

Analytical Public Policy Document
(POLICY BRIEF)

REGIONAL YOUTH POLICY

Project: “Civic Circles – From Institutional
Silence to Youth-Led Dialogue”

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1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

The purpose of this policy brief is to provide a concise and analytically grounded synthesis of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations for the development of a comprehensive regional youth policy in the Pelagonia Region, based on the results of the implementation of the Local Democratic Circles (LDC) model. The document aims to establish a clear, evidence-based, and strategically oriented framework for interventions intended for public institutions, the donor community, civil society organisations, with a focus on strengthening youth participation, improving the quality of local governance, and fostering sustainable local development. In addition, the document seeks to provide a more operational and donor-oriented perspective by identifying potential areas for support, including piloting innovative measures, scaling successful local practices, and strengthening institutional and administrative capacities for long-term implementation and sustainability.

Within the broader context of socio-economic transformations, the Pelagonia Region is facing structural challenges that significantly affect the young population, including limited access to services, underdeveloped youth infrastructure, and continuous migration trends. At the same time, a pronounced gap between young people and institutional actors is evident, manifested through low levels of trust, limited opportunities for meaningful participation, and insufficient involvement of young people in public policy-making processes, particularly at the local level.

In this context, the need for systemic, inclusive, and sustainable youth policies is positioned as a key strategic priority, aligned with the principles of good governance, participatory democracy, and youth empowerment. This policy brief contributes to addressing these challenges by promoting an integrated approach that connects youth policy with broader development priorities, including local economic development, social cohesion, and institutional transparency.

A particular contribution of this document lies in its empirical grounding in the results of the Local Democratic Circles (LDC), a structured participatory model that enables early and meaningful involvement of young people in the processes of problem identification and co-creation of solutions. Through this process, young people and institutions jointly define priorities and develop concrete initiatives, resulting in proposals that are simultaneously relevant, institutionally aligned, and feasible in practice.

In addition, the document highlights the need for a transition from ad hoc initiatives toward structured and institutionalised mechanisms for youth participation that ensure continuity, predictability, and long-term impact. In this regard, the proposed recommendations are aimed at strengthening institutional capacities, establishing functional youth infrastructure (particularly youth centres), and developing mechanisms for active and meaningful youth participation in decision-making processes.



From a donor perspective, this policy brief offers a clear intervention logic based on identified needs and validated through a co-creation process, enabling effective targeting of resources toward areas with high potential for social and developmental impact. At the same time, the LDC model demonstrates a high degree of replicability and adaptability, making it relevant not only for the Pelagonia Region, but also for the broader context of youth policy development.

Ultimately, this document affirms the role of young people not only as beneficiaries of public policies, but as active, competent, and legitimate co-creators of public policy. Such an approach creates the foundation for more inclusive, transparent, and sustainable governance that integrates the needs and potential of young people as a key resource for the future development of the region.

2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND EVIDENCE BASE

The analysis presented in this document is based on a systematic analytical synthesis of the results from the implementation of the Local Democratic Circles (LDC), carried out in nine municipalities in the Pelagonia Region, as well as on additional consultative processes with relevant institutional and civil society actors. The approach does not include primary research, but is based on the review and processing of existing project documentation, youth-generated initiatives, and institutional insights, in line with the defined scope of engagement.

A key characteristic of the methodological approach is its grounding in the Local Democratic Circles (LDC) model, which represents a structured form of participatory governance based on genuine co-creation between young people and institutions. Unlike traditional consultative processes, which most often take place at a late stage and are reduced to collecting opinions, the LDC model enables the joint definition of problems, constraints, and solutions from the earliest phases of the process.

The methodological process was implemented through a two-phase, yet interactive and continuous cycle of work. In the first phase, young participants, together with representatives of local self-government, identified the key local challenges, priorities, and needs. This phase was fundamentally important, as it created a shared basis of understanding in which young people articulated their experiences, while institutions provided context regarding existing policies, competencies, and limitations.

