



MINISTERUL
EDUCAȚIEI ȘI CERCETĂRII



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
Agenzia Elvețiană pentru Dezvoltare și Cooperare
Швейцарское управление по развитию и сотрудничеству



CENTRUL
Parteneriat pentru
Dezvoltare

Final Evaluation Report of the National Strategy for Youth Sector Development 2020



The document is developed by Center Partnership for Development, within the Joint Fund for the Development of Youth Centers and strengthening participation and civic engagement among young people in the Republic of Moldova of the Ministry of Education and Research, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the United Nations Population Fund.



MINISTERUL
EDUCAȚIEI ȘI CERCETĂRII



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
Agenția Elvețiană pentru Dezvoltare și Cooperare
Швейцарское управление по развитию и сотрудничеству



CENTRUL
**Parteneriat pentru
Dezvoltare**

Final Evaluation Report of the National Strategy for Youth Sector Development 2020

AUTHORS: Alexei Buzu, Rodica Ivașcu, Natalia Covrig, Igor Ciurea, Florin Gîscă

The document is developed by the Center Partnership for Development, within the Joint Fund for the Development of Youth Centers and strengthening participation and civic engagement among young people in the Republic of Moldova of the Ministry of Education and Research, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the United Nations Population Fund.

CONTENT

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	3
INTRODUCTION	4
METHODOLOGY.....	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	9
PRIORITY I: YOUTH PARTICIPATION	11
1.1.INTRODUCTION	11
1.2.GENERAL FINDINGS	13
1.3.RELEVANCE.....	15
1.4. IMPLEMENTATIONS	18
1.5. THE IMPACT	31
1.6. GENDER INCLUSION AND EQUALITY	34
1.7.RECOMMENDATIONS.....	42
PRIORITY II: SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	44
2.1. INTRODUCTION.....	44
2.2. GENERAL FINDINGS	44
2.3. RELEVANCE	45
2.4. IMPLEMENTATION.....	47
2.5. IMPACT	53
2.6. GENDER INCLUSION AND EQUALITY.....	55
2.7. RECOMMENDATIONS	57
PRIORITY III. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	58
3.1. INTRODUCTION.....	58
3.2. GENERAL FINDINGS	58
3.3. RELEVANCE	59
3.4. IMPLEMENTATION.....	61
3.5.IMPACT	65
3.6.GENDER INCLUSION AND EQUALITY	66
3.7.RECOMMENDATIONS.....	69
PRIORITY IV. STRENGTHENING THE YOUTH SECTOR	70
4.1. INTRODUCTION.....	70
4.2. GENERAL FINDINGS	71
4.3. RELEVANCE	72
4.4. IMPLEMENTATION.....	74
4.5. IMPACT	80
4.6. GENDER INCLUSION AND EQUALITY.....	85
4.7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	87
ANNEX 1: INTERVIEWEES IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS	89

List of abbreviations

NAPDYW	National Agency for Programs Development and Youth Work
NEA	National Employment Agency
CPA	Central Public Authority
LPA	Local Public Authority
DRO	Diaspora Relations Office
LYC	Local Youth Council
CORM	Classifier of Occupations in the Republic of Moldova
CPD	Center Partnership for Development
DC	District Council
D/MYC	District / Municipal Youth Council
YFHC	Youth Friendly Health Center
YC	Youth Center
GUAM	Consultative forum of 4 states (Georgia, Ukraine, Republic of Azerbaijan and Republic of Moldova)
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MECR	Ministry of Education, Culture and Research
MEI	Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure
MF	Ministry of Finance
NEET	<i>Not in education, employment of training</i> (they are not in the educational system, in the workforce/labour market/ employed or in non-formal education)
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODIMM	Organization for the Development of the Small and Medium Enterprises Sector
NGO	Non-governmental organization
SCO	Civil Society Organization
NNLYCM	National Network of Local Youth Councils from Moldova
NSYSD	National Strategy for Youth Sector Development
NVW	National Volunteer Week
ITCSS	Information Technology and Cyber Security Service
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNWomen	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
VNR	Voluntary National Review
HIVA	Host Institution of Voluntary Activity

INTRODUCTION

In 2020, the implementation process of the National Strategy for Youth Sector Development 2014-2020 was completed. The strategy outlines the priority directions for the development of the youth sector and defines a specific action plan. The direct involvement of young people, youth workers and youth organizations and other actors of immediate contact in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country was one of the defining elements of this strategic document. The aim of the Strategy was to enhance and strengthen the youth sector, thus contributing to the creation of an appropriate environment for the development of the personal and professional life of each young man and young woman, including those with few opportunities. The implementation effort focused on four strategic areas: Youth Participation, Youth Services, Economic Opportunities for Youth, and Strengthening the Youth Sector.

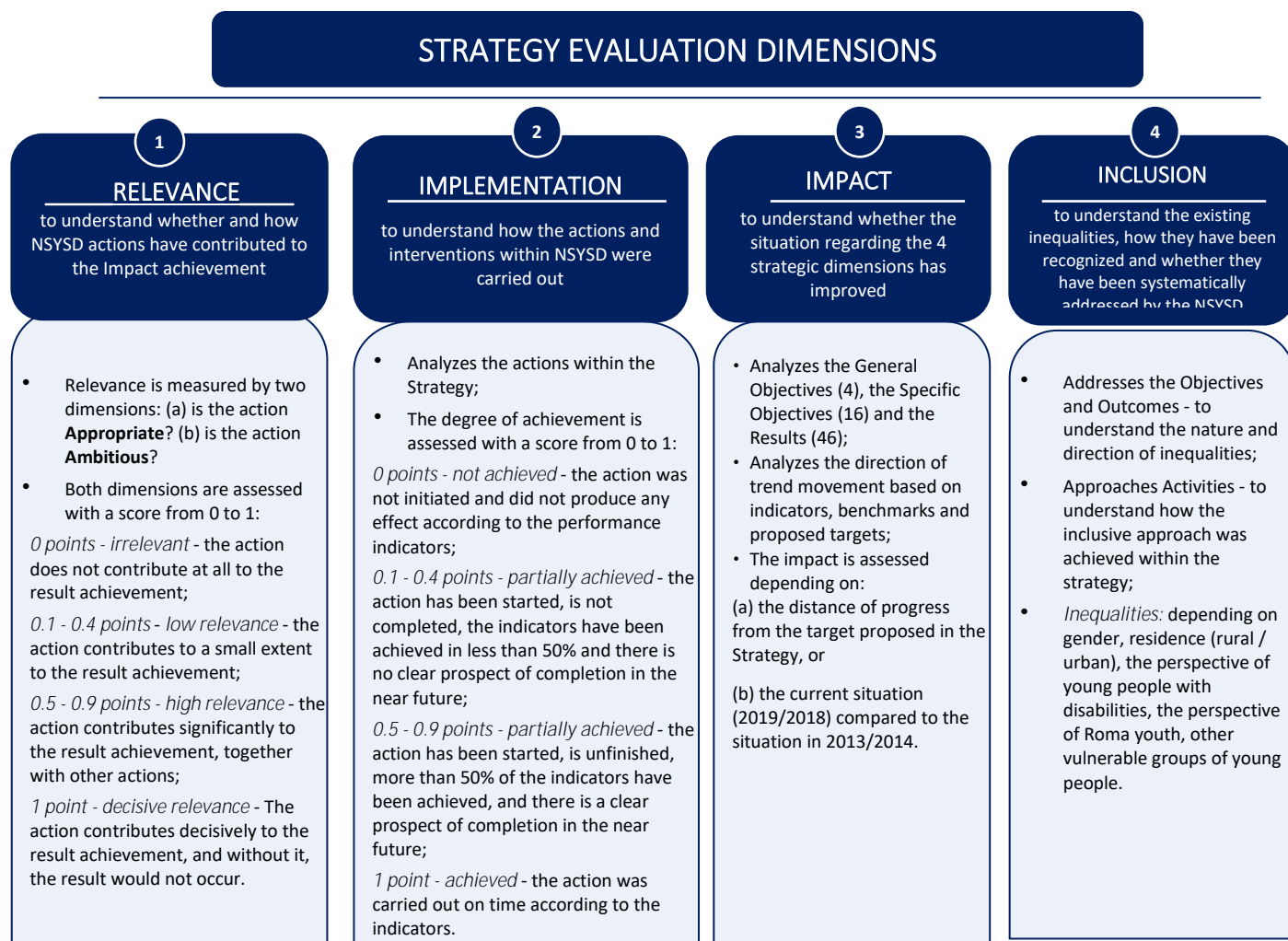
The completion of the implementation phase determined the need to start an independent process of final evaluation of the Strategy. The purpose of the exercise is to evaluate the level of implementation of the National Youth Strategy and the Action Plan, the degree of achievement of the established results, the factors that facilitated / prevented the basic achievements. The conclusions and recommendations resulting from this evaluation will serve as a basis for the elaboration of a new policy document aimed at youth sector development.

The evaluation process was based on the following objectives:(1) Understanding how relevant the Strategy was to address the needs of the Moldovan youth sector and young people in general; (2) Analysis of the extent to which the planned objectives and results have been achieved in relation to the expected results and targets; (3) Identifying innovative practices and models that have contributed to accelerating the implementation process; (4) Identifying the causes and factors that have reduced and prevented the proper achievement of the expected results; (5) The assessment of the degree to which *no one is left behind* has been addressed in the process of developing and implementing the Strategy; (6) The formulation of the lessons learned to be taken into account for the next strategic document on the youth sector development in the Republic of Moldova.

The evaluation of the Strategy was a joint effort. It was done within the Joint Fund for the Development of Youth Centers and strengthening the participation and civic engagement among young people in the Republic of Moldova of the Ministry of Education and Research, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the United Nations Population Fund.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation focused on the analysis of four key dimensions. The evaluation process covered the period 2014-2020 and referred to the following evaluation dimensions: *Relevance* – in order to understand if and how the actions within the Strategy contributed to achieving the Impact, or if they could produce / contribute to achieving the Impact; *Implementation* - to understand how the actions and interventions have been carried out within the Strategy and the *Impact* - to understand whether the Strategy has led to positive changes at the macro level in all strategic areas; *Inclusion and Gender Equality* - to understand how the Strategy recognizes and coherently addresses the most relevant inequalities for young people in the Republic of Moldova.



Relevance of a public policy document can be understood as the way in which the policy document in question recognizes the most important issues in the field, understands their magnitude, and proposes a set of measures, interventions and actions according to the identified problems and their magnitude. This element of proportionality largely determines whether a public policy document is relevant or not.

The level of relevance was measured from 0 to 1. A low score means a low level of relevance and a score closer to 4 means a high level of relevance (see table below). Relevance was assessed on the basis of two basic elements - Match and Ambition. Matching an intervention or action represents the way it proves to be the most *appropriate* intervention for the strategic area, the expected result and the specific problems of the field. That said, when we try to analyze *the level of matching* we try to understand if the proposed approach is the fairest (appropriate!). The ambition refers to the way in which public policy interventions are proportionate to the magnitude of the problems in the strategic area addressed in the evaluation process. Within the Strategy, an intervention with a high level of ambition will be one that will be *proportionate* to the level of difficulty of the problems faced by young people in the country. The more persistent and significant the problems of young people, the higher the level of ambition for interventions.

The degree of relevance of the action	Description of the degree of relevance	Score
Lack of relevance	The action does not contribute at all to the result achievement	0
Low relevance	The action contributes little to the result achievement	0.1-0.4
Significant relevance	The action contributes greatly to the result achievement, along with other actions	0.5-0.9
Decisive relevance	The action contributes decisively to the result achievement, and without this action the result would not occur	1

At the analytical level, the appreciation of the level of relevance will allow us to understand:

- The way in which the actions / interventions within the Strategy are appropriate in relation to the identified objectives and problems
- The way in which the actions / interventions within the Strategy are ambitious in relation to the identified objectives and problems
- Level of relevance by strategic areas
- How the actions / interventions within the Strategy will contribute to achieving the impact results.

Implementation. Within this evaluation, the implementation involves the measurement and analysis of the implementation degree of the interventions within the action plan and the results produced by them. The analyzed results refer to the positive changes that have been made / produced in a relatively short time, most often prescribed in the action plan. In this sense, the evaluation of the effectiveness of a public policy differs from the evaluation of the policy impact by the hierarchy of results that are evaluated. In the case of implementation, these are less significant results that can be achieved in a shorter time and in the case of policy impact assessment, much more important results are analyzed, which occur in a longer period.

The implementation is appreciated with a score from 0 to 1. A low score means a lower degree of achievement (implementation) and a score closer to 1 means a higher level of efficiency (see table below). Given that the Strategy Action Plan contains over a hundred initiatives, such an analytical approach allows us to compare the level of efficiency by strategic areas and years of reference.

General finding on the indicator	Description of the degree of achievement	scores
Unfulfilled	The action was not initiated and did not produce any effect according to the performance indicators	0
Partially done	The action has been started, is not completed, the indicators have been achieved in less than 50% and there is no clear prospect of completion in the near future.	0.1-0.4
	The action has been started, is unfinished, the indicators have been achieved in proportion of over 50%, and there is a clear prospect of completion in the near future.	0.5-0.9
Accomplished	The action was carried out on time according to the performance indicators	1

The analysis of the degree of efficiency will focus on the appreciation and understanding:

- The achievement level of in each strategic area
- The achievement level by type of implementer, including secondary
- The achievement level by type of intervention
- Factors that favored and inhibited the fulfillment process.

The Impact of the Strategy refers to the analysis of the significant results that occurred during the implementation period, their magnitude and the level at which these results can be attributed to the interventions within the public policy document. In the context of the impact of public policies, significant results refer to planned or unintended positive changes, both positive and negative changes, of a sustainable nature, at the level of individuals, communities and institutions.

Impact assessment involves assessing two key elements. First of all, the evaluation effort will involve the analysis of the progress at macro level of the changes related to gender equality related to the targeted areas within the Strategy. Secondly, the evaluation process will identify the level of attribution of the Strategy towards possible positive changes in the lives of young people.

Within this evaluation, the impact of the Strategy will be achieved through the combined analysis of the relevance and implementation of interventions. This approach starts from the assumption that a

public policy produces an impact if it meets at the same time two essential conditions: public policy must have a high degree of relevance (involve *matching* and *ambitious* interventions) and a high degree of implementation of these interventions. Thus, depending on the level of relevance and the level of efficiency, the evaluation will assess the probability of the Strategy impact.

Inclusion and Gender Equality. In order to understand the extent to which young people benefited equally from opportunities and chances for young people, the evaluation process has included steps that allowed us to determine: (i) how consistent the low level of participation of young people from vulnerable categories was approached at the stage of describing the problem (use of data as disaggregated as possible on different categories of young people); (ii) what was the response of decision-makers to the needs of participation of young representatives of marginalized categories, both in the planning stage of strategic interventions and in the process of their implementation; and (iii) how effective and consistent were the instruments of monitoring, evaluation and reporting in line with the needs for participation of excluded young people.

The analysis of these dimensions was performed on the basis of the [EVALUATION MATRIX](#).

The evaluation team will draw conclusions based on the triangulation of evidence from different methods of data collection and from primary and secondary data sources, namely:

(1) Analysis of statistical data and relevant documents. These include: annual reports on the implementation of the Strategy Action Plan, Comprehensive Analysis of the Youth Sector (UNICEF/UNFPA), the 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report of the 2030 Agenda, the ministry's annual reports, Youth Well-being Policy Review of Moldova (published by OECD, 2018), Mid-term review of the implementation of the National Strategy for the Youth Sector Development 2020 (Unicef, 2018), including the support of the international expertise delivered by UN WOMEN on the youth sector analysis from a gender perspective as well as annual reports on the evaluation of the Strategy prepared by civil society representatives.

(2) Interviews with key persons. These were accomplished based on a predetermined guide. Interviews were organized with selected key experts, including representatives of key ministries, LPAs, youth centers and youth organizations, councils and informal youth groups, the donor community. The list of interviewees is attached.

(3) Consultation sessions. In the context of the development process of the Evaluation Report of NSYSD 2020 and in order to ensure a broad and participatory framework for consulting the subjects of the youth sector, 3 consultation workshops were carried out, with selected participants in the territorial profile (from south, center, north) and grouped according to the activity areas in the youth sector as follows: **(i)** civil servants responsible for youth in level II of the LPA (23 participants); **(ii)** practitioners in the field, youth workers, representatives of Youth Centers and NGOs, etc. (38 participants) and **(iii)** young people, volunteers, youth leaders, beneficiaries of Youth Centers, youth councils, representatives of informal and representative structures of pupils, students, etc. (50 participants). Within each workshop, a short retrospective of NSYSD was presented, based on the professional / social profile of the participants present at the workshop. Subsequently, the participants in each workshop were divided into discussion groups focused on 3 elements related to the implementation of NSYSD: results, challenges and development tendencies of a new Strategic Planning Document after 2020.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth participation. The proposed interventions for the first strategic priority are characterized by a relatively high level of relevance, being equivalent to 0.65 points (out of a maximum of 1). Thus, the observed results show a good calibration of most of the planned actions, especially those for the sub-priorities aimed at international cooperation with youth structures and the development of local youth councils, both being evaluated with a level of over 0.72 points. The degree of implementation of priority I of NSYSD is a partial one, being equivalent to only 0.54 points out of maximum 1 possible. Given the extensive and diverse set of interventions set for strategic area I. Participation of young people (area incorporating 21 specific results and 73 actions), their performance was assessed with scores ranging from 0.13 to 0.72 points. Among the interventions that are characterized by a high degree of achievement are the actions of completing or modifying the legislative and normative framework (0.86) and those aimed at carrying out communication, promotion or awareness campaigns (0.84). Although the strategy has managed to boost the creation of several premises that would facilitate the participation of young people, Moldova continues to be characterized by increased civic passivity. According to the report "Youth participation in pandemics" Although the strategy has managed to drive the creation of several premises that would facilitate the participation of young people, Moldova continues to be characterized by increased civic passivity. According to the report "Youth participation in pandemics"¹, in July 2020, only 18.4% of young people in Moldova participated in activities aimed at influencing the decision-making process. During the implementation of NSYSD 2020, several legislative and normative acts were elaborated and promulgated in order to create the conditions for facilitating the more active participation and involvement of young people at social and decision-making level. Among them we can mention the Law no. 215/2016 on Youth, Framework Regulation on the organization and functioning of Local Youth Councils, Government Decision no. 598/2020 on the organization and functioning of the National Agency for Programs Development and Youth Work, etc. Likewise, the foundations of the activity of some youth structures that operate at district and local level were laid, youth initiatives were supported through the grant program, a series of training and information activities were carried out for the main actors relevant to the youth sector, etc. Although the proposed strategic interventions have contributed to progress, the lack of a homogeneous monitoring framework and macro indicators specific to the participation of young people in Moldova has made it difficult to estimate the impact of strategic interventions on major issues related to participation of young people.

Better Services for Young People. In order to achieve the objectives, set under Priority II, actions with a high degree of relevance (0.73 out of a maximum of 1) were planned, above the average of the actions from the other priorities. The matching level of actions (on average 0.84) was generally higher than the degree of ambition (on average 0.63), the score being negatively affected by the lack of concrete targets, lack / insufficiency of the allocated budget, limited time and clarity lack in the wording of the intervention. By contrast, the level of achievement under Priority II (on average 0.41) was the lowest of all four planned priorities. Most of the planned actions were related to the establishment of standards for services provided to young people (including the outreach ones) and the development of an accreditation system for these services. During the implementation it was decided to change the initially planned approach, namely - to abandon a system of standards and to develop quality criteria for the services provided. This change delayed the implementation schedule, which also led to a lower level of implementation. Most of the planned actions have not been carried out at all, or are at an early stage of implementation. The level

¹ https://progen.md/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/9352_covid_19_impactul_participarea.pdf

of achievement under the priority ranged from 0.34 to 0.52 for each of the three sub-priorities. In terms of impact, no target has been set for the degree of contribution to building the capacity of young people for integration into society, and it is difficult to assess the extent to which the objective has been achieved. Thus, the carried-out activities contributed to the development of young people's capacities, however, no data are available on the extent to which young people with reduced opportunities have also benefited, which are explicitly mentioned in the formulation of the objective.

Economic Opportunities for Young People. The actions planned under Priority III have a relatively high degree of relevance (on average 0.62). By contrast, the lowest degree of relevance was found for actions related to the sub-priority *Economic Empowerment and Entrepreneurship among Young People* (0.35). In this case, the lack of matching and ambition of some actions significantly influenced the average score in a negative way. The degree of implementation of the actions under Priority III was average (with a score of 0.49 out of a maximum of 1). The degree of achievement varied significantly between sub-priorities, from 0.26 for sub-priority 3.1, to 0.58 and 0.63 for sub-priority 3.2 and 3.3 respectively. The main factors that reduced the potential impact were insufficient financial resources, lack of specific targets, the lack of a programmed approach and in some cases - the insufficiency of human resources in the responsible structures of the MECR for the workload required by NSYSD. At the same time, we find that in Priority III, the central role for achieving the objectives has the specialized public authorities (MEI, ODIMM, NEA), and the resources and levers of MECR do not have the capacity to produce significant changes. Under Priority III, the overall objective (Development of entrepreneurial and employment opportunities among young people, especially those with reduced opportunities) does not contain a verifiable quantitative indicator. Only a few of the reported actions present disaggregated data on young beneficiaries with fewer opportunities. Marginalized groups (rural youth, young people with disabilities) continue to be under-represented in the entrepreneurial environment.

Strengthening the Youth Sector. In order to strengthen and develop the youth sector, a series of interventions at national, regional and local level have been designed and implemented. The relevance of these interventions (analyzed in terms of ambition and matching of planned activities) ultimately determined the level of impact on the sector. The analysis of priority IV of NSYSD 2020 indicates that the activities planned and carried out under this priority are characterized by a relative relevance, with an overall score of 0.63 points out of a maximum of 1. Compared to other general priorities, the area of consolidation of the youth sector occupies the last positions on the relevance of the actions set out in the Strategy and its Action Plan. The low ambition of the actions also determined their moderate level of relevance. Priority 4 of NSYSD 2020 focused more on the institutional empowerment of youth structures (including those in the associative sector), on the development of skills in youth work and on the development of mechanisms to strengthen this sector (from the perspective of capacities, human resources, of policies etc.). At the macro level, the planned targets resonate with these goals, but the analysis shows that some specific actions were not ambitious and transformative enough to fully achieve the proposed results (such as actions planned to promote non-formal education among young people or for the participatory and inclusive development of the intersectoral legislative framework). In this regard, at the level of the whole priority, the coefficient of the level of ambition is twice lower than that of matching the actions with the proposed targets. The level of implementation of the activities envisaged for priority IV is estimated to be moderate, with some deviations from the initial strategic planning. Accumulating an average score of 0.56, priority IV ranks first in the *implementation* chapter, compared to the other three strategic areas of NSYSD 2020. The highest score for achievement is attested in the case of activities aimed at completing or amending the legislative and normative framework of youth sector,

grant and investment support programs developed by the relevant ministry and conducting studies and analyzes in the field.

PRIORITY I: YOUTH PARTICIPATION

1.1. Introduction

Civic activism of young people is an essential element both for ensuring democracy and for the consistent development of human capital. Over the last four decades in the European space, the participation of young people in social, political and civic decision-making process has become increasingly important. Their participation is a key topic for youth policy in the European Union and the Council of Europe together with many other stakeholders in the practice and research in the field of youth work. Youth participation is a priority in the European Union's Youth Strategy (2010-2018) and is one of the priorities for cooperation between the European Commission and the Member States. In 2011 and 2012, respectively, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Committee of Ministers adopted recommendations on this subject, suggesting the use of new tools and methods to engage in dialogue with young people and to create more age groups for this age group. In 2013, the European Commission presented a study on the situation and trends of youth participation in different youth groups, exploring the results from various aspects of participation.²

Youth participation is the first and most complex strategic priority under NSYSD 2020, referring both at the number of activities and results included, and the variety of key actors targeted. International incentives, as well as the elaborated national studies that highlight the precarious situation in Moldova from the perspective of youth participation³, have determined the authorities to come up with a set of public policies at national level to provide new opportunities for young people and increase their interest in becoming more actively involved in community life. One of the targeted policies is the National Strategy for Youth Sector Development 2020 (NSYSD 2020). Thus, a special role in NSYSD 2020 belongs to the issue of low youth activism, this being the most complex area of intervention in the indicated public policy document. It should be noted that NSYSD 2020 defines *participation* as the coordinated involvement of young people, of public administration authorities and civil society in the decision-making process of solving problems in the youth sector. Creating an environment that encourages the active involvement of young people in solving community problems and participation in democratic processes determines the need for a comprehensive framework for intervention.

Priority I of NSYSD 2020 aims to contribute to increasing the level of involvement of young people in the process of strengthening participatory democracy. By means of this priority, the authorities' response was aimed at (i) providing as many opportunities for youth participation as possible, (ii) creating and strengthening youth structures, but also (iii) developing a normative and legislative framework that will facilitate the integration of the youth dimension in all areas of activity. Thus, in line with the overall objective, six specific objectives and an extended range of interventions were planned, as reflected in the figure below.

²New and innovative forms of youth participation in decision-making. Anne Crowley & Dan Moxon. http://ecpat.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/178717GBR_Forms-youth-participation.pdf

³ According to the text [SNDST 2020](#), In 2013, youth participation was quoted at only 11%.

The NSYSD 2020 evaluation exercise identified progress towards the first priority target, as well as outlining a series of recommendations for the subsequent strategic document. In the context of completing the implementation cycle of the Strategy, in 2020 the activities of its evaluation have started in order to establish the effects of the interventions of the authorities in relation to the issue of the low level of activism of young people. Therefore, the impact of NSYSD 2020 on youth participation was assessed in the light of the objectives and performance targets proposed to be achieved in the end, and the most relevant findings were reflected in this document.

PRIORITY I. YOUTH PARTICIPATION	Sub-priority 1.1. Legal framework for the participation of young people in the decision making process	<p>R1.1.1. Legislative and normative framework with provisions that allow and stimulate the active and equal participation of all young people in the created decision-making process;</p> <p>R1.1.2. Young people involved, until the end of 2018, by all LPA II in the decision-making process, based on youth consultative structures;</p> <p>R1.1.3. Young people involved in the decision-making process at local level by at least 30% of LPA I;</p> <p>R1.1.4. Systematic consultations on public policies aimed at young people by the LPA.</p>
	Sub-priority 1.2. Civic activism of young people	<p>R1.2.1. At least 30% of young people associated and actively involved in formal and informal structures;</p> <p>R1.2.2. At least 60% of young people of the active population participate in the vote and are directly involved in this process;</p> <p>R1.2.3. Volunteer activity consolidated through a developed infrastructure, accessible to all young people and functional, recognized at a formal and practical level;</p> <p>R1.2.4. The degree of participation of young people, youth organizations, initiative groups and youth workers in the implementation of increased youth policies.</p>
	Sub-priority 1.3. Local youth councils	<p>R1.3.1. Local youth councils operate on the basis of a regulatory and good governance mechanism;</p> <p>R1.3.2. By the end of 2016, functional RNLIC in all regions of the Republic of Moldova;</p> <p>R1.3.3. By the end of 2018, LYC represented by a consolidated national network;</p> <p>R1.3.4. LYC have instruments to ensure financial sustainability, including from the state;</p> <p>R1.3.5. At least 40% of young people aged 13-18, including those with reduced opportunities, involved in LYC activity.</p>
	Sub-priority 1.4. Youth mobility	<p>R1.4.1. At least 35% of young people, including those with limited opportunities, are beneficiaries of national and international mobility programs;</p> <p>R1.4.2. At least 35% of the beneficiaries of mobility programs have competitive skills and knowledge on the labor market;</p> <p>R1.4.3. At least 35% of young people who go abroad to study or work are informed about mobility programs and at least 20% become beneficiaries of these programs.</p>
	Subpriority 1.5. Informing young people	<p>R1.5.1. By the end of 2020, access to correct and secure information is ensured for at least 80% of young people;</p> <p>R1.5.2. By the end of 2018, at least 50% of young people are aware of the risks of the online environment;</p> <p>R1.5.3. Until the end of 2017, a legal framework for ensuring the protection and security of young people and adolescents on the Internet.</p>
	Sub-priority 1.6. International cooperation	<p>R1.6.1. The presence of youth organizations in the Republic of Moldova in European youth structures encouraged and increased;</p> <p>R1.6.2. Extensive collaboration and the number of events held annually jointly with international organizations and increased youth structures.</p>

F1. Areas of intervention for priority 1. Youth participation
Source: NSYSD 2020

1.2. General findings

The interventions proposed for the first strategic priority are characterized by a relatively high level of relevance, being equivalent to 0.65 points (out of a maximum of 1). The analysis methodology proposed in this exercise found that, at the stage of Strategy development, measures and actions were identified that would lead to good progress in relation to the objectives and results set and specific to the area of youth participation. In relation to the other priorities, the area of participation ranked second by relevance. Thus, the observed results show a good calibration of most of the planned actions, especially those for sub-priorities aimed at international cooperation with youth structures and the development of Local Youth Councils, both being evaluated with a level of over 0.72 points. Also in this context, we can not overlook the difference up to the maximum level of points, which indicates that not all the interventions identified were transformative, which would have facilitated a more significant progress in terms of participation (pronounced gaps being observed for the sub-priorities aimed at the mobility of young people and their civic activism).

The actions identified proved to be less ambitious. The breakdown of the results obtained for the relevance element, from the perspective of matching and ambition of the interventions proposed for priority I, allowed us to find that, although after the matching, the authorities managed to identify actions characterized by their transformative element, still the lower ambition has generated a stagnation in achieving the planned major results (see the methodology section for details). Thus, the matching element obtained on average 0.74 points, and the ambition one - 0.55. Given the participatory process organized at the stage of the strategic document elaboration (with the involvement of development partners, SCOs in the youth sector, representatives of the youth group and civic activists, etc.), this allowed the Strategy paper to incorporate interventions as effective as possible in relation to the objectives and results set. On the other hand, the effort and intention to implement them (for example the allocated resources, the scope of the action, the number of targeted beneficiaries, etc.) had repercussions on achieving the expected progress.

The degree of implementation of NSYSD priority I is partial, being equivalent to only 0.54 points out of a maximum of 1 possible. Given the extensive and diverse set of interventions set for strategic area I, the Youth participation (area comprising 21 specific results and 73 actions), their performance was evaluated with scores ranging from 0.13 to 0.72 points. Among the interventions that are characterized by a high degree of achievement are the actions of completing or modifying the legislative and normative framework (0.86) and those aimed at carrying out communication, promotion or awareness campaigns (0.84). By contrast, at the opposite pole were classified the actions aimed at conducting studies and research specific to the area of youth participation (0.43), the development of policy documents, strategies and methodologies (0.44) and the provision of grants and investments (0.10). So, the evaluation exercise made it possible to identify the fact that the interventions that were under the direct responsibility of the line ministry designated for the implementation of the strategy had a higher degree of accomplishment (modification of the legislative and normative framework). At the same time, the existence of a development partner or a specialized partner on the part of civil society organizations contributes significantly to increasing the degree of implementation of strategic interventions.

Although the strategy has managed to drive the creation of several premises that would facilitate the participation of young people, Moldova continues to be characterized by increased civic passivity. During the implementation of NSYSD 2020, several legislative and normative acts managed to be

elaborated and promulgated, which aimed at creating the conditions that would facilitate the participation of young people to be more actively involved at social and decisional level. Among them we can mention the Law on Youth no. 215, the Framework Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Local Youth Councils, the Government Decision on the organization and functioning of the National Agency for Programs Development and Youth Work, etc. Likewise, the foundations of the activity of some youth structures operating at district and local level were laid, youth initiatives were supported through the grant program, a series of training and information activities of the main actors relevant to the youth sector were carried out. Although the proposed strategic interventions have contributed to progress, the lack of a homogeneous monitoring framework and macro indicators has made it difficult to estimate the impact of strategic interventions on major issues related to youth participation. Based on a study conducted in 2020⁴, it was possible to identify that only 18.4% of young people were involved in civic and decision-making activities, which is an extremely low rate.

The holistic assessment of this area has identified a number of challenges that have delayed achieving the expected impact with regard to youth participation. These include: (i) the insufficiency of a mechanism that would facilitate the integration and monitoring of young people's perspectives in public policies developed in all areas related to their area of participation; (ii) the reduced functionality and financial sustainability of the created youth structures (such as Local Youth Councils, Youth Centers, etc.); (iii) the lack of a single data collection framework that would allow the identification of the trend in terms of youth participation, both in terms of civic participation, representation in decision-making structures, and in terms of access to and benefits of youth services, etc. In addition to these, an equally important factor to be reflected in this context represents the changes in the political arena, namely (i) the reform of the Government⁵, which determined the merging of the ministries, including the ministry responsible for implementing interventions specific to this priority and (ii) the loss of institutional memory with the change of ministers of the relevant entity and the teams for implementation and management of youth participation priority. We do not omit the fact that these changes had direct repercussions on the level of achievement of the set objectives, taking into account the fact that the interventions specific to the given priority were largely attributed to the relevant ministry.

Inclusive youth participation - a dimension with prospects for improvement. It should be mentioned that at the stage of the Strategy elaboration, the exclusion of young people from vulnerable categories was highlighted as an issue to be addressed by the public policy document, being later integrated in the logical matrix of interventions and expressly mentioned through 2 specific objectives (1.1 and 1.2.). The strategy evaluation exercise has revealed that the lack of specific national tools that would facilitate consistent monitoring of the beneficiaries of the activities carried out and that would allow the generation of multiple information disaggregated according to the socio-demographic criteria of the young people involved (such as gender, level of education, ethnicity, presence of disability, living environment, etc.) was an impediment in measuring as objectively as possible the level of inclusion of young people with reduced opportunities. Although in recent years there has been a slightly positive trend at national level to implement initiatives addressing the issue of inclusive participation of young people (with the support of development partners), the unavailability of a single national mechanism to monitor compliance with this principle has registered repercussions, based on comparable data collected in a systematic way.

