

MONITORING REPORT OF POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH IN MONTENEGRO

Summary

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For monitoring of the situation of youth, including their level of participation it is important for all national stakeholders to actively work on the "Improvement of statistics at the national level and knowledge of youth."

This was so far recognized by the state as well and is mentioned in Youth Strategy 2017-2021 and also in previous NGO Prima policy recommendations.

In order to contribute to improvement of existing public policies that enable youth to be more active, it is of key importance to provide evidence on public policy performance and this is one of the main reasons why the Youth Participation Index (YPI) is created. This index is divided into three pillars: political, social and economic participation of young people, and monitored in Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Turkey and Macedonia.

This monitoring report is based on data collected during desk research and official requests for information sent to responsible institutions (Ministry of education, MONSTAT, Parliament of Montenegro etc).

Our results are in line with the observation from Council of Europe level that while it is true that youth interest in and participation in formal political institutions and processes such as voting have declined over the past decades, along with trust in democratic institutions and leaders, it is only when applying a very narrow definition of political participation that one could conclude that youth have a low participation or interest in politics. If we broaden our definition beyond participation in elections and formal political institutions to include participation in civic and voluntary associations and in protest and social movements, the picture changes considerably. (Flesher Fominaya for EU-CoE youth partnership).

NGO Prima from Montenegro prepared this monitoring report as a part of the activities of regional network "Youth Bank Hub for Western Balkan and Turkey" created in partnership with "Ana i Vlade Divac" Foundation in Serbia, Association for Education – MLADIINFO International in Macedonia, Partners Albania and "Community Volunteers Foundation" in Turkey. Network focus on youth participation, and monitor youth policy developments in respective countries with the aim to advocacy for youth issues.

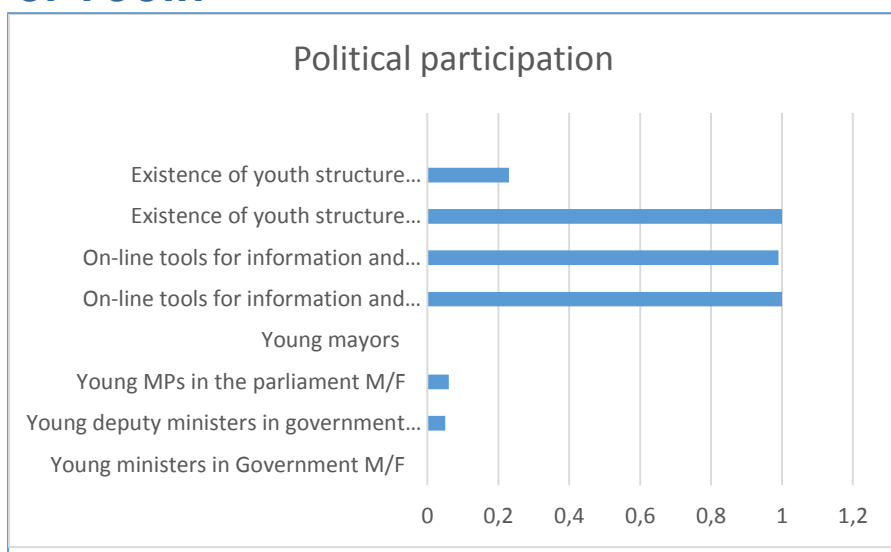
Network activities are financially supported through the project funded by the European Commission within the Support to Regional Thematic Networks of Civil Society Organizations and regional network. For certain activities implemented in Montenegro, NGO Prima also got a support from Ministry of finances of Montenegro through Games of chance funds.

Podgorica, Jun 2018

NGO Prima, MONTENEGRO

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Data on Political Participation of Youth



Even when they are officially included in process of creating policy documents, not just via online channels but as members of working groups, youth voice is not heard enough or they are just outvoted.

There are no regularly organized events for structured dialogue with youth

Local structures are including youth offices but rarely functional Youth Councils.

On national level there is Directorate for Youth but there is no Council for youth, no Youth Council or official youth structure recognized by the state

Data on Social Participation of Youth

Early leavers from education and training (percentage of population aged 18–24 with the lowest secondary education and not participating any more in further education or training) was 5,5

•MONSTAT

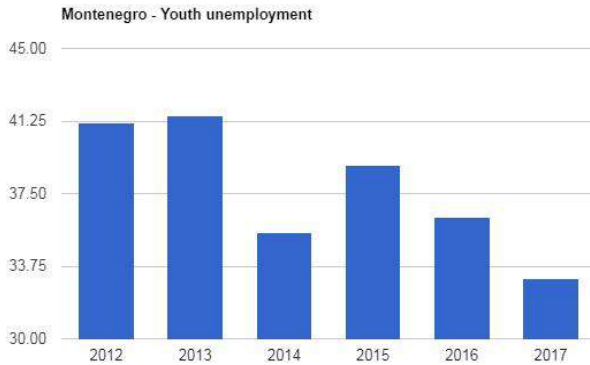
Dropout from the secondary education (2015-2016 school year) was 0,17