The second phase consisted of a process of joint co-creation of initiatives, whereby the identified priorities were transformed into concrete and structured proposals. In this phase, young people and institutional actors functioned as equal co-creators, whereby:

- young people contributed perspectives and ideas based on real needs;
- institutions provided information regarding budgetary, legal, and administrative frameworks.



Particularly significant was the so-called “reality check” mechanism, which did not function as a filter for rejecting ideas, but rather as a collaborative alignment process through which initiatives were adjusted to actual institutional capacities. This process resulted in proposals that were both ambitious and feasible, significantly increasing their implementation potential.

The methodology additionally generated a strong co-learning dynamic, whereby:

- young people gained practical understanding of how local self-government functions and how decision-making processes operate;
- institutional representatives gained direct insight into the real needs, challenges, and priorities of young people.

As part of the methodological approach, and in accordance with the requirements for validation of findings, targeted consultative meetings were also conducted with relevant local-level actors, contributing to the further strengthening of the evidence base and the relevance of the recommendations. In this context, direct meetings were held with:

- a representative of the Municipality of Bitola – Natasha Popovska, Youth Officer;
- a representative of the Municipality of Resen – Marija Evtimovska, from the civil society organisation EKO Gerila, partner organisation of Pro Local;
- a representative of the Municipality of Dolneni – Ajsha Muameroska, Youth Officer.

These consultations enabled direct validation of the analytical findings and recommendations, as well as further deepening of the understanding of local institutional dynamics, challenges, and implementation opportunities.

This integrated approach – combining participatory methodology, institutional involvement, and additional expert consultation – enables the development of policies that are:

- evidence-based;
- contextually relevant;
- institutionally aligned;
- and characterised by a high degree of local ownership.

In summary, the applied methodology represents a replicable model of co-creating public policy, which not only generates concrete initiatives, but also contributes to transforming the relationship between young people and institutions – from one-way communication to partnership based on trust, transparency, and shared responsibility.

3. REGIONAL CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES

The Pelagonia Region is facing a complex set of interrelated structural challenges that have a direct and long-term impact on the position and prospects of the young population. The analysis of demographic trends indicates a continuous process of outmigration, particularly pronounced in smaller and rural municipalities, resulting in the gradual depletion of local human capital and the weakening of the developmental potential of communities. This trend not only limits the economic dynamism of the region, but also further deepens inequalities in young people's access to opportunities.

Alongside these demographic challenges, the region faces significant limitations in terms of the availability and quality of youth infrastructure. The lack of functional youth centres, limited access to public transportation, and the insufficiently developed offer of cultural, educational, and social activities create an environment that does not adequately support the personal and professional development needs of young people. Under such conditions, young people often face limited opportunities for active participation in community life, which further reduces their motivation to engage and contribute to local development.

An additional structural challenge is the pronounced gap in communication and interaction between young people and institutional actors. This gap is reflected in low levels of trust in institutions, limited transparency of processes, and insufficiently developed mechanisms for meaningful youth participation. As a result, young people often remain marginalised in decision-making processes, which limits their potential as active actors in society.

However, the findings from the Local Democratic Circles (LDC) process also indicate a significant and thus far underutilised potential for improving local governance. Municipalities, including smaller and rural local self-government units, demonstrated a high level of institutional openness, flexibility, and willingness to establish constructive dialogue with young people. This proactivity represents a key initial foundation for the design and implementation of future interventions aimed at strengthening participatory democracy and developing inclusive youth policies.

In this regard, the identified challenges and opportunities underline the need for an integrated and strategic approach that connects youth policies with the broader development priorities of the region, ensuring sustainable and long-term effects on social cohesion and economic development.

4. KEY FINDINGS

4.1. Youth Centres as a Dominant Priority

One of the most consistent and prominent findings of the analysis is the dominant position of youth centres as a priority across all municipalities covered, accounting for approximately 45% of all identified initiatives. This trend indicates that the need to establish youth infrastructure is not limited solely to the provision of physical space, but rather represents a broader structural indicator of the lack of institutionalised mechanisms for youth participation and development.