⁴ [COVID 19 and Youth: How the pandemic influenced youth participation. Study. Chisinau 2020. P. 11.](#)

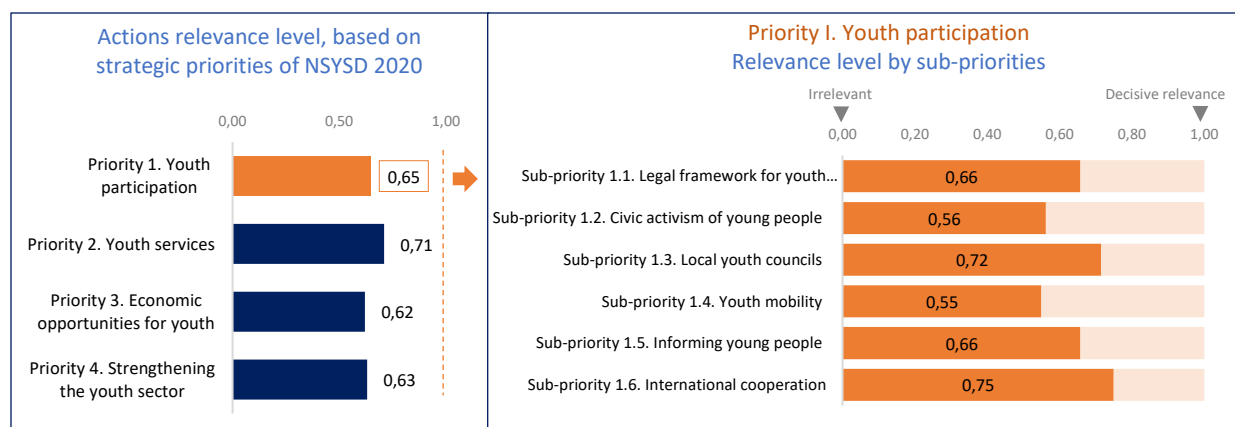
⁵ <https://gov.md/ro/content/reforma-guvernului-aplicare>

Given the importance of youth participation, this priority needs to be maintained in the subsequent development strategy of the youth sector. In order to move forward on this issue, the authorities should come up with a more complex and holistic response, which would aim to address as effectively as possible the issue of increased reluctance of young people to be involved in both decision-making process (regardless of administrative level), as well as in civic activities at community level. In this regard, the recommendations for the following strategy paper include: (i) setting macro-type indicators (for example, the participation rate of young people in civic actions, including those from the most marginalized categories; the share of young people running for local, district and national decision-making positions, the participation rate of young people in the vote, the share of young people who were elected as mayors, councilors, deputies, etc.) which would allow both the annual dynamic monitoring of the performance targets set in a more specific and clearly distinct way for the participation of young people, and the identification of public policy documents to be adjusted to the needs of young people; (ii) strengthening the capacity of the authorities in developing and implementing national and local instruments for the development of public policy documents aligned with the needs of young people and evaluating them in an efficient and complex way that would result in recommendations for further improvement of policy interventions (iii) holistic planning of training activities for those involved in promoting youth participation initiatives, the line ministry being responsible for conceptualizing a complex program of topics to be addressed so that they ensure consistency and logical continuity, (iv) the establishment, by the end of 2022 at the latest, by the line ministry of the clear mechanism to address the issue of youth inclusion in the participation process, so that each young person can benefit from the necessary opportunities that would contribute to their civic activism, (v) establishing and maintaining partnerships that would facilitate the proper implementation of interventions aimed at increasing participation of young people etc.

1.3. Relevance

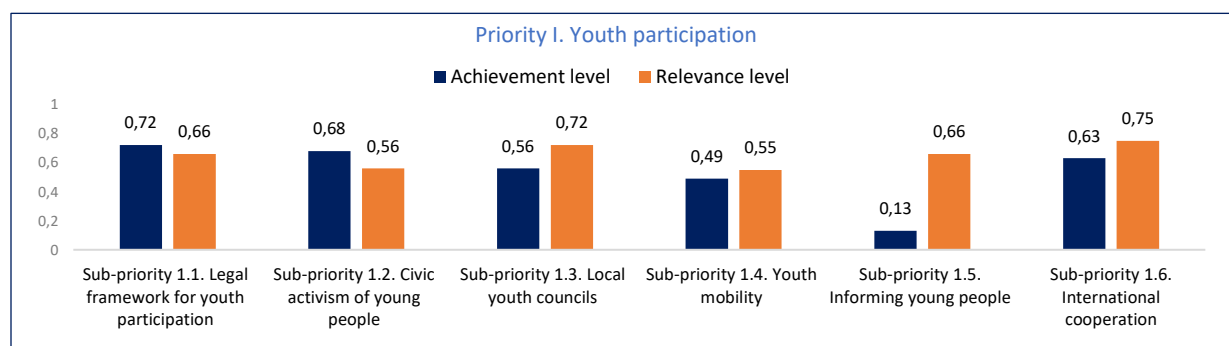
A key element in the process of evaluating NSYSD 2020 Priority I is to establish the level of relevance of the proposed interventions in relation to the specific objectives specific to youth participation. Assessing the relevance of the proposed interventions analyzes how appropriate and ambitious they are to determine the expected changes. In this context, it is important to understand the extent to which the set interventions were in line with the scope of the desired results and objectives. The analysis of the degree of relevance of each action proposed and reflected in the logical matrix in relation to the objectives and strategic results is an optimal method in this sense.

The proposed interventions in relation to the overall objective, with reference to the involvement of young people in the process of strengthening participatory democracy, were estimated with a relatively good level of relevance. Rated on a scale from 0 to 1 in accordance with the set objectives, the actions in the logic matrix obtained scores ranging between 0.55 and 0.75 points. Referring to the evaluation performed, this is equivalent to a high relevance (figure below). In other words, at the stage of planning the strategic document, in order to achieve the set objectives, the authorities managed to identify necessary actions that would contribute as much as possible to increase the level of participation of young people, depending on the established sub-priorities. In relation to the other priorities, the area of participation ranked second by relevance. In line with this, it can be noticed that, on the one hand, it means a relatively high relevance, but on the other hand - the difference up to the maximum level shows that not all the proposed interventions had a transformative character that would have allowed a more significant progress in achieving the set impact with regard to increasing the level of youth participation.



*F2. Relevance of interventions in relation to the proposed objectives for priority area 1. Youth participation;
Source: Authors' estimates*

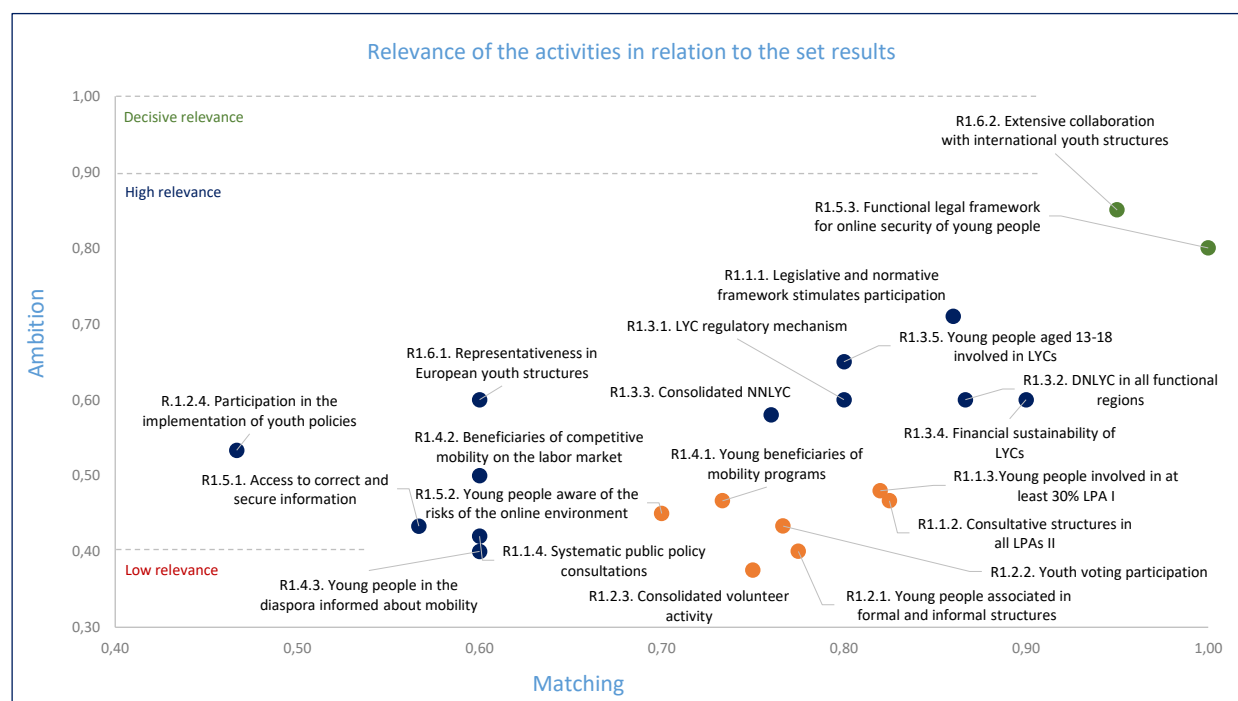
The relative level of relevance was influenced by the interventions set for the sub-priorities aimed at strengthening local youth councils and partnerships with international youth structures. For both objectives, the authors of the document took into account to identify actions that increased the probability of approaching the expected results following the implementation of the strategy. Thus, their relevance was estimated at a level of over 0.7 points.



*F3. Mapping interventions according to the level of achievement and relevance
Source: Authors' estimates*

On the other hand, a lower degree of relevance was characteristic to the planned interventions for the objectives related to the mobility of young people and their civic activism. Although the previous figure shows that most objectives have a level of relevance slightly above the average level (0.5 points), the actions set for two specific objectives have mostly influenced the fact that the general objective is not equivalent to a higher degree of relevance. Thus, the planned actions are more characterized by a limited degree of influencing the estimated progress for the goal of youth mobility and the increase of youth activism. The values of 0.55 points and 0.56 points respectively can confirm this. In the same order of ideas, the figure above reflects the relevance for the results set for the two objectives. Thus, it is possible to identify in more details which interventions have made the least contribution to the planned progress.

The planned actions managed to prove the matching, but are less ambitious. Analysis of the level of relevance in terms of *matching* the action to the set result and objective (how transformative and structural the activities were in relation to the established results) and the *ambition* to achieve it (how comprehensive and ambitious these interventions were in magnitude), have clarified that they have a high degree of relevance from the perspective of matching the expected objectives and an average from the perspective of the degree of ambition. In other words, even if some of the actions were considered to be effective in achieving the strategic impact for the participation area of young people, the effort and intention in their implementation were estimated to determine what may stand in the way of the coveted progress (e.g., allocated resources, the scope of the activity, the number of beneficiaries concerned, etc.).



F4. Interventions' relevance in relation to the set results, depending on the match and ambition
Source: Authors' estimates

At the same time, we cannot overlook the level of relevance obtained for the sub-priority aimed at improving the legal framework specific to the area. In the context in which the provisions of public policies have the greatest transformative power in any sector of activity, the average obtained value of the level of relevance for the given objective - of 0.66 points, reveals a lower concordance of activities in relation to the reforming element.

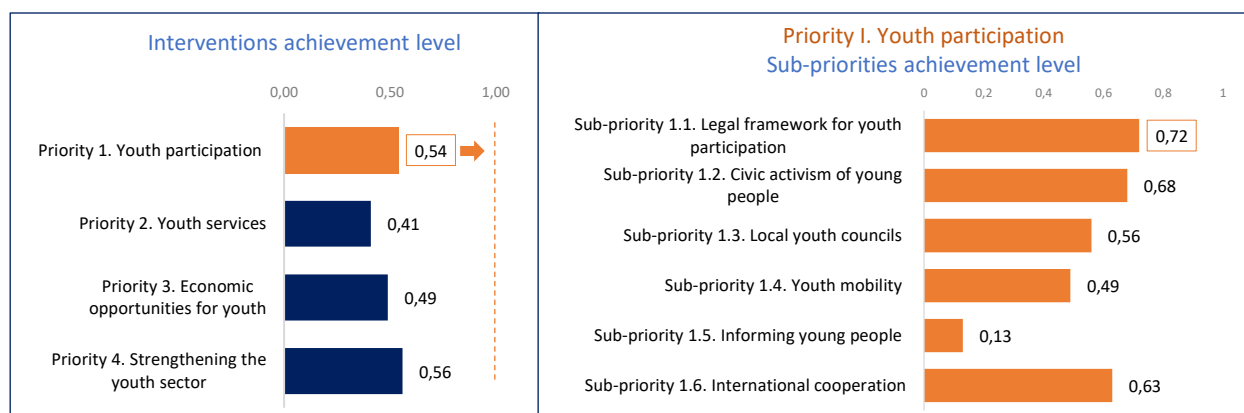
Mapping the results in terms of fit and ambition highlighted interventions that are more relevant to increase the level of achievement of the overall goal set. Thus, in accordance with the figure presented above, it can be noticed that this category contains the actions that aimed to achieve the result 1.6.2. *Extensive collaboration with international youth structures*. The planned activities involved (i) the development of multilateral cooperation by ensuring a dynamic and effective communication with international organizations and structures supporting youth and sports policies, such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Independent States, GUAM, Central European Initiative, Visegrad Group, etc. and (ii) promoting mobility and youth exchange

by expanding the participation of the Republic of Moldova in the European Union's "Erasmus Plus" and "Eastern Partnership" programs. The evaluation showed a high calibration of these actions in relation to the specific set result, the first action contributing to its achievement in cooperation with other interventions, and the last having a decisive influence, contributing directly and independently to the achievement of the proposed target. At the same time, this category also includes the actions specific to the result 1.5.3. *The functional legal framework for increasing the online security of youth*. This result included the implementation of a single action, namely the revision of the national legal framework that ensures cyber security in the light of the information needs of young people. In relation to the proposed result, this intervention was evaluated as one that will independently determine the materialization of the expected target.

In the same context, the interventions that, due to the lower ambition, may delay the manifestation of the strategic results, were also highlighted. These include interventions aimed at increasing the level of youth participation in decision-making processes at community level (result 1.1.3), including at district level, based on youth advisory structures (result 1.1.2), increasing voting participation of young people (result 1.2.2), greater association of young people in formal and non-formal participation structures (result 1.2.1), strengthening volunteering through a developed infrastructure, accessible to all young people and functional, formally recognized and practically (result 1.2.3), as well as to increase the number of young beneficiaries of national and international mobility programs, including young people in the categories with reduced opportunities (result 1.4.1). Thus, although from the perspective of matching the set results, the planned interventions were evaluated with a relatively high level of relevance, nevertheless the degree of ambition had a more negative repercussion on the achievement of the set targets. Mostly, the low ambition is due to the small size of the actions carried out in terms of beneficiaries involved, including those in the most excluded categories, but also the limited capacity and resources allocated to support training and empowerment of young people and youth workers in Local Youth Councils and Youth Centers, if referring to increasing their representation both in youth structures and in the decision-making process.

1.4. Implementation

The evaluation process of this strategic area established a partial degree of achievement of the set objective, accumulating a score of 0.54 points out of a maximum of 1.0 possible. Compared to the other results obtained for the strategic priorities, we find that the one aimed at youth participation ranks second. It should be noted that the accumulated score, however, indicates a relative level of implementation of the proposed interventions. The strategic area "Youth Participation" includes 6 specific objectives and 21 results. The performance in their realization varies, being influenced by several factors. Therefore, from the following figure, it is observed that the interventions proposed for two sub-priorities have an extremely low degree of implementation. We refer to actions specific to the field of youth mobility (estimated with a score of 0.49) and the information on the online security (0.13 points). It is important to mention that a rather important sub-priority in relation to the analyzed priority, namely the legal framework for youth participation has achieved the highest level of achievement.

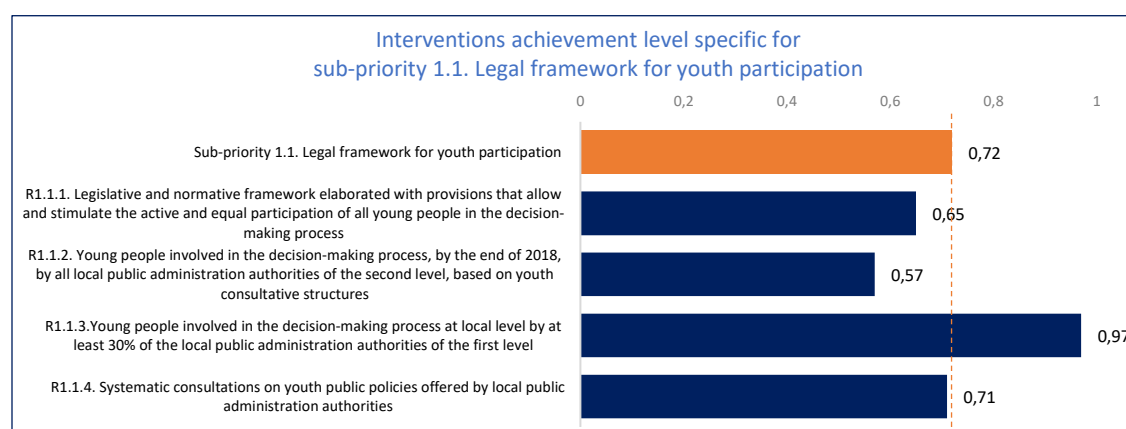


F5. Interventions achievement level specific for priority I. Youth participation

Source: Author's estimates

Specific objective 1.1. Improving, by the end of 2017, the legal framework by approving at least 6 normative acts that would ensure the participation of young people, including those with reduced opportunities, in all decision-making processes

The interventions set for the first sub-priority are characterized by a high degree of achievement, being equivalent to 0.72 points. At this stage, this score can be interpreted as a positive trend in the inclusion on the authority's agenda and other key actors (development partners, NGOs, civic activists, etc.) of topics related to the issue of low youth participation and promoting their needs in public policy documents at both national and local levels. A detailed analysis of the scores obtained by each specific result set for this area revealed that all the results planned under sub-priority 1.1. have passed the average level of achievement, best classified being the established interventions regarding the participation of young people in the decision-making process at local level (LPA I) - 0.97. The specificity of the actions could come as an explanation for this high level of achievement (most being oriented towards training and information campaigns). The following is an analysis of the authorities' effort to achieve the targets set for each outcome of this sub-priority.



F6. Implementation level of interventions specific for sub-priority 1.1. Legal framework for youth participation

Source: Authors' estimates

During 2014-2020, several key documents were approved to ensure the participation of young people and the development of the youth sector in a sustainable way. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Research was represented in most inter-ministerial commissions aimed at introducing normative changes that directly or tangentially targeted the youth sector. Among the most important acts that have been approved are:

- Law on youth⁶ no. 215 of 29.07.2016 which sets out the main conditions for the development of the youth sector, laying the foundations for the organization of several key structures in the sector;
- Government Decision no. 598 of 12.08.2020 on the organization and functioning of the National Agency for Programs Development and Youth Work⁷;
- Government Decision no. 347 of 10.06.2020 on the approval of the Regulation on the organization and development of the "Youth Capital" Program⁸;
- Order of the Minister of Youth and Sports No. T / 376 of 30.12.2016 on the approval of the Framework Regulation on the organization and implementation of the Grants Program for youth organizations⁹;
- Minister's Order No. T / 303 of 31 October 2016 on the approval of the Framework Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Local Youth council¹⁰, etc.

At the same time, during the implementation of NSYSD several normative acts were improved from the youth perspective. Order of the MYS no. T / 571 / A of 22.10.2015 regulated the 2018-2019 editions of the Youth Awards by approving the Regulation on awarding national distinctions and awards for the youth sector. For the 2020 edition, the Regulation on granting the national prize for youth was elaborated and approved by order no.735 of 28.07.2020¹¹, 2020 edition. Budget classification, approved by Order of the Minister of Finance No. 208 of 24.12.2015¹², was revised and supplemented with new codes for programs for the youth component, amended and approved by the Order of the Minister of Finance No. 117 of 11.08.2017 on amending and supplementing the budget classification. Another important amending document is the Government Decision no. 1 of 03.01.2020 for the amendment of annex no. 2 to the Government Decision no. 1006/2014 on the approval of the National Strategy for Youth Sector Development 2020 and the Action Plan on its implementation. By Government Decision no. 477/2019 for the amendment of annexes no. 1 and no. 2 to the Government Decision no. 1213/2010 on the approval of measures to support youth activities, several provisions regulating the manner and limits of expenditure in the case of organization and financing of youth activities have been revised.

It is worth mentioning that several acts planned to be drafted or amended have not been approved. These include Law no. 435/2006 on administrative decentralization for the express inclusion of youth activities and services in the area of competence of the LPA level II which, despite discussions in 2015 and 2016 and several attempts to introduce changes, did not generate any progress. Following the tests, it was concluded that such an amendment could be made only in cooperation or by the State Chancellery, the Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova (CLAM), or other authorities of the central public administration within a draft law on amendment of Law no. 435/2006 on administrative decentralization.

⁶ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=105800&lang=ro

⁷ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=122776&lang=ro

⁸ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=121725&lang=ro

⁹ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=97355&lang=ro

¹⁰ https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_nr.t303_din_31.10.2016_cu_privire_la_aprobarea_regulamentului_de_funcționare_a_consiliilor_de_tineret.pdf

¹¹ https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/regulament_premiu_tineret_pdf.pdf

¹² https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=118362&lang=ro

Also, the regulatory framework for co-management structures has not been improved. The provisions of Government Decision no. 733/2011 on the creation of the Governmental Commission for Youth Policies are now being used as a benchmark. An evaluation report of this document was prepared in a participatory manner with the representatives of the Committee on Youth Policies. It should be mentioned that the draft framework regulation for the organization and functioning of the advisory commission for youth policies was developed in 2020, being included in the Government Action Plan for 2021 to be approved by Government Decision.

Although NSYSD aims to develop and implement a clear tool for assessing sectoral public policies from the perspective of the youth needs at government level, such a mechanism has not been developed. An instrument at the level of civil society was created and piloted by the National Youth Council from Moldova in 2017-2018.

The implementation of the strategy also provided for the development of a broad framework of analyzes and studies on the youth participation in the decision-making process. However, it has been identified that a homogeneous research framework has been lacking over the years that would have made it possible to assess the progress and impact of the strategy on youth participation. Thus, due to the lack of consistency in reflecting macro indicators specific to the youth sector, studies often do not allow the assessment of trends in youth participation or comparability of results over time or in territorial profile.

The evaluated document aims by the end of 2020 to ensure the participation and involvement of young people in the decision-making processes of at least 30% of LPA level I and 100% of LPA level II. In order to achieve these results, the strategic framework provides for several thematic studies on the involvement of young people in the decision-making process, the creation and consolidation of several forms and tools of participation, information, training and development of needed skills among both young people and key local actors responsible for ensuring the involvement of young people. Thus, during the years 2014-2020, several studies were carried out with an evaluation component of the youth participation in the decision-making process:

- Sociological survey "Young in Moldova 2016", conducted by CBS-AXA;
- Assessment of bottlenecks and barriers to participation of Moldovan youth and adolescents in decision-making processes¹³, made by the Institute of Public Policies;
- The study of comprehensive youth sector analysis, conducted by the National Institute of Economic Research;
- Study "Development Needs of the associative youth sector in the regions of the Republic of Moldova"¹⁴, IDIS Viitorul;
- Annual studies on the needs of young people, conducted by NNLTSM;
- COVID-19 and Youth: The Effects of the Pandemic on Youth Participation¹⁵;
- Problems of (non) participation of young people in voting¹⁶, carried out by IDIS Viitorul;
- Youth Index¹⁷, performed by the Independent Analytical Center Expert-Grup;

¹³ <https://ipp.md/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Raport-participarea-tinerilor.pdf>

¹⁴ http://www.viitorul.org/files/library/DEZVOLTAREA%20SECTORULUI%20ASOCIATIV%20DE%20TINERET%20web_0.pdf

¹⁵ https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/covid_19_impactul_participaretinerilor.pdf

¹⁶ http://viitorul.org/files/library/Problemele%20neparticiparii%20tinerilor%20la%20vot_Borcoi_Berbeca_RO.pdf

¹⁷ https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/indicele_de_tineret.pdf

- Regional Youth Card Score¹⁸, performed by the Independent Analytical Center Expert-Grup;
- other analysis documents.

Thus, the action on the elaboration of the studies was carried out. Although the information highlighted by studies and reports on the specifics of youth participation was the basis for shaping youth initiatives, the lack of a uniform research framework that would align their results with the priorities and results of the strategy or facilitate the dynamic evaluation of the field of participation of young people, including in territorial profile.

The strategy provides for several training activities for LPA officials on the development of programs to support youth participation in decision-making process. Although several trainings have been delivered, they are spontaneous and do not allow a clear assessment of the impact on professional development and skills acquired by trained officials. While speaking about the training of LPA specialists, through partners and within the Joint Fund, during the years 2017-2020, trainings have been conducted with the participation of employees of local public administration level II (22 people), including specialists of level I. Financial capabilities of the Joint Fund do not allow the training of all specialists responsible for the youth field in the country; but according to the program, the trained persons disseminated and trained the employees of the LPA of level I.

In 2019, through a support program on participatory budgeting, 6 districts received training and mentoring, 4 districts managing to approve annual action plans for youth for 2020 (Sângerei, Făleşti, Șoldănești and Ocnița). They were based on the intersectoral approach of the youth field and were carried out with the participation of local stakeholders. In 2020, another 5 LPAs went through a similar program: Leova, Glodeni, Rascani, Edinet and Balti municipalities. As part of a national training activity, civil servants and LPA representatives, responsible for youth (over 30 participants from 25 ATUs), were trained to plan and develop budgets based on results-based management for 2020. At the same time, through the assistance program for the development and consolidation of the District / Municipal Youth Councils, within the activities carried out by NNLYCM, MECR regularly conducts training for representatives of LPA level II and level I, on youth involving mechanisms in the decision-making process. Annually, through the grant program for youth organizations of the MECR, projects are funded that provide official training within the LPA with responsibilities in the field of youth. All these trainings have a diffuse approach, being difficult to assess their impact and skills developed.

The indicators of NSYSD activities with reference to the development of local programs and tools to support youth participation in the decision-making process by LPA and the implementation of participation mechanisms at local level remain the weakest in terms of the achievement level within youth participation strategic priority. Regarding the development of local mechanisms for youth participation in decision-making processes and the creation of a local environment that would ensure the integration of young people's priorities in local policies, NSYSD provides the following tools: the creation of local co-management commissions; launch of local grant programs; creation of mechanisms to monitor local budgets and the involvement of young people in the budgeting process; elaboration and updating of district youth strategies.

¹⁸ <https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Youth%20Score%20Card.pdf>

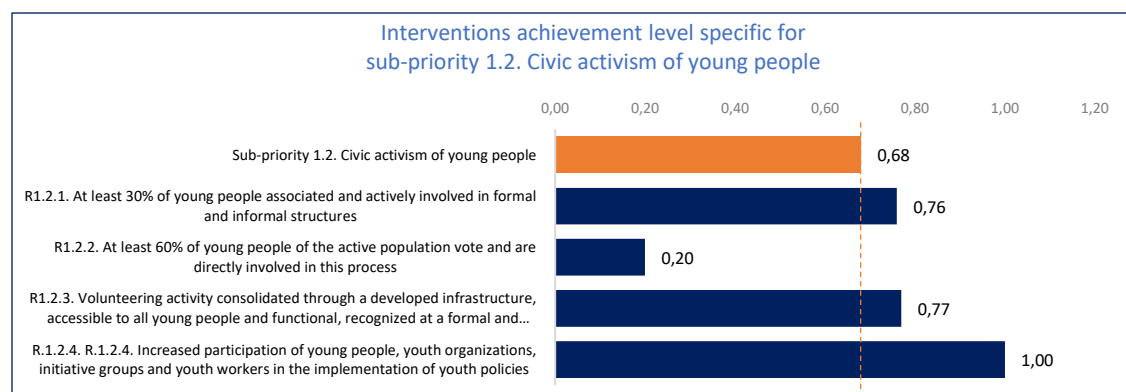
The creation of comanagement structures was piloted in five districts (Cahul, Falesti, Ialoveni, Straseni, Ungheni). The evaluation exercise identified that, at national level, there is no clear program to support the creation of these local structures and there is no mechanism for interacting with the national parity structure. That gap can also be considered a cause of the unstable activity of the formed structures. The creation of structures at local level is a prerogative of the LPA, if they consider it relevant and there is support capacity, including financial. In this context, central public authorities can consult and support LPA authorities in this process. Thus, based on the financing contract concluded between MECR and IDIS “Viitorul”, three study visits were carried out (Sângerei, Ialoveni, and Cahul) and initiated discussions on the importance of collaboration of local public authorities and youth organizations, the need to create co-management commissions, as well as the constituents, functions and responsibilities of such a structure to be effective and sustainable. Several efforts to establish local co-management commissions were also made by the National Youth Council of Moldova, however, it failed to create functional and sustainable structures. The lack of significant results in the creation and operation of comanagement structures is due to several factors: the lack of a clear understanding from the LPA on the need and mandate of comanagement structures, lack of a clear vision on how the local comanagement commissions and the government commission for youth policies interact; there was no actor who would have assumed the leadership in facilitating the process of creating and supporting the activity of these commissions, lack of pressure on the need to create these structures.

The launch of local grant programs provides young people with an effective tool for participation in decision-making process and participatory problem-solving. This instrument aims to provide financial and methodological support to young people implementing initiatives at local level in collaboration and co-financing with LPAs level II. Several results were recorded in this regard, but they do not cover the indicators set out in the strategy. Thus, for 2018, several districts have planned money for grant programs: CR Anenii Noi 80 000, CR Cahul 50 000, CR Fălești 80 000, CR Ocnița 50 000, CR Orhei 26 000, CR Soroca 100 000, CR Ungheni 50 000; but the Government Decision on the allocation of money from MECR was not approved (because it was the end of the budget year and the MoF gave a negative outcome, but the districts implemented at the local level from the amounts allocated by them). In 2019, only 2 LPAs of level II applied for the co-financing of the grant program from MECR: CR Soroca 100 000 and CR Ungheni 70 000. The reason is that some districts planned large sums for the program, but had few applications, so there was no need to request additional resources from the MECR. Also, some did not apply considering the experience of 2018. In 2020, 10 LPAs of level II applied to the program, of which 9 were funded.

The elaboration of the district youth strategies framework is a more formal one, there are no clear examples of elaboration, implementation and evaluation of the Local Youth Strategies in a coherent and efficient way. Many of the developed strategies were not approved or did not have clear implementation tools. In the period 2014-2020, several districts (Rezina, Rascani, Criuleni and Orhei) managed to develop and approve district strategies for the development of the youth sector, even if during these years support was provided to all youth specialists and LPAs of level II in this regard. In 2018, based on the MECR request, confirmations were received from some districts regarding the existence of local strategies, namely: Sângerei 2014-2017, Ungheni 2013-2017, Ialoveni 2013-2017 (even if they were established before the elaboration of NSYSD 2020, subsequently they were adjusted and complied with it). However, the local strategic planning process remains flawed and often without sufficient resources to implement it. Local youth strategies are formal in nature, lacking sufficient funding to achieve the objectives and having limited human capacity. The annual planning process is not aligned with local strategic priorities and does not directly contribute to achieving these goals.

Specific objective 1.2. Increase, by the end of 2020, by at least 60% of the level of civic activism of young people in the Republic of Moldova, including young people with reduced opportunities.

The evaluation of the specific results from the perspective of achievement highlighted an advanced level of implementation for most of them. Achieving the specific objective 1.2. involves several categories of activities, including: strengthening the capacity of youth leaders, conducting information campaigns on positive community activism practices, involvement in volunteering and supporting volunteering, funding and supporting youth community activities. Through its annual grant program for youth organizations, the MECR covers most information and training campaigns for young people in the fields of civic activism, volunteering and community participation. Thus, for three out of four results, the proposed interventions were implemented in a considerable proportion (over 0.76 points).



F7. Intervention's implementation level specific for sub-priority 1.2.

Source: Authors' estimates

The grant program for youth organizations has been the main tool for promoting and supporting youth civic activism, providing the resources and support needed to carry out information and mobilization campaigns for young people in national and community youth projects.

Year	Nr. of funded projects	The amount allocated
2020	23	5,868,334.00 MDL
2019	22	5,300,621.95 MDL
2018	23	5 441 818.44 MDL
2017	28	6,076,371.53 MDL
2016	22	3,513,802.00 MDL
2015	23	3,609,031.00 MDL
2014	24	3,396,871.00 MDL
2013	20	3,218,164.00 MDL
2012	34	3,722,316.00 MDL
TOTAL	196	34 279 015.92 MDL

Table 1. Value and number of grants offered by MECR in the period 2012-2020. Source: MECR

Activities and indicators in the field of volunteering had a high degree of achievement, most of the objectives being accomplished. By Order of the Minister of Youth and Sports No. T / 525 / A of 15.07.2014 on the approval of the organization and functioning Regulation of the certification commission and

certificate model of host institution of the voluntary activity, *the Certification Commission of the host institutions of the voluntary activity was created*. Also, a large number of activities are carried out annually to encourage volunteering by implementing projects, debates, forums, meetings for young people and youth specialists.

