build up confidence and enable them to live independently, thereby preventing heavy dependence on the social welfare system.
- » In case you are not able to provide some part of your services to the users, aim to do so in cooperation with other (private and public) service providers that the user recognises as being able to contribute to their personal development. You should aim to formalise the structure of the agreement with other service providers through contacts or agreements on cooperation, which are regularly monitored and periodically reevaluated.
- » In your work, you should always strive to encourage your users to contact their families and loved ones whenever they wish to do so, except in cases where there are limitations stemming from the need to ensure the safety and protection of the user.

Evaluation and planning

As service providers, you should have written instructions for implementing need assessments and creating service provision plans which contain descriptions of the roles users have in the planning process.

- » When assessing the need of each individual user, you should strive to do so professionally, or delegate that activity to a colleague whose expertise is more suited to the specific needs of the user. This activity should be implemented in cooperation with the user, his family, guardian or foster care provider, and other service providers.
- » You should develop an individualised service plan for each user. This should be done in cooperation and agreement with the user, his family and other persons involved in the provision of the service.
- » When encountering a user with limited abilities in your work (persons having difficulties communicating and similar), you should strive to provide them with adequate support so as

to ensure their active participation in the individual plan development process.

- » When you develop an individualised plan, try to make sure that it contains all rights and responsibilities pertinent to your position as a service provider as well as to service users, deadlines for implementation of that plan, as well as conditions for changes in the plan, the conditions for change in modalities of implementation of that plan, as well as termination of implementation.
- » The plan should determine the overall needs of the user, clear goals and methods of service provision, as well as ways to evaluate the achieved results. All of this should be done in agreement with the user.
- » Each individual plan should contain all limitations to the users freedom of choice/movement stemming from the specificity of the program (for example, in case of a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program), as well as limitations imposed for the users and other persons' security, as well as those imposed by a court.
- » The service provision plan should at all times be such that it can be implemented in coordination with other service providers to the end of satisfying the users need (schools, health institutions, employment services, and other service providing organisations).
- » Should the users' needs require you to do so, strive to regularly follow and periodically revise their individualised plans; at the least every three months. To do so, you should acquire the service users', their families' or other relevant persons' permission. The changes you agree upon should always be documented, and afterwards continue with the implementation of the plan.

Decision-making and self-determination

In order to enable users to actively impact their own lives, strive to at all times provide them with the option of making independent choices on all aspects of their lives.

- » Always treat the service user in such a manner that respects their dignity, regardless of their race, skin colour, gender, age, language, religious, political and other beliefs, national or ethnic heritage, property, able-bodiedness, or any other trait.
- » You should always have a document in written on the rights users have to make decisions regarding events that impact their lives.
- » Strive to empower each user and support them in reaching well founded decisions in line with the available possibilities that best suit their individual needs, interests and abilities.
- » Strive to provide adequate support to users who have specific needs so that you could empower and enable them to participate in the decision making process.
- » When developing the service provision plans, you should always respect the users views, opinions and wishes.

Privacy and confidentiality

- » You should always have written policies on privacy and confidentiality of information that you acquire to guide you in your work.
- » Your relationship with the user should be based in trust, and the provision of services should be handled in an environment that ensures that the user's information stays private and confidential.
- » You are obliged to respect the user's right to privacy and confidentiality of information in all service provision processes, and especially in cases when the user entirely or to a great degree depends upon the temporary or permanent aid and care of a third party.
- » As a service provider, when gathering, storing and using information at your disposal you should always act in a manner which ensures the privacy and confidentiality of the user's information.

- » Never share the user's information with a third party without previously informing and receiving permission from the user. In cases where the user is a child, you should always have his/her family's, guardian's or foster care provider's consent. Exceptions to this rule must be clearly prescribed, either by official court order, or by any other official means.
- » Always strive to possess clearly defined guidelines on the availability of data on service users, as well as on the exchange of such information with other bodies/authorities.