Furthermore, the analysis of specific initiatives shows that youth centres appear in different forms and stages of development – ranging from entirely new initiatives for establishment (Demir Hisar, Dolneni, Mogila, Prilep, Resen), to initiatives focused on the formalisation and institutional strengthening of existing centres (Krivogashtani).

In this sense, youth centres are perceived as multifunctional platforms that provide a sense of belonging, opportunities for active participation in the community, and space for the development of personal and professional skills.

It is particularly significant that several initiatives foresee the involvement of young people in the management of these centres (co-management approach), which further strengthens their potential as a mechanism for long-term and sustainable youth participation.

At the same time, they function as both a symbolic and practical instrument for the institutional recognition of young people as relevant actors in local development.

4.2. Limited Infrastructure and Accessibility of Services

In addition to the need for youth centres, the analysis points to widespread challenges related to infrastructure and access to basic services. Deficiencies in public transportation, underdeveloped sports infrastructure, as well as limited communal services and cultural content, are identified as key factors directly affecting the quality of life of young people.

These challenges are particularly pronounced in smaller and rural municipalities, where limited access to services further reduces opportunities for social integration and active youth participation in local community life. As a result, infrastructural limitations are not merely technical problems, but also carry significant socio-economic implications.

Moreover, the analysis of initiatives shows that young people actively propose concrete, locally adapted solutions, such as:

- development of recreational facilities and activities (e.g. a paintball zone in Novaci);
- creation of new models for activation and socialisation (e.g. a youth camp in Krushevo).

This indicates that young people do not perceive infrastructural problems solely as limitations, but also as opportunities for developing innovative and self-sustaining local solutions.

4.3. Institutional Gap and Limited Communication

The analytical findings also indicate the existence of a significant gap between young people and institutions, manifested through low levels of understanding of institutional processes, limited transparency, and underdeveloped communication channels. This gap results in reduced trust and low rates of youth participation in decision-making processes.



The lack of effective communication further deepens the perception of institutional inaccessibility, discouraging young people from engaging in public life and contributing to community development.

Concrete initiatives, such as the case of the Municipality of Bitola, directly address this challenge through proposals for the establishment of modern digital communication channels with young people, featuring content adapted to their habits and language.

This finding indicates that the communication gap does not stem solely from a lack of information, but also from inappropriate communication formats and channels, requiring a systemic approach to overcome it.

4.4. Positive Trends in Institutional Response

Despite the identified challenges, the analysis also reveals significant positive trends in institutional response. In several municipalities, active involvement of local authorities was observed, including the direct participation of mayors and administrative representatives in dialogue processes.

This openness to communication, together with the willingness to consider and potentially implement the proposed initiatives, represents an important precondition for strengthening participatory governance. Such an approach contributes to reducing institutional distance and creating a foundation for long-term cooperation.

In addition, the LDC process demonstrated that institutions are not positioned merely as recipients of proposals, but as active participants in shaping them, particularly through the process of alignment with legal, budgetary, and administrative frameworks.

This indicates a gradual transition from formal participation to meaningful engagement and partnership.

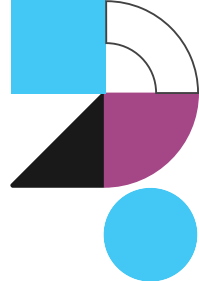
4.5. Transformative Effect on Young Participants

One of the most significant outcomes of the process is its transformative effect on young participants. The analysis shows a clear evolution in their approach – from the initial articulation of general needs and expectations to the development of structured, evidence-based, and institutionally aligned policy proposals.

This process contributes to strengthening democratic competencies, developing critical thinking, and increasing the sense of responsibility among young people. In this way, youth participation is positioned not only as a consultation instrument, but also as a mechanism for education and empowerment.

Furthermore, the analysis of initiatives shows that young people actively assume the role of co-creators and implementers through:

- participation in programme and content design;
- organisation and implementation of activities;
- involvement in the management of youth spaces and initiatives.



5. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The comparative analysis of different types of municipalities indicates the existence of pronounced local specificities and development dynamics, while at the same time identifying convergent trends that are essential for shaping an integrated and strategic approach to youth policy at the regional level.

An integrated and strategic approach to youth policy at the regional level requires not only local interventions, but also stronger inter-municipal cooperation, coordinated policy frameworks, and shared mechanisms for youth participation and information exchange. In urban municipalities, such as Bitola and Prilep, a relatively higher level of institutional consolidation is observed, as well as a broader and more diversified range of public services. However, the analysis shows that the key challenge in these environments is not only the quality of services, but also their visibility and accessibility from the perspective of young people. The lack of systematised and youth-oriented information mechanisms, as well as insufficient coordination between local actors and municipalities, results in low levels of awareness of existing opportunities, which negatively affects trust and youth participation. In urban municipalities, the recommended interventions include:

- development and implementation of an integrated municipal digital platform (Youth Info Hub), bringing together all information relevant to young people (events, opportunities, programmes, subsidies);
- establishment of a structured communication strategy targeting young people, with clearly defined channels, objectives, and indicators for reach and engagement;
- active and continuous use of social media (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook) with targeted, short, and visually adapted content (videos, reels, infographics);
- creation of youth information campaigns presenting existing programmes, results, and opportunities in an accessible and attractive way;
- establishment of Youth Info Desks within municipalities or youth centres;
- engagement of young people as communication ambassadors / peer educators, contributing to the creation and dissemination of information relevant to their generation;
- organisation of regular information events and open days in municipalities, with direct presentation of opportunities and programmes;
- development of mobile applications or newsletter systems for regularly informing young people about current activities and opportunities.



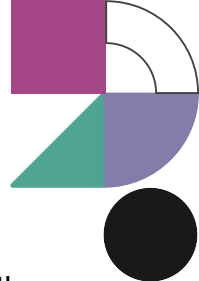
On the other hand, rural municipalities, such as Mogila, Novaci, Krivogashtani, Dolneni, and Demir Hisar, face more pronounced structural and infrastructural constraints, particularly in relation to mobility, access to services, and general development infrastructure. In these contexts, youth centres are recognised as key multifunctional community hubs, with the potential to integrate educational, social, and cultural functions and serve as local hubs for youth participation. At the same time, these municipalities demonstrate a higher level of direct communication between young people and institutions, representing important potential for the development of effective participatory models. Such proposed models may include:

- establishment of functional youth centres as multifunctional local hubs providing integrated services (education, digital skills, culture, social activities);
- development of mobile youth services (mobile youth units) to ensure access to activities and programmes in smaller and remote settlements;
- improvement of local public transportation and alternative mobility models (subsidised routes, organised transport for young people, shared transport solutions);
- investment in local digital infrastructure (internet access, digital tools) to ensure equal access to information, education, and online opportunities;
- development of multifunctional public spaces (sports grounds, cultural centres, open youth zones) to encourage social interaction and activism.

Tourism-oriented municipalities, such as Krushevo and Resen, demonstrate specific development potential related to youth tourism, cultural activities, and creative industries. In these environments, young people recognise opportunities to connect local resources with innovative initiatives, creating synergies between youth policy and local economic development.

- development of local youth tourism programmes, including thematic camps, festivals, eco-tours, and cultural events, designed and implemented with the active participation of young people;
- establishment of youth tourism hubs within youth centres, functioning as coordination, promotion, and development points for local tourism initiatives;
- support for youth entrepreneurship in tourism through grants, training, and mentoring for the development of small businesses (guiding services, local tours, digital services, creative products);
- development of creative industries (culture, arts, digital design, media) as a tool for local economic development and youth retention.

Despite contextual differences, the analysis identifies shared priorities across all municipalities, including the need to establish youth centres, improve public transportation and mobility, develop sports and cultural content, and strengthen communication and interaction between young people and institutions. These trends provide a solid basis for designing an integrated regional youth policy.