Volunteering campaigns are constantly organized. In the period 2015-2018, over 70 thousand young people were involved in volunteer activities. However, the lack of an exactly set target to be achieved in these years makes it difficult to estimate the exact degree of achievement of the activity in terms of the established indicator and leaves it to the evaluators to estimate that degree. During these years, the presented reports with reference to the activities organized during the NVW,¹⁹ reflects an increase both in the number of beneficiaries of the activities and in the number of volunteers involved (in 2015 - 13,318 people and 1,602 volunteers; 2018 - 335,137 people and about 60,000 volunteers). Volunteer campaigns are constantly organized, except for 2019 when there was no coordinated national campaign. The Volunteer Festival, another event provided in the activity plan, is an event organized annually. The National Volunteer Conference is organized annually, with the exception of 2015-2016, when no financial resources were available. At the 2017 conference, *a Resolution was adopted on the commitments made at the level of policies on the development of volunteering in the Republic of Moldova*²⁰.

Trainings are organized annually through organizations receiving grants in the field of volunteering, including for organizations accredited as the host institution of the volunteer activity. The trainings provided for the preparation of volunteer coordinators covered the needs of public organizations and institutions. In the period 2015-2019, more than 420 volunteer coordinators were trained, including those who were responsible for organizing volunteer activities within NVW. In 2020, 58 volunteer coordinators from all over the country were additionally trained, of which 22 are representatives of public institutions (town hall, inspectorate, educational institutions, etc.). The organized trainings manage to cover the existing requests, both for HIVA and for the organizations that work with the volunteers, not being accredited yet. The trainings aim to increase the quality of work with volunteers and increase the number of organizations informed about how to accredit volunteering as a host institution. During the strategy, several host institutions were accredited: in 2015 - 21 entities, 2016 - 65, 2017 – 51, 2018 – 31, 2019 – 34, 2020 – 20.

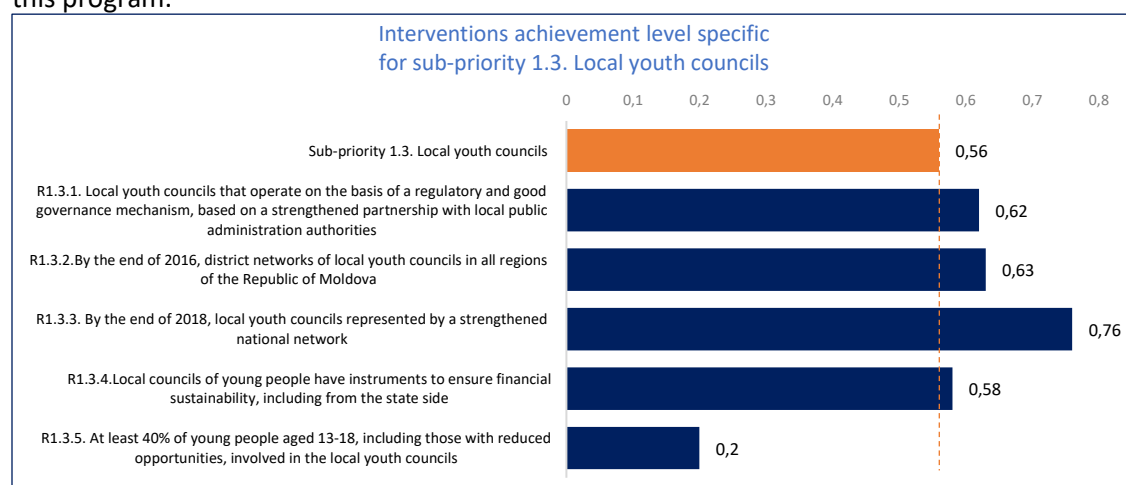
Specific objective 1.3. Consolidation, by 2020, of local youth councils by increasing by 30% the number of young people involved and by at least 80% of the territorial representation.

The Launch in 2015 of the Assistance Program for the consolidation and development of rayonal / municipal youth councils, and the creation of National Network of Youth Local Councils from Moldova in 2016, have promoted the development of local tools for participation and local representation of young people. This initiative determined that subpriority 1.3 to be evaluated with a relatively good degree of achievement (0.56 points). However, the fact that youth participation structures at district level exist in only 65% of LPAs level II, and district and municipal networks covering all or most LPAs of level I exist in only 7 LPAs level II, reduced the achievement of more significant progress.

¹⁹ <https://tdvmoldova.wordpress.com/rapoarte/>

²⁰ <https://tdvmoldova.files.wordpress.com/2017/12/rezolutia-cnv-2017.pdf>

In 2016, by Order of the Minister of Youth and Sports no. T / 303 of 31.10.2016, the Framework Regulation for the creation and functioning of local councils was approved, **as well as a set of model acts to ensure the proper organization, functioning of local youth councils and cooperation within the national network. At the same time, the Calendar Plan of actions regarding the involvement of young people in the process of identifying the current needs and necessities of young people at local level and their participation in the elaboration of the Local Public Authorities budgets on the youth component was developed.** Although trainings were conducted for youth specialists and representatives of local youth councils, regarding the creation and operation of structures for representation and participation of young people, facilitating the process of participatory implementation of youth action plans, implementation of innovative tools for work with young people, however, there is a lack of some consistency and continuity in the organization of these types of training. The training of LPA officials does not have clearly established and integrated educational objectives within a curriculum with well-defined training modules. It was also not clearly estimated the need for training, the field and the number of people who should be enrolled in this program.



F8. Interventions implementation level specific for sub-priority 1.3.

Source: Authors' estimates

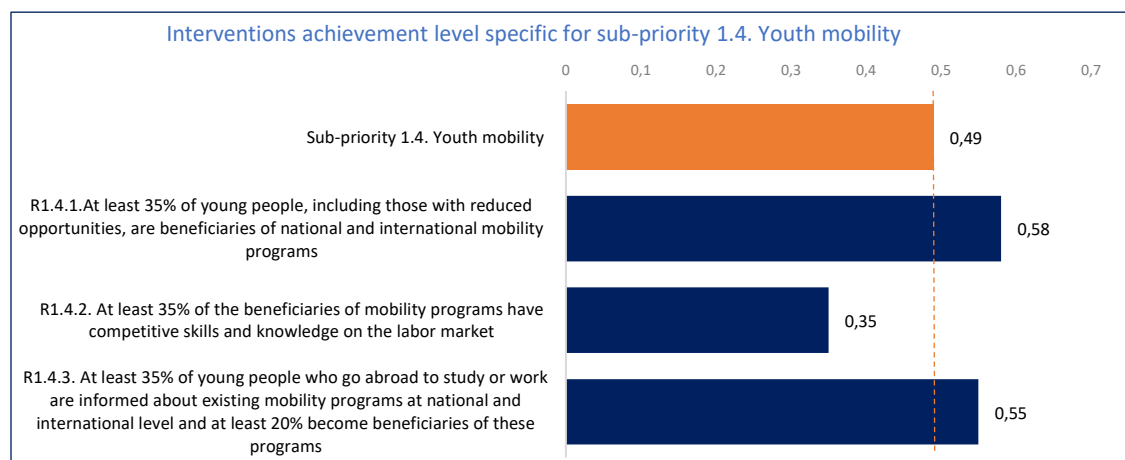
According to the latest report presented by NNLYCM, youth representation structures are present in 23 LPAs of level II, which represents a coverage rate of about 65%. Due to the processes that take place within district / municipal youth councils (elections, additions, frequent change of LYC members), as well as the influence of political factors, lack of logistical and financial support from LPA, involvement of adults in LYC activity, often leads to reduced institutional memory, which prevents the achievement of established indicators for expansion the geographical area where the D/MYC functional networks operate. To ensure the synchronization process of the action schedule implementation on youth participation in the process of elaborating local budgets on the youth component, the creation, development and consolidation of local youth councils, annually on average 4-5 meetings of district / municipal networks of young people are organized. Meetings with D/MYC representatives are organized quarterly to monitor the implementation of the national level assistance program. The NNLYCM website has also been created, which provides the necessary information on local youth councils and local youth centers, but also provides a tool for online organization of LC meetings. Through this platform, online meetings take place with the presidents of D/MYC, online meetings of D/MYC, consultation sessions on accessing the portal, ensuring the conduct of local elections for the creation of community councils, online elections for the

creation and completion of D/MYC, information on service providers. During 2020, the platform was accessed by 1590 unique visitors out of 30,544 visits during the year (both in the country and abroad) and 325 people registered on the portal. However, it is necessary to review the functionality of this platform and the content placed to better meet the needs of NNLYCM.

In the first 3 years of operation of NNLYCM no district / municipal forums were organized, but national network conferences were held regularly. In 2018, 16 district youth forums were held, and between April and May 2019 D/MYC organized 21 district youth forums. In 2020, 19 district/municipal youth forums took place with the participation of representatives of local public authorities, NGOs, youth centers, youth-friendly services providers, other local actors (833 participants). The forums addressed the current needs and challenges of young people, as well as measures to overcome them, approving 19 resolutions, which were sent as a recommendation to the LPA in order to develop draft programs and actions for young people.

Specific objective 1.4. Increase, by 2020, the level of mobility of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, at national level by at least 20% and at international level by at least 15%.

Subpriority 1.4, which involves increasing the level of mobility of young people, has a low level of achievement - 0.49 points. The planned actions have aimed at promoting opportunities for exchange of experience and mobilities both nationally and internationally among young people, so that they achieve success in education and employment. Although the results reflected in the following figure show that the involved authorities and partners came with interventions aimed at implementing and promoting mobility programs, there are still significant gaps in assessing their impact on youth employment performance, the result 1.4.2 accumulating only 0.35 achievement points.



F9. Implementation level of interventions proposed for sub-priority 1.4.

Source: Authority estimates

Several initiatives to promote international mobility have been supported through the grant program. One of the projects from youth organizations grant program has promoted the Erasmus + program and supported the creation of student initiative groups to promote this program in the institutions where they study. Along with the Erasmus Info Center, a series of trainings were conducted for young people and youth NGOs, on accessing mobility programs for young people. A guide has also been created, presenting the international mobilities available in the Republic of Moldova (in addition to the Erasmus + program).

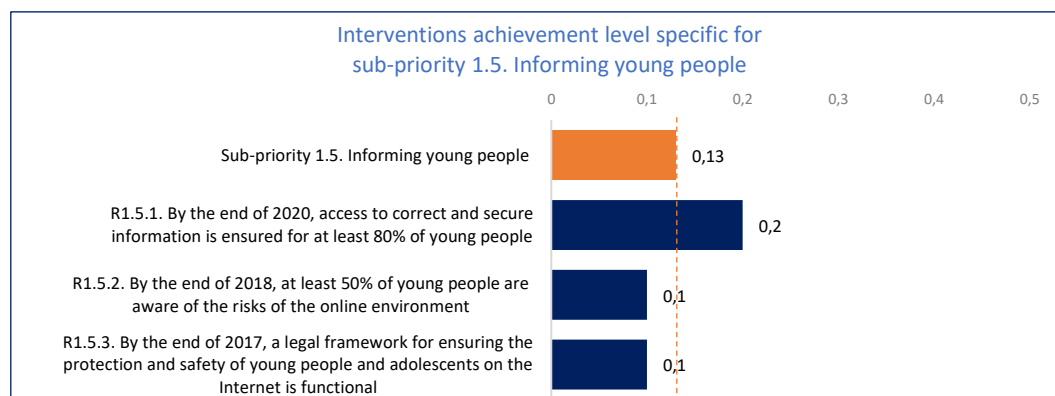
An Erasmus + guide dedicated to young people in our country was not created, as the guide for young people in Romania was available. Thus, this version was also used in Moldova.

Although several activities were planned to increase the awareness of young people in the diaspora about available mobility programs, only a few events for the diaspora were organized by DRO, including young people. These events were not intended for young people, nor did they emphasize their element of international mobility. Thus, there is a lack of an institutionalized tool for informing young people in the diaspora and a clear mechanism for monitoring their impact, informing and communicating through social networks. It should be specified that, according to the strategic document, the information activities of young people in the diaspora were assigned to the Diaspora Relations Office (DRO).

At the level of internal mobility, the NNLYCM quarterly conferences were the basic platforms for exchanging experiences between LYC and young people in the regions. NNLYCM and its activities remain the only tools to support the mobility of young people at national level. There were no programs dedicated to the internal mobility of young people, youth workers or civil servants in the youth field. Usually, the exchange of experience is carried out within the training activities, intended for these categories of people.

Specific objective 1.5. Diversifying the methods of access to information of young people, ensuring their online security.

No significant progress has been made on assessing and improving the national legal framework for cyber security in view of the information needs of young people, nor the strengthening of young people's safe use of the Internet. For these reasons, all results specific for subpriority 1.5. were assessed with scores not exceeding 0.2 points. Although the annual reports presented by the relevant ministry on the implementation of NSYSD 2020 highlight some initiatives by the authorities and development partners regarding the intention (s) to improve the legal framework by integrating clauses and measures that would lead to a higher degree of cyber security for children and young people, and (ii) educating young people to use reliable sources of information, however no significant progress in this regard has been observed.



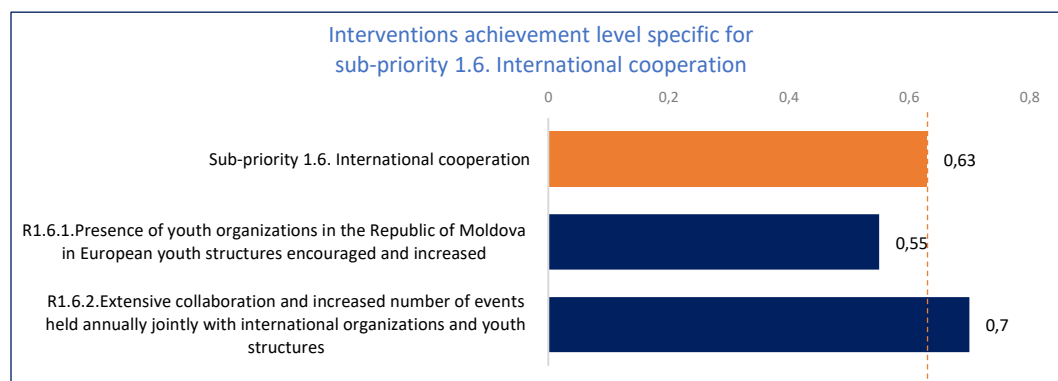
F10. Interventions achievement level specific for sub-priority 1.5.

Source: Authors' estimates

In 2020, a joint plan for an information campaign with the National Police Inspectorate was approved. During 2020, several working meetings were held with representatives of UNFPA, MIA and ITCSS in order to plan a training within the YC. Given the establishment of the pandemic, which was determined by the COVID-19 virus, the respective activities did not have a finality.

Specific objective 1.6. Strengthening partnerships with youth structures of international organizations.

The results set with reference to strengthening partnerships with international youth structures have a **relatively high level of achievement**. Thus, the last sub-priority for the area of interventions Youth participation was evaluated with 0.63 points. Actions aimed at establishing extensive cooperation and organizing joint events with international youth organizations structures were the most influential in achieving this result (0.70 points).



F11. Interventions achievement level specific for sub-priority 1.6

Source: Authors' estimates

In order to achieve the set goal, a series of activities were organized for and with young people and youth structures at national and international level. Annual reports presented by the relevant ministry reflect several annual events to which the Ministry and youth association sector representatives have been delegated to represent the Republic of Moldova in international events organized by international youth structures. In the period 2015-2020, a series of activities were organized to inform young people and youth organizations about youth mobility opportunities, including familiarization with the opportunities of the Erasmus+ program. However, there are no tools in Moldova that would encourage and support the youth organizations participation in international structures.²¹

At international level, emphasis has been placed on carrying out joint activities with foreign partners, ensuring the presence of delegations from the Republic of Moldova at relevant international events and supporting the organization of international events in the country. The continued support of this effort will be determined by the impact of the actions taken in order to effectively address the problem of low youth participation.

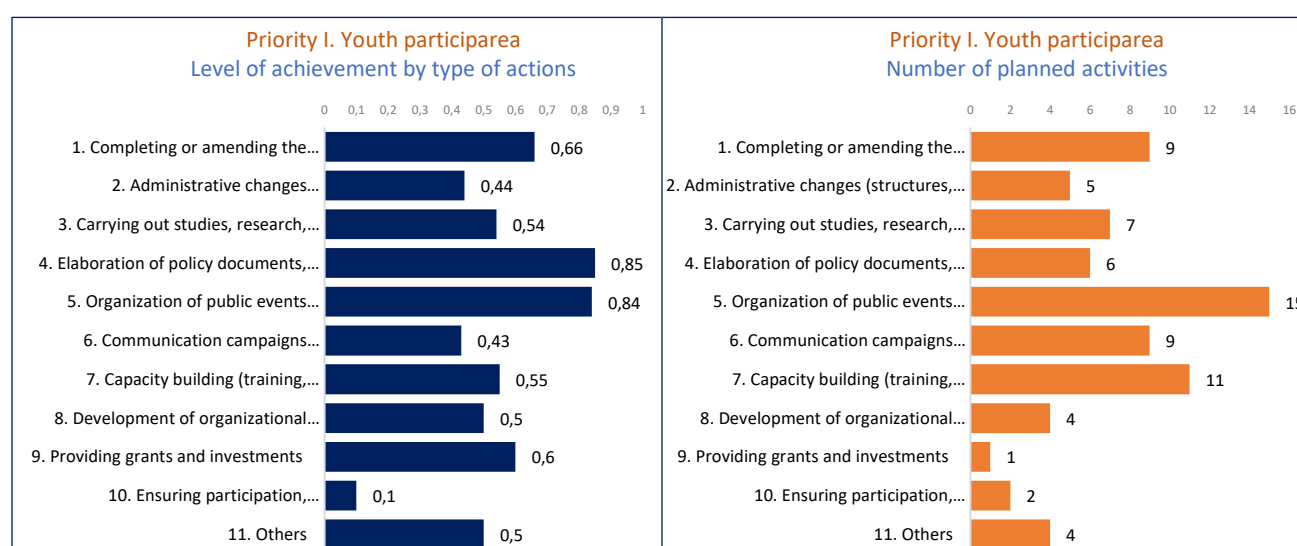
Carrying out interventions depending on their type

Activities to complete or amend the legislative and regulatory framework (0.86) and communication, promotion or awareness-raising campaigns (0.84) have the highest degree of achievement, while at the opposite pole; with the lowest degrees of achievement are the provision of grants and investments (0.10),

²¹The Ministry pays the NYCM membership fee at the European Youth Forum. Assuming the payment of the membership fee in the international structures is provided in the Law on Youth and in GD 1213/2010. It should be mentioned that GD 1213/2010 refers to Government contributions and not to contributions for youth CSOs. No evidence was identified of the Ministry assuming membership fees for youth CSOs.

conducting studies and research (0.43) and documents of policies, strategies, methodologies, standards (0.44). The high degree of accomplishment of completing or modifying the legislative and normative framework can be explained by the fact that this activity coincides with the direct attributions of the profile ministry. At the same time, the high level of information, communication and awareness-raising campaigns is due to the partnerships created through the grant program for youth organizations and the assumption of these campaigns by the grant beneficiaries. On the other hand, the low degree of implementation of grant and investment activities at the local level is determined by the fact that it is largely the responsibility of LPA, which due to lack of resources and low priority of the field, limits investment in this area. In terms of studies and research, the low score is determined by not conducting several analyzes on sectoral areas with an impact on young people.

By type of activity, the first priority has the highest number of activities to complement and amend the legislative and regulatory framework (15), administrative changes (11), studies accomplishment and research and capacity building (training, exchange of experience) both counting 9. At the opposite pole, we can find participation and representativeness assurance (1) and offering grants and investments (2). The structure by activities denotes their transformative character, the degree of achievement being determined especially by factors such as the person in charge of the activity and the availability of the necessary resources to be implemented, and less by the ambition or type of activity.



F12. Mapping interventions set for priority I. Youth participation, by type of action, level of achievement and number
Source: Authors' estimates

Factors that positively influenced the performance of activities

The activities under the direct responsibilities of the ministry responsible for the youth portfolio tend to have a higher degree of achievement than those under the responsibilities of other CPAs or LPAs. Many of the activities with sectoral implementation have not been carried out or have been carried out to a partial extent. Examples of this include activities in the field of online security and secure access to information.

The existence of a development partner or a specialized partner from civil society organizations contributes significantly to the achievement level. The promotion of priorities and activities closely related to the mandate of the organizations also determines an increased involvement on their part in the implementation process. Thus, activities that have UNFPA, NYCM or NNLYCM as partners tend to have a higher degree of achievement than activities without a partner.

The framing of the activity within a thematic program, with clearly established objectives, results and responsibilities, determines a higher degree of achievement. The activities included in the Development Program of the Local Youth Councils or the Development Program of the Youth Centers for the years 2017-2022 tend to have a higher degree of achievement compared to the isolated activities. This is determined by several factors: the existence of a well-established implementation framework, the existence of partners who assume the implementation directly, the presence of an implementation budget and a long-term framework.

1.5. Impact

In terms of impact, NSYSO manages to drive the development and approval of several acts in the field of youth, volunteering, youth work, but there are still some gaps in promoting youth priorities in sectoral policies. The specialized central authority during the years 2014-2020 manages to approve a series of transformative documents for the youth sector, providing regulation of the youth work, submission of the file for introducing the occupation of a specialist in youth work in CORM, approval of several framework regulations, etc. At the same time, it was not possible to institutionalize a mechanism for integrating youth priorities in a sectoral profile, in areas such as health, social protection, entrepreneurship, culture, etc.

The lack of a single framework for collecting data on youth participation makes it difficult to assess trends in participation. Recent studies show a modest participation and involvement of young people in decision-making process and low civic participation. In a general context of disinterest and lack of involvement, young people are sometimes even less active and interested than the average population. Civically, the involvement of young people is not sufficiently supported with formal tools in education, in the process of vocational training, in the period of professional life²². According to some empirical estimates, the participation rate of young people aged 18-29 is on average only 2.4%, without exceeding too much the specific index of the whole population (2%). In rural areas, the local participatory spirit is a little more active, comparatively with the urban one.²³

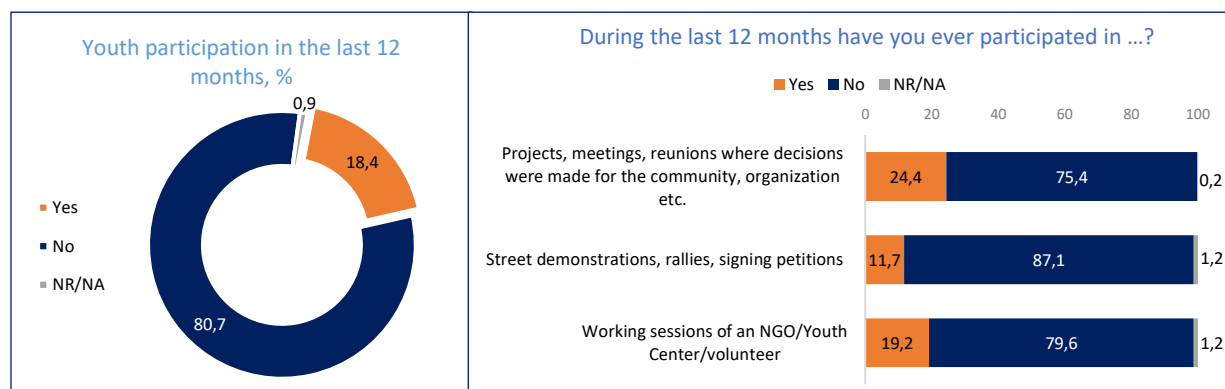
In the last year, only 18.4% of young people in Moldova participated in activities of influencing the decision-making process. The opinion poll conducted among young people, in July 2020, showed that only one-fifth of young people in the country have been involved in the last year in some activities that would determine their manifestation as a link in the decision-making process.²⁴. We refer both to the participation in meetings where decisions have been made, including for the community, working meetings of youth organizations, as well as to street demonstrations / rallies, etc.

²²The level of involvement of young people in the decision-making process and within the elective bodies. Study. Chisinau, 2017, 38 p.

²³Gender barometer. How do women and men participate in politics and decision-making process? Chisinau 2018. 38 p.

²⁴COVID 19 and Youth: How the pandemic influenced youth participation. Study. Chisinau 2020. P. 11.

http://progen.md/files/9352_covid_19_impactul_participarea.pdf



F13. The level of self-appreciation of youth participation, %
Source: [Opinion poll conducted by CPD and UNFPA, July 2020](#)

Data collected through U-Report indicates a low level of participation of young people in the decision-making process. One of the strategic areas of intervention foreseen in NSYSD 2020 aimed at increasing the participation of young people in social and civic life. Despite the efforts, the perceived level of participation is low, the main barrier being insufficient information of young people about these opportunities. At the same time, there is a low visibility of local youth councils, more than half of which are unaware of the existence of such a structure.

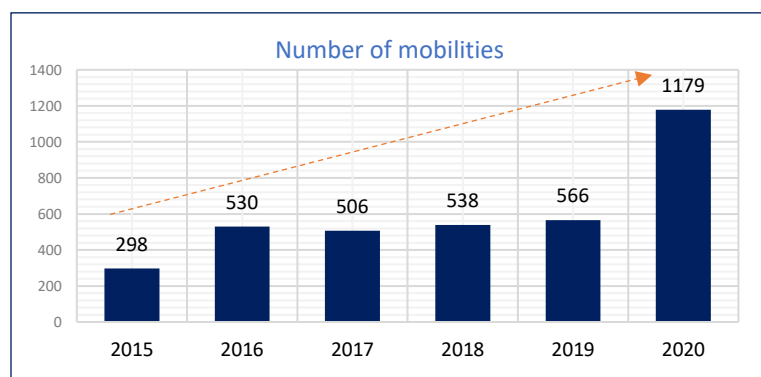
Participation in political processes in 2014-2020 had negative trends. Thus, in the parliamentary elections of November 30, 2014, young people aged 18-35 had a turnout of 28.82% (the adult population rate was 70%). In the local elections of June 14, 2015 (first round) the turnout was 24.94%. In the 2016 presidential elections (first round) the participation rate of young people aged 18-25 was 10.11%, and in the 2019 parliamentary elections it was 8.4%²⁵. According to the Electoral Code, the citizens of the Republic of Moldova with the right to vote who have reached the age of 25, including on election day, can be elected mayors. In this sense, for the first round of the 2015 local elections, out of a total of 4,393 people, about 276 young people up to the age of 30 applied, representing 6.28% of the total number. According to the data provided by the CEC, the rate of young people who became mayors was 3.34%. The under-representation of young people can also be observed in the municipal, local, communal and village councils. Thus, according to the results of the 2015 local elections, out of a total of 1,083 district councilors, only 142 people had not exceeded the age of 35. In the local, communal and village councils, young people were represented in proportion of 14%, i.e. 1535 out of 10564. Following the results of the 2019 parliamentary elections, 16 young people under 35 obtained seats as deputies, but as some of them were already 35 years old, the current parliament has only 11 deputies below this age, i.e. under 11 % of the total of the 101 deputies. In the 2019 parliamentary elections, 59 young people were registered on the electoral lists in the national constituency.

During the years 2016 - 2020, the National Network of Local Youth Councils was created, launched and developed, becoming one of the main partners of public authorities in promoting the participation of young people in the decision-making process at local level. NNLYCM has a coverage of 65.7% at LPA of level II (23 districts and municipalities) and a more modest representation at LPA level I (14.9%, 134

²⁵Problems of (non) participation of young people in voting. IDIS The Future. Chisinau 2020. P. 7.

local/community councils). Even if we have a constant dynamic in the growth and development of the network of local councils at local level, they remain strongly dependent on the Assistance Program for consolidation and development of rayonal/municipal youth council and on the resources allocated within it. The need to ensure their durability and financial sustainability, including from local budgets, remains a top priority for both NNLYCM and MECR.

In the period 2014-2020 there is an increase in the degree of information of young people about mobility programs, but the level of access to these programs remains at a similar level. The indicators set at Objective 1.4 have not been met. The data provided by Salto Youth indicate for the period 2014-2019 the participation of the Republic of Moldova in 705 activities, of which 141 are from the European Voluntary Service, 159 youth exchanges and 405 mobility of youth workers. During the same period, 2726 people in the country were enrolled in mobility programs (72 people participated in European Voluntary Service programs, 1382 in youth exchanges and 1272 in mobility of youth workers), according to Salto Youth data. In the period 2014-2020, through Erasmus + projects, higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova obtained 3617 ICM mobilities (International Credit Mobilities) for academic staff and students, as follows:



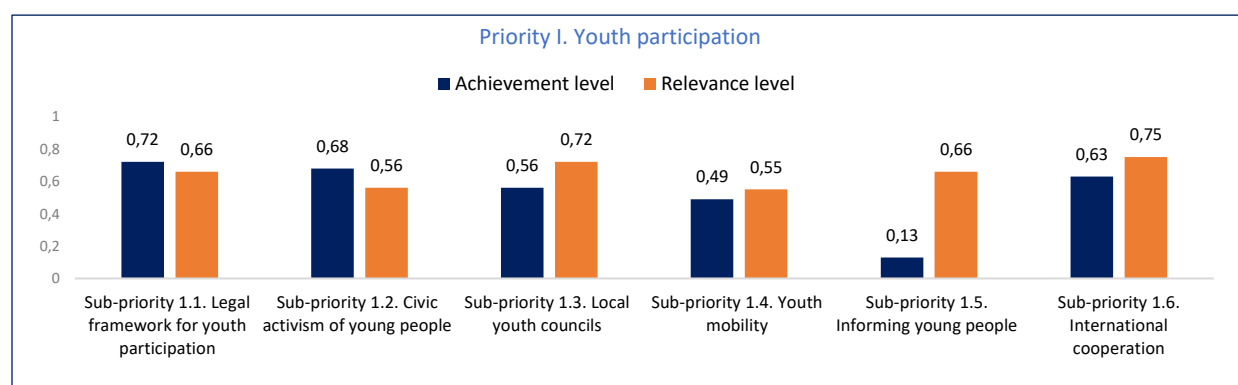
*F14. Number of mobilities for academic staff and students
Source: National Erasmus + Office in Moldova, 2015-2020*

European Commission statistics show that all ICM mobilities offered to the Republic of Moldova are 100% absorbed and implemented. International credit mobility (ICM) is distributed approximately equally between academics and students. The duration of the implementation of each ICM project is 2-3 years (for example: the 2020 selection mobilities will be implemented in the years 2021-2023).

Increasing internet accessibility among the population also makes it easier for children and young people to access online resources. At the same time, there is a deterioration in the online safety of young people in recent years, NSYSD fails to drive the development of public policies in the field of online security or to increase the awareness of young people about the existing risks. According to studies conducted by the International Center La Strada in the period 2014-2017, there is a continuous increase in young people's access to the Internet and social networks. Thus, the presence and interest in social networks in the period 2014-2017 increases from 85% to 96.1%, the use of the Internet to send audio and text messages increases from 57.7% to 89.3%. At the same time, the number of young people and children accepting strangers on their friends list has increased from 59% to 70.5%,²⁶.

²⁶Online Child Safety. Public Policy Study. Chisinau 2020. P.13.

The analysis of the interventions according to the degree of achievement and the relevance one shows, in most cases, a correspondence between these two elements. Concerned about identifying the extent to which authorities and the strategy implementation partners prioritized the activities over the priority youth participation and young people, allowed us to observe a match between the organized interventions and their relevance. Therefore, the transformative character of some activities did not determine a lower degree of accomplishment. An exception is observed in the case of sub-priority 1.5 aimed at informing young people. Thus, even if from the perspective of relevance, it was evaluated with a high score (0.66), still the level of implementation is quite low (0.13). In this sense, we can see that the degree of achievement was determined mainly by factors related to the availability of necessary resources.



F15. Mapping interventions according to the level of achievement and relevance
Source: Authors' estimates

1.6. Inclusion and gender equality

Ensuring equitable opportunities for participation represents a right of all young people in Moldova. In line with this right of the young people, in the proposed evaluation exercise we were concerned with identifying the following: (i) the trend towards ensuring the inclusion of marginalized young people, both in terms of opportunities for participation and representation as members of youth organizations or organizations in the decision-making process as well as empowerment; (ii) the reasons which determined the progress or regression in ensuring the inclusion of representatives of the more marginalized categories.

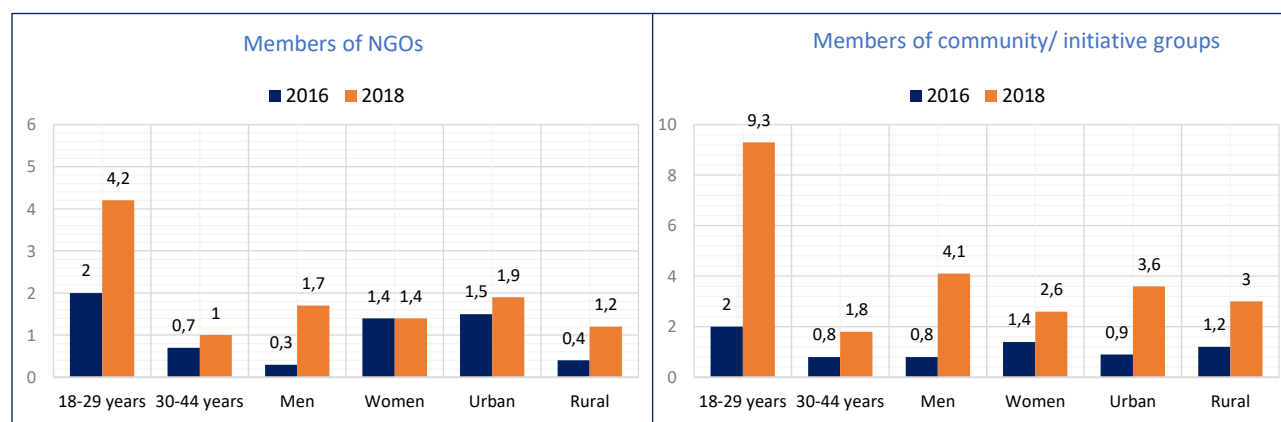
Determining the level of contribution of the results and objectives set on the inclusion of young people in the participation process can be done through the comparative analysis of disaggregated data. Thus, in terms of the Strategy impact on reducing the exclusion of young people with few opportunities from the participation process, an effective method of analysis aims to assess the specific situation of the same categories of young people in the year before the Strategy and its last year of implementation - 2013 / 2014 compared to 2019/2020. For example, the share of young people with disabilities as members of NGOs in 2014 compared to 2020, or the participation rate of young women aged 18-35 in local decision-making process in 2015 compared to 2019, or the share of young Roma and young Roma representatives of local youth councils in 2014 compared to 2020 etc.