Safety from exploitation

- » In your work as service providers, you should strive to have defined policies which contain detailed information on measures and user protection procedures, as well as on prevention of abuse and exploitation of service users.
- » In your work, you should possess defined ways for decreasing the risk of violence, physical, psychological or sexual abuse, regardless of whether the service is provided in the premises of the service providing organisation, the family or in the community.
- » In cases where in your work you are to have access or have responsibility to handle the users finances, as well as other means and property, appropriate measures for decreasing risks of embezzlement and different abuses on the part of the staff, volunteers and other individuals in contact with the user, are put into place, for which there are specific guidelines and procedures.
- » In case of suspicion that someone is a victim of physical, psychological or sexual abuse, always follow the prescribed ways to report and investigate this suspicion.
- » As service providers, you should undergo organised trainings on prevention of abuse, recognising abuse, proper response in situations where abuse has been established, suspicion of abuse, and detection of abuse.

Appeals and complaints

- » Service providers should be well informed about instructions on the rights of users to appeals/complaint mechanisms and the procedures for handling the user's appeals/complaints. Those instructions should be straightforward and available to both users and other interested parties.
- » You should be aware of the fact that users have the right to appeal any decision related to the realisation of their right to social services as well as to contest the quality of the provided services, without fear of penalty or denial of services.
- » In the event that the user is not satisfied with the internal way of handling, receiving and resolving complaints, it is necessary to provide him/her, as well as his/her family members or other legal guardians, with the possibility of independent mediation.
- » In case you receive complaints and appeals, or in case those result in disputes, you are obliged to record them - along with actions taken and solutions reached - and forward them to the administrative body responsible for resolving them.

Leadership

- » You should be aware that the organisation you work for is required to have its vision and mission in writing, which is then implemented in your work with users and the wider community.
- » The organisation you work for is required to have a written business policy as well as a written document on modes of action relevant to its activities, and they must be distributed among staff and users.
- » Your organisation needs to be lead in a strategic manner, focusing on achieving results, which ensures a positive public image.
- » The results achieved in your work are evaluated and monitored, as they are an important

element of the process of continual betterment, transparency and responsibility in regard to your work.

- » Service providers should have quality internal and external communication strategies which ensure that all individuals participating in the work of the organisation are well informed.
- » The management of the organisation providing services needs to ensure that all individuals employed on an operational level fulfill all their legal, statutory and contractual obligations.
- » All employees, including the manager, need to apply an adequate system of risk management, insurance and work quality control, as well as monitor and assess the degree to which the goals achieved are in accordance with the mission behind the provision of certain services.

Management

- » As service providers, it is important that you know that the organisation you are working for has a governing body that is responsible for governing the organisation in accordance with the law.
- » The organisation that you work for should have a statute or other founding document which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the governing management, method of member selection, as well as conditions for appointment.
- » Representatives of service users should be represented in the governing body of an organisation whose central activity is the provision of social protection services.
- » Employees should also have representatives in the organisation's governing body.
- » The governing body should establish procedures according to which activities within the organisation are implemented, as well as rules on conflict of interest, and on conduct in case of conflict of interest.
- » Members of the governing body should also be active members of the local community that promote the values of social service provision, as well as good practice.
- » The governing board should ensure that the work implemented is in compliance with legislation.
- » Members of the governing body are responsible for timely and quality preparation of the organisation's strategic programs, service provision plans, and annual operative and financial reports on service provision affairs.

Securing necessary staff

- » The work of the service providers is carried out in accordance with established, written human resources policies containing measures and procedures related to the performance of their work, conditions for admission of new professional associates, and other working conditions in the field of labor legislation.
- » As someone who provides social protection services within the organisation, you are obliged to be familiar with the Code of Conduct in regard to work and provision of services, the credibility of licensed programs that serve to enable individuals to provide services, principles of professional work, ethical relationships with service users, as well as the prescribed liability for non-compliance with these rules.
- » The number of individuals engaged in provision of social protection services must correspond to the needs of the beneficiaries and the activities for which your organisation is licensed.
- » As a service provider, you are obliged to, in line with the capacities of your organisation, professionally improve yourself, while your work is subject to supervision, either internal or external.
- » As someone who provides social protection services, you have to understand the purpose of introducing standards here discussed, as well as the purpose of active participation in the protection of the user's rights, all in the aim of protecting their best interest.

- » You are obliged to participate in ensuring a safe environment for service users, and to work on the improvement of conditions relevant to the provision of services which fall under the purview of your work.