6. RECOMMENDED YOUTH POLICIES

The proposed youth policies derive directly from the analytical findings and from the concrete initiatives developed through the Local Democratic Circles (LDC) process in the nine municipalities of the Pelagonia Region. This approach ensures a high level of alignment between the identified challenges and the proposed solutions, as well as their institutional applicability.

The particular value of the proposed policies lies in the fact that they do not represent merely theoretical recommendations, but are the result of a co-creation process between young people and institutions, in which the proposed measures have already been partially validated in a real institutional context. In this way, the recommendations have the potential for rapid and effective implementation, as well as adaptation across different local settings.

Based on the conducted analysis of conditions in the Pelagonia Region, covering the municipalities of Bitola, Prilep, Resen, Krushevo, Demir Hisar, Novaci, Mogila, Dolneni, and Krivogashtani, a need was identified for the development of an integrated and multi-sectoral approach to youth policy. This approach should address specific local challenges, while at the same time ensuring a coordinated and strategic framework for improving the position of young people as active actors in social and local development.

The analysis shows that urban municipalities, such as Bitola and Prilep, have a higher level of institutional development and a broader range of public services, but at the same time do not invest sufficiently in targeted communication, resulting in a perception among young people that opportunities are limited.

On the other hand, small and rural municipalities, such as Novaci, Mogila, Dolneni, Krivogashtani, and Demir Hisar, face more pronounced structural constraints, particularly in relation to access to services, mobility, and the limited range of activities available to young people. However, unlike urban environments, these municipalities demonstrate greater potential for direct and immediate communication between young people and institutions, enabling faster trust-building and the establishment of partnership relations. In this context, youth initiatives clearly indicate that the establishment of functional youth centres and local activities would not only improve the quality of life of young people, but also contribute to their retention in the community, strengthen social cohesion, and activate local development potential.

Based on the conducted analysis and the identified key findings, the establishment of an integrated and systemic approach to youth policy development in the Pelagonia Region is proposed, one that ensures both the strengthening of institutional capacities and the active involvement of young people as co-creators of public policy. Specifically, the following is proposed:

6.1. Institutionalisation of Co-Creation as a Governance Model

- **Formal integration of Local Democratic Circles (LDCs)** as a regular municipal practice (minimum two cycles per year) recognising their importance as participatory and deliberative mechanisms that strengthen dialogue between young people, local institutions, and community stakeholders, while fostering inclusive decision-making and democratic engagement.



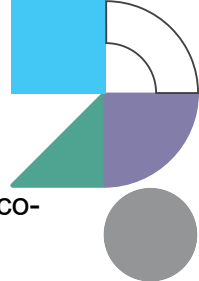
- **Mainstreaming the youth perspective as a horizontal priority across all public policies**, so that youth issues are not treated in isolation, but as a strategic development component that directly contributes to increasing young people's motivation, active participation, and trust in institutions.
- **Establishing local protocols for the early involvement of young people** in policy-making processes.
- **Establishing mechanisms for monitoring youth measures and preparing annual reports** (annual reports should use disaggregated data by sex, gender, ethnicity, age, and disability, and include indicators on gender equality and multi-ethnic inclusion).
- **Introducing mandatory consultation and co-creation requirements** in the development of local youth-related strategies and programmes, including the organisation of consultations with young people and relevant stakeholders once per year at the local level.
- **Ensuring dedicated budget lines to support co-created initiatives**, with clear criteria and transparent allocation in line with the principles of gender-responsive budgeting, as well as for activities aimed at multi-ethnic inclusion and accessibility.
- **Ensuring that every municipality has an elected Youth Council, a Youth Centre, and a Youth Officer.**
- **Establishing a civic oversight mechanism** to monitor compliance with legal obligations towards young people, including public reporting on institutions that fail to meet their legally prescribed obligations (e.g. municipalities that do not allocate the legal minimum of 0.1% of their budget to youth), accompanied by a dedicated report on the impact of such shortcomings on gender and ethnic inclusion.

Objective: To transform youth participation from formal, occasional into a systematic and sustainable partnership.