The insufficiency of comparable disaggregated data makes it difficult to establish the impact on inclusion in the participation process. We want to mention that, following the analysis of the documents and studies elaborated during the implementation period of the Strategy, an insufficiency and inconsistency was found in the generation of multiple disaggregated data that would allow the given comparison. This makes it difficult or even impossible to identify the effects of initiatives implemented at national level in order to ensure the inclusion of young people. Therefore, for situations where this comparison was not possible, an analysis was made of the intention and ambition of the authorities and implementing partners of NSYSD 2020 in integrating the principle of youth inclusion in the undertaken actions.

In order to understand the major trends in ensuring inclusion, the identification and evaluation of proxy indicators was considered an option in the proposed analytical context. Thus, to analyze which was the change in the period 2014-2020 from the perspective of youth inclusion, following the implementation of the Strategy, some *proxy* indicators were set and analyzed in a time frame as broad as possible. Even if these data are not comprehensive, they still allow us to outline some basic findings in relation to the macro indicators specific to the area of youth participation and the direction, which would ensure a greater degree of integration of young people from the marginalized categories in the participation process. Among the basic indicators analyzed, depending on the available data, we may refer to the affiliation to any participation structure (initiative group, NGOs, local youth councils etc.). The available data allow us to outline some findings regarding the predisposition of young people to be affiliated to a youth structure. The dynamics of their weighting can contribute to the interpretation of the desire and motivation of young people to participate and be involved in civic actions at Community level.

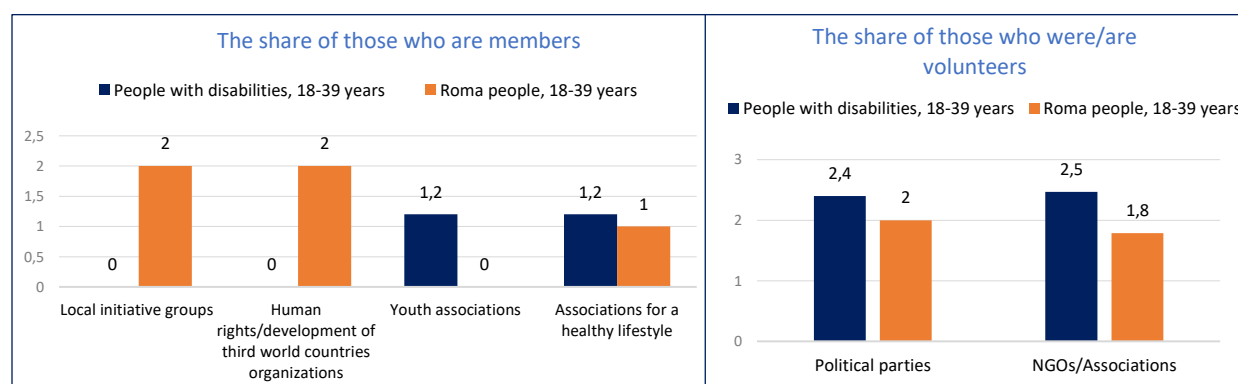
Young people in rural areas continue to be characterized by a relatively low rate of affiliation to an initiative group or non-governmental organization. One form of participation is related to joining some groups that work in the living environment of young people. Thus, the opinion polls conducted between 2016 and 2018 made it possible to identify the fact that, within two years, the share of young people aged 18-29 who became members of public associations or became involved as volunteers within these entities *has slightly increased*.

Even if there is a slightly positive trend among people in rural areas, it is still important to take into account the extremely low values specific to them (up to 3% in 2018). At the same time, the gender perspective showed that in the case of men, the values are a bit higher compared to women, etc.).



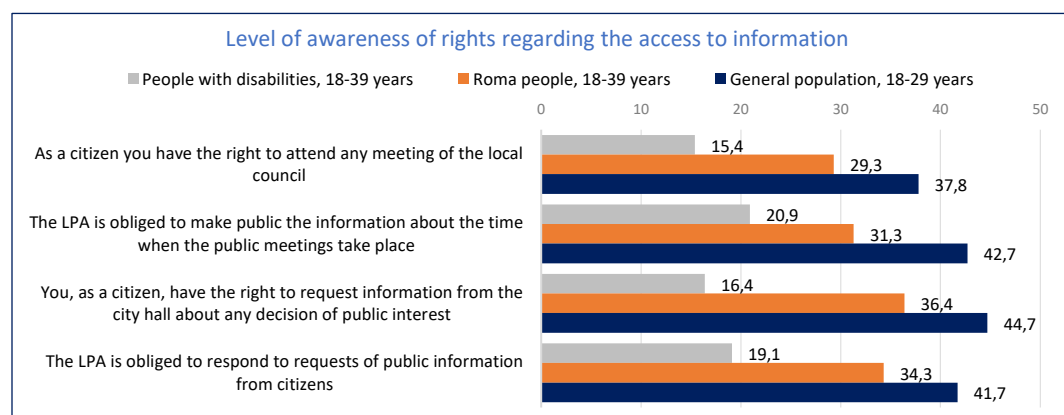
F16. Dynamics and share of members of NGOs or community initiative groups, %, Source: CPD surveys from 2016 and 2018

Young people with disabilities and those of Roma ethnicity have an extremely low affiliation to any participation structure. The data of an opinion poll conducted by CPD in 2018, showed that less than 2% of respondents aged 18-39 are in one of the participation structures, such as initiative groups or non-governmental organizations. Also in the same vein, we find that only up to 3% of young people from these two more disadvantaged categories were involved in volunteer activities or in political parties, either in public associations. The problem of accessibility, awareness of the issue of inclusion, but also the perpetuation of stereotypes in society towards these two groups of people has an extremely negative impact on the possibility of participation in both civic activities and decision-making process.



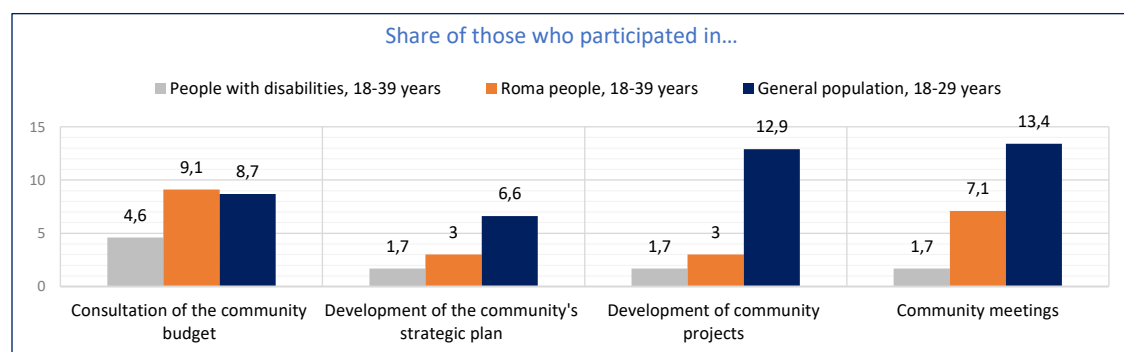
*F17. Share of young people with disabilities and Roma ethnicity who are members or volunteers in NGOs or local initiative groups, %
Source: CPD Opinion Poll, 2018*

At the same time, most young people with disabilities and those of Roma ethnicity are not aware of their rights regarding access to information of public interest, which, likewise, can be considered a form of participation. Access to information is determined by the perception of citizens regarding their right to request information and the obligation of Local Public Authorities (LPAs) to inform citizens or the community. In the context in which, in 2018, less than 20% of young people aged 18-39 with disabilities and less than 35% of Roma ethnicity firmly stated that they have these rights, there is a new inequality with regard to their participation. Compared to the young general population, these rates are much lower.



*F18. Level of awareness of rights regarding the access to information, %
Source: CPD Opinion Poll, 2018*

The level of involvement of young people in the decision-making process is quite low, especially for vulnerable groups. In the figure below we can see the share of people who have ever participated, in 2018, in one of four community involvement activities. With the exception of participation in the Community Assembly, the share of involvement is less than 10%. The level of participation of vulnerable groups is even lower.



F19. Level of involvement in various community participation activities, %.

Source: CPD Opinion Poll, 2018

The analysis of the available data has highlighted the fact that at national level there are significant inequalities in terms of participation of young people with fewer opportunities. The lack of up-to-date and comparable data for 2020 makes it difficult to assess as pragmatically as possible the impact of NSYSD on increasing the level of inclusion, but at this stage, we can assume that, at best, strategic interventions did not allow the worsening of the situation and inequalities did not become accentuated even more.

In order to understand to what extent the Strategy aimed at increasing the level of inclusion of young people, the evaluation process included steps that allowed us to establish: (i) how consistently the low level of participation of young people from vulnerable categories has been addressed at the stage of describing the problem (use of disaggregated data across different categories of young people); (ii) what was the response of decision-makers to the needs of participation of young representatives from marginalized categories, both in the planning stage of strategic interventions and in the process of their implementation; and (iii) how effective and consistent the instruments were monitoring, evaluation and reporting in line with the need for participation of excluded young people.

Thus, the evaluation process allowed us to highlight that the issue of the low degree of participation of young people from marginalized groups in Moldova has been elucidated in the text of the Strategy, both at the stage of describing the problem and at the stage of setting the objectives and the results framework:

(i) At the stage of describing the problem, the document highlighted some categories of young people at risk of exclusion, namely: young people with disabilities, those living with HIV, who have criminal record, young girls in general and pregnant women, young people representing ethnic minorities and so on. Likewise, some of the reasons that determined the manifestation of marginalization (precarious political and economic situation, stereotypes existing in society with reference to young people, etc.) and its effects were elucidated. At the same time, we cannot omit the fact that very little data were presented in a disaggregated form regarding the participation of young people from vulnerable categories in the decision-making process, representatives of decision-making and youth structures at local, district and

national level, beneficiaries of empowerment, mobility and volunteering activities, etc. The lack of national and district studies that would allow a quantitative and qualitative evidence of the situation of young people with reduced opportunities is one of the basic causes that was mentioned in the strategic document.

(ii) At the stage of defining the specific objectives, the principle of inclusion was stated. Thus, three of the six objectives specific to the priority area analyzed expressly indicate the creation of opportunities for the participation of young people from marginalized categories: the specific objective 1.1. Improving, by the end of 2017, the legal framework by approving at least 6 normative acts that would ensure the participation of young people, including those with reduced opportunities, in all decision-making processes; 1.2. Increasing, by the end of 2020, by at least 60% the level of civic activism of young people in the Republic of Moldova, including among young people with reduced opportunities; 1.4. Increase, by 2020, the level of mobility of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, at national level by at least 20% and at international level by at least 15%.

(iii) The integration of young people with reduced opportunities was highlighted to a certain extent and through the set strategic results. Expressly, only 4 out of 21 results highlighted the aspect of inclusion of young people with reduced opportunities (results 1.1.1, 1.2.3, 1.3.5 and 1.4.1). However, inclusion can be interpreted, to some extent, also through the results aimed at creating structures for youth participation at the local level. This is a method of providing opportunities for participation to young people in rural areas.

Although the issue of inclusion has been elucidated at the stage of defining objectives and results, some more specific interventions have not been developed. Although the need for an integrative approach to the issue of inclusion in the strategy paper was noted, the level of its elaboration can still be assessed at an early stage. Thus, of the total interventions set out in the first priority action plan, only 2 more specifically address the issue of inclusion: (i) in terms of training key people in local youth councils on the inclusive participation of young people with reduced opportunities; and (ii) promoting the involvement of young people with reduced opportunities in national and international mobility programs.

The evaluation of the strategic document allowed us to identify that: (i) the action plan initially reflects actions that will help to overcome major inequalities in the participation of young people from vulnerable categories - for example, although activities have been planned to develop research and studies specific to the youth sector, however, the inclusion aspect was not proposed for consistent monitoring; (ii) no tools have been provided for the training and direct empowerment of young people from marginalized categories or those for the consistent training of youth workers; and (iii) the lack of applicability perception of a mechanism or method aimed at implementation of tools, in a more systematic way, used to address the inequalities faced by young people with reduced opportunities, in terms of participation.

[The intention of the authorities to sensitize the legislative and normative acts elaborated and / or adjusted in the period 2014-2020 to the needs of young people with reduced opportunities](#)

During the implementation of the Strategy, several legislative and normative acts were elaborated, finalized and approved specific to the youth sector. In order to understand to what extent the elaborated acts will contribute or facilitate the inclusion of young people in the participatory process, these

documents were analyzed in terms of the predisposition to promote the inclusion of young people from vulnerable categories.

Their general evaluation elucidated an incipient level of awareness of the documents to the principle of inclusion of young people from marginalized categories. In the in most documents, the element of inclusion is not expressly indicated, but can be interpreted to some extent. In the context in which the provision of the element of inclusion or positive measures that can contribute to an easier integration of vulnerable young people in the participation process is secured at an early stage, we cannot see an increased predisposition or ambition on the part of the authorities in providing equal opportunities for all young people in Moldova to develop and participate.

Legislative and normative acts specific to the youth sector elaborated / finalized in 2014-2020 (examples)	General findings on ensuring inclusion of young people with reduced opportunities
Law on youth no. 215 from 29.07.2016 ²⁷	Although some provisions are included to ensure greater participation of young people, those measures that address the inclusion of young men and women in vulnerable categories (vulnerable categories are not defined in the law) are not expressly indicated.
Regulation on the activity of the National Agency for the Programs Development and Youth Work ²⁸	The only attribution that expressly indicates this principle concerns (point 7.2, letter o) the involvement, within the limits of functional competences, in the elaboration and implementation of intersectoral youth policies and programs (the social inclusion of young people is also listed).

Table 2. Example of general analysis in terms of inclusion of normative and legislative acts specific to the youth sector developed in 2014-2020

Capacity-building initiatives in terms of the inclusion of youth organizations representatives

Some primary evidence has been identified regarding the approach to inclusion at the stage of consolidating local youth councils. The representatives of the Local and District Youth Councils represent an important link in increasing the level of inclusion of the most vulnerable. However, the strategy paper contained a single direct activity aimed at empowering them in the field of inclusion (action 44). Some of the activities organized by the Local Youth Councils were aimed at raising awareness and empowering those working with young people regarding (i) the process of communication with young people from ethnic minority groups, with special needs, from socially vulnerable families and (ii) providing opportunities and carrying out activities that respond as effectively as possible to the specific needs of each, in order to create an environment conducive to their participation. However, in the evaluation process, it can be perceived a primary level of effort, focused on empowering board members, in a way that is as consistent and programmatic as possible, in issues aimed at ensuring equal opportunities for young people from marginalized categories, but also in systematic monitoring of involvement and representation of given categories among the members of the LYCs and among the beneficiaries of the services provided by the given structures.²⁹

²⁷ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=105800&lang=ro

²⁸ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=122776&lang=ro

²⁹ Reports on the implementation of the NSYSD 2020 Action Plans, MECR

The annual forums organized with the representatives of the youth councils constitute, in practice, the basic platform where the specific needs of young people are addressed. Annually, the youth councils conduct surveys among young people in Moldova to identify their development and participation needs, and the conducted forums highlight the priorities for intervention for the next year. Thus, once the surveys elucidate the needs of young people according to age, gender, living environment, they are reflected in the programs and action plans for the coming years. The integration level of the needs of young people with reduced opportunities in the plans of youth councils remains at the discretion of the representatives of these entities, a pragmatic mechanism for analyzing this perspective not being developed or implemented in practice. At the same time, the main limitation in the process of interaction with the representatives of the National Network of Local Youth Councils from Moldova was the non-generation of conducted surveys of disaggregated data on other socio-demographic criteria such as ethnicity, disability, level of education, income, etc., which can also be considered a cause of the exclusion of young people with reduced opportunities from empowerment and empowerment activities.

The lack of consistency in the training activities of young people and specialists in the field to ensure equal opportunities for all was seen as an impediment to increasing the level of inclusive participation. Following the consultation of the activity reports, as well as the discussions carried out with the youth representatives, some gaps in ensuring inclusion were highlighted. In particular, they are related to the low coherence of complex training programs organization for a large number of youth workers in relation to the needs of young people with reduced opportunities. At the same time, the fluctuation of the workers within the youth councils represents an impediment in the consistent implementation of the tools presented / offered in order to ensure the inclusion of the young people. Therefore, the lack of a mechanism that would allow the consistent training of youth workers in the field of inclusion by applying a comprehensive methodology that will allow the conceptualization of inclusion and tools for measuring and monitoring it, has led to a stagnation in providing opportunities to exploit the right of vulnerable young people.

The inadequacy of a method that is systematically applied to address inclusion through grant programs is also a cause for the stagnation of equal opportunities for young people and their empowerment. Initiatives for young people, which are funded through state grant programs, include a wide range of topics, including topics sensitive to the participation needs of marginalized young people. Given that the authorities launch the grant program each year to support youth organizations (youth councils, youth organizations, initiative groups, etc.) and that the regulations for these competitions do not provide for measures to encourage the participation of young people with limited opportunities, the decision to address the subject given by the applicant entity is left to their discretion. In the period 2014-2020, more than 280 initiatives of youth entities were funded through state grant programs. Due to the lack of systematization and totalization of the results of implemented projects, it was impossible to highlight at this stage the number of direct and indirect beneficiaries of young people with reduced opportunities, but also the effects of local grant programs on influencing the inequalities faced by these young people.

With reference to international mobility programs, specialists in the field mentioned a slight increase in the number of young beneficiaries with reduced opportunities. The unavailability of multiple disaggregated data did not allow accurate reflection of figures regarding young people from different marginalized categories. However, experts note that the observed dynamics was not as high as their expectations were. Limitations included some of the conditions for participation in mobility programs, namely: (i) knowledge of English – considering the fact that young people from vulnerable groups have a

lower level of knowledge of foreign languages, this has been identified as an obstacle to participation; (ii) initial payment for travel services - although 70-80% of the sum is subsequently reimbursed by the organizers, however, not all young people with reduced opportunities can initially cover these costs etc. In order to overcome these limitations, in 2018-2019 at European level, the foundations were laid for a network of mobility program graduates - EU4youth. Its purpose is to support alumni of the programs to implement further projects with the involvement of other young people from marginalized categories. Due to the onset of the pandemic situation, the network's activity stopped in 2020 and is to be resumed later.

Monitoring the inclusion element of marginalized young people

In terms of monitoring, some efforts were observed in collecting data in order to estimate the level of integration of marginalized young people in the participation process. Since 2015, several studies have been carried out to highlight the issue of excluding vulnerable young people from the participation process³⁰. Despite these efforts, the data presented do not fully allow a trend of progress to be estimated in terms of their integration into participatory activities. The basic reason being the impossibility to compare the available data. Due to the non-use of a unique methodology of data disaggregation according to the same socio-demographic criteria, such as age categories (in studies we can find age categories of 14-24 years, 15-29 years, 18-30, or 18-35 years old, etc.), ethnicity, presence of disability, level of education, etc., this has disadvantaged the most objective and real highlighting of progress in this context. At the same time, starting with 2016, with the amendment of the Law on Youth, the age limit of people who can be considered young has been moved - from 30 to 35 years. This, in the present case, can also be considered an impediment in the comparative analysis of the available data.

In the context in which the inclusion of young people in the participation process has been set as a strategic intervention, it is essential that the reports and documents prepared and presented annually provide as detailed information as possible, about beneficiaries and about the strategic effects on overcoming inequalities that affect marginalized young people. Thus, the identification of an inconsistency in the presentation of information disaggregated on multiple criteria (gender, age, ethnicity, disability, income, education, etc.) determined the difficulty in the process of evaluating the area of participation in terms of inclusion. Although after the meetings with the people in charge of the youth participation area it was mentioned that the data are randomly collected, still a systematization and reflection of them is not offered to the general public.

An observed progress is that, in 2020, the methodology for collecting multiple disaggregated data with reference to young people from marginalized categories was developed. Thus, with the support of development partners - UNFPA, in November-December 2020 was piloted the methodology of quantitative identification at national and district level of young people with reduced opportunities. The methodology also reflects an enumeration of the categories of young people considered vulnerable. We believe that this is an opportunity to be able to identify measures, interventions and programs that can contribute to a greater inclusion of all young people according to their participation needs.

³⁰1. "Young in Moldova 2016" Study, conducted by CBS-AXA; 2. Assessment of blockages and barriers to participation of young people and adolescents in Moldova in decision-making processes conducted by the Institute of Public Policy; 3. The study of comprehensive analysis of the youth sector; 4. "Needs for the development of the associative youth sector in the regions of the Republic of Moldova" Study, IDIS Viitorul; 5. Annual studies on the needs of young people, NNLYC; 6. Problems of youth participation in electoral processes in the Republic of Moldova, IDIS Viitorul 2020, 7. other analysis documents.

1.7. Recommendations

In order to increase the degree of involvement and responsibility of the LPA, investments and skills development are needed not only at the level of specialist responsible for the youth field, but also of the support departments (e.g., the finance department). The development of LPA skills to work with young people and to support the participation of young people in the decision-making process must be approached in a complex way, not only in terms of the capacities of the civil servant responsible for the youth field. Training programs must address the directions of finance, social assistance, employment and even political leadership.

In the absence of sufficient human capacity at the unit level responsible for implementing the strategy, it is recommended to outsource these tasks to the implementation partners with the necessary financial and advocacy support.

The implementation of training actions in the field of participation requires a holistic approach, they must be framed in a complex and long-term plan, detailed in annual actions, with a logical continuity of those of previous years and clear tools for monitoring the impact.

It is necessary to organize all the actions within thematic programs that address the specific areas covered by the strategy through macro targets, procedures and standard working methods, avoiding isolated and sporadic activities.

Adjustment of action plans to the institutional capacity of the authorities involved, taking into account available human and financial resources, in order to avoid setting unattainable targets with existing resources.

In order to increase the level of inclusion of young people from marginalized categories, their consistent capacity, but also to increase the degree of strategic impact on the participation of disadvantaged young people, the following recommendations are outlined:

Conceptualizing as clearly as possible the inclusion of young people with reduced opportunities. Due to the lack of a clear definition that would allow the immediate highlighting of the issue of equity of young people in vulnerable categories, the process of consistent monitoring of the phenomenon also becomes difficult. given, but also the establishment of relevant interventions to reduce the inequalities faced by young people in marginalized categories.

At the planning stage of the next strategy, it becomes important to analyse, as pragmatic as possible, the problem of the inclusion of young people with reduced opportunities in the participation process. Thus, a more complex analysis of the inequalities faced by different categories of young people is required, depending on gender, age, ethnicity, disability, standard of living, education, etc.; of the structural causes that determine the persistence of these inequalities, but also of the essential interventions to be implemented in order to reduce these gaps.

Establishment of a clear mechanism to address the issue of youth inclusion in the participation process. Here we refer both to a mechanism implemented at national level to monitor the situation of young

people from vulnerable categories and their training, and youth workers, both locally and centrally. A mechanism that would also facilitate the integration of the perspective of vulnerable young people in sectoral public policies.

Standardization of the multiple and comparable disaggregated data collection system specific to the youth sector in terms of participation. The lack of such a system has been a major impediment in the process of establishing the level of inclusion and the impact of the Strategy on this issue. Thus, as a matter of priority, it is necessary to conceptualize the data collection initiatives, so that they allow a comparative analysis of the situation of vulnerable young people in extended time frames (to target the same categories of young people in terms of age, to set the following minimum indicators be monitored through national and local surveys, etc.).

Implementing a national tool on online platforms in order to be able to aggregate and generate the most disaggregated results of the grant programs supported by the ministry. This would allow for a more pragmatic and effective analysis of the impact of the grant program, including on empowerment, involvement of young people from vulnerable categories.

PRIORITY II: SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

2.1. Introduction

The most successful integration of young people in a society, transition period is a challenge for the Republic of Moldova. The formal education system is not able to offer a sufficiently wide spectrum of services to cover all the needs of young people related to personal and professional development. And outside the public institutions, opportunities for the leisure of young people with non-violent activities and alcohol, tobacco and drugs are very limited, which negatively affects the development, in particular, of young people with fewer opportunities.

To fill these gaps, a range of youth services tailored to the current needs and interests of young people is needed, accessible to as many beneficiaries as possible. Actions planned under Priority 2 have been modeled to provide young people with friendly services, including outside institutions and for a healthy lifestyle.

PRIORITY II. SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE		
Sub-priority 2.1. Youth-friendly service providers	Sub-priority 2.2. Outreach services for young people outside the institutions	Sub-priority 2.3. Services for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle
<p>R 2.1.1 Functional mechanism for ensuring the quality and efficiency of services provided to young people</p> <p>R 2.1.2 Legal and methodological environment for ensuring the quality of services provided to young people by service providers</p> <p>R 2.1.3 Conditions for the self-development of service providers for young people created</p> <p>R 2.1.4 Consolidated and extended youth friendly services</p>	<p>R 2.2.1 Opportunities to initiate and provide young people with outreach services, including the legal framework, created</p> <p>R 2.2.2 Outreach services, accredited according to minimum quality standards, provided to young people by at least 30% of service providers</p>	<p>R 2.3.1 Measures to promote a healthy lifestyle among young people intensified</p> <p>R 2.3.2 Optimal conditions for youth organizations in terms of monitoring health policies created</p>

F20. Areas of intervention according to priority 2: Youth Services

Source: NSYSD 2020

2.2. General findings

Actions with a high degree of relevance (0.73) have been planned to achieve the objectives set out in Priority II, above the average of the actions from the other priorities. The degree of matching of actions (on average 0.84) was generally higher than the degree of ambition (on average 0.63), the score being negatively affected by the lack of concrete targets, lack / insufficiency of the allocated budget, limited time and lack clarity in the wording of the intervention.

By contrast, the level of achievement under Priority II (on average 0.41) was the lowest of all four planned priorities. Most of the planned actions were related to the establishment of standards for services provided to young people (including outreach services) and the development of an accreditation system for these services. During the implementation it was decided to change the initially planned approach, namely - to abandon a system of standards and to develop quality criteria for the services provided. This change delayed the implementation schedule, which also led to a lower level of implementation. Most of the planned actions have not been carried out at all, or are at an early stage of implementation. The level of achievement under the priority ranged from 0.34 to 0.52 for each of the three sub-priorities.

In terms of impact, no target has been set for the degree of contribution to building young people's capacity for integration into society, and it is difficult to assess the extent to which the objective has been achieved. Thus, the carried-out activities have contributed to the development of young people's capacities, but no data are available on the extent to which young people with reduced opportunities have also benefited, which are explicitly mentioned in the formulation of the objective.

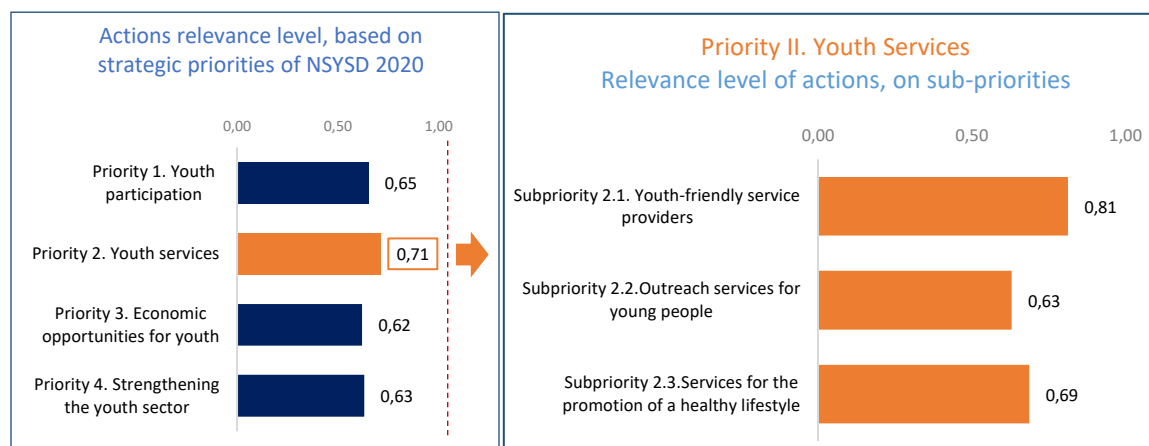
The proposed targets for the three sub-priorities have been met to a small extent. Youth services have a low level of territorial coverage (44 youth centers, including branches - most with 1-3 employees) - far from the accessibility target for 90% of young people. Youth services cover, for the most part, young people from younger age groups (especially 15-19 years old) and have poor efficiency in integrating disadvantaged categories of young people (vulnerable, with disabilities, from rural areas). The infrastructure of the centers and the capacity of the staff do not allow the provision of services for young people with disabilities, or young people from other vulnerable groups.

From the youth perspective, some interventions were perceived as irrelevant, indicating an issue related to the content and delivery of services for young people. The share of outreach services in the service offer of youth centers (9.3% in the second half of 2020) remained well below the proposed target of 45%. The methodological framework for outreach services is also in an early stage of development, like the training of providers.

Neither the measures to promote a healthy lifestyle among young people have reached the planned target of at least 80% of the total number of young people. The number of young people receiving services to promote a healthy lifestyle accounted for about 10% of the total number of young people. In addition, it is unclear how and whether the promoted messages are adapted to the needs of different groups of young people, with targets disaggregated according to the specific problems and requirements of different young people (depending on gender, age, living environment, disabilities (locomotor, sensory deficiencies), social group (young Roma people, institutionalized young people), etc.

2.3. Relevance

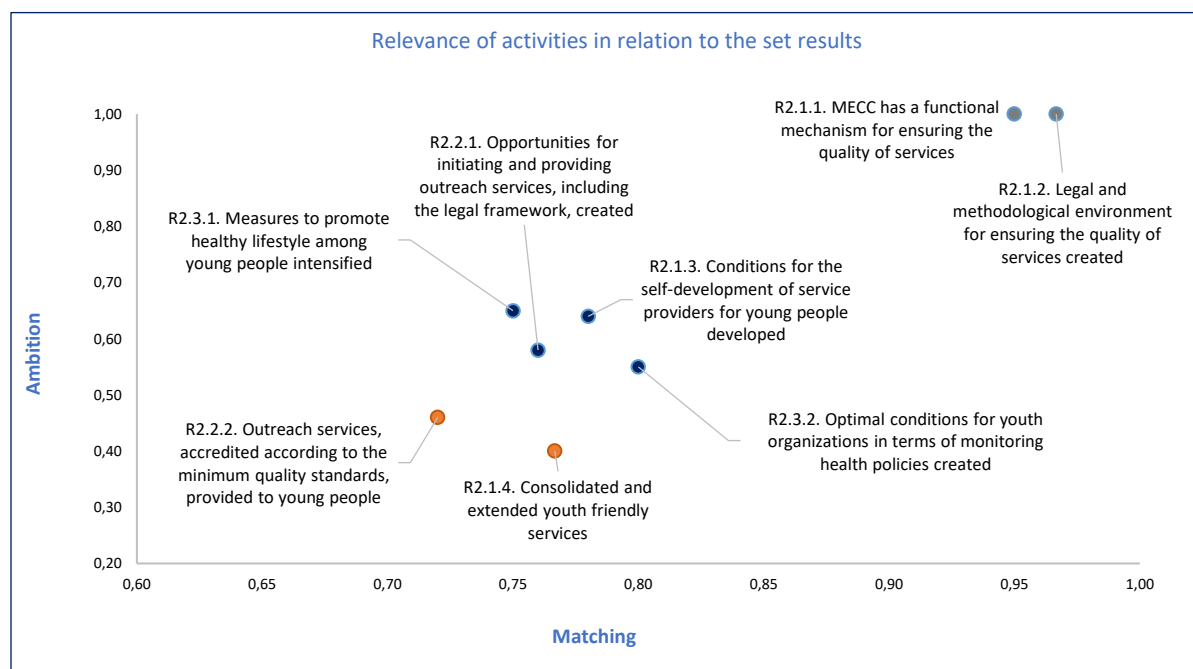
The actions planned under Priority II had an average relevance of 0.73 - a score higher than the average of the actions in the other priorities. Most of the actions planned for Priority II had a high degree of relevance, both in terms of matching and ambition to achieve. Based on this assessment, we can assume that if the actions had been carried out in full, the expected results would have contributed greatly to the achievement of the objectives and the expected impact.



F21. Relevance level of interventions in relation to the objectives of priority II of NSYSD 2020

Source: Authors' estimates

In the case of priority II, we can note that the degree of matching of actions was generally higher than the degree of ambition. At the priority level, the average score for the match is 0.84, and the average score for ambition is 0.63. Results 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 had maximum scores for both match and ambition. For the other results, a higher degree of matching (around 0.8) and a lower degree of ambition (0.6-0.8) were characteristic. The lower average score for some results indicates not namely the lack of relevant actions, as the presence of less relevant actions that affected the overall average. The factors that affected the score were the lack of concrete targets, the lack/insufficiency of the allocated budget, the limited time or the lack of clarity in the formulation of the intervention.



F22 Relevance of interventions in relation to the set results, depending on the match and ambition

Source: Authors' estimates

Within the Sub-Priority 2.1 Youth-friendly service providers, actions planned for Results 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 had a maximum degree of relevance. The establishment of a responsible accreditation structure and the creation of the accreditation system had an almost maximum degree of matching (0.95) and ambition (1) for the *creation of a functional mechanism for ensuring the quality and efficiency of services provided to young people* (2.1.1). The planned actions for the elaboration of the minimum quality standards, the framework regulation and the adjustment of the normative framework for the *creation of a legal and methodological environment for ensuring the quality of services provided to young people by the service providers* (R 2.1.2) also had the maximum relevance level (1) or almost maximum (0.9). Instead, for Results 2.1.3 and 2.1.4, the degree of actions relevance was lower, 0.71 and 0.58, respectively. This was due to the low level of ambition set for the planned actions.