Volunteering, internships and traineeships

- » Volunteers working in your organisation are organised according to written policies and guidelines on their engagement.
- » Your organisation must have written guidelines on the inclusion of student interns in the work your organisation does, as well as trainees who have acquired certain vocation during their formal education.
- » There are inclusion and orientation programs that can assist you in the incorporation of volunteers, practitioners and trainees into your organisation, while they are also provided with a mentor for the duration of their engagement.

Accessibility

- » Premises and objects in which your organisation implements its activities are in locations which have adequate accessibility in relation to locality and transportation.
- » Premises in which social protection services are provided are safe and adapted to users' needs, in accordance with their specific needs.
- » Premises designated for personal hygiene purposes are designed and equipped to ensure safe and easy use, and are adapted to the users' specific needs.

Conditions adapted to users' needs

- » Premises, in regard to internal and external organisation, are appropriate to satisfying the users' specific needs.
- » The objects and content of the services are such that they do not stigmatise the user.
- » In terms of equipment, the premises are such that they satisfy the needs of the user.
- » With regard to technical equipment of the premises and object, it is such that it satisfies the conditions in regard to hygiene, heating, lighting and temperature.
- » The furniture in the premises is such that it is adapted to the service users' needs.
- » Users have access to various different aid and adaptive devices, which are such that they, for the most part, aid their independence and wellbeing.

Health, security and protection

- » In your work, you use developed analyses and risk assessments, as well as written guidelines on risk management.
- » In the environment in which you implement your activities, you always take care that users do not have access to dangerous objects and equipment, while you strive to ensure that the premises are safe from any harm that may be caused by traffic and objects that can threatening to the users life or health.
- » In case of need, implement emergency evacuation measures for users, employees and other individuals who find themselves in the premises in which your organisation implements its activities.
- » In cases when service users are in an increased risk or danger, you are trained to act in accordance with procedures in such a way as to mitigate, to the greatest possible degree, all consequences to their security and health.
- » You are obliged to document all events that may potentially expose service users, employees and other individuals involved in the work your organisation implements, property and work materials to risks. You are also obliged keep record of activities implemented when the risk has already taken place.

How to assess whether you are implementing all specific standards in your work, in regard to provision of services you are licensed to provide?

In the following part, you will find a table according to which you can assess whether you are abiding to the established standards (in case you agree with the claim, mark the cell in the left column):

Quality standards	Assessment of compliance
In my work I always provide service users with exhaustive information on the services that the organization provides and the conditions for realising their rights to that service.	
Information on the services my organization as well as services that affiliated organisations provide, are available to all interested persons.	
I regularly exchange information on the availability of services and the possibility of using them with other service providers.	
Information on the work the organization does is accessible in all available formats.	
I strive to regularly update the information and make sure that they are valid and relevant.	
In my work, I always provide exhaustive information on the services that my organization provides, as well as on conditions for realizing rights to services.	
In my work, I possess written instructions on the availability of services I provide, the type of services I provide, their content and the conditions for use of the said services.	
The criteria for fulfilling the conditions required for the realization of the right to services are made available to all users, potential users, families and other persons I encounter in my work.	
I am always available to my users in emergency situations.	
The services that fall into the scope of my work are available at the place and time which is most suitable to the user's needs.	
All information on services is easily understandable to all interested parties.	
I always explain why I cannot provide a prescribed service when I cannot provide it.	

Quality standards	Assessment of compliance
In instances when I am not able to provide a prescribed service, I refer the user and other interested parties to other service providers whom I have determined is suitable to the user's needs.	
In my work, I make plans with other service providers.	
I strive to provide services that do not fall under my competency in cooperation with other service providers, while the exchange of services is arranged via contract and other legal devices.	
I always encourage users to communicate with their families or persons close to them, except in cases where such communication is formally forbidden.	
I evaluate the user's needs in a professional manner, and when I am not able to do so, I leave such activities to colleagues who are more adequately suited to do so.	
I develop an individual service plan for each user, with his/her active participation in the development process.	
If the user has limited abilities, I strive to ensure he/she receives adequate support while I also encourage his/her active participation in the development of a plan suited to his/her needs.	
The service plan contains rights and obligations of both sides, including timeframes for their implementation, while it also prescribes the possibility of modification with established conditions for discontinuation of services.	
The plan always encompasses all of the user's needs, goals and methods of service provision and the illustrates the method of result evaluation.	
The service provision plan can always be implemented in coordination with other service providers.	
I always regularly follow and, need be, periodically revise the service plan. This I do with the user's or other persons' consent, while I always record the changes we agree upon.	
UI always treat the user with the utmost respect for his/her dignity, taking care never to discriminate against him/her on any basis.	