6.2. Development and Sustainable Management of Youth Centres

Given their dominant role as a regional priority, it is recommended to establish a functional **and sustainable network of youth centres through:**

- Provision and formal allocation of municipal space for Youth Centres, in accordance with the Law on Youth Participation and Youth Policies, including transparent procedures, institutional support, and sustainable operational conditions for their long-term functioning at the local level;
- Planning and allocating a stable and predictable budget for operational functioning.



- Establishing a governance model through a public call for youth organisations (co-management approach), with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- mandatory engagement of certified youth workers;
- development of annual programmes based on the needs of young people.
- Additionally, for existing centres:
- formalisation of their status and alignment with legal standards;
- strengthening of administrative and programmatic and financial capacities.
- Objective: youth centres to function as local hubs for participation, learning, and development.

6.3. Improvement of Local Infrastructure and Access to Services

To address structural constraints, targeted interventions are recommended, particularly in rural municipalities:

- improvement and subsidisation of public transport for young people;
- investment in sports, cultural, and recreational facilities and infrastructure;
- development of multifunctional public spaces accessible to young people;
- support for local activation initiatives (sports, culture, outdoor activities).

In parallel, support is recommended for:

- innovative and self-sustaining models, such as recreational activities and youth events that generate their own income.

Objective: improvement of quality of life and youth retention.

6.4. Development of Effective and Youth-Oriented Communication Mechanisms

To overcome the communication gap, it is necessary to establish modern, accessible, and youth-adapted communication channels:

- development of municipal digital youth information platforms (Youth Info Hub);
- active communication through social media (Instagram, TikTok, Facebook);
- Creating short, visual, and interactive content tailored to young people
- involvement of young people as content creators and communication ambassadors;

- Organising regular information campaigns and open days (covering topics that reflect the realities and concerns of young people, such as climate change and sustainable urbanisation, digitalisation and cybersecurity, mental health and social justice, and equal opportunities for all, including marginalised groups).

Objective: increased awareness, trust, and participation.

6.5. Strengthening Youth Participation through Formal Mechanisms

In order to ensure long-term and structured participation, the following is recommended:

- Establishing and activating local Youth Councils with a clear mandate and adequate resources.
- Introducing participatory budgeting mechanisms.
- Organising regular youth forums, public hearings, and consultative processes.
- Institutionalising co-creation as an integral part of decision-making processes. Objective: young people to be active actors, not merely beneficiaries.

6.6. Support for Youth Initiatives and Local Development

In order to stimulate local dynamism and innovation, the following is recommended:

- Establishing small grants for youth initiatives.
- Supporting youth entrepreneurship and start-ups.
- Developing non-formal education and skills programmes (including digital and green skills).
- Connecting young people with the local business sector (through internships, mentorship, and partnerships).
- Supporting initiatives related to tourism, culture, and the creative industries.

Objective: economic empowerment and youth retention.



TABLE 1: FINDINGS → POLICY RESPONSE

Key Finding	Implication	Recommended Policy Response
Youth centres as a dominant priority	Lack of institutionalised youth infrastructure	Lack of institutionalised youth infrastructure
Limited infrastructure and services	Reduced quality of life and opportunities for young people	Reduced quality of life and opportunities for young people
Communication gap	Low awareness and trust	Low awareness and trust
Diversified initiatives (local context)	Different needs across municipalities	Support for locally adapted and innovative models (tourism, recreation, self-sustaining activities)
Co-creation as a model	High potential for sustainable policies	Institutionalisation of LDC and early youth involvement
Transformation of young people	Increased capacity for participation	Support for youth leadership, participation, and implementation of initiatives
Positive institutional response	Readiness for partnership	Establishment of formal mechanisms for cooperation and participatory budgeting

7. CONCLUSIONS AND POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

The conducted analysis of the conditions and needs of young people in the Pelagonia Region indicates the existence of a complex set of structural, institutional, and socio-economic challenges that require a coordinated, systemic, and long-term approach. At the same time, the results of the Local Democratic Circles (LDC) process confirm that, despite these challenges, there is significant potential for improving youth policies through inclusive and participatory governance models.