In the Sub-priority 2.2 Youth-friendly services outside institutions (outreach), actions planned to achieve the result R.2.2.1 *Opportunities created by initiating and providing youth outreach services, including the legal framework* had an average relevance of 0.67. These included interventions of high relevance such as the development of a study on outreach needs, methodological support, but also of medium relevance, such as guidance of providers on intercultural education. In 2020, the plan was complemented by other actions of medium relevance, which were highly matched (focused on providing tools to work with young people with fewer opportunities, including NEET), but with little ambition due to the time and small budget set aside.

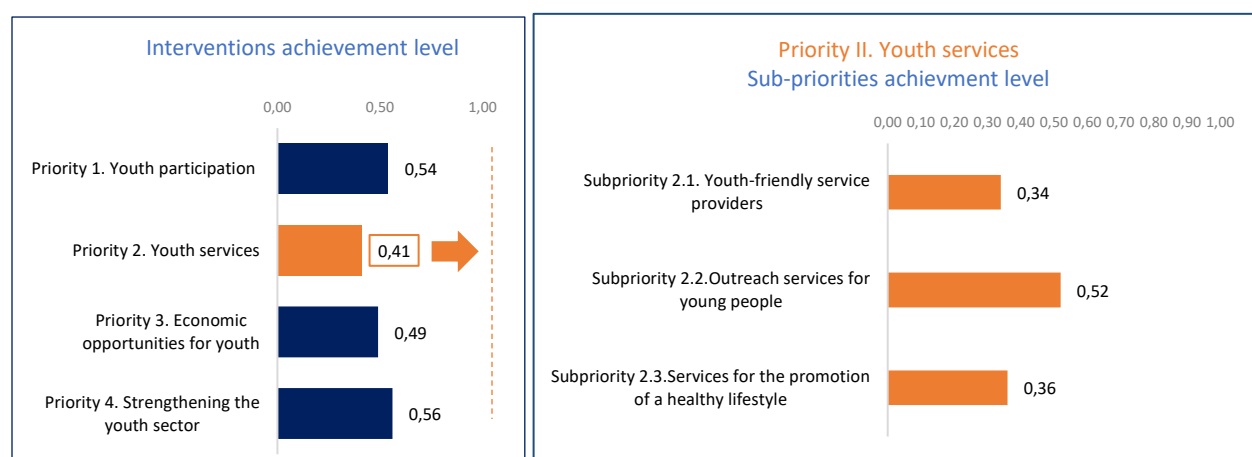
For R 2.2.2. Outreach services, accredited according to the minimum quality standards, provided by at least 30% of the providers, the degree of relevance of the planned activities was 0.59. These included actions of high relevance such as a providers training program, the development of quality standards, but also actions less relevant to the proposed outcome, such as supporting the centers regarding the implementation of activity plans and individual institutional development plans for the two planned results.

In the Sub-priority 2.3 Services for promoting a healthy lifestyle, the relevance of the planned activities was 0.69. Although the matching of the actions was generally high, the ambition was not commensurate. Actions planned to achieve R.2.3.1 *Measures to promote an intensified healthy lifestyle among young people* had a high relevance of 0.70. These included actions of greater relevance, such as expanding the network of peer educators, providing campuses with informational materials and condoms, organizing information campaigns, but also of minor relevance, such as editing informative guides for a healthy living. For R 2.3.2 *optimal conditions for youth organizations in monitoring health policies*, the actions had a degree of relevance above average (0,68), but none of them was decisive for the production of the result (annual studies on the level of access and quality of medical services provided to young people and strengthening the capacities of youth organizations in advocacy and monitoring of health policies for young people).

2.4. Implementation

Achievement under Priority II Youth Services was the lowest of all four planned priorities. The average performance score is 0.41 out of a maximum of 1. Most of the actions planned under specific objectives 2.1 and 2.2 were related to the establishment of standards for services provided to young people (including outreach) and the development of a system of accreditation of these services. The implementation of these actions was started at the beginning of the implementation period, but along

the way it was decided to change the approach. The change involved the abandonment of a system of standards, and the development of quality criteria for the provided services. The institution responsible for accreditation was established in August 2020, with no real functional capacity until the end of the strategic period. For these reasons, most actions planned for Priority II, have not been achieved at all, or are at an early stage of implementation.



F23. Level of implementation of the proposed interventions for priority area 2. Youth services

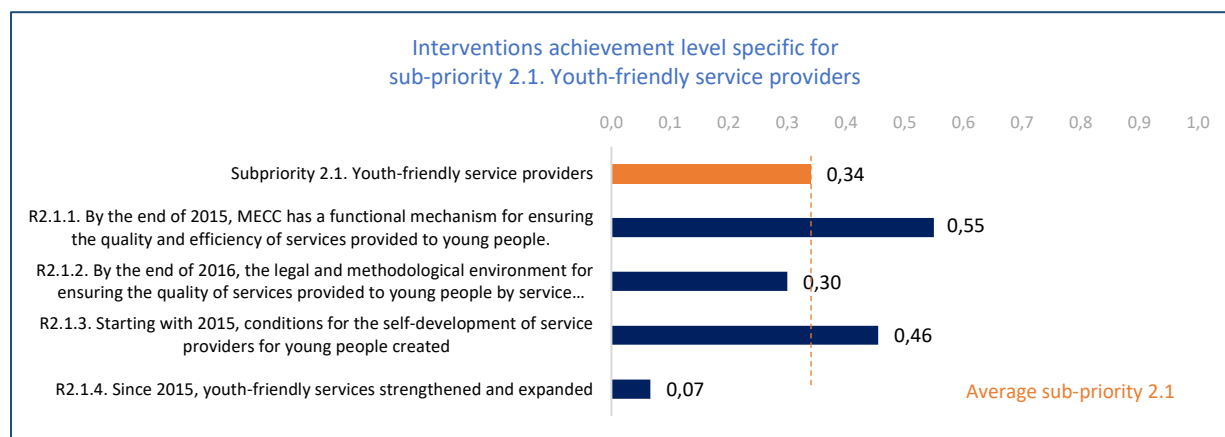
Source: Authors' estimates

The level of achievement under this priority ranged from 0.34 to 0.52 for each of the three sub-priorities. Thus, the implementation of the actions planned for Priority 2.1 is 0.34, for Priority 2.2 it is 0.52, and for Priority 2.3 it is 0.36.

Specific objective 2.1. Ensuring the quality and efficiency of services provided to young people, so that, by the end of 2020, they are accessible to at least 90% of young people.

Under sub-priority 2.1, the highest average achievement (0.55) was recorded for the actions planned for outcome 2.1.1. (Functional mechanism to ensure the quality and efficiency of services provided to young people by the end of 2015). The average of the other actions did not exceed the average for the entire objective. The fewest achievements were found in the actions planned for outcome 2.1.4 (Starting in 2015, youth-friendly services strengthened and expanded) (0.07).

Specific objective 2.1 was achieved to a small extent (0.34). The goal set was a very ambitious one that was to be assured through a series of results, few of which were achieved. The object is verifiable on the basis of two distinct indicators: a qualitative one (quality and efficiency of services provided to young people) and a quantitative one (accessibility of services for 90% of young people). The accessibility of services implies both the quasi-total geographical distribution of services and the way of providing services in a way adapted to the needs of the vast majority of young people, depending on the gender, age, living environment or interest of young people. From the point of view of geographical coverage, the provision of services is based on the 22 youth centers located in 62% of the territorial-administrative units of level II. At the same time, most youth centers have a limited capacity to provide services, both in terms of the number of human resources available and in terms of capacity to deliver services outside the place of residence. According to the logic of the planned actions, the quality and efficiency of the services were to be ensured by creating quality standards and a provider accreditation mechanism.



F24. The level of implementation of the activities provided in NSYSD 2020, sub-priority 2.1

Source: CPD estimates based on MECR annual reports

R2.1.1 Mechanism for ensuring the quality and efficiency of services provided to young people - there has been no progress.

The structure that should have been responsible for ensuring the quality and efficiency of services (NAPDYW), was established 5 years late, on 12.08.2020³¹. By the end of the NSYSD implementation period, the Agency had not become operational and the accreditation system had not been created either.

R2.1.2 Legal and methodological environment for ensuring the quality of services provided to young people by service providers - the foundations of the methodological framework have been laid, but no progress has been made on the legal framework.

In 2016, the draft of the General Standards for the accreditation of youth-friendly service providers was developed and was consulted with members of the Network of Youth-Friendly Service Providers. In 2015, the Framework Regulation of the youth service provider was elaborated, which was to be submitted to the public consultation process. Following the change of approach, the use of standards and the framework regulation was abandoned. A new set of criteria for youth services has been developed³² and to be finalized and approved. The Conceptual Document of Programs Portfolio for the Youth Centers provides the approach and conceptual understanding (youth work, programs/services, the principle of non-formal learning), performance criteria for youth services, as well as their monitoring based on the traffic light method. This method involves analyzing the current situation, understanding the needs for development and planning of activities to meet all criteria.

R2.1.3 Conditions created for the self-development of youth service providers - was partially completed.

The carried out actions produced some small results, but they did not have the necessary continuity and were carried out outside a concrete program. Therefore, the achievements did not contribute as a whole to the development of a friendly situation and thus to the achievement of the specific objective. In 2015, the sectoral communication and relationship mechanism was elaborated, being approved (11.09.2015) at the quarterly meeting of the network of youth service providers, but after 2016, it was no longer

³¹ GD 598 / 12.08.2020 on the organization and functioning of the National Agency for the Development of Youth Programs and Activities

³² "Concept of the program portfolio for youth centers", UNFPA Moldova, 2019

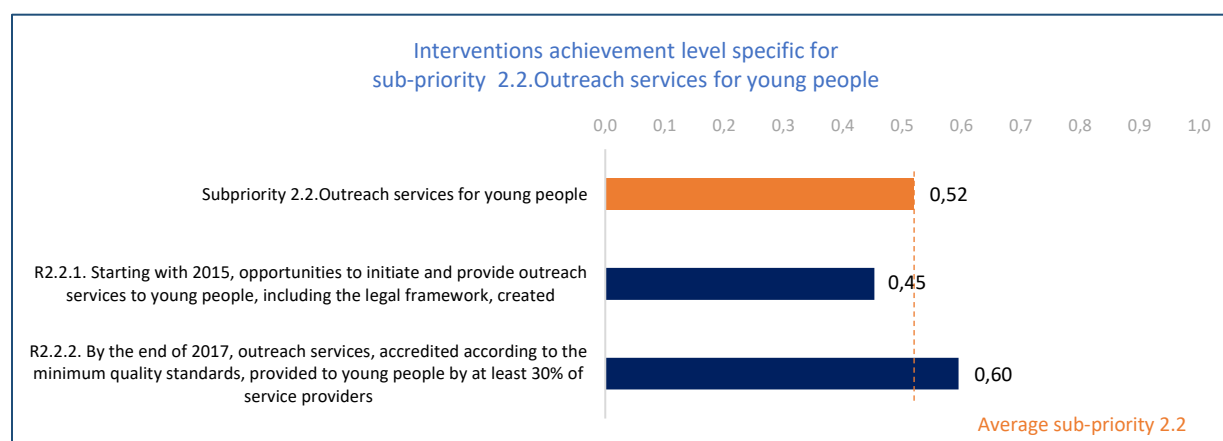
functional. Over the years, exchanges of experience have been reported for service providers - but their number (2-4 annual exchanges) has been insignificant for the self-development of service providers. In 2016, 2018 and 2019, three editions of the annual forums of youth-friendly service providers were held, while the methodological support needed by service providers to ensure minimum quality standards has not been developed. In 2020, the online Training Program for Youth Workers was implemented within the Joint Fund, which included 15 thematic sessions and had more than 60 people as beneficiaries.

R.2.1.4 Consolidated and extended youth-friendly services- it was not realized. The system under which youth-friendly services were to be strengthened and extended, based on the development of standards and the accreditation of providers, was not implemented. None of the planned products were delivered: no service providers were accredited, no mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the quality of services was developed, nor was there a planned expansion of youth-friendly services in all district centers.

OS 2.2. Development of outreach services through the elaboration of the methodological framework and the continuous training of providers, so that, by the end of 2020, they will contribute at least 45% of the total offer of services

Under sub-priority 2.2, the planned actions for the development of opportunities to initiate and provide outreach services (2.2.1) were carried out in the proportion of 0.45. At the same time, the actions planned for the effort to accredit these services registered a small average until 2019, but made some progress in 2020, at the expense of the actions introduced in the plan in the early 2020, which aimed to support YC in implementing activity plans and capacity development, finally achieving a score of 0.6.

Specific objective 2.2 has been partially achieved. A methodological document for outreach services was created in 2019. Outreach services are in the early stages of development. In 2020, they represented about 9% of the total activities carried out by YC, far from the proposed target (Methodological framework for outreach services - not performed; Outreach services, 45% of the total offer of services - not performed).



F25. The level of implementation of the activities provided in NSYSD 2020, sub-priority 2.2
Source: Authors' estimates

R 2.2.1 Opportunities for initiation and provision of outreach services to young people, including the legal framework, created - the realization has begun, without completion. The legal framework for outreach services has not been created.

The basic study on the needs of outreach services and their mapping, planned for 2016, was not carried out. In 2019, a methodological support was developed for youth workers³³, which was to be used in 2020 to develop outreach services and strengthen the capacity of youth centers in the field of outreach services. During the implementation period, some activities were carried out to support/guide the youth organizations for the organization of intercultural education activities, but the number was modest in relation to the national scale.

In 2020, the Joint Fund supported an effort to ensure viable tools for working with young people with reduced opportunities, including NEETs. In the context of the pandemic, YCs have implemented online outreach tools. Statistical data do not show an increase in the number of beneficiaries among young people with fewer opportunities.

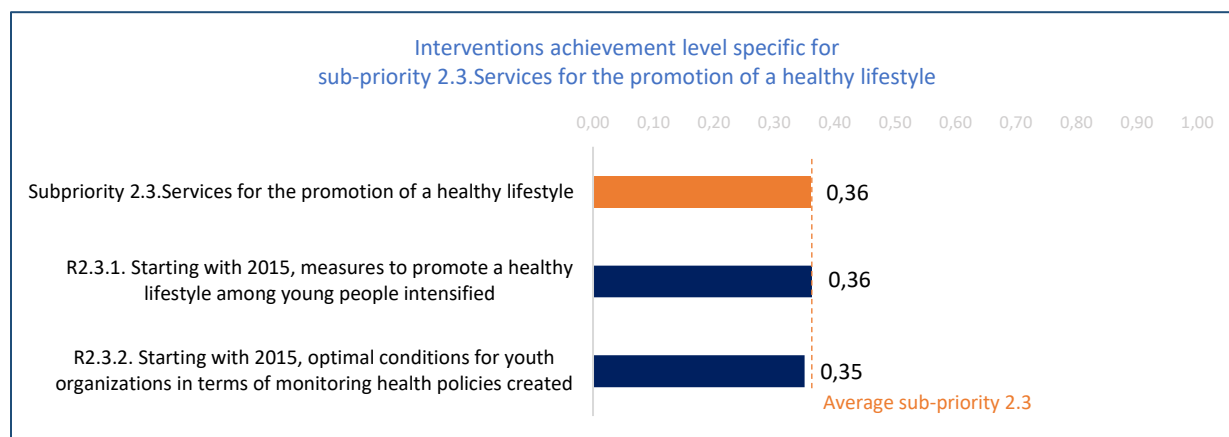
R 2.2.2. By the end of 2017, outreach services, accredited according to minimum quality standards, provided to young people by at least 30% of service providers - has not been achieved. No outreach service provider has been accredited. No quality standards have been developed for outreach services, nor has any training program for outreach providers been implemented. According to the annual Report of the relevant ministry (2015), the implementation of the training program for providers for the initiation of outreach services was to be carried out after the establishment of NAPDYW (2020). The only progress in this regard was in 2020, when the Joint Fund supported the creation/endowment of safe, interactive and youth-friendly spaces in youth centers. However, this initiative has not been able to replace the major actions not carried out. In 2020, about 30% of YCs reported the provision of outreach activities, but their quality cannot be assessed, for the time being, based on a reference system.

OS 2.3. Enhancement of measures to promote a healthy lifestyle among young people, so that, by the end of 2020, at least 80% of the total number of young people will benefit from this support

The actions planned to promote a healthy lifestyle had an average achievement of 0.36, and the actions designed to create the conditions for monitoring health policies averaged 0.35.

Specific objective 2.3 was achieved in a proportion of about 12.5% of the planned measure. According to official data, the number of young people reported as beneficiaries of the campaigns during the 6 years amounted to a maximum of 65 thousand (*informed about sexual and reproductive health in the information campaigns "Pro-health" and "Informed and protected", campaigns carried out by members of the Peer-to-Peer Educators Network, Y-PEER Moldova and PA volunteers "Health for young people" in secondary schools and summer camps*). The reported number represents about 10% of the total number of young people (18-35 years old) registered in the Republic of Moldova in 2020 (640 thousand - with 180 thousand fewer people than in 2014) - far from the set target of 80%.

³³ "Closer to young people, How to create more accessible services for young people", Support for youth workers, Terre des hommes Moldova Foundation, 2019



F26. The level of implementation of the activities provided in NSYSO 2020, sub-priority 2.3

Source: Authors' estimates

R 2.3.1. Since 2015, measures to promote a healthy lifestyle among young people intensified - it was partially achieved, but the scale and small diversity of the actions carried out could not contribute to achieving the specific objective. The Peer-to-Peer Educators Network Y-PEER Moldova has expanded from 15 (2016) to 27 local teams in 27 a.t.u. (2020), which represents 73% of the a.t.u. - which is 7 percentage points below the 80% target set in the NSYSO. The Y-PEER structure is quite volatile and from year to year it is possible to change the number of teams and the localities in which it operates. Apart from the activities of the Network of Young Educators (which had the most beneficiaries) were reported only activities that indirectly contributed to informing young people and can hardly be included in information campaigns (exception 2019 - Youth Information Campaign "I am young and I am healthy!"). Topics covered in campaigns and activities to promote a healthy lifestyle included information on youth-friendly health services, sexual and reproductive health, personal hygiene, mental health and proper nutrition. In 2016, the editing of a guide was supported³⁴, which had, among other topics, the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Another planned action "Providing student campuses with distribution points for information materials in the field of youth health and condoms" - was not carried out - largely due to resistance from school administrations.

R 2.3.2. Since 2015, optimal conditions for youth organizations in terms of monitoring health policies created - has been achieved to a lesser extent. There is no consistent evidence that monitoring conditions have improved. The capacities of youth organizations have not been significantly strengthened, and the annual study of the quality of medical services has not been carried out.

Of all the annual studies planned on the level of access and quality of medical services provided to young people, the Study on social norms and health differences between girls and boys in the Republic of Moldova was reported in 2016 (Neovita Youth Friendly Health Center). According to reports, the effort to strengthen the capacity of youth organizations in advocacy and monitoring health policies for young people was limited to a few trainings in 2015-2016, of which benefited about 20 young people.

³⁴ "Student Guide", National Council of Student Organizations of Moldova - focused on informing young people in the first year of college about the opportunities they can benefit from, as well as promoting a healthy lifestyle, non-formal education, youth organizations

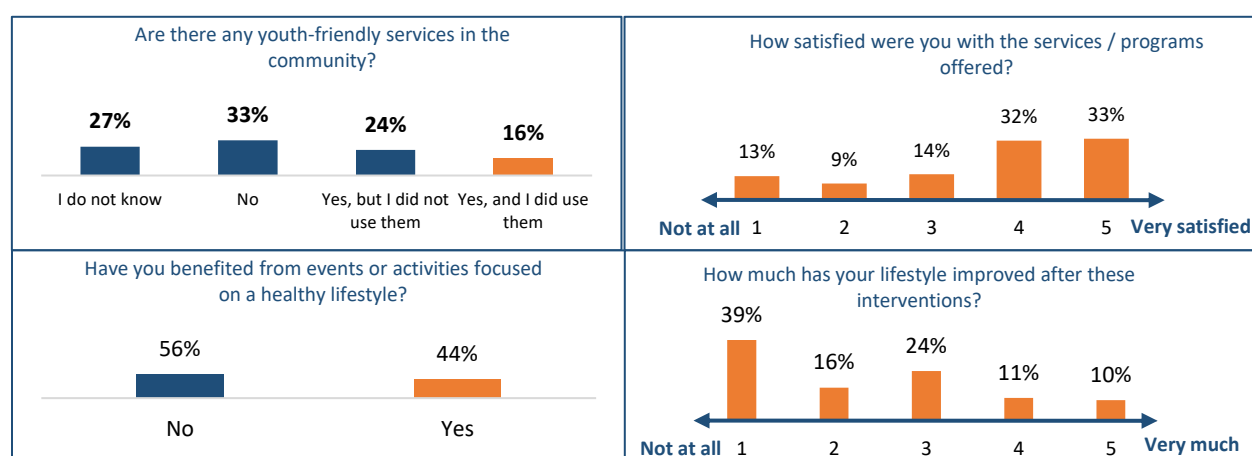
In order to achieve general objective 2 of the NSYSD, 29 actions were planned. Most of them focused on the development of policy documents, methodologies and standards (6 actions), the modification of the normative and legislative framework and the strengthening of capacities (4 each) and the assurance of participation or representativeness (3). The other types of interventions were found in only 1-2 planned actions. The 6 actions aimed at developing policy documents, methodologies and standards, had a degree of achievement of 0.36. The actions planned to change the regulatory framework were carried out to a lesser extent than 0.25, and those to strengthen capacities to a greater extent than 0.48.

2.5. Impact

General objective 2. Contribute to the formation of the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and behaviors necessary for the successful integration of young people in society, including those from reduced opportunities group

The quantitative indicator of general objective 2 is not set. There is no established target for the degree of contribution to the training of young people's capacities for integration into society. The objective provides for an important qualitative element: young people from the low-opportunity group are explicitly mentioned - which means that all planned actions target them as direct beneficiaries. The activities carried out within NSYSD have contributed to the development of young people's capacities, but no data are available on the extent to which young people with reduced opportunities have also benefited. At the moment, the centers infrastructure and the staff capacity do not allow the provision of services for young people with disabilities, or young people from other vulnerable groups.

In the opinion of young people, youth services are either not visible or have a modest impact. Over 50% of young people surveyed via U-Report³⁵ state that youth services are not developed in their community or do not know about their existence, which speaks of a low level of coverage with services at the territorial level. On the other hand, some interventions were perceived by young people as being of little relevance to them, which indicates a problem with the content and delivery of youth services.



F27. Perceived level of access and effect of youth services; Source: U-Report, 2020

³⁵ U-Report is a social messaging and data collection system developed by UNICEF, being used in 41 countries. The program sends SMS surveys to participants, collecting real-time responses. The surveyed aspects refer to health, education, hygiene, unemployment, HIV / AIDS, etc. The data collected are not representative of the entire young population of the reference country. 718 young people answered questions about youth services.

Specific objective 2.1. Ensuring the quality and efficiency of services provided to young people, so that, by the end of 2020, they are accessible to at least 90% of young people

The indicator of accessibility of quality services (90% of young people) was not reached. In 2020, there were 44 youth centers³⁶ (22 at district/municipality level and 22 branches), most of which have 1-3 employees (in exceptional cases - Criuleni, Soroca or Edinet - the number of employees is 13-17 people), placed in district/municipal centers (about 100 employees). Youth centers (service providers) do not have the necessary geographical coverage and the capacity of human resources to provide accessible services for 90% of young people in the Republic of Moldova (about 576 thousand young men and women out of a total of about 640 thousand people with age between 18-35 years, in the year 2020). Youth centers do not have sufficient human resources and capacity to ensure access to services for the planned number of young people in rural areas.

Compared to 2014, from the reported information, it can be concluded a slight improvement produced in the quality of services correlated with the training of workers and the endowment of youth centers. Deficiencies related to the accessibility of services for young people with reduced opportunities or young people over 20 years of age remains an actual topic. The solution proposed in the strategy, which involved a functional quality assurance mechanism by accrediting youth services, minimum quality standards, regulatory framework, was not achieved. In the first years of implementing the strategy, some steps were taken. In 2015, the draft of General Standards for Accreditation of Youth Friendly Service Providers was developed, the Network of Youth Friendly Service Providers was organized (which included not only youth centers, but also other organizations active in the field of youth services) and were held regular meetings and its annual forums. The Standards draft was consulted within the network in 2016. In 2017, the responsible authority changed its approach based on standards and implicitly to some of the planned actions as being too rigid for what youth-friendly services entail.

In 2019, MECR returned to the concept, preferring a more flexible and creative approach, based on the provisions of the Law on Youth 215/2016, which does not involve standardization and accreditation of youth service providers. In 2019, a set of quality criteria was developed for youth services, which have not yet been implemented. In 2020, the National Agency for Programs Development and Youth Work was established (GD 598 / 12.08.2020) which, at the time of development of the evaluation report, was not yet operational.

Specific objective 2.2. Development of outreach services through the elaboration of the methodological framework and the continuous training of providers, so that, by the end of 2020, they will contribute at least 45% of the total offer of services

The proposed result was not achieved. The methodological framework is in an early stage of development, as is the training of providers. The share of outreach activities from the total activities carried out by the youth centers in the second semester of 2020 was 9.3% - in decrease, compared to the first semester: 16.6%³⁷. These values represent a share up to five times lower than the proposed target (at least 45% of the service offer). In 2020, the development of outreach services was still at an early stage: the Joint Fund contributed to the development of a study on outreach services, which serves as a basis

³⁶ According to the Report on the implementation of the Action Plan for 2020 of NSYSO 2020

³⁷ UNFPA, Statistical Report on "ACTIVITY OF YOUTH CENTERS" semester II, 2020

for the development of these services through youth centers. The results proposed under this sub-priority have not been achieved. There is no methodological framework and standards for outreach services, nor have such services been accredited - an approach that was abandoned during the implementation of the strategy. No program has been developed for the training of outreach service providers, nor is there any evidence of the systematic provision of such services, including for young people with reduced opportunities. The methodological framework is to be developed, and the youth centers have limited capacities - which does not allow the development of large-scale services.

Specific objective 2.3. Intensify measures to promote a healthy lifestyle among young people, so that, by the end of 2020, at least 80% of the total number of young people will benefit from this support

The goal was not achieved. The number of young people receiving services to promote a healthy lifestyle is about 10% of the total number of young people. According to official data, the number of young people reported as beneficiaries of the campaigns during the 6 years amounted to a maximum of 65 thousand (26,794 informed in 2016 about sexual and reproductive health in the information campaigns "Pro-Health" and "Informed and protected". In other years, the number of beneficiaries has reached a maximum of 1,000 people. Campaigns conducted by members of the Y-PEER Educators Network and P.A. "Health for young people" in secondary schools and summer camps with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) - about 6000 beneficiaries per year). The reported number represents only about 10% of the total number of young men and women (18-35 years old) registered in the Republic of Moldova in 2020 (640 thousand - with 180 thousand fewer people than in 2014).

There is no evidence on the intensification of measures to promote a healthy lifestyle among young people compared to the period before the implementation of the strategy. According to the officially reported information, the measures to promote a healthy lifestyle were sporadic, were not based on a communication strategy, did not have an agenda of topics or targets for geographical coverage and social groups. The officially reported actions were carried out within the projects and initiatives of the implementing partners or other organizations. In order to reach the 80% goal (over 500 thousand young people), communication tools with much higher coverage would have been needed (such as influencers, commercials, TV shows, youtube, social networks, within national or face-to-face awareness-raising and information campaigns in separate communities focused on specific community issues), but also much larger financial resources.

The target lacks specificity, or a healthy lifestyle includes many aspects (physical, mental and spiritual hygiene, nutrition, exercise, reproductive health, etc.) that address different age, environment or occupation categories. In this sense, the spectrum of measures to promote a healthy lifestyle that can be undertaken is varied and differs depending on age, gender, social group, or topic addressed. The approach of the responsible authorities and partners during the implementation of the strategy focused only on some of these variables, with a predilection for reproductive health among adolescents, hygiene, proper nutrition. Other topics that were not targeted, or were targeted less, refer to alcohol and drug use, risks of obesity and diabetes, addiction to computer games.

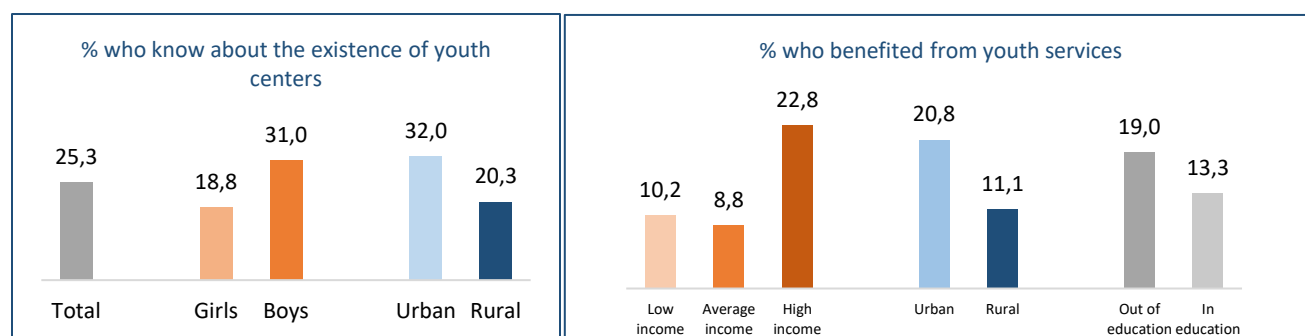
2.6. Inclusion and Gender Equality

Youth-oriented services are under-represented in rural areas. According to the latest data of MECR, at national level there are 22 Youth Centers active in 22 localities, these being concentrated in the urban

environment, at LPA of level II.³⁸ In rural areas, although there are some branches of urban YCs, the youth sector has a limited capacity to provide certain services and to apply the work of and for youth. For this reason, young people in rural areas become a disadvantaged group in accessing services and various opportunities (Figure 27).

Young girls/women are more actively involved in youth activities and are, to a greater extent, beneficiaries of youth services. The level of access to the services provided for young people is directly correlated with the visibility of the structures that provide them. Despite the wide range of services offered by youth centers, only 25.3% of young people know about their existence³⁹. The young women were less informed than young men, and awareness was higher among young people in urban areas than among young people in rural areas (figure below).

Services for young people, in the current way of delivery, show poor efficiency in integrating disadvantaged groups of young people. The general objective of priority II of NSYSD 2020 is expressly aimed at *the knowledge formation, skills and behaviors necessary for the integration into society of young people, including those with limited opportunities*. Consequently, some of the planned actions planificate (74, 74¹ și 74²) refer to certain categories of young people with reduced opportunities or NEET young people. However, none of these actions provide for appropriate specific indicators that would favor the monitoring of the degree of inclusion.



F28. Degree of knowledge of youth services among young people in Moldova
Source: OECD, 2018

Not all young people have been able to benefit equally from youth services. In addition to the fact that young people in rural areas have more limited access to youth services, there are other disadvantaged groups in this regard. The analysis of the context reveals that youth services are focused on a small group of young people, on the pro-active and motivated ones. Although one of the objectives of priority II was to ensure quality and efficient services accessible to 90% of young people, currently the services provided through youth centers are accessible, to a large extent, to adolescents, urban residents, with a high level of social integration. The representation of young people from villages, young people from NEET category (unemployed, young people not involved in the field of work and who do not pursue any form of education), young families, etc., continues to be quite small.

³⁸ Comprehensive analysis of the youth sector, 2019

³⁹ Youth Well-being Policy Review Moldova; OECD, 2018, https://www.oecd.org/countries/moldova/Youth_Well-being_Policy_Review_Moldova.pdf

Youth services cover, for the most part, young people in the younger age categories. The highest level of activism is manifested by young men and women aged 15-19, who are also the main beneficiaries of the youth services provided. One explanation for this lies in the dissonance between the services provided by local youth structures (YC, LYC, NGOs, YFHC, etc.) and the interests of young people in older categories, who are already oriented towards employment, family, etc., and who may benefit from the specialized services of other institutions providing specialized services (employment, entrepreneurship, social assistance, etc.).

Young people with disabilities benefit to a small extent from youth services and activities. During the strategic cycle, a methodological product was developed that provides the basis for the development of youth-friendly services outside institutions (outreach), which mentions the need to ensure accessibility and inclusion of outreach services, including for young people with disabilities. However, given the insufficient capacity and skills of youth workers to work with young people with disabilities or institutionalized young people, their access to services remains limited.

2.7. Recommendations

Ensuring a complex and integrated approach - for interventions to be more effective, it is often not enough for them to be sufficient and appropriate. They need to be calibrated to the real needs of the sector. If we refer to training and institutional development interventions, it is important that the coverage area is vast (both numerically and geographically).

Developing an approach, which would allow the extension of YC and their subsidiaries in all urban localities (including all district centers) and in large rural localities and uniform replication of positive practices based on a mechanism of communication, training and exchange of experience between YCs. Modeling planned interventions in such a way that they are addressed to marginalized young people with reduced opportunities, with an emphasis on their specific needs in both the planning and implementation phases.

Planning interventions in order to extend the coverage of beneficiaries. With the identification of actions that will contribute to overcoming the reluctance of young people to participate, it is important to ensure their ambitious character, manifested by expanding the magnitude and scope of the number of beneficiaries directly involved.

Organizing interventions within programs addressing the specific areas targeted by the strategy through macro targets, linked to objectives, actions, procedures and standard working methods.