Quality standards	Assessment of compliance
There is always written record testifying to the fact that the user reached decisions impacting his life using all rights at his/her disposal.	
When providing services, I always empower the user to make decisions that impact all aspects of his/her life and that are in line with his/her abilities, while I also always take care of the user's best interests.	
I always make sure to provide users with special needs with the as much autonomy as I possibly can in issues related to decision-making and active participation relevant to the services provided.	
In regard to implementing services according to the users' needs, I always respect their needs and wishes.	
There are written policies in the organisation where I work on user privacy protection and the ways in which information acquired through work is processed.	
The relationship with the user is always based in trust, while the provision of services always takes place in an environment that ensures the confidentiality of the users' sensitive information .	
The users' privacy, as well as confidentiality of information on the users, always come first. Special care is given to the dependence of users on other individuals.	
I always gather, store and use information in line with the rules on confidentiality of information and the users' privacy.	
If there is a need to do so, I only provide information to third parties with the users' expressed consent, or with the expressed consent of third parties authorised to, in specific situations, provide the same.	
My work contains clear guidelines on how the information I acquire can be used and how to share it with other authorities.	
In my work, there are written policies on the basis of which users are protected from abuse and exploitation.	
Procedures for minimizing the risk of violence and any other form of abuse are applied.	
There are written procedures for reaction in cases where there is doubt that abuse took place, as well as ways to report such doubts.	

Quality standards	Assessment of compliance
I have undergone trainings on prevention of abuse and other forms of endangerment of the users' integrity.	
I am familiar with the rights to complaints and appeals as well as with procedures taken to that effect.	
User instructions are easily accessible and understandable.	
I am aware of the fact that users have the right to appeal all decisions relevant to their right to access services and the quality thereof, and that they cannot be sanctioned for doing so.	
I am aware that the user and interested persons may, in the second instance, call for a review of the decision on the use of the services.	
I record all complaints and appeals on my work as well as the steps I take in order to address them.	
The mission and vision of the organization I work exists in writing and is implemented in direct work with service users.	
The organization has a business policy and means of implementing its work in written, and those documents are available to all interested parties.	
The management of the organization is guided by a strategy and focused on achieving the results prescribed therein.	
The results of my work are measurable and easily monitored, while they are also susceptible to evaluation and improvement.	
The organization has internal and external communication strategies.	
All employees are hired in accordance with the law and the prescribed licensing conditions.	
Everyone is trained to apply appropriate risk assessment procedures and to act in accordance with risk and harmful consequence management policies.	
My work is guided by existing measures and procedures.	

Quality standards	Assessment of compliance
I am familiar with the Code of Professional Conduct in regard to work and provision of services, with the credibility of licensed programs relevant to enabling individuals to provide services, on the principles of professional work, with the principle of ethical relations with service users, as well as prescribed responsibilities.	
The number of persons engaged in the provision of social protection services corresponds to the activities of the organization and the number of beneficiaries.	
I undergo professional specialization in line with the opportunities within the organization, while my work is susceptible to either internal or external supervision.	
I understand the reasons for which standards are introduced and I participate in the protection of the users rights in the aim of protecting their best interest.	
In my work, I strive to provide a safe environment for service users and I work to improve the conditions for the implementation of services that fall under my competence.	
The work of volunteers, practitioners and trainees is regulated by written acts of the organization, while they undergo mandatory orientation.	
Volunteers, practitioners and trainees are familiar with the services your organization provides, user rights and obligations in terms of working with users, while they are provided with a safe and secure work environment in line with regulations and internal rules of the organization.	
The premises in which the organization implements its activities are in locations which are adequately accessible in regard to locality and public transportation.	
The premises in which social protection services are provided are safe and adapted to the users' specific needs.	
Spaces intended for personal hygiene maintenance are designed and equipped in such a way as to ensure safe and simple use, and are adapted to the users' specific needs.	