One of the key conclusions is that young people, when provided with adequate conditions and mechanisms for participation, demonstrate a high degree of engagement, analytical thinking, and readiness to contribute to the development of their communities. The LDC process enabled a transformation in the role of young people – from passive beneficiaries of policy to active co-creators of solutions – representing a significant step forward in strengthening democratic culture and civic participation.

Furthermore, the analysis confirms that the most effective and sustainable initiatives are those resulting from joint co-creation between young people and institutions, whereby the process of alignment with institutional frameworks does not constrain, but rather strengthens the quality and feasibility of the proposed solutions. This approach creates the basis for establishing long-term partnerships and shared responsibility for policy implementation.

A particularly significant finding is the consistent need to establish and strengthen youth centres as a structural element of local policies. These centres are recognised as key platforms for socialisation, learning, skills development, and active participation, but also as mechanisms for reducing social exclusion and strengthening the local community. Their institutionalisation, together with the establishment of sustainable management models, represents a prerequisite for long-term impact.

At the same time, the identified communication gap between young people and institutions, particularly in urban municipalities, points to the need for systemic improvement in transparency, accessibility, and methods of communication. The limited visibility of existing opportunities creates a perception of restricted prospects, further emphasising the importance of developing modern, youth-oriented communication mechanisms.

In rural municipalities, structural limitations are more pronounced, but at the same time there is greater potential for direct communication and trust-building between young people and institutions. This potential should be strategically utilised through the development of locally adapted and innovative solutions that respond to the specific needs of communities.

With regard to replication potential, the Local Democratic Circles model proves to be highly relevant, flexible, and applicable across different local and regional contexts. Its value derives from the combination of:

- early and meaningful involvement of young people;
- continuous dialogue with institutions;
- and the development of realistic and feasible solutions.

The replicability of the model lies in its ability to adapt to different socio-economic conditions while preserving its core value – building partnership between young people and institutions.



In addition, the process creates a strong sense of local ownership over results, which is a key factor for sustainability. At the same time, it contributes to strengthening the capacities of both young people and institutions, generating a long-term positive effect on the quality of local governance.

In summary, the results of the analysis indicate that sustainable advancement of youth policies requires the simultaneous addressing of infrastructural, institutional, and communication-related challenges, as well as the continuous and meaningful involvement of young people in policy-making processes.

The institutionalisation of co-creation as a governance model, together with strategic investments in youth infrastructure and participation mechanisms, represents a key precondition for the development of more inclusive, transparent, and sustainable local communities.

This policy brief calls for coordinated action among institutions, Youth people, civil society, and the donor community in order to ensure a systemic approach to youth policy. Investing in young people is not merely a social obligation, but a strategic investment in the long-term development and stability of the region.

People are not merely a social obligation, but a strategic investment in the long-term development and stability of the region.

Annex 1: Example of a Regional Youth Policy

Development and Sustainable Management of Youth Centres

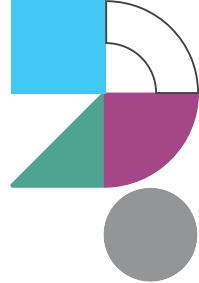
Objective:

Establishing a functional and sustainable network of youth centres in the Pelagonia Region as key infrastructure for youth participation, non-formal education, and local development.

Description:

This regional policy aims at the systematic establishment and advancement of youth centres across municipalities through the provision of inter-institutional support, inter-municipal exchange of resources, including among members of the Regional Youth Platform (LGUs and CSOs), sustainable financing, and the involvement of young people in their governance.

The policy is based on the principle of co-creation and partnership between local authorities and youth organisations, in order to ensure the relevance, functionality, and long-term sustainability of the centres.



Key policy measures:

- Establishment of new youth centres in municipalities where none currently exist;
- Formalisation of existing centres in Krivogashtani;
- Introduction of co-management models;
- Provision of budgetary support;
- Development of programmes based on the needs of young people.

Expected impact:

Improved youth participation, increased social inclusion, and stronger local communities.



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