Ensuring the internal mechanisms of the MECR in order to preserve the institutional memory, know-how and consistency in the implementation of long-term actions. The implementation of the planned actions must be framed in a systematized approach in which the annual actions are a logical continuity of those of the previous years.

PRIORITY III. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

3.1. Introduction

Existing jobs in the Republic of Moldova are modestly paid and unattractive for young people. The employment of young people on the labor market is marked by the option of emigrating abroad. Four out of ten migrants are young people aged 16-30, and their intentions to emigrate for work are also expressed to a greater extent by young people. The unemployment rate among young people is higher than the unemployment rate at national level, the most disadvantaged on the labor market being young people in the age category 15-24. In addition, young unemployed people have competitive disadvantages in the labor market compared to other age groups due to the fact that they have less work experience, do not have the knowledge and entrepreneurial skills, the necessary financial resources.

PRIORITY III. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE		
Sub - priority 3.1. Economic empowerment and entrepreneurship among young people	Sub-priority 3.2. Employment opportunities	Sub-priority 3.3. Internships
<p>R 3.1.1 The share of young people among entrepreneurs increased by 10%</p> <p>R 3.1.2 At least 300 sustainable businesses implemented annually through economic empowerment programs</p>	<p>R 3.2.1 Unemployment rate decreased from 12.1% in 2013 to 8% in 2020 for the age group 15-24 years and from 8.7% in 2013 to 5% in 2020 for the age category 15-29 years</p> <p>R 3.2.2 The share of young people (15-29 years old) who left their job from 25% in 2012 to 15% in 2020 decreased</p>	<p>R 3.3.1 Qualitative mechanism for long-term internships (6-9 months)</p> <p>R 3.3.2 The number of young people in the pre-university and university system who have completed internships increased by at least 50%</p> <p>R 3.3.3 The number of beneficiaries of internship programs employed increased by at least 50%</p>

F29. Areas of intervention under Priority III on strengthening the youth sector
Source: NSYSD 2020

3.2. General findings

The actions planned in Priority III have a relatively high degree of relevance (on average 0.62). By contrast, the lowest degree of relevance was found for actions under sub-priority 3.1 Economic empowerment and entrepreneurship among young people (0.35). In this case, the lack of matching and ambition of some actions significantly influenced the average score in a negative way.

The degree of implementation of the actions under Priority III was average (with a score of 0.49 out of a maximum of 1). The degree of achievement varied significantly between sub-priorities, from 0.26 for sub-priority 3.1, to 0.58 and 0.63 for sub-priority 3.2 and 3.3 respectively. The main factors that reduced the potential impact were the insufficiency of financial resources, the lack of specific targets, the lack of a programmed approach and in some cases - the insufficiency of human resources in the responsible structures of MECR for the workload required by NSYSD. At the same time, we find that in Priority III, the central role for achieving the objectives has the specialized public authorities (MEI, ODIMM, NEA), and the resources and levers of MECR do not have the capacity to produce significant changes.

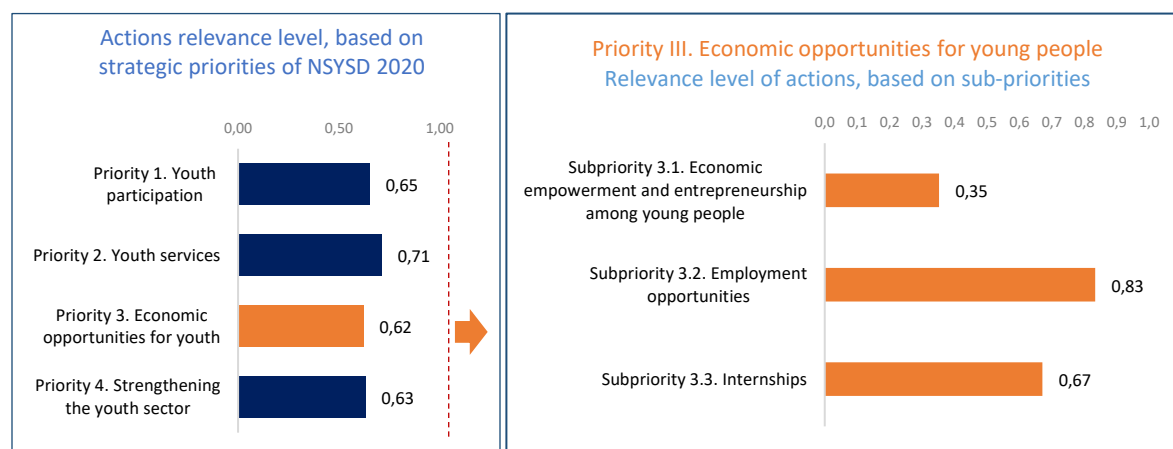
Within the general objective of the Priority III (Development of entrepreneurial and employment opportunities among young people, especially those with reduced opportunities) does not contain a verifiable quantitative indicator. Even if, according to the qualitative indicator in the objective, young people with reduced opportunities were to be among the special beneficiaries, they did not enjoy the due attention to the implementation of NSYSD. Only a few of the reported actions present disaggregated data on young beneficiaries with fewer opportunities. Marginalized groups (rural youth, women and young people with disabilities) continue to be under-represented in the entrepreneurial environment.

In the case of sub-priorities 3.1 and 3.2, the weak link between the proposed objectives and the planned actions was noted. Even if some of the actions had a medium or high degree of implementation, they mattered more as complementary measures, which did not change the negative trend in this area. Thus, there is a decrease in the share of young people among entrepreneurs (from 22.7% in 2009 to 14.4% in 2017) - in contrast to the proposed goal of increasing, by at least 30% of the number of young people with economic skills.

Some of the specific objectives are not verifiable due to the lack of data that could confirm the proposed indicators. For example: 3.1 Increasing the number of young people with economic skills and 3.3 Increasing the number of beneficiaries of internship programs. Even if some objectives have been achieved (lowering the youth unemployment rate or increasing the employment rate of young people), the results produced by the actions taken are not broad enough to make a decisive contribution to this objective.

3.3. Relevance

Priority III has a relatively good degree of relevance. The actions planned under Priority III had in average a degree of relevance of 0.62. Within the sub-priorities, the relevance was raised to sub-priority 3.2 (0.83) and sub-priority 3.3 (0.67). Instead, the actions planned for the sub-priority 3.1 was extremely small (0.35).



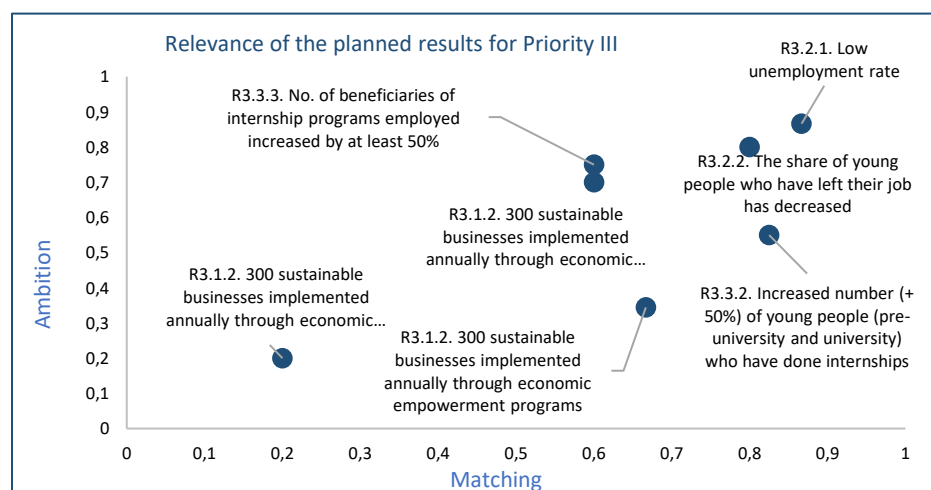
F30. Relevance level of interventions in relation to objectives for priority III

Source: Authors' estimates

We can highlight as the main factors that have reduced the potential results of the strategy, lack of funding (or funding within the allocated budget), lack of specific targets, lack of a programmed approach, and taking into account the number of employees in the responsible structures of MECR - insufficient

human resources for the workload required by NSYSD. The average degree of matching of actions from Priority III was 0.65, and the degree of ambition was 0.59. In this case, we can notice also a greater degree of matching, than ambition. The lowest degree of matching and ambition can be seen in R 3.1.2., for which only one action was planned. This separate action could not contribute to the production of the result. Stimulating cross-border cooperation could not generate 300 sustainable businesses a year, which is why it was scored 0.2 for matching. At the same time, the action was scored with 0, 2 for the degree of ambition due to the budget of only 100 thousand lei and the lack of targets for the number of young beneficiaries of cross-border cooperation. At the other extreme, with a high degree of matching and ambition are the actions planned for R 3.2.1. The three planned actions were matched (0.87) for the proposed result and with a higher level of ambition (0.87) due to both the allocated budget and the focus of the final product. R.3.3.2 is an example of a high degree of matching (0.83) but with less ambition (0.55) - in this case the degree of ambition of an action has negatively influenced the overall score. More exactly, for *Carrying out information campaigns on the opportunities offered by the internship* - an average budget of 30 thousand lei per year was allocated - a ridiculous amount for such an initiative that can ensure the information of an insignificant number of people (0.2 ambition). A high degree of relevance for the planned actions did not automatically determine a high degree of achievement - which depended, rather, on the foresight and consistency of implementation.

Within the Sub-Priority 3.1 Economic empowerment and entrepreneurship among young people, the relevance of the actions planned to produce the result R.3.1.1 *share of young people among entrepreneurs increased by 10 p.* were 0.51. A total of nine various actions were planned in terms of implementation. Interventions with greater relevance refer to trainings, mentoring programs, annual forums of young entrepreneurs. Medium-relevant ones include informing young people about entrepreneurial opportunities, business incubators, social entrepreneurship, and the least relevant refer to the creation of an e-learning platform, training in IT, including for young people with reduced opportunities. In the case of R. 3.1.2, *300 sustainable businesses implemented annually through economic empowerment programs*, a low level of relevance of 0.2 was found. Only one action was planned for this result: Stimulating cross-border cooperation programs for young people - which was not likely to significantly influence the outcome.



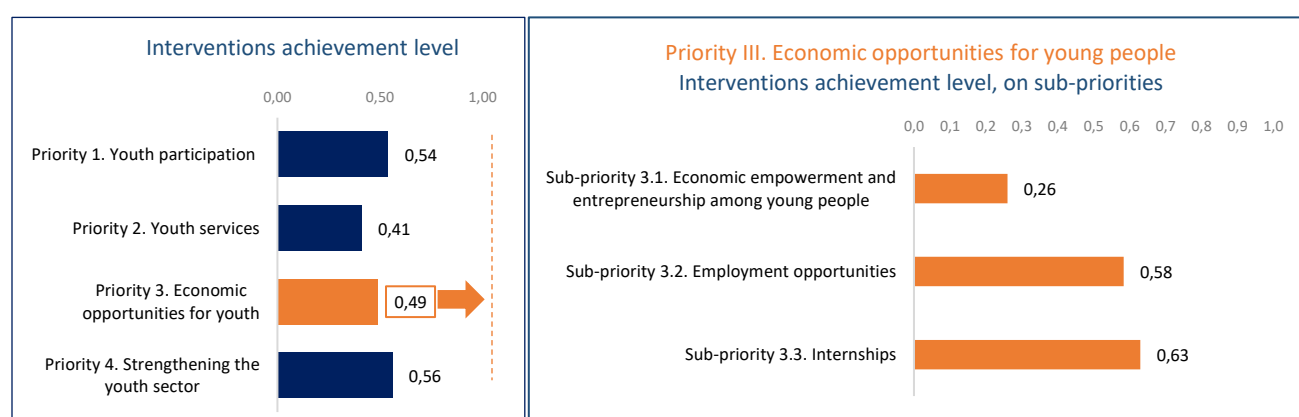
F31. Relevance of interventions in relation to the set results, depending on the match and ambition.
Source: Authors' estimates

In the Sub-priority 3.2 Employment opportunities, the average relevance is 0.85. For R 3.2.1 *Unemployment rate decreased from 12.1% in 2013 to 8% in 2020 for the age group 15-24 years and from 8.7% in 2013 to 5% in 2020 for the age category age 15-29*, three actions of great relevance were planned (around 0.9): vocational training courses for young people registered as unemployed, career guidance services and job fairs for young people. Although appropriate and ambitious, the actions were not enough to produce the result. For R 3.2.2 *the share decreased from 25% in 2012 to 15% in 2020 (15-29 years) of young people who left work*, two relevant actions were planned (0.8): policies to stimulate the employment of young graduates in the field of work and the elaboration of the mechanism for monitoring the professional trajectory of young people.

In the Sub-priority 3.3 Internships, the relevance of the actions was 0.67. For R 3.3.1 *Qualitative mechanism for carrying out long-term internships (6-9 months) for students from the existing university and pre-university system*, actions with a relevance of 0.65 were planned: amending the regulation on long-term internships and conducting the study regarding the international experience regarding the participation in internships. For R 3.3.2. *Increased number of young people who did internships, with at least 50%*, actions were planned with a high degree of relevance (average 0.69): Information campaigns and media coverage of internship opportunities, establishing partnerships for the organization of internships, financial support for young people with reduced opportunities in doing internships. For R 3.3.3 *The number of beneficiaries of internship programs employed in the field of employment increased by at least 50%*, two actions were planned, although relevant (0.68) insufficient to produce the result: national study on the share of young employees who previously benefited of internships informative guide for young people regarding the advantages of the internship experience at employment.

3.4. Implementation

Achievement level under Priority III Economic opportunities for young people was average, with a score of 0.49. The degree of achievement varied significantly between sub-priorities. Thus, sub-priority 3.1 had a grade of 0.26. The other two sub-priorities were achieved to a greater extent: 0.58 - for sub-priority 3.2 and 0.63 - for sub-priority 3.3.

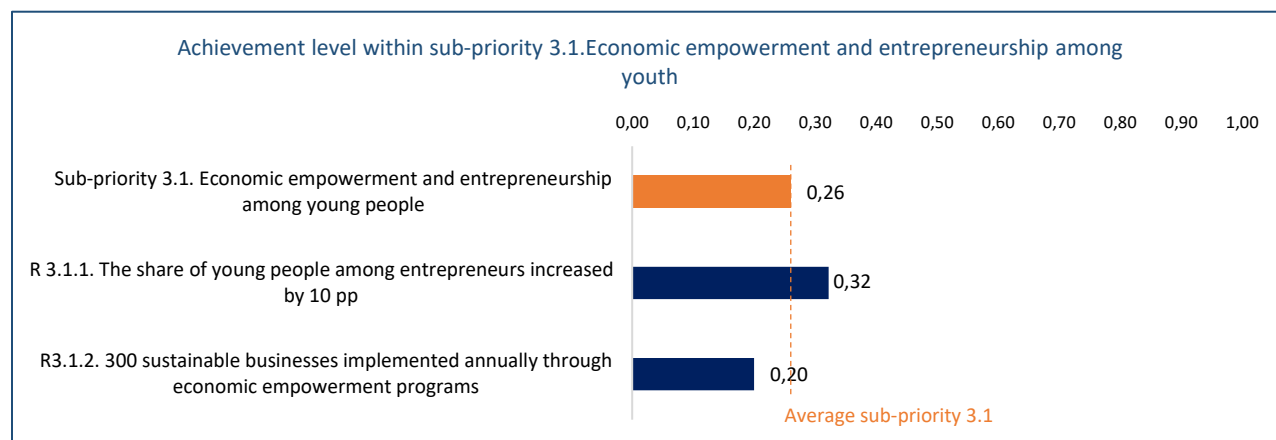


F32. Implementation level of provided activities in NSYS 2020

Source: Authors' estimates

Specific objective 3.1. Increase, by the end of 2020, by at least 30% in the number of young people with economic skills, especially those in rural areas and groups with reduced opportunities

The degree of achievement of the objective cannot be estimated due to the lack of objective data both at the beginning and at the end of the NSYSD implementation period. If we analyze the low degree of accomplishment of the planned actions, we see that there are few prerequisites for achieving the objective, on the contrary, a regression in sub-priority 3.1 is possible.



F33. Implementation level of the activities provided in NSYSD 2020, sub-priority 3.1

Source: Authors' estimates

R 3.1.1. By 2020, the share of young people among entrepreneurs increased by 10 %. The actions planned for this result were carried out to a small extent (0.32). If we analyze the indirect data available in the field of entrepreneurship⁴⁰, we can actually see a decrease in the share of young people among entrepreneurs for a period that partially overlaps with the monitored period (from 22.7% in 2009 to 14.4% in 2018). Some of the planned actions were carried out with an average degree of achievement, the annual national forum of young entrepreneurs until 2018, some mentoring activities with a relatively small number of young beneficiaries (maximum 50 people). The information of young people was carried out on business incubators, organization of conferences, trainings, summer schools - but they did not set certain targets for numerical, geographical or social coverage, which is why their achievement was low and the efficiency of the young population was low. Electronic learning platforms in the field of entrepreneurship have also been developed (www.antreprenoriatsocial.md, <http://infoera.org/>), but they matter more as complementary measures, which have not changed the negative trend in this area. In 2020, efforts were made to train young people, through YC, in the field of social entrepreneurship, IT domain and digital empowerment, but the planned training programs were not implemented.

R3.1.2. At least 300 sustainable businesses implemented annually through economic empowerment programs. To produce this result, a single action was planned (Stimulating cross-border cooperation programs for young people), there are some indications that prove that it was partially achieved in 2018. Some efforts have also been made in other sectors, for example, for young people in rural areas, some opportunities for preferential access to finance have been created for the development of business in the

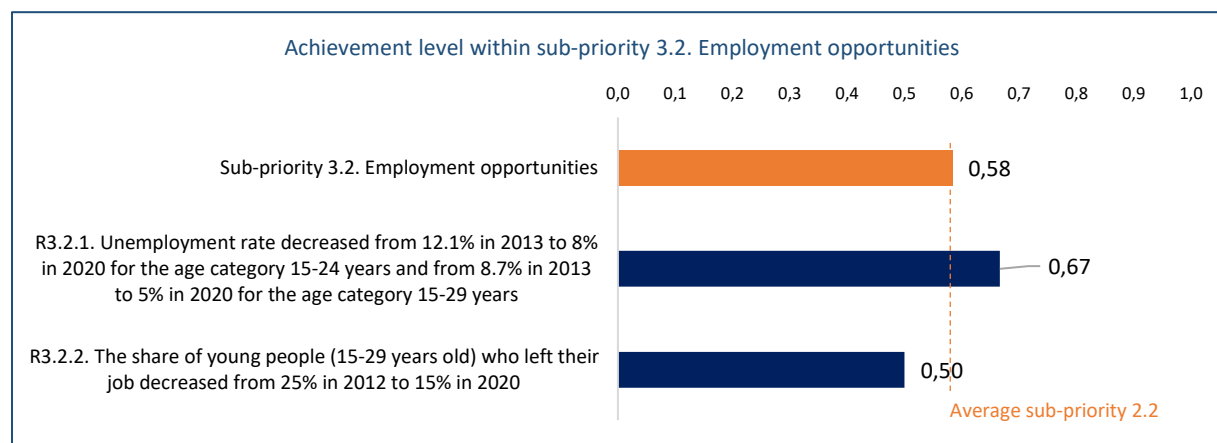
⁴⁰ https://statistica.gov.md/public/files/ComPresa/Antreprenoriat_feminin/Antreprenoriat_femei_barbati_2018.pdf

field of agriculture⁴¹. In 2020, 16 young farmers⁴² they received subsidies for business in the field of agriculture. However, in the end these figures did not contribute at all to the production of the expected result.

Specific objective 3.2. The increase, from 28% in 2013 to 35% in 2020, of the employment rate on the labor market of young people aged 15-29

R3.2.1. The unemployment rate increased from 9.3% in 2014 to 10.9% in 2020 for the age group 15-24 years and decreased from 7% in 2014 to 6.25% in 2020 for the age category age 15-29 years. In 2019, the unemployment rate was 10.4% for the 15-24 age category and 5.8% for the 25-34 age category. For both categories, we see a positive dynamic, although without reaching the value of benchmarks. Overall, we can appreciate as a positive trend in this field, but as long as the number of actual beneficiaries of the planned actions (training courses, job fairs) does not total more than 10 thousand people during the period, there are large doubts that the dynamic described is due to the actions carried out within this sub-priority.

The degree of accomplishment of the actions for this result is 0.58. Of the three planned actions, we can note the vocational training courses for young people registered as unemployed (with a maximum degree of achievement 1). Annually, 62.3% -71.5% of the unemployed trained by NEA were young. However, the absolute number of young people has steadily decreased from 2089 in 2015 to 621 in 2019. Another action with a high degree of achievement is youth job fairs - however in their case the collected data does not indicate the employment rate of young people participants, and therefore the effectiveness of the action is not obvious. The third action: providing career guidance services in educational institutions and youth resource centers - has a low degree of achievement (0.2). The guidance activities are sporadic and cover a small number of beneficiaries - while for maximum efficiency they should have national coverage for all categories of young people.



F34. Implementation level of the activities provided in NSYSD 2020, sub-priority 3.2

Source: Authors' estimates

⁴¹Art. 22, 23 Law no. 276 of 2016 on the principles of subsidization in the development of agriculture and rural environment Government Decision 455 of 2017 on the distribution of FNDARM funds

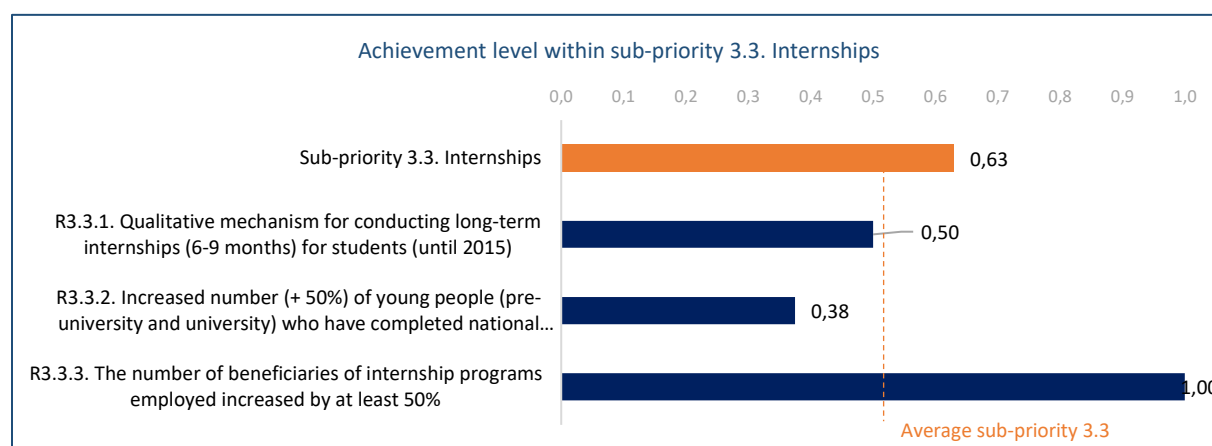
⁴² <http://aipa.gov.md/sites/default/files/Rezultatele%20subventionarii%20solicitarilor%20din%202020%20preliminar.pdf>

R3.2.2. The share of young people (15-29 years old) who left their job from 25% in 2012 to 15% in 2020 decreased - The indicator is not verifiable from official data, and the average degree of achievement for this result is 0.5. Two actions were planned to produce the result. Adoption of policies to stimulate the employment of young graduates in employment with a degree of achievement of 0.7. The most important policy document adopted during the implementation of NSYSD, was the National Employment Strategy for 2017-2021 - with specific provisions for young graduates. The second action, the elaboration of the mechanism for monitoring the professional trajectory of young people (degree of achievement: 0.3) - was initiated by an experimental methodology in 2015, but which did not materialize in a national mechanism, for the time being.

Specific objective 3.3. Increase, by the end of 2020, by at least 50% the number of beneficiaries of long-term internship programs in the lifelong learning system, increasing the degree of career guidance and the development of their skills in relation to the needs of the labor market

Official sources do not provide data for verifying the indicator proposed in the objective. The average level of achievement for actions under sub-priority 3.3 is 0.63.

R3.3.1. Until the end of 2015, a qualitative mechanism for conducting long-term internships (6-9 months) for students in the existing university and pre-university system. At the end of the implementation of NSYSD, it was found that there were practices for organizing trainees, but they were not organized in a functional and inclusive mechanism. The two actions planned for this result had an average degree of achievement of 0.5, due to the failure to amend the regulation on long-term traineeships (0) and the completion (1) of the study on the international experience of participation in internships of young people in the Republic of Moldova.



F35. Implementation level of the activities provided in NSYSD 2020, sub-priority 3.3
Source: Authors' estimates

R 3.3.2. The number of young people in the pre-university and university system who have completed national or international internships increased, by the end of 2020, by at least 50%, based on cooperation between the education system, youth organizations and companies. The degree of achievement of the result is not verifiable due to the unavailability of official data for the verification of the benchmark. The average degree of accomplishment of the planned actions is 0.38. In 2015-2017, annual information campaigns were conducted on internship opportunities, but without a record of the

number of beneficiaries or campaign targets (achievement rate 0.4). Partnerships have been established between various institutions for the organization of internships (1), but for the time being these partnerships are not capitalized through systematized internship organization practices. Implementation gaps include the complete under-utilization of the possibility to provide financial support for young people with reduced opportunities for internships (0).

R 3.3.3. The number of employed beneficiaries of internship programs increased by at least 50% - an unverifiable indicator due to the lack of official data on this subject. The degree of accomplishment of the two planned actions is maximum (1): a national study on the share of young employees who benefited from internships and an informative guide for young people regarding the advantages of internship experience in employment. However, none of the actions contributed to the expected result.

3.5. Impact

Overall objective 3. Developing entrepreneurial and employment opportunities among young people, especially for those with limited opportunities

Finding: The general objective does not contain a verifiable quantitative indicator. The qualitative indicator in the objective stipulates that young people with limited opportunities represent a target group who were to enjoy special attention. None of the reported actions present disaggregated data on young beneficiaries with fewer opportunities.

Specific objective 3.1. Increase, by the end of 2020, by at least 30% of the number of young people with economic skills, especially those in rural areas and groups with reduced opportunities

Goal achievement cannot be verified. No benchmarks are available for 2014 or 2020 to verify the quantitative indicator set in the target (*Increase by at least 30% the number of young people with economic skills*). Officially reported data on beneficiaries of economic skills development actions are not disaggregated on the basis of (rural) environment or membership of low-opportunity groups.

Statistical data⁴³ shows a decrease in the share of young people among entrepreneurs, from 22.7% in 2009 to 14.4% in 2018, indirectly, these data indicate possible causes, which include a decrease in the number of young people with entrepreneurial skills or the existence of other barriers to the development of entrepreneurial activities by young people. No similar data are available on young people with reduced opportunities. Actions were carried out to inform young people about entrepreneurship opportunities, as well as training and skills development activities, but without a defined program, and without set targets on the number or categories of targeted young people. In the absence of macro indicators, these actions were carried out without specific targets (including on the profile of trained or informed persons), within the budgetary capacities of the implementers. Therefore, these actions could not significantly contribute to the planned increase in the target.

Specific objective 3.2. The increase, from 28% in 2013 to 35% in 2020, of the employment rate on the labor market of young people aged 15-29

⁴³ Results of the research “Business Environment Development” NBS, UNDP, UN Women, 2020
https://statistica.gov.md/public/files/ComPresa/Antreprenoriat_feminin/Antreprenoriat_femei_barbati_2018.pdf

Based on the available data it is difficult to assess whether the objective has been achieved, but according to official data⁴⁴, the employment rate of young people aged 15-24 increased from 17.1% in 2014 to 19% in 2019, and in the category of 25-34 years, in the same period increased from 46, 6% in 2014 to 52.1% in 2019. We can talk about a positive dynamic, but probably not of a planned action. It is also very difficult to establish a causal link between the actions taken and the dynamics recorded.

The planned actions were carried out in a large proportion, compared to the average of the actions on the whole strategy. NEA annually trained unemployed young people in vocational training courses (in proportion of 62.3% -71.5% of the total trained), in 2016, the National Employment Strategy for 2017-2021 was approved, and annual job fairs for young people were organized. Less has been done in terms of career guidance services in educational institutions and youth resource centers or in terms of the mechanism for monitoring the professional trajectory of young people. With the exception of the development of the National Employment Strategy for 2017-2021, which has a section dedicated to young people, the other actions planned and carried out were small in scope and were not likely to contribute significantly and sufficiently to achieving the specific objective.

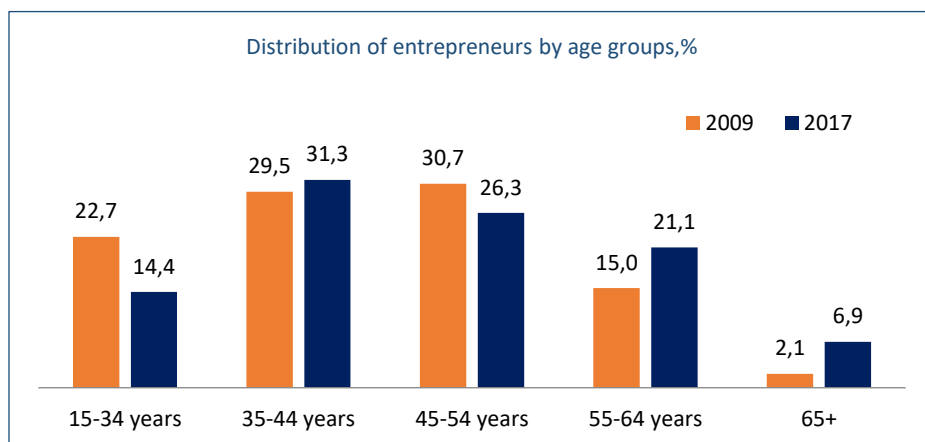
Specific objective 3.3. Increase, by the end of 2020, by at least 50% the number of beneficiaries of long-term internship programs in the lifelong learning system, increasing the degree of career guidance and the development of their skills in relation to the needs of the labor market

The target contains an indicator that is not verifiable. MECR and other public institutions do not keep statistical records on the beneficiaries of internship programs. The officially reported information does not confirm any upward trend in the number of beneficiaries of internship programs. Several studies were conducted on internship activity in the Republic of Moldova (1. Regarding the international internship experience, 2. "Percentage of young employees who benefited from internships", Methodological Guide "Privileges of internship experience in employment") and some media activities and promotion of internship opportunities were carried out. The most important achievement was the establishment of partnerships between universities, companies, youth organizations in order to organize internships - [which materializes in an offer of internship opportunities](#). However, updating this information is sporadic and there is no effective system for planning, organizing, conducting and monitoring internship activities. Some actions such as amending the regulation on long-term traineeships or financial support programs for young people with fewer opportunities have not been carried out.

3.6. Inclusion and Gender Equality

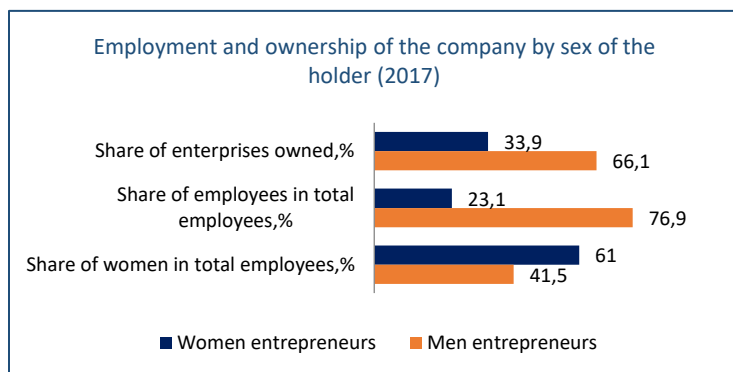
One of the objectives of priority III is to increase the number of young people from low-opportunity groups who manage to develop their economic skills. Despite the interventions, the rate of young entrepreneurs (15-34 years old) decreased from 22.7% in 2009 to 14.4% in 2018. At the same time, young people have smaller businesses compared to other age groups. The share of enterprises consisting of 0-9 employees among young people is 89%.

⁴⁴ Calculations of the National Bureau of Statistics. The year 2014 calculated in accordance with the new definition of employment, implemented starting with 2019.



F36. Dynamics of the number of entrepreneurs in Moldova, by age categories
Source: NBS, 2017

From the perspective of gender equality, the business environment faces inequalities related to the representation of women and men. According to NBS data, only 34% of Moldovan enterprises are owned or managed by women⁴⁵. Women are usually business managers with a smaller number of employees, but also with a higher percentage of employed women (61% compared to 41.5% in the case of male-run enterprises). As at the planning stage of NSYSD 2020 and the Action Plan for its implementation, the authorities did not make any specific commitments related to advancing gender equality, the perspective of women in entrepreneurship was less addressed during the strategic cycle.