Quality standards	Assessment of compliance
Facilities and the content of the services are such that they do not stigmatise service users.	
In terms of equipment, it is such that it satisfies the needs of all users.	
The premises and facilities are technically equipped to satisfy all conditions relevant to hygiene, heating, lighting and temperature.	
Furniture in the facilities is adapted to users' needs.	
Various aids and adaptive devices are made available to users, and they are such that they contribute to the users' independence and wellbeing to the greatest possible degree.	
In my work I use analyses and risk assessments, as well as written guidelines pertinent to risk management.	
I always take care to ensure that users do not have access to dangerous objects and equipment, while we also strive to ensure that facilities are safe from vehicles and objects that might be harmful to the users' life and health.	
In case of need, I implement emergency measures for the evacuation of users, employees and other persons on the premises in which my organization implements its activities.	
I am trained to act in accordance with procedures in situations where users are in increased risk or danger, so as to prevent to the greatest possible degree the negative effects of said situations to their safety and health.	
I regularly keep record of all events that present a potential risk to users, employees and other individuals involved in the work my organisation implements, to property and operating funds, and I also keep record of actions taken in instances where the risk is imminent.	

Specific standards pertaining to social protection services for children and youth up to the age of 18 residing outside their own family

16th Standard: Admission and discharge

As a social care provider, you are obliged to properly plan the admission and release of children and young people who are relocated from their own family, and to respect the needs of children, young people and their families during the provision of said service.

- » In your work, you should have written guidelines on admission and discharge procedures.

- » You should always strive to support the goal of deinstitutionalisation via the implementation of preventive and alternative support programs in the family and the local community.
- » You are obliged to know that it is a recommended standard that children up to the age of three are placed in institutional settings only in cases of emergency, and if so only for a short period of time, while their accommodation/adoption must be of the utmost priority.
- » You are obliged to empower children/youth, their families or guardians to make independent choices and to express their opinions and wishes while planning the provision of out-of-home services.
- » Brothers and sisters are always accommodated together, and in outstanding situations where this is not possible, regular contact between them should be assured.
- » In your work, you should strive to ensure that all children/young individuals always go through orientation processes and are made aware of the types of services they can expect, the sort of protection they can receive and with whom they will share space.
- » Service providers are obliged to introduce the service users and their families or guardians to all the services you provide, as well as possibilities and modes of service provision.
- » In your work, you should strive to adequately prepare children already accommodated or residing outside their families for the arrival of a new child/young person.
- » In order to ensure, in the best possible way, that the needs of children/young people are met, you need to strive to ensure that they are accommodated in small residential units of a family type, always taking into consideration the developmental age and special needs of the child/young person.
- » You should strive to exchange all information regarding the child/young person with the family, as well as information pertaining to the service provided, in a manner that ensures the confidentiality of that information and does not threaten the relationship between the child/young person, service provider and the family.
- » In situations when a child/young person is transferring from one system of social protection to another, you are obliged to create a plan of high quality and implement it in a careful and professional manner.
- » If you perform tasks that include preparation for adoption and foster care, you are obliged to do so in a way that respects the needs, the life situation and the original living environment of children and young people.
- » In instances where the child's/young persons out-of-home protection has ceased due to their transition to independent life in the community, you are obliged to guarantee that they are adequately prepared for independent life, according to their own abilities.
- » When in the process of planning to prepare the user for exiting the service providing organisation, as a service provider, you are obliged to create a follow-up protection plan in coordination with the competent social protection institution which will define rights as well as support measures to be instated upon the user's departure from the organisation, and provide contacts of service providers and affiliated organisations for the types of services available to the user.

17th Standard: Relationship with children and youth

This relationship between you as the service provider and the child, or rather young person, as the user, has to be based in understanding, respect and clear professional and personal boundaries.

- » In your work, you are obliged to respect each child/young person equally, regardless of their or their parents or guardians race, gender, skin colour, language, religious, political and other beliefs, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability or any other characteristic or circumstance on the basis of which they could be differentiated. You must provide equal attention to all child/youth users.
- » You are obliged to talk with each child/youth user in a friendly and warm manner.
- » You are obliged to impact the behaviour of each child/young person in a positive way.
- » You are obliged to maintain and encourage communication with each child/young person that is grounded in the principle of respect for their views and opinions.
- » Persons providing services are obliged to communicate among themselves in a manner that encourages respect and professional teamwork.
- » As a service provider, you are obliged to continuously professionally perfect yourself in order to satisfy the specific protection needs of children/youth.