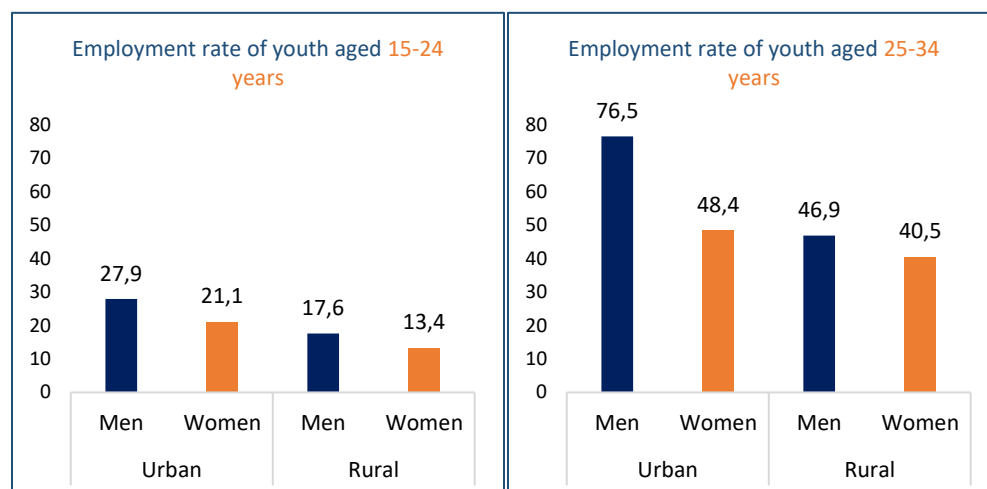


F37. Representation of women in entrepreneurship
Source: NBS, 2017

The employment rate of young people in rural areas is lower compared to those in urban areas. Thus, regardless of the age category, the highest employment rate is attested among young people in urban areas (27.9% in the case of young people aged 15-24 years and 76.5% in the category of 25-34-year-old). There are some differences between young women and men in relation to the labor market: the latter are, to a greater extent, integrated into the labor market. Therefore, any intervention to raise the

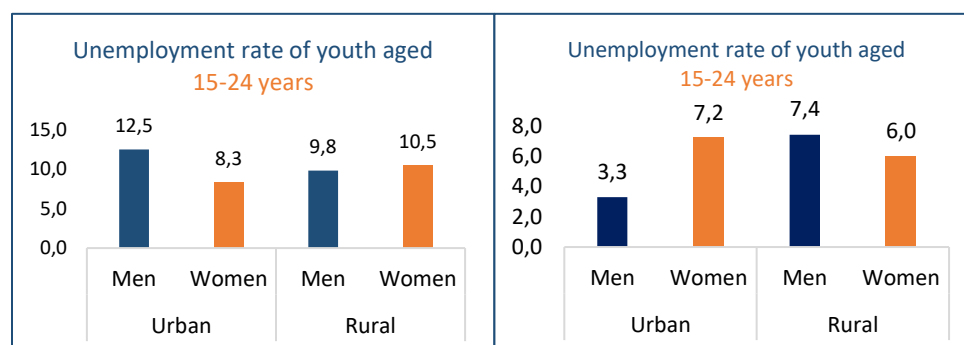
⁴⁵ https://statistica.gov.md/public/files/publicatii_electronice/Antreprenoriat_feminin/Antreprenoriat_Femei_Barbati_2020.pdf

employment rate of young people must take into account the inequalities identified and come up with differentiated solutions, especially for young people in rural areas and young women.



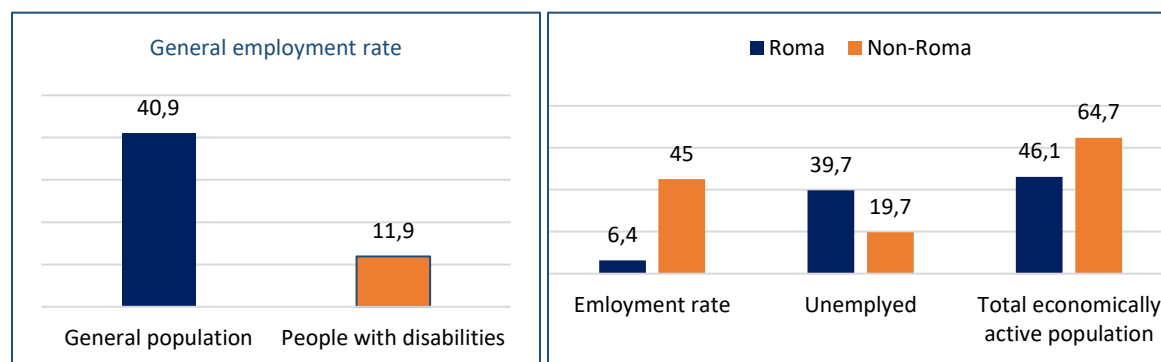
F38. Employment rate of young people in the labor market, by gender and age
Source: NBS, 2017

Regarding the unemployment rate among young people, the highest rate is attested among men aged 15-24 in urban areas. In order to achieve the objective of priority III, which aims to reduce the youth unemployment rate, the authorities have planned certain interventions in this regard. The data provided by the National Bureau of Statistics indicates, however, a negative trend for young people aged 15-24. In particular, young men in urban areas stand out, whose rate exceeds by about 4 percentage points the unemployment rate of young women in urban areas and by almost 3 percentage points the unemployment rate of young people in rural areas. At the same age category, young women in rural areas have an unemployment rate that exceeds that of young people in rural areas and that of young women in urban areas. In the age category 25-34 years, regardless of area of residence, women young people face higher unemployment, an explanation being the family responsibilities he assumes. At the same time, given that this is the reproductive age category, there is a high probability that young women trying to integrate into the labor market after the childcare period face important barriers in this regard.



F39. Unemployment rate among young people, by gender, age and place of residence
Source: NBS, 2019

Marginalized groups face significant barriers to accessing the labor market. According to a study conducted in 2019 on the population's access to lifelong learning, the employment rate of people with disabilities is about 4 times lower compared to the general population⁴⁶. The situation is even more alarming when we talk about Roma people: their employment rate is about 6 times lower compared to the non-Roma population.



F40. Employment rate and unemployment among vulnerable groups
Source: CPD Survey, 2019

3.7. Recommendations

Focus of the NSYSD on the priorities / sub-priorities within the competence of the central public authority specialized in the youth field.

Adjustment of action plans to the institutional capacity of the authorities involved, taking into account available human and financial resources, in order to avoid setting unattainable targets with existing resources. Focus available resources on a smaller number of actions, but which have maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

Correlation of interventions with the proposed result - strategic planning involves the development of a logical framework and the setting of specific and complex interventions that would resonate faithfully with the proposed results in each strategic area. In other words, the activities must be planned in such a way that there is certainty that they will lead to the achievement of the established result (appropriate interventions).

Establishing specific quantitative and qualitative indicators, disaggregated even by area of residence (urban/rural), verifiable from official sources. Monitoring and reporting on the progress of NSYSD implementation based on these performance indicators.

⁴⁶The uncertain path to adult qualification. An analysis of lifelong learning inequalities in the Republic of Moldova; CPD, 2019, <https://progen.md/calea-incerta-spre-calificarea-adultilor-o-analiza-a-inegalitatilor-de-invatare-pe-tot-parcântul-vietii-in-republica-moldova/>

PRIORITY IV. STRENGTHENING THE YOUTH SECTOR

4.1. Introduction

The youth sector has benefited from complex support and interventions in recent years, but it still faces some methodological, financial, human resources challenges. Priority 4 of the National Strategy for Youth Sector Development (NSYSD) 2020 aimed to address these issues and come up with specific interventions on the most important dimensions of YS (see Figure 41). Despite ambitious targets and planned interventions for the strategic cycle, the youth sector continues to be affected by several structural problems: (i) there are difficulties in implementing the legal framework in the youth field at local level, (ii) lack of effective tools and mechanisms implementation of youth policy and youth work, (iii) acute shortage of human resources, qualified and with sufficient skills and (iv) reduced institutional capacity at the level of youth structures (youth organizations, youth centers, councils, etc.)⁴⁷. During the implementation period of the Strategy, in particular - in the last 3 years, the efforts of the national authorities have focused on addressing these challenges and reducing them, being planned an impressive number of activities both nationally and locally. Their degree of efficiency and relevance ultimately determined the impact of the interventions on the youth sector.

PRIORITY IV. STRENGTHENING THE YOUTH SECTOR			
Sub-priority 4.1. The associative youth sector	Sub-priority 4.2. The youth worker	Sub-priority 4.3. Intersectoral legislative framework in the field of youth	Sub-priority 4.4. Non-formal education
<p>R 4.1.1 Financial viability and sustainability of activities ensured in at least 50% of youth organizations</p> <p>R 4.1.2 Confidence of young people in the youth association sector increased by at least 15%</p> <p>R 4.1.3 At least 50% of youth organizations are beneficiaries of institutional development programs</p>	<p>R 4.2.1 Functional mechanism and structure for the certification of the youth worker</p> <p>R 4.2.2 At least 80% of youth workers trained professionally annually and have skills in implementing youth policies</p>	<p>R 4.3.1 At least 80% of sectoral policies reflect the needs of young people</p> <p>R 4.3.2 Mechanism for monitoring the level of implementation of activities for young people</p> <p>R 4.3.3 Effective and continuous interinstitutional cooperation in the youth field</p> <p>R 4.3.4 Practical mechanism for collecting disaggregated statistical data</p>	<p>R 4.4.1 Robust system for recognizing skills acquired in the non-formal education process</p>

F41. Areas of intervention under NSYSD priority IV on strengthening the youth sector
Source: NSYSD 2020

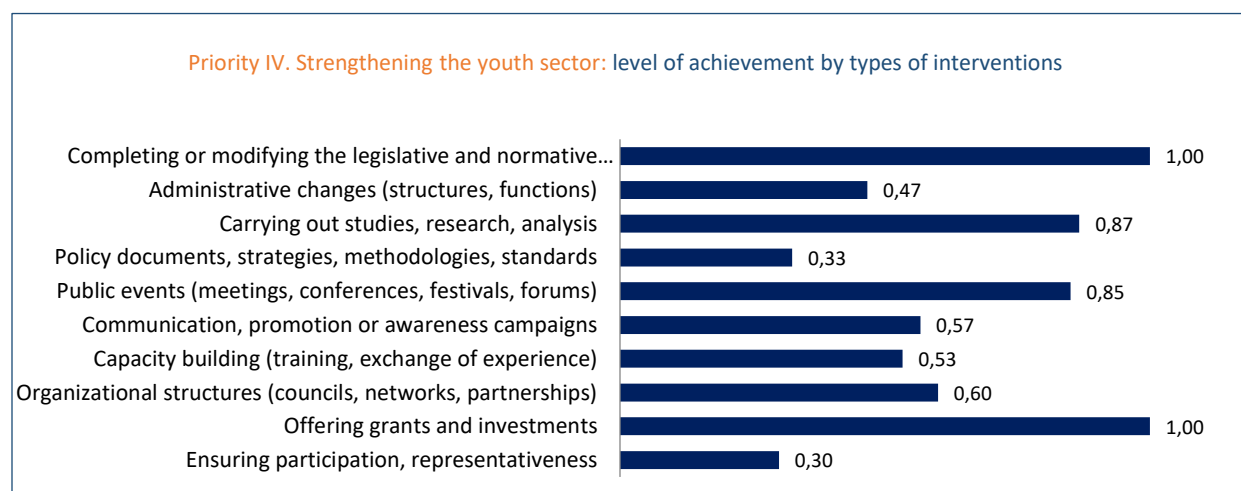
⁴⁷ Data extracted as a result of public consultations and in-depth interviews with key actors in the field, regarding the implementation of NSYSD 2020

4.2. General findings

In order to consolidate and develop the youth sector, a series of interventions at national, regional and local level have been designed and implemented. The relevance of these interventions (analyzed in terms of ambition and matching of planned activities) ultimately determined the level of impact on the sector. The analysis of priority IV of NSYSD 2020 indicates that the activities planned and carried out under this priority are characterized by relative relevance, with an overall score of 0.63 points out of a maximum of 1. Compared to other general priorities, the area of consolidation of the youth sector occupies the last positions on the relevance of the actions set out in the Strategy and its Action Plan.

The low ambition of the actions also determined their moderate level of relevance. Priority 4 of NSYSD 2020 focused more on the institutional empowerment of youth structures (including those in the associative sector), on the development of skills in youth work and on the development of mechanisms to strengthen this sector (from the perspective of capacities, human resources, of policies etc.). At the macro level, the planned targets resonate with these goals, but the analysis shows that some specific actions were not ambitious and transformative enough to fully achieve the proposed results (such as actions to promote non-formal education among young people or to develop participatory and inclusive framework of the intersectoral legislative framework). In this regard, at the level of the whole priority, the coefficient of the level of ambition is twice lower than that of matching the actions with the proposed targets.

The level of implementation of the activities envisaged for priority IV is estimated to be moderate, with some deviations from the initial strategic planning. Accumulating an average score of 0.56, priority IV ranks first in the *implementation* chapter, compared to the other three strategic areas of NSYSD 2020. The highest score for achievement is attested in the case of activities aimed at completing or amending the legislative and normative framework of youth sector, grant and investment support programs developed by the relevant ministry and conducting studies and analyzes in the field. Activities aimed at ensuring the representation and inclusive participation of young people have accumulated lower shares.



F42. Implementation level of the activities, by types of intervention, within priority IV of NSYSD
Source: Authors' estimates

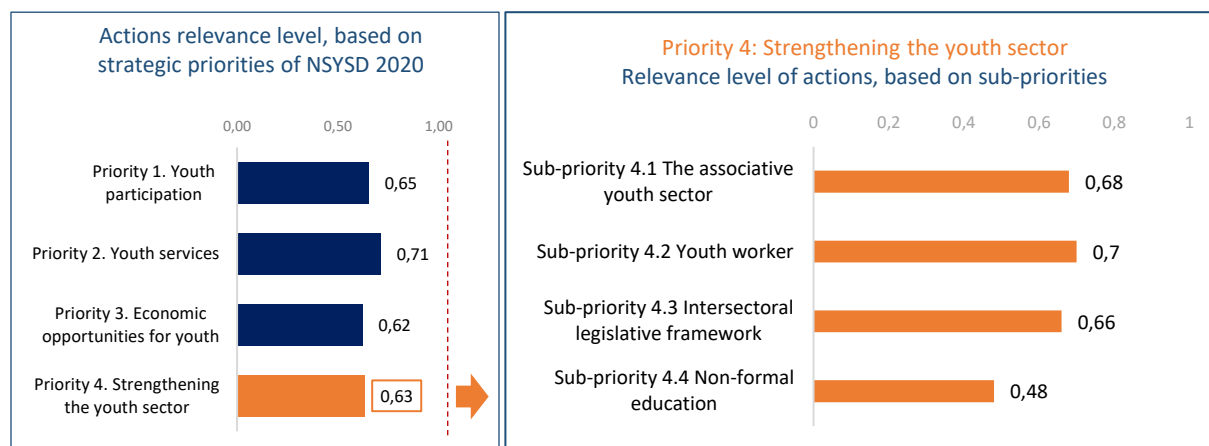
Although the action plan has not been fully implemented, the impact of the interventions is felt throughout the youth sector. Priority IV of NSYSD 2020 focused on the development of youth sector infrastructure and support mechanisms in ensuring the quality of youth work. Even if the expected target was not reached, the training efforts of organizations and youth centers have led to an increase in their financial and managerial capacities. At the same time, some progress has been made on the development of mechanisms to ensure the quality of youth work. Less felt impact is observed in the case of interventions aimed at inter-institutional and participatory cooperation in the development and implementation of youth policy and elements of inclusion.

4.3. Relevance

In order to be able to anticipate a visible impact on the youth sector, the relevance of the planned activities becomes crucial. The challenges and limitations currently facing the youth sector are of major complexity, which also requires the need for appropriate and calibrated interventions in these challenges. When referring to issues related to the institutional capacity of youth structures or mechanisms for implementing youth policy, it is important that interventions are appropriate and ambitious enough to bring about structural change. Otherwise, the challenges of the youth sector will persist over time, as they will be addressed in a sharp manner.

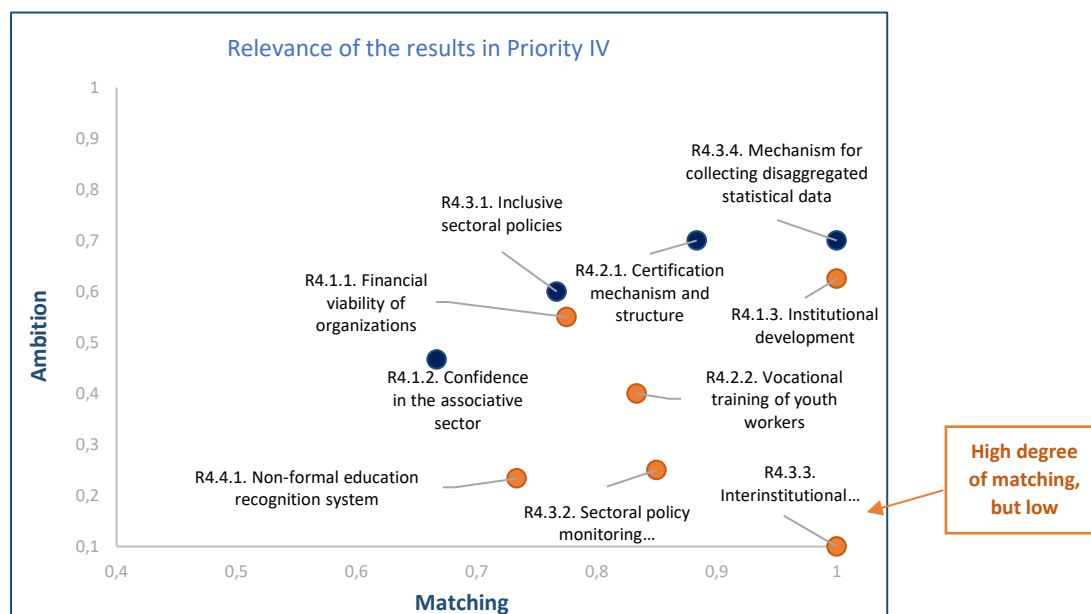
The NSYSD 2020 analysis indicates a relative relevance of the interventions foreseen in the priority of the development of the youth sector. At the macro level, priority 4 accumulated a score of 0.63 points, on a scale from 0 to 1, from the perspective of the relevance of the planned actions (figure 43). The interventions and activities carried out on the dimension of strengthening the youth sector were positively appreciated by the actors in this field, but there are certain limitations and gaps in the level of ambition and approach, which was expected to be more complex and integrative.

The breakdown of the degree of relevance indicates a variation in the level of sub-priorities. The detailed analysis suggests that the actions planned under sub-priority 4.2 *The youth worker* recorded the highest degree of relevance - 0.7 points, these being largely focused on capacity building, institutional mechanisms and viable structures, which would ensure quality and the efficiency of youth work. Starting from the idea that these interventions are structural in nature and have a complex approach, with national coverage, we can assume that their full implementation would greatly contribute to the strengthening of the youth sector. On the other hand, the lowest relevance score accumulated sub-priority 4.4. *Non-formal education* - 0.48 points, based on the nature of the actions taken on this dimension. Given the low level of involvement of young people in this type of education, the actions taken to promote non-formal education were insufficient, with short-term effects (except for the approval of the Regulation on the certification of non-formal knowledge). The set of activities carried out within the sub-priorities 4.1 *The associative youth sector* and 4.3 *The intersectoral legislative framework* were necessary and appropriate for the purpose, but insufficient and of small magnitude.



F43. Relevance of the actions implemented under priority 4 of NSYSD 2020 - Youth Sector.
Source: Authors' estimates

The low level of relevance on certain sub-priorities and results is largely determined by low ambition. The relevance of the interventions planned and carried out within the strategic area regarding the consolidation of the youth sector was analyzed from the perspective of matching (how transformative and structural the activities were in relation to the established results) and ambition (how comprehensive and ambitious these interventions were). In the case of priority IV, there is a degree of matching of actions higher than the level of ambition (figure 44). At the priority level, the average score for the match is 0.85, and the average score for ambition - only 0.46.



F44. Level of relevance by types of results planned in Priority IV of NSYSD 2020
Source: Authors' estimates

Some results are characterized by interventions with an extremely low degree of ambition, such as interinstitutional and participatory cooperation in the development and implementation of youth policy

(R4.3.3; R4.3.2). The activities envisaged to achieve these results aimed at involving young people and youth organizations in the development of intersectoral public policies, which is a crucial element in ensuring the inclusion of young people, integrating their needs and ensuring a democratic process. However, the magnitude of these interventions was extremely small - the share of those involved in youth policy making process, but also the number of inclusive policies, developed in a participatory way, was quite small during the strategic cycle, which tells us about a modest ambition in this regard⁴⁸. This category also includes the interventions provided for in result R4.2.2, aimed at the professional training of youth workers. The insufficiency of qualified and competent human resources is one of the structural problems of YS, the activities of capacity building of youth workers have a very high level of relevance, from the perspective of matching. However, the magnitude of these interventions has been relatively small, compared to the current needs of the sector in terms of institutional capacities and competences. During the period of implementation of NSYSD 2020, the share of staff who received vocational training and continued work in the youth sector was relatively small. The high fluctuation in the youth sector and the low institutional memory within the youth structures impose the need for more calibrated and exhaustive interventions.

Mapping the results from the perspective of relevance highlights certain interventions with a low degree of both matching and ambition, these being activities with a lower impact on strategic objectives. In this respect, the result of increasing young people's confidence in the youth association sector (R4.1.2) is noteworthy, with information and public events being largely carried out on this dimension. Although this type of intervention has its role in developing a favorable position towards the associative sector, they are not complex enough to determine essential changes in perceptions and attitudes. Moreover, such activities usually bring together empowered, active young people who already show a certain level of interest in the work of youth organizations. In order to increase confidence, focused actions would be more relevant,

Activities aimed at developing mechanisms and structures designed to ensure the efficiency and quality of youth work are of high relevance for the consolidation of the sector. In order to ensure the quality and efficiency of the youth worker activity, it is necessary to clearly regulate it, as well as to develop the necessary support for the development of human resources (R4.2.1). Development of documents, mechanisms and certification structures for youth work, as well as institutionalization of the function, they are both ambitious and appropriate interventions, as they provide a general regulatory framework, mechanisms of national applicability, with an impact on the whole youth sector. At the same time, youth work and youth services can become effective and inclusive when there is sufficient data on the status of young people, vulnerable categories, level of access, etc. For this reason, R4.3.4 regarding the development of a mechanism for collecting disaggregated statistical data, accumulated a high score for relevance (on average, 0.85p) on both the matching and ambition side.

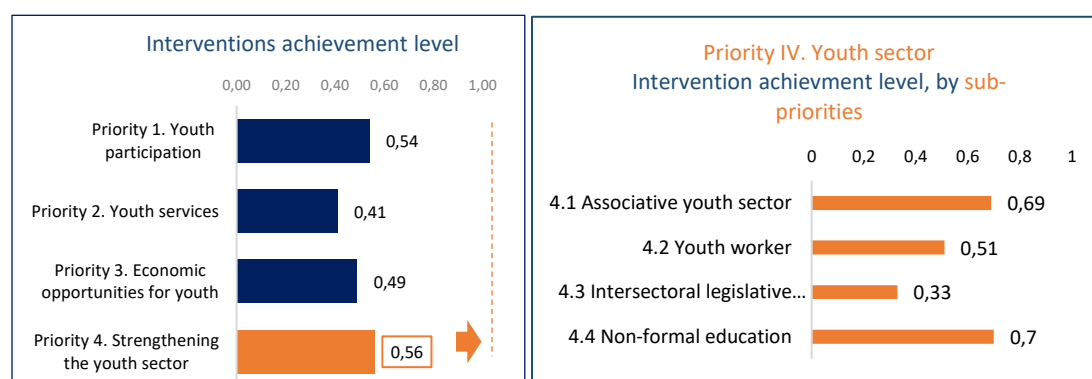
4.4. Implementation

Although the degree of implementation of activities under priority IV is higher compared to other strategic priorities, it is still very modest. The actions planned to strengthen the youth sector were carried

⁴⁸ MECR's annual reports on the implementation of the provisions of NSYSD 2020 and the Action Plan, <https://mecc.gov.md/ro/content/rapoarte-sndst-2020>

out in a proportion of 0.56, on a scale from 0 to 1, which suggests that about half of those planned were fully implemented, according to the strategic planning (figure 45).

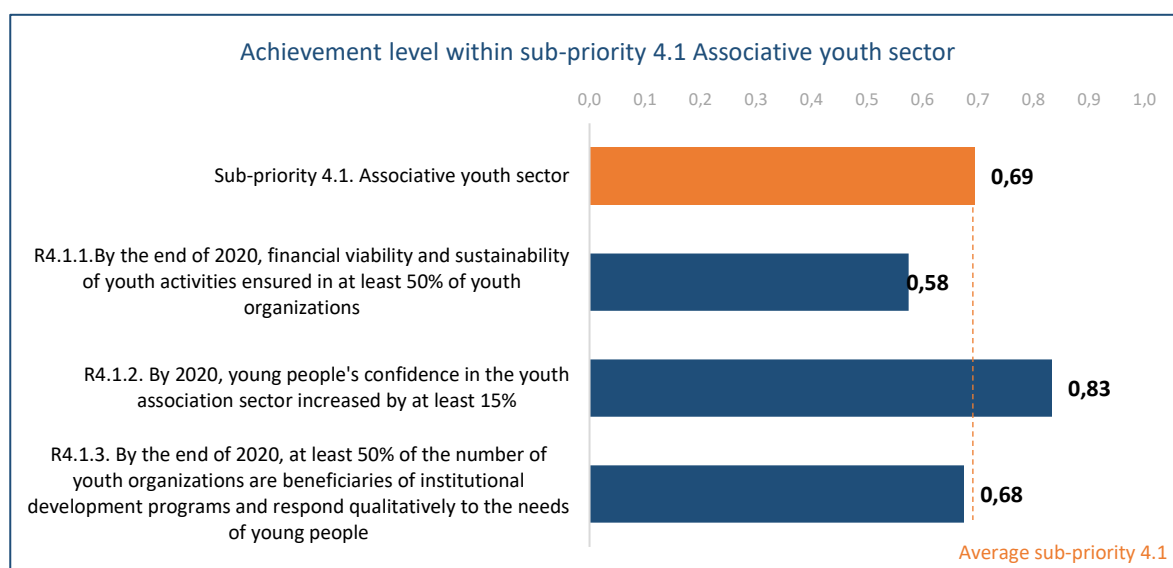
The breakdown of the level of achievement of priority IV indicates significant variations at the level of sub-priorities. The lowest average score attributed to the degree of achievement is attested in the case of sub-priority 4.3 *Intersectoral legislative framework*, which accumulated a score of 0.33p. Actions planned on this dimension aimed at developing inclusive public policies that integrate the interests and needs of young people, developing national mechanisms for evaluating youth and sectoral policies in terms of youth needs, involving young people and youth organizations in developing relevant policies, etc. Despite the ambitious targets, their achievement was more modest, a negative factor being the reduced capacity to ensure the sustainability of those achieved in the first years of the strategic cycle. The highest score for the degree of achievement accumulated sub-priority 4.4. *Non-formal education*, with a score of 0.78p. Within it, 3 major actions were planned aimed at the legal recognition of knowledge acquired through non-formal education and the promotion of non-formal education, these being, for the most part, implemented (figure 45).



F45. Implementation level of the activities provided in NSYSD 2020

Source: Authors' estimates

The actions planned under sub-priority 4.1 aimed at strengthening the capacity, role and public perception of the youth association sector in order to respond effectively to the needs of young people. Efforts have been largely focused on developing the capacities of youth structures, promoting the associative sector and providing financial support for development. These were to be ensured by 3 major results, which were achieved on average.



F46. Implementation level of the activities provided in NSYSD 2020, sub-priority 4.1

Source: Authors' estimates

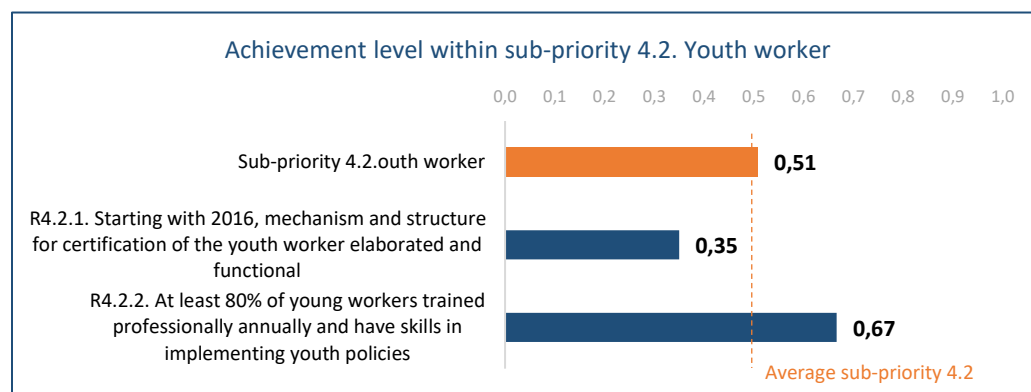
R4.1.1. Financial viability and sustainability of youth activities ensured in at least 50% of youth organizations. The basic effort to achieve this result has focused on training and developing the capacities and self-financing services of youth organizations. Since youth organizations have specific processes of frequent change of members and governing bodies, which often leads to reduced institutional memory, which makes it difficult to reach the target of 50% capacity organizations. Moreover, the context analysis reveals that, during the period of implementation of the Strategy, some organizations have repeatedly benefited from training in terms of sustainability and financial viability, over several years, which reduces the degree of coverage. In order to increase the level of representation of the interests of youth organizations, in 2017 a network of resource persons in youth policies was created, which was to support the relevant ministry, but the functionality and sustainability of this network was not ensured. However, a positive aspect in the training effort of youth organizations is the partnerships between the public and the associative sector, created during the strategic cycle, which amplified the effects and scale of interventions at national and regional level.

R4.1.2. The confidence of young people in the youth association sector increased by at least 15%. To achieve this result, studies were planned on the level of trust and access of young people to youth services, activities to promote the associative sector and positive initiatives within it and the organization of annual events with the participation of representatives of youth organizations and youth. Most of the activities were carried out according to strategic planning, except for the massive promotion of youth initiatives. Central authorities have made considerable efforts to financially support initiatives from the associative sector, but have focused less on the mass dissemination of these experiences in order to increase the interest of young people.

R4.1.3. At least 50% of the number of youth organizations are beneficiaries of institutional development programs and respond qualitatively to the needs of young people. This dimension shows the same challenges as in the result R4.1.1. Due to the continuous flow of people within the youth structures, ruptures and inconsistencies appear between the activities and results of organizations in the medium and long term. In such cases there is a risk of duplication of effort, involution or stagnation of the

institutional development of the organization⁴⁹. During the strategic cycle, the authorities developed a very important tool for the development of the associative sector - the grant program for youth organizations. It has contributed to some extent to the revitalization of YS, strengthening the institutional capacities of youth structures, expanding youth services, ensuring the involvement of young people in the social life of the country. However, the need to increase the number of beneficiary organizations and to ensure better territorial coverage was noted.

Sub-priority 4.2 aimed at creating and developing an institutional mechanism to ensure the quality and efficiency of the youth worker activity. The achievement level of the results under this sub-priority was relatively modest.



F47. Implementation level of the activities provided in NSYSD 2020, sub-priority 4.2

Source: Authors' estimates

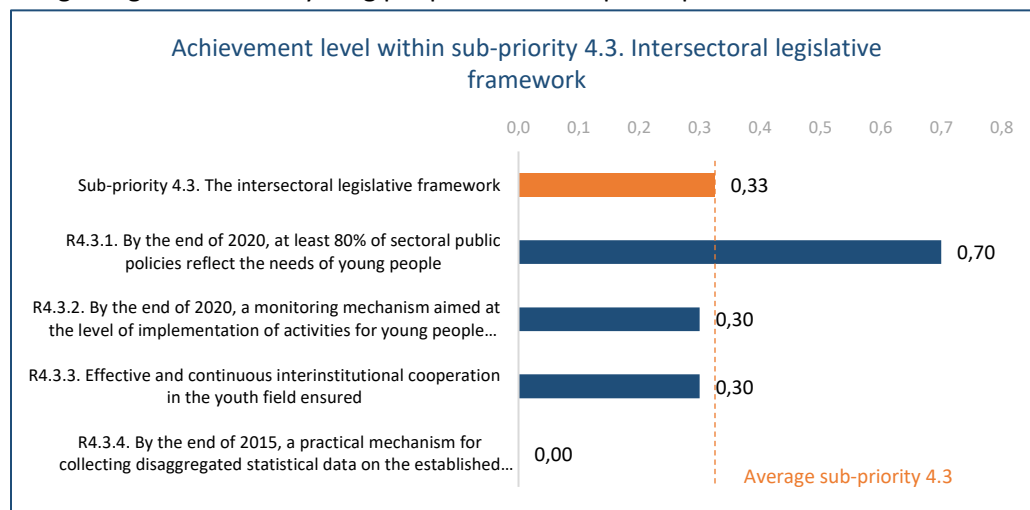
R4.2.1. Mechanism and certification structure of the youth worker elaborated and functional. Emphasis was placed on strengthening YS capacity through the development of infrastructure and support mechanisms in ensuring the quality of youth work. Despite the intention and the wide range of activities planned for this purpose, the youth worker certification mechanism has not been developed to date, and the youth worker skills certification commission has not been set up. Progress has been modest in developing the set of documents on the training of youth workers' professional skills. Although it was planned to develop the set of indicators for the skills of youth workers and to approve their training curricula, training of specialists is currently carried out on the basis of the European set of indicators, applied by some civil society organizations, without a nationally approved curriculum and integrated into the academic system. The most consistent actions were carried out in 2018-2020, aimed at increasing the skills of human capital in YS and institutionalizing the occupation: consultations were conducted with representatives of YC and other related entities, to agree on the areas of activity of a youth specialist; introduction of the occupation in the Classification of Occupations of the Republic of Moldova (CORM). At present, the position of "specialist in youth work" is found in the new CORM project, which is to be approved in 2021.

R4.2.2. At least 80% of youth workers are professionally trained annually and have skills in implementing youth policies. The most consistent intervention in order to achieve this result is related to the program of continuous training of the youth worker, which was implemented annually (6 editions, of 9 training modules each). Despite the efforts made, the proposed target was not fully achieved, the

⁴⁹ [Development of the associative youth sector](#), Institute for Development and Social Initiatives (IDIS) "Viitorul"

number of those included in the program being much too small, compared to the current skills needs of the sector. In addition, interventions were carried out under the Joint Fund⁵⁰ and through the grant program of the line ministry. Another important intervention for the development of YS capacities aims at the mobility of the youth worker. Through the ERASMUS + program, in the period 2014-2019, 405 activities of youth workers mobility were organized, in which 1272 workers participated⁵¹. However, a national mobility program, as designed in the strategic plan, has not been developed.