18th Standard: Development and education of children and youth

When providing support to children/youth you are obliged to do so in a manner that shapes their future in such a way that makes them independent and active members of society.

- » You are obliged to be aware of the fact that each child/young person has the right to education in regular institutions of the educational system, and, if necessary, to the support of a service provider or an affiliate organisation, while exceptions to that treatment have to be clearly explained and in line with regulations.
- » You are obliged to provide each child/young person with information that is adapted to their age and their current situation, as well as their future possibilities, in a form and way that is easily understandable and accessible.
- » In your work, you are obliged to encourage children/youth to maintain contacts with their biological families, friends and other important individuals in their social environment.
- » Always aim to support and aid children/youth in the development of personal values and self respect.
- » Always strive to empower children/youth to participate in decisions and choices related to events that may shape their lives, in line with their maturity and age.
- » Strive to encourage and support children/youth in playtime and leisure activities in line with their age.
- » Always support children/youth in their choice to build and maintain relationships with others, as well as in their creative expression.
- » Always strive to adapt your work to the religious customs and beliefs of the child/young person, as well as their habits, without imposing or forcing other views.
- » You should facilitate the development of social, emotional, and communicational skills of each child/youth, as well as the skills necessary for independent life.
- » You are obliged to ensure the availability of services and necessary professionals to children/youth whose protection plans require different services important to their life and development (educational, health, cultural, recreational).
- » Always strive to regularly document, follow-up on and evaluate the learning process and progress of each child/young individual.

19. Standards: Health, nutrition and the welfare of children and youth

As a person providing services to children and youth, you are at all times obliged to take care of their physical and emotional needs in order to ensure their general welfare. Children and youth should live in a healthy environment, and should be provided with healthy food adapted to their needs.

- » When providing services to children and youth, you are obliged to provide them with instructions, advice and support on questions related to healthcare, nursing and personal hygiene, in line with their individual needs, cultural habits and wishes.
- » The aforementioned advice should be provided in line with social health risks and problems (alcohol, drug, tobacco and chemical substance related addiction, HIV/AIDS prevention, sexual and emotional relations, etc).
- » The child/young person should at all times be able to take care of his/her health and personal hygiene in a manner that is respectful of his/her privacy and dignity.
- » You are obliged to provide each child with a clearly outlined healthcare plan as part of the individual protection plan.
- » You are obliged to keep record of all important diseases, accidents and injuries children/youth in the out-of-home system experienced, as well as of actions that were taken in response to the aforementioned.
- » As service providers, you are obliged to promote healthy eating habits, to ensure access to adequate amounts of quality food and beverages, while respecting their wishes and nutritional needs.
- » Service providers are obliged to take effective and safe measures for food and hygiene preservation.
- » You must encourage children and youth to keep to the basic rules of hygiene.
- » Service providers are obliged to respect the individual needs of the child/young person in terms of rest, sleep and comfort.
- » As a service provider, you are obliged to take appropriate measures to prevent contagious diseases and keep a record of compulsory vaccination, as well as all other measures of health preservation, including systematic reviews.

20. Standards: Restrictive procedures

In regard to children/youth whose freedom of choice or movement is being limited, you are obliged to implement all protective measures aimed at protecting their rights, in line with the principle of best interest.

- » As a service provider, you are obliged to have written guidelines on the application of restrictive procedures.
- » In regard to limitations to the freedom of choice and/or movement, you are obliged to duly document such measures in individual accommodation/protection plans.
- » You cannot endanger the human rights of any child/young person subject to restrictive measures
- » In situations where you assume that the child/young person might run away, as a service provider, you are obliged to have control measures in place, as well as specific guidelines for the prevention of such situations. These may include physical modifications of spaces and consultative-therapeutic approaches to changing the child's behaviour, or a previously approved form of physical contraction. You are obliged to apply all of the above-mentioned approaches in accordance with the approved accommodation/protection plan, guided by the principle of the child's/young persons best interest.
- » As a service provider, you are obliged to be familiar with the measures that are permitted by

applicable laws, as well as with guidelines for their implementation, and to never overstep your bounds.

- » You are obliged to possess written instruction on treatment and measures in situations where a child/young person is absent without permission.
- » You are obliged to have a written record on the circumstances of each absconding, on all measures taken, on the circumstances surrounding the child's/young persons return, on the reasons for their escape, and on all the measures taken in light of the reasons provided.