The results planned under sub-priority 4.3 were achieved in a proportion of only about 20% of those expected. The highest score for the degree of achievement accumulated the result 4.3.1 which aimed at integrating the needs of young people in sectoral public policies.



F48. Implementation level of the activities provided in NSYSD 2020, sub-priority 4.3

Source: Authors' estimates

R4.3.1. At least 80% of sectoral public policies reflect the needs of young people. During the implementation of the Strategy, through various analyzes and events for the representatives of the youth sector (service providers, youth workers, youth organizations, etc.) the intersectoral policy approach was facilitated. A complex study on the youth sector was conducted on this dimension⁵², evaluations of sectoral public policies were carried out, a mechanism for analyzing and integrating the needs of young people in public policies (*youth mainstreaming*) was developed⁵³. This mechanism was designed as a basic tool for public authorities and actors responsible for developing public policies to integrate the needs of young people and, directly, to achieve the expected result. However, at present, this instrument is not applied by the responsible authorities, which diminishes the impact. The main barrier to the sustainable implementation of this indispensable tool is the additional effort and overburdening of those responsible for developing sectoral public policies.

⁵⁰ <https://moldova.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Fondul%20Comun.pdf>

⁵¹ <https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/eeca/cooperation/statistics/>

⁵² Comprehensive analysis of the youth sector, 2019

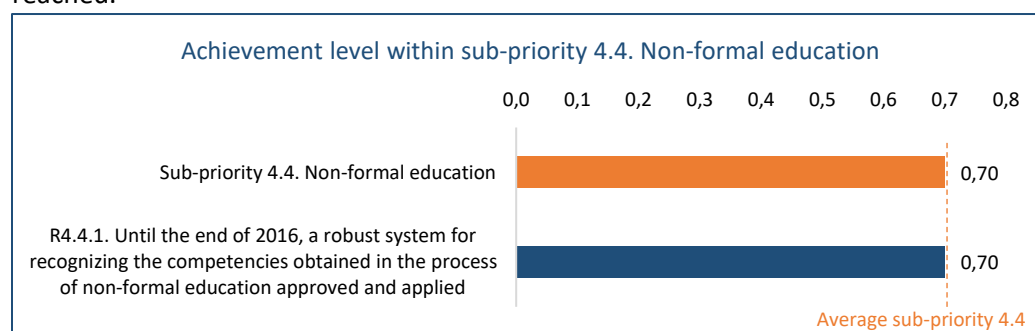
⁵³ Report on the implementation of the Action Plan for 2016 of NSYSD 2020
https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/raport_sndst_2020_anul_2016.pdf

R4.3.2. Monitoring mechanism envisaging the level of implementation of activities for young people through sectoral public policies. The interventions, planned to achieve this result were quite ambitious, aiming at including the youth component in all sectoral public policies and the annual assessment of the level of reflection of young people's needs in policy documents. Despite the rather high ambition, the evaluation of policy documents was carried out only during the period of applicability of the instrument for integrating youth priorities (2016-2017), this practice was later abandoned. Training staff in the analysis of sectoral policies in the light of the needs of young people is an essential and indispensable element in achieving the planned targets. However, very little attention was paid to this aspect during the implementation of the Strategy, the number of the trained ones being quite small.

R4.3.3. Effective and continuous interinstitutional cooperation in the youth field ensured. In order to achieve this result, only one activity was planned in the strategic plan, which involved young people/youth organizations in the development of intersectoral public policies. Less progress has been made on this dimension, as confirmed by the annual reports on the implementation of the Strategy's action plan, but also by key players in the field.⁵⁴.

R4.3.4. By the end of 2015, a practical mechanism for collecting disaggregated statistical data on the established youth sector. The authorities have failed to develop such a mechanism. During 2016, discussions were held with the National Bureau of Statistics and it was found that there are already certain tools developed in this regard. For this reason, the idea of developing a mechanism out of the difficulty of developing a new concept, of national applicability, was abandoned.

Sub-priority 4.4 aimed at expanding non-formal education services, so that by 2020 at least 80% of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, can benefit. Although the activities planned in this priority have accumulated a quite high score to achieve - 0.7p, the expected final target is far from being reached.



F49. Implementation level of the activities provided in NSYSD 2020, sub-priority 4.4

Source: Authors' estimates

R4.4.1. Until the end of 2016, a robust system for recognizing the competencies obtained in the process of non-formal education approved and applied. The activities envisaged to achieve this result have been largely carried out. In 2017, the draft Regulation for the certification of non-formal knowledge was developed, which also includes the mechanism for recognition of competencies. In 2019, the Regulation

⁵⁴ Data extracted from in-depth interviews with experts and key actors in the youth field, November 2020

on the validation of non-formal and informal education was approved⁵⁵. Additionally, activities were carried out to promote non-formal, short-term education, which did not produce structural changes.

4.5. Impact

Priority IV of NSYSD 2020 aimed at developing the infrastructure of the youth sector and support mechanisms in ensuring the quality of youth work. Within this priority, the authorities' efforts were focused on the development of the associative sector (financial viability and sustainability, institutional capacities), ensuring the quality and efficiency of work by and for youth (infrastructure and human resources capacity), development of the policy framework (integration of youth needs) and expanding non-formal education services (youth access). The impact on each of these dimensions will be measured in the light of the objectives and expected results and the targets achieved at the end of the strategic cycle.

It should be noted that the central authorities have made consistent efforts and have consistently supported the development of the youth sector, through the implementation of NSYSD 2020. Although the CPA's mandate is to support, as a matter of priority, the development of the regulatory framework and methodological guidance in the youth field, central authorities have provided continuous direct support to Local Public Administrations throughout the strategic cycle, even in the absence of tools. specific legal requirements. Central authorities have supported local authorities in the development of the youth sector through youth programs, such as the Youth Centers Development Program, the Local Youth Council Development and Support Program, the Grants Program, etc.). The impact of these efforts on the youth sector in general has largely depended on the openness and interest of local authorities and structures in implementing or being part of these programs. As the central authorities do not have instruments of coercion and are not in their competence, the decision to involve, implement youth programs at the local level was at the discretion of the LPA, which benefits from local autonomy. The impact of the interventions planned in NSYSD 2020 on the development of the youth sector is presented in more detail below.

4.1. Strengthening the capacity, role and public perception of the youth association sector to respond effectively to the needs of young people

The financial and organizational capacity of youth structures has increased in recent years, but continues to be limited. According to the action plan of the Strategy, it was expected that in at least 50% of the youth organizations the financial viability and sustainability of the youth activities would be ensured. The available data do not allow an accurate estimate of the number of organizations active in this field. In the absence of an exact frame of reference for 2014, it becomes difficult to estimate the quantitative indicator. At a subjective level, the experts in the youth field claim that the 50% target was not reached due to the continuous change of the number of organizations, but also of the extremely high fluctuation within these structures. Capacity building has been achieved through training and institutional development programs of youth organizations, but the systemic approach has been lacking, these being achieved through the grant program.⁵⁶ Moreover, training efforts have been focused on certain organizations, which have repeatedly benefited from training on this topic. Only in the last 3 years has the

⁵⁵ https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/regulament_privind_educatia_nonformala.pdf

⁵⁶ Data extracted from in-depth interviews with experts and key actors in the youth field, November 2020

level of coverage expanded. Despite efforts, the financial capacity of organizations is still limited. According to a study on the development of the associative sector, the coefficient for the financial viability of organizations increased from 1.35 in 2013 to 2.4 in 2018 (measured on a scale from 0 to 4), which indicates an average level of financial capacity⁵⁷. The same study reveals that only 22.7% of the organizations had the budgeting process integrated in the annual strategic and operational planning. The limited financial capacity of youth structures requires the provision of services / activities by and for youth on small projects and sustainability and low impact for young people and the community.

Youth organizations still face challenges in terms of their institutional development. According to the study on the development of the youth sector⁵⁸, organizations are positioned at a medium level in terms of strategic planning capabilities, management and governance, advocacy capabilities. According to the report, 22% of the evaluated organizations have an Evaluation and Monitoring (E&M) system containing well-defined indicators and data collection and analysis systems, being twice as high as in 2013 (10%). At the same time, only 36% of organizations have links or partnerships with local/national decision makers, or with government structures. The level of organizational development was evaluated on a scale from 0 to 4, each coefficient being the average of a set of indicators relevant to the field of analysis.

	STRATEGIC PLANNING	GOOD GOVERNANCE	ADVOCACY
COEFFICIENT 2013	■ 1.82	■ 1.59	■ 1.69
COEFFICIENT 2018	■ 2.40	■ 3.00	■ 2.60

*F50. The evolution of the institutional development of the organizations from the associative sector
Source: IDIS "Viitorul"*

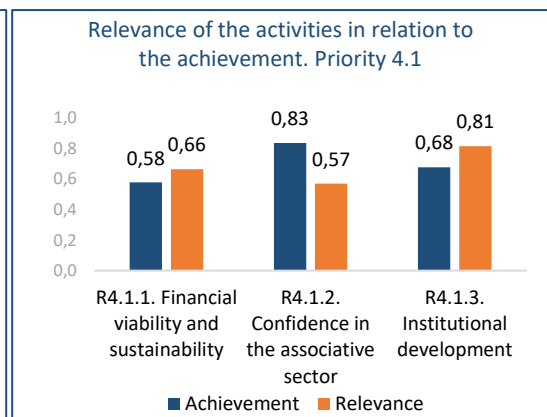
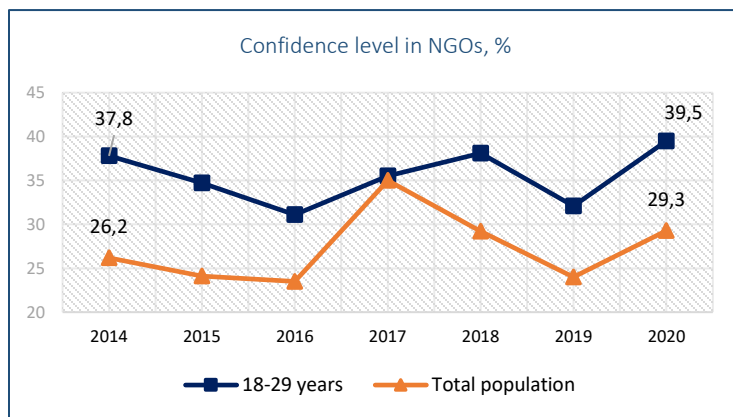
Another indicator of the development of the associative sector concerns the perceptions of young people towards this sector. The planned target for this indicator was to increase the level of confidence of young people in the associative sector by at least 15%, by the end of the strategic cycle. Public Opinion Barometer data⁵⁹ shows that the confidence level did not change significantly compared to the 2014 data, both at the level of the general population and at the level of the young category (figure 51).

The moderate impact on the youth association sector is explained in the way of conceptualizing and carrying out interventions on this dimension., both from the perspective of capacity development and at the level of confidence among young people. Figure 52 indicates a high degree of implementation of the interventions expected to increase young people's confidence in the associative sector, but the relevance of these interventions was relatively low, which also determined the less felt impact. Regarding the institutional development of youth organizations, the planned interventions had a complex character, which would have determined structural changes, if they had been fully implemented.

⁵⁷ [Development of the associative youth sector](#), IDIS "Viitorul", 2019

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Public Opinion Barometer, Institute of Public Policy, <http://bop.ipp.md/ro/>



F51. The evolution of the level of trust of young people in the associative sector

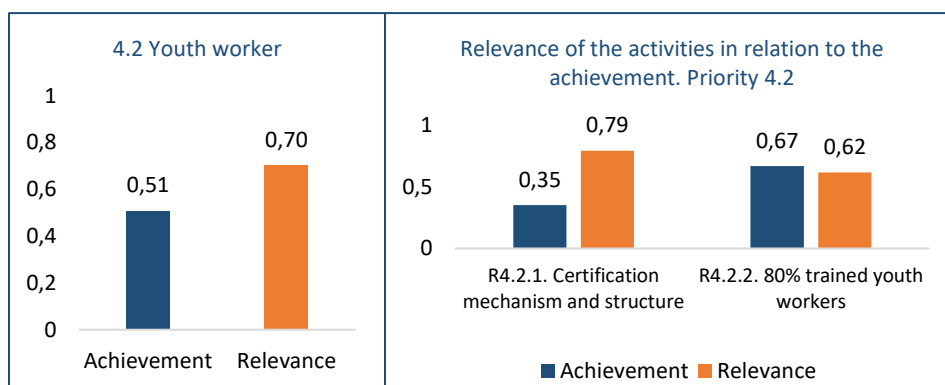
Source: BOP, Institute of Public Policy

F52. Relevance vs. achievement

Source: Authors' estimates

4.2. Creation, by the end of 2016, and development, by the end of 2020, of the institutional mechanism for ensuring the quality and efficiency of the work of the youth worker

The quality and efficiency of youth work can be ensured through the actors who provide it. In sub-priority 4.2 of NSYSD 2020 the emphasis is on strengthening YS capacity by developing human resources skills, but also support mechanisms in ensuring the quality of youth work. Work is currently underway on the set of documents on the training of young workers' professional skills, which is expected to be strengthened in 2021. As these crucial actions were less accomplished during the implementation of the Strategy or with a delay of several years (due to the lack of an integrated approach, socio-economic and political context, public administration reform, which led to the merger of ME, MC, MYS), the impact on the sector was modest.



F53. Relevance Vs. Realization

Source: Authors' estimates

The capacity of human resources in the youth sector is low. Insufficient staff, low level of skills in youth work, as well as increased fluctuation of human resources in the field of YS (due to unattractive salaries, insecurity and ambiguity regarding the sustainability of employment / specialist in youth work, etc.) undermine efficiency of the youth work. Another problem is that a large part of specialists and youth workers come from different fields, not having special training and the necessary qualifications. Despite

training aimed at increasing human resources skills, the effect of these trainings was short-lived, including due to low ambition (training programs for workers and youth specialists were absolutely necessary and appropriate for the intended target, but had a low level of coating, including at the territorial level, which has diminished the impact). Actions aimed at increasing human capital skills in YS have intensified in recent years, but the country's socio-economic and political context has diminished in the sustainability of efforts.⁶⁰

Gaps in the capacity of human capital involved in youth work are maintained over time. The comprehensive analysis of the youth sector and previous evaluations talk about the persistence of systemic gaps related to the insufficiency of specialists in YS and the low level of professionalism adapted to the specific needs of the young generation; lack of a regulated framework for the development of managerial capacity in increasing the competence and performance of employees in YS (minimum quality standards, etc.); the lack of a framework for evaluating the performance of employees in activity-oriented structures and youth services; reduced professional capacity to provide fair services and activities, etc.⁶¹

4.3. Continuing to strengthen the national public policy framework so that it responds across the needs of young people

In recent years, some progress has been made in the development and consolidation of ST in terms of the adoption and implementation of legislative acts and policy documents. These documents have helped to redefine the roles and competencies of key public institutions in developing and implementing youth policies. In 2016, the *Law on Youth* was approved, which regulates the principles and objectives of youth policies, based on the principles of intersectoral cooperation, equality, information, participation and transversality. The law introduced important changes in the framework and structure of YS in the Republic of Moldova, ensuring a legislative update to the needs of young people, workers and specialists in the field, organizations and youth. The law introduces several new definitions and terms, such as non-formal and informal education of young people, peer educators, etc.

Although there is an improvement in the legal framework of the YS, its implementation remains a challenge. According to the comprehensive analysis of YS in 2019, MECR, as the main body empowered to promote youth policy at the national level, does not have subordinated regional territorial units in the field of youth, which influences negatively the implementation of the legal framework at local level.

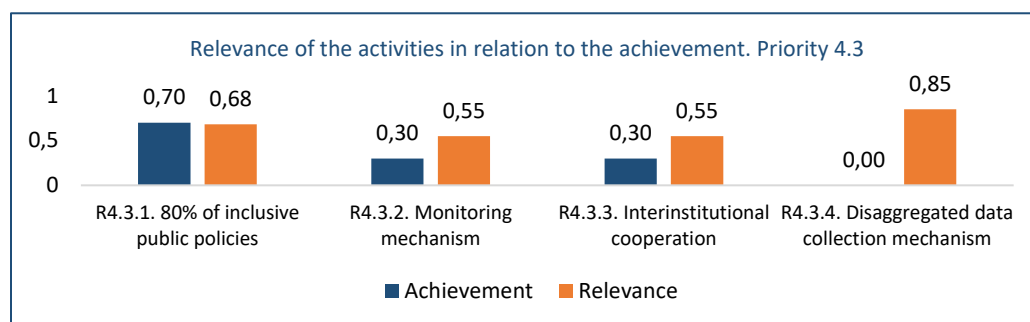
The objective of involving young people and youth structures in the development of public youth and sectoral policies has been partially achieved. Modest progress on this dimension is determined by the low level of implementation of the actions envisaged in the strategic plan, on the one hand, and by the low level of coverage (as a component part of the relevance), on the other hand (see Figure 54). Interinstitutional cooperation did not reach the expected level, due to the limited capacity of young people and youth structures to get involved in decision-making process and/or to develop advocacy initiatives, due to the low interest of young people to be part of this process, but also the authorities insufficient efforts to ensure the sustainability of structures created for this purpose (such as the National

⁶⁰ Comprehensive analysis of the youth sector, 2019

⁶¹ Ibid

Network of Resource Persons in Youth Work, the reference group in the implementation of youth policies, which is no longer functional).

The capacity of public authorities to analyze policy documents in light of the needs of young people continues to be limited. Efforts to train employees in integrating young people's priorities into policy documents and analyzing them through the needs of young people have been extremely low during the strategic cycle. Despite the fact that tools for analyzing and integrating young people's needs into policy documents, including sectoral ones, have been developed, their applicability has been short-term, without creating institutional skills and competences in this regard. At present, the need to continuously strengthen the capacity of employees in this area persists⁶².

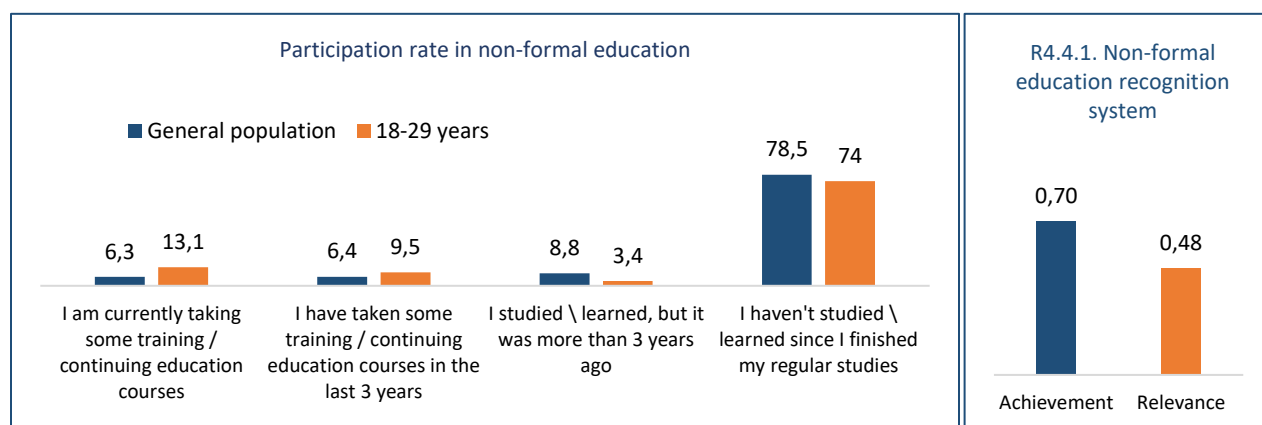


F54. Relevance vs. achievement

Source: Authors' estimates

4.4. Expand non-formal education services by 2020 so that at least 80% of young people, including those with fewer opportunities, can participate in them

The participation rate of young people in non-formal education is quite low. According to a report by the Center Partnership for Development (CPD) in 2019 on population access to lifelong learning⁶³, only 24% of young people used different types of non-formal education services (figure 55). Respectively, the target of 80% coverage with such services is far from the current reality of the Republic of Moldova. Low impact is due to the type of envisaged actions: although they were largely carried out, most of them did



⁶² Data extracted from in-depth interviews with experts and key actors in the youth field, November 2020

⁶³ [The uncertain path to adult qualification. An analysis of lifelong learning inequalities in the Republic of Moldova](#), CPD, 2019

not involve a systemic approach, being actions with a short-term effect, except for the approval of the Regulation on the validation of non-formal and informal education.

F55. Population access to non-formal education services, % Source: CPD opinion poll, 2019

The concept of lifelong learning (lifelong learning) is not fully assimilated. The share of young people who plan to continue their formal studies in the next three years is 33.4% (the answer options are *definitely Yes* and *rather Yes*), and non-formal learning - 37.6%⁶⁴.

4.6. Inclusion and Gender Equality

Inclusion is a key element of public policy, with the intention of providing equal opportunities and addressing the needs of the population or groups of the population fairly. Although NSYSD 2020 did not set as its specific objective the assurance of gender inclusion and equality, this indirect commitment is observed from the specificity of certain activities planned in the action plan on the implementation of the Strategy. Public authorities have made efforts, especially in the last 3 years of implementing NSYSD 2020, to address the needs of vulnerable young people, to create premises and conditions to "leave no one behind". However, in the absence of specific commitments in this area, the effort to include young people has had a moderate effect.

The authorities have made efforts to integrate young people from socially vulnerable groups in local youth structures. They focused both on the integration in associative structures, and in the area of coverage with services of the Youth Centers. Despite these efforts, selective practices (focusing on the most active, motivated), the lack of mechanisms to support and encourage the participation of vulnerable groups of young people, poorly developed accessible infrastructure, insufficient specialists trained to work with vulnerable categories of young people make it difficult to work with these categories.

There is an urgent need to increase the level of equity and access to youth activities and services. Youth structures are found, for the most part, in the urban environment. Respectively, the activity of / and for the youth is limited to a certain group of young people, which is characterized by a relatively higher degree of activism, mainly from the urban environment, with wider access to various sources of information. Often, the same categories of adolescents and young people are found in several structures of participation of young people in the locality, region and at national level, the same young people being involved in youth activities. The specialists and youth workers, the representatives of the youth structures are oriented, for the most part, towards the young people enrolled in studies, from the younger age group (14-19 years old) considering that the older young people are harder to get involved, from various reasons: study mobility (university), employment, family creation, care responsibilities.

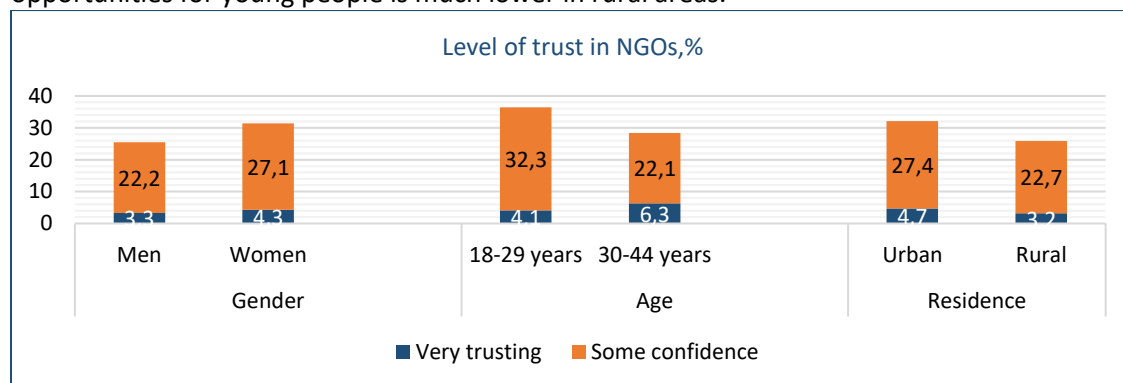
Young people with disabilities have difficulty accessing the services of youth structures, including the lack of specialists with appropriate professional training. However, both the authorities and other relevant actors have supported initiatives to include young people with disabilities, depending on their abilities, in various activities proposed by youth structures, highlighting the high degree of receptivity of the latter.

Local infrastructure is one of the impediments for people with special needs to fully benefit from services and opportunities for young people. The lack of access roads in the organization's headquarters

⁶⁴ Ibid

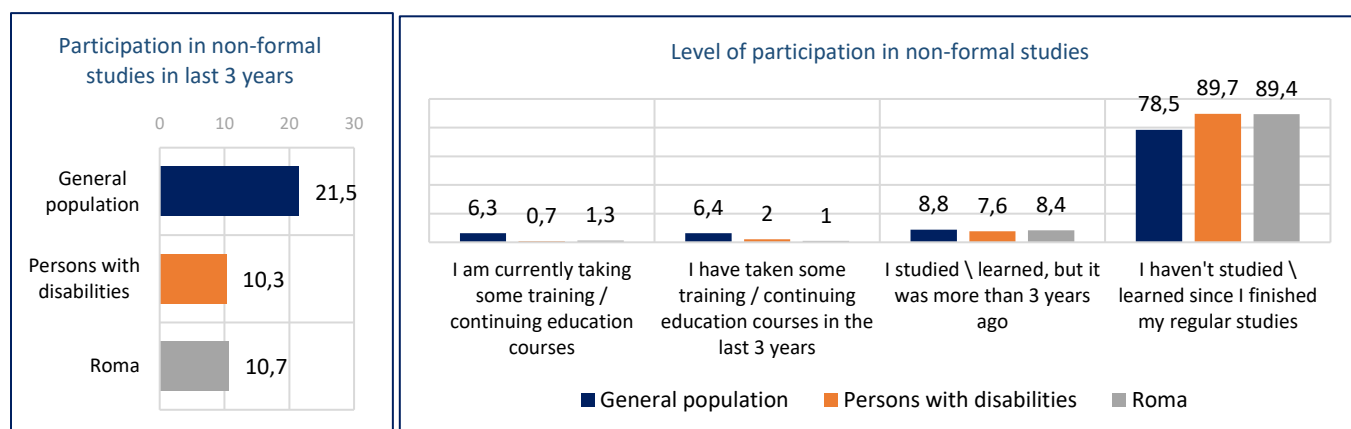
and / or the reasonable inadequacy of the institution, the insufficiency of trained and qualified staff to work with vulnerable categories of young people are barriers that demotivate both representatives of youth structures and vulnerable young people to engage or be involved in activities. of youth.

As the degree of representation of vulnerable young people in youth structures is low, their level of trust in the given structures is also low. Studies on youth services access reveal that among the beneficiaries are more girls, which explains their higher level of confidence in youth structures. At the same time, the trends reveal a lower level of trust in the associative sector and youth structures in rural areas, this being an indirect indicator of low accessibility - the level of coverage with services and opportunities for young people is much lower in rural areas.



F56. The level of trust in the associative sector, by social groups
Source: CPD Opinion Poll, 2020

Access to non-formal education is very low among vulnerable young people. About 90% of people with disabilities and Roma people have never participated in non-formal courses/training. Of the total population that has ever participated in some form of non-formal education, 6.3% are currently employed in continuing education / training, another 6.4% in the last 3 years and 8.8% more than three years in follow. These figures accentuate the reduced predisposition to continue lifelong learning after completing formal studies. The authorities have the task of stimulating lifelong learning through the adoption of specific policies.



F57. Access of the population from vulnerable categories to non-formal education services, %
Source: CPD Opinion Poll, 2019

4.7. Conclusions and recommendations

Despite ambitious targets and planned interventions, the youth sector continues to be affected by a number of important problems: (i) there are difficulties in implementing the legal framework in the field of youth at local level, (ii) lack of effective tools and mechanisms for implementing youth policy and work, (iii) acute shortage of human resources, qualified and with sufficient skills, and (iv) reduced institutional capacity at the level of youth structures (youth organizations, youth centers, councils, etc.).

The capacity of the youth sector needs to be strengthened. Insufficient staff, low level of skills and qualifications in youth work, employee turnover has reduced the efficiency and sustainability of youth work. Many specialists and youth workers do not have special training for working with / and for youth. Actions aimed at increasing the skills of human capital in the youth sector have intensified in recent years, but some external factors, such as the country's socio-economic and political situation, have diminished the sustainability of efforts.

The impact of the implementation of youth policies and programs for the development of the youth sector was determined by activism, connection and the degree of intersectoral cooperation, among the youth structures, but also by the openness of the LPAs to approach the youth structures as active and indispensable actors in the community. The presence of youth structures, the motivation and openness of LPA to effectively implement youth policies and programs have increased the involvement and participation of young people, as well as the sensitivity of the authorities to the needs of young people and the youth field. The efforts of institutional development of the youth structures, but also of stimulating the intersectoral cooperation in this respect, must be one of the key elements of the next strategic plan for the development of the sector.

Complex, structural interventions are needed to strengthen the youth sector. Based on the challenges and constraints highlighted in this report, on the one hand, and the good practices and successful experiences recorded during the implementation of NSYSD 2020, on the other hand, public authorities are to develop a new strategic document, with interventions and approaches that take into account all these elements. In this regard, the following are a series of recommendations that would increase the performance of the youth sector and its continuous development:

Strengthening the training effort of youth structures. In the period 2015-2020, the relevant ministry developed various programs for financial and organizational training of youth structures (organizations, youth centers), for the development of capacities and skills of youth workers, but the planned targets were not fully met. For the most part, the training effort was made through grants, so the interventions were scattered and varied from one implementer to another. In order to perform better on this dimension, it is important that the effort is based on a systemic approach, institutionalized and integrated into a single, national concept.

Continuous increase of human resources capacities in the youth sector. It is important that the authorities, in the next strategic cycle, give priority to the methodological support activities of the YC, specialists / youth workers, other youth service providers in order to supplement the lack of skills and qualifications currently facing the sector. In this sense, it is opportune to develop a regulated framework for enhancing competencies, a framework for evaluating performance, etc.

Reviewing and adapting youth policies and strategies to their needs. Due to the strong segmentation of the young population from a socio-economic, demographic point of view, specific institutional responses are needed. They have to adequately address the needs and challenges facing young people, including the disadvantaged, through targeted interventions. In order to be able to effectively integrate the needs of young people in public policy documents, it is also important to train the leaders of the line ministries.

Strengthening intersectoral cooperation in order to implement youth policies. Youth policy must be developed in a cross-sectoral approach and in close correlation with national policies in related fields, such as education, employment, health, agriculture and adaptation to climate change, etc. Although there is a significant number of strategies and programs for young people, implemented by various state institutions, there is a lack of an integrated approach and a complex evaluation mechanism on the implementation of youth policies, including the cross-sectoral dimension. Given the intersectoral nature of YS, collaboration between different state institutions in the field of youth is indispensable.

Integrating the gender dimension and social inclusion into youth and related sectoral policies. All aspects of youth in youth strategies / policies, but also in sectors (e.g., education, health, economic empowerment) should address gender issues and social inclusion.

Ensuring equitable access to youth programs and services. The "no one is left behind" principle must be one of the key elements of the interventions to be planned in the new Youth Strategy. Planned programs and actions must address the needs of young people of different ages, different levels of education, areas of residence, socio-economic status, etc., so that disadvantaged and least approached young people are included in youth development programs.

Integration of young people from disadvantaged groups in youth structures. The presence of disadvantaged young people (young people with disabilities, adolescents and young people from low-income families, with low school success, young NEETs, young people with risky behavior, etc.) is low in youth structures. In the next strategic cycle, it is important that the authorities and partners implementing the Strategy make efforts to integrate these categories of young people into youth structures and activities, to develop mechanisms to support and encourage their participation in such actions, to ensure the preparation specialists to work with disadvantaged categories, etc.

Development of specific and disaggregated indicators by social categories. In order to be able to estimate the performance of the implementation of the new Strategy, it is important that the set indicators resonate faithfully with the results towards which they tend, to be specific and accurate (quantitative or qualitative), so that their periodic measurement is possible. Additionally, it is necessary that the indicators used to measure the results be disaggregated by social categories (gender, age, ethnicity, disability, environment of residence, etc.), which would allow the analysis of inclusion aspects.

Annex 1: Interviewees in the evaluation process

institution	Representative
Ministry of Education, Culture and Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ion Donea, <i>former Head of the Youth Department, Ministry of Youth and Sports</i> • Svetlana Savițchi, <i>Senior Consultant, Youth Department</i> • Marcel Marin, <i>Head of the Youth Department</i> • Aliona Dumbrăveanu, <i>Senior Consultant, Youth Department</i> • Macarenco Larisa, <i>Senior Consultant, Youth Department</i>
Organization for the Development of the Small and Medium Enterprises Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sergiu Iordan, <i>main strategic planning specialist</i>
"Dacia" Youth Resource Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ion Babici, <i>former executive director</i>
Moldovan Students Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radu Mereniuc, <i>project coordinator</i> • Igor Ciurea, <i>ex-president</i> • Nicolai Loghin, <i>former president</i>
Moldovan National Youth Council (CNTM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Igor Ciurea, <i>former general secretary</i> • Roman Banari, <i>current General Secretary</i> • Nicolae Cheleş, <i>President</i>
Y-PEER Moldova	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galina Manole, <i>coordinator</i>
Junior Chamber International	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sergiu Soltan, <i>co-founder</i>
United Nations Population Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ion Donea, <i>project manager</i>
Pro Bono Information and Resource Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Igor Ciurea, <i>institutional development director</i> • Simona Patricia Podoleanu, <i>executive director</i>
National Network of Local Youth Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dumitru Juraveli, <i>president</i>
MILLENIUM Development Training Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vitalie Cîrhană, <i>director</i>
Erasmus + Moldova Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claudia Melinte, <i>coordinator</i>
NEOVITA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Galina Leșco, <i>coordinator</i>