How to assess whether you are implementing all specific standards in your work, in regard to provision of services to children/youth under your care?

Možete koristiti sljedeću tabelu kako biste procijenili da li vi i vaša organizacija poštujete utvrđene standarde. U slučajevima gdje se slažete sa izjavom u lijevoj koloni, možete napisati komentare u desnoj koloni.

Standardi kvaliteta	Procjena primjene
In my work, I have written guidelines for the procedures for reception and dismissal	
I always strive to upkeep deinstitutionalization through implementation of alternative and preventive support programs aimed at supporting the family and the local community.	
I am aware that the recommended standards state that children up to the age of three should be placed in institutions exclusively in emergencies, and for a short period of time, while their accommodation/ adoption must be of the highest priority.	
I strive to empower children/youth and their families or guardians to make independent choices and express their views and desires throughout the entire process of creating a service plan for protection outside the family environment.	
I am aware that brothers and sisters are always to be accommodated together, while in cases where that is not possible, their regular contact needs to be ensured.	
I strive to ensure that children/youth always go through the orientation process, that they are aware of what kinds of services they can expect to receive, what types of protection they can receive and who they will share space with.	
I always introduce the service user and their families or guardians to the services we as an organisation can offer, as well as the ensuing opportunities and modalities of service provision.	
In my work, I strive to adequately prepare children/youth already residing outside their families for the arrival of a new child/young person.	

Standardi kvaliteta	Procjena primjene
I always strive to ensure children/youth are accommodated in small, family type residential units, taking into account the developmental age and special needs of the child/young person.	
I strive to exchange all information on each child/young person and the service provided with the family, and to do so in a way that ensures the confidentiality of information and does not endanger the relationship between the child/young person, the service provider and the family.	
When it comes to transiting from one system of social protection to another, I always plan and implement the transition carefully and in a professional manner.	
I undertake tasks entailing preparation for adoption and placement in foster care in a manner that is sensitive to the needs, life situation and original environment of the child/young person.	
When children / young people cease to be protected outside their own family because they are at the point of transition to independent life in the community, I strive to guarantee that they are, in line with their abilities, adequately prepared for independent life.	
In the process of preparing the user to leave the service providing organisation, I prepare a follow-up protection plan in cooperation with competent social protection institutions which defines the child's/young persons' rights and measures of support available to them, as well as the contact details of service providers and affiliated organisations that provide the types of services users are entitled to.	
In my work, I respect every child/young person equally, regardless of their or their parents or guardians race, gender, skin colour, language, religious, political and other beliefs, nationality, ethnic or social origin, disability or any other characteristic or circumstance on the basis of which they could be differentiated. I provide each child/young person who uses our service with equal care.	
I communicate with each child/youth service user in a warm and friendly manner.	
I impact the behaviour of each child/young person in a positive way.	

Standardi kvaliteta	Procjena primjene
The communication that I maintain with each child/young person is grounded in the principle of respect for their views and opinions.	
The communication among me and my colleagues is based in mutual respect and professional team work.	
I strive to continuously professionally perfect myself in order to satisfy the specific protection needs of children/youth.	
I am aware that each child/young person has the right to education in regular institutions of the educational system, and, if necessary, to the support of a service provider or an affiliate organisation , while exceptions to that treatment have to be clearly explained and in line with regulations.	
All the information that I strive to provide each child/young individual with is adapted to their age and their current situation, as well as their future possibilities, in a form and way that is easily understandable and accessible.	
In my work, I encourage children/youth to maintain contacts with their biological families, friends and other important individuals in their social environment.	
In my work, I always aim to support and aid children/youth in the development of personal values and self respect.	
I always strive to empower children/youth to participate in decisions and choices related to events that may shape their lives, in line with their maturity and age.	
I strive to encourage and support children/youth in playtime and leisure activities in line with their age.	
I always support children/youth in their choice to build and maintain relationships with others, as well as in their creative expression.	
I always strive to adapt my work to the religious customs and beliefs of the child/young person, as well as their habits, without imposing or forcing other views.	
I attempt to facilitate the development of social, emotional, and communicational skills of each child/youth, as well as the skills necessary for independent life.	

Standardi kvaliteta	Procjena primjene
I ensure the availability of services and necessary professionals to children/youth whose protection plans require different services important to their life and development (educational, health, cultural, recreational).	
I always strive to regularly document, follow-up on and evaluate the learning process and progress of each child/young individual.	
While providing services to child/youth service users, I give them instructions, advice, and support related to health and personal hygiene, in line with their individual needs, cultural habits and wishes.	
The aforementioned advice children and youth receive ought to be in line with social and health risks and (alcohol, drug, tobacco and chemical substance related addiction, HIV/AIDS prevention, sexual and emotional relations, etc).	
I strive to always enable children/youth to take care of their health and personal hygiene in a manner that is always respectful of their privacy and dignity.	
I strive to provide each child/young person with a clearly written healthcare plan within their individual protection plan.	
I always keep records of all relevant diseases, accidents and injuries that children/youth within the system of protection outside their own family suffered, as well as of ensuing procedures.	
I strive to promote healthy eating habits, to ensure access to adequate amounts of quality food and beverages, while respecting their wishes and nutritional needs.	
I strive to ensure that effective and safe measures for food and hygiene preservation are taken.	
I encourage children and youth to keep to the basic rules of hygiene.	
I respect the individual needs of the child/young person in terms of rest, sleep and comfort.	
I take appropriate measures to prevent contagious diseases and keep a record of compulsory vaccination, as well as all other measures of health preservation, including systematic reviews.	
In my work, I have written guidelines on the application of restrictive procedures	

Standardi kvaliteta	Procjena primjene
I clearly document all limitations to the freedom of choice and/or movement in the individual protection/placement plan.	
I abide by the rule that the human rights of all children/young persons subject to restrictive procedures must be upheld.	
In a situation where I assume that a child/young person might run away, I, as a service provider, have established tools and measures for monitoring and specific instructions on how to prevent escape.	
I am aware of the measures that laws and guidelines allow me to implement, and I strive to always abide by them.	
I possess written instructions on the form of treatment and measures that are to be implemented when a child/young person is absent without permission.	
VI document the circumstance of every escape, all measures that were taken, the circumstances surrounding the child/young persons return, the reasons they provide for their escape, and all measures taken with regard to the reasons provided.	

In which way is do you evaluate the quality and success of your work

When the organisation you work for reaches a decision on introducing quality standards and begins implementing team trainings on the said standards, the following and most important step is the self-evaluation you as a social service provider should undertake.

After identifying and singling out the areas of quality and standards that are relevant to your work, you need to carefully study them so as to understand their purpose. You should constantly evaluate whether there is evidence that confirms that your work is in compliance with standards. This verification of evidence refers to the analysis of existing documentation pertaining to the regulation of service provider activities, as well as other documents pertinent to your work.

It is necessary to verify whether the said evidence is reliable, up to date, and whether they are in compliance with the current service provider practice.

While undergoing **self-evaluation**, you should aim to use the models of **instruments for self-evaluation** which can be found in the previous chapter, in the form of **tables** as they can be useful for evaluating the quality of your work.

Developing a plan for improving quality

As service providers, you should develop special plans for improvement for each individual standard, and they should describe all details related to the agreed upon improvements in that field.

This plan should contain: **defined goals, all activities necessary for the achievement of that goal, and defined deadlines and responsibilities.**

The practice is that the quality-indicating compliance report is delivered to the competent authority. This depends upon your country's legal framework. Usually, the initial report is made in the matter of three months since the institution of quality standards. Afterwards, at some future juncture, a progress report on the implementation of quality standards is delivered to the same authority. The following reports are then submitted in line with the prescribed deadlines or rule books relevant to your activities.

It is important to remember that **self-evaluation procedures, development of improvement plans and their implementation are to be continuously undertaken**, as long as the process of bringing all/specific standards in your work are brought into compliance, and as long as it is not established that the highest attainable degree of conformity with the quality standard that your organisation estimated is possible to reach in a certain time frame has been attained. Afterwards, it is necessary to follow up on and periodically evaluate achievements, and implement compliance evaluation every two to three years, and ensure the continuous work on improvement.

External revision

It is possible that certain laws in your country delegate the responsibility of **external revision in a certain timeframe** to a **certain ministry or another body**, so as to ensure objectivity in work and the application of standards. Thereby, an independent monitoring over the implementation of standards is established.

Detached and outreach youth work method and resource handbook for youth work practitioners in Wales

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