•Ministry of education



Creation of the new Youth Law is in process and adoption is foreseen for the end of 2018

Data on Economic Participation of Youth



Source: TheGlobalEconomy.com, The World Bank

“A modern economy does not reward individuals for what they know, but what they can do with what they know.” OECD

NEET rate for 15 – 29 (youth according to Youth law in MNE)	2012	2013	2014	2015	Gap M-F	2016	Gap M-F	2017	Gap M-F
Total	23,8	23,2	22,6	23,4	-1.3	22,3	-1.5	20,4	-3.8
Males	22,3	23,4	22,7	22,8		21,6		18,5	
Females	25,3	22,9	22,4	24,1		23,1		22,3	
NEET rate for 15 - 24	2012	2013	2014	2015	Gap M-F	2016		2017	Gap M-F
Total	16,9	17,8	17,7	19,1	1.6	18,4	0.7	15,5	0.3
Males	17,2	19,4	18,8	19,9		18,7		15,6	
Females	16,6	16,2	16,5	18,3		18,0		15,3	

The total participation of self-employed persons in the first quarter of 2018 was 18.8%

NEET rate in last 3 years is decreasing. However, among youth 15 – 29 NEET rate is slightly bigger among girls than boys

Comparisons of data

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH

Having in mind accessibility of information as a precondition to participation in relation to policy development, among structures on national and municipality level, online tools for participation in decision making are present in high level. Comparing to previous monitoring reports there is slight improvement, especially at local level.

Parliament of Montenegro has a web site, regularly updated, in Montenegrin and English language. There are available emails and telephone numbers of the: The Cabinet of the President, Office of the Secretary General, Scriptorium Parliament of Montenegro, Department of Public Relations and Protocol and Web editors. Some of the Bodies of Parliament have a Twitter account, e.g. Committee on European integration (Twitter: @EUOdborCG)

Government of Montenegro has active all online channels. Also, Government inter alia has a mechanism for online participation: e-petition www.epeticije.gov.me that allows citizens to create internet petitions, which, if they are supported by 6,000 citizens / which, in the form of initiatives submitted to the Government for consideration. There is also portal www.euprava.me to facilitate and speed up communication with the citizens, through the system of electronic document management.

All ministries have their own web sites where citizens and thus young people can acquire information about the work of these and some ministries are also using online contact forms and accounts on social networks to communicate with citizens and young people. From social networks, Facebook is the most popular, followed by Twitter.

Efforts of some of the authorities to start using **channels that are more youth friendly**, and more in line with modern communication, are recorded but still, **there are no regularly organized events for structured dialogue with youth**. One of the positive examples is Ministry of sport – Directorate for youth, that during 2018 organized meetings with NGO representatives working on youth issues in order to establish better communication and coordination in process of implementation of the Youth strategy. This ministry increased financing of youth projects from around 170 000 EUR in 2017 to around 400 000 EUR in 2018. Also, Directorate used online tools for consultations on the draft of the new Law on youth, and also published results of consultations. First draft of this new policy document had quite strong negative reaction of the part of civil society, although they officially had representatives in the working group developing this document, but since it is still working version it is hard to give conclusions on the quality.

At the local level, all local government units (except at the moment the Municipality Gusinje) have their own web sites and e-mail. Special form for the questions of citizens available on the website has a slightly smaller number of municipalities. Also, other channels besides mentioned website, email, available telephone numbers are rare. The exceptions are certain municipal secretariats and for example offices for Youth - which have their emails, twitter accounts and even official Facebook pages.

All mentioned above represent just **basis for participation** – and is used mainly for information sharing, and consultations with citizens, including youth and level of real influence on decision making is under the question. We have examples that

representatives of youth organizations even when they are officially included in process of creating policy documents, not just via online channels but as members of working groups, **their voice is not heard or they are just outvoted.**

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH

When analyzing the situation of young people at the risk of poverty, or the percentage of poor people (the young people who lives under the line of poverty) – there is no accurate statistics, because there is no enough research on youth.

Young people part of social welfare system (who receive financial support in Social Protection System) are not clearly visible, because the system is following data on basic material benefits in social protection: family financial support (MOP), personal disability allowance, care and assistance allowance and child allowance. In family financial support data on number of families and total number of family members is available, but no statistics how many of them are young parents, or how many young people are part of those families.

If we consider education, and skills and competences young people get or life, it is interesting to monitor results of **PISA tests: What 15-year-olds know and what they can do with what they know.**

With this research and monitoring we cover PISA test on reading. “Definitions of reading and reading literacy have changed over time in parallel with changes in society, economy and culture. Literacy is no longer considered to be an ability acquired only in childhood during the early years of schooling. Instead, it is viewed as an expanding set of knowledge, skills and strategies that individuals build on throughout life in various contexts, through interaction with their peers and the wider community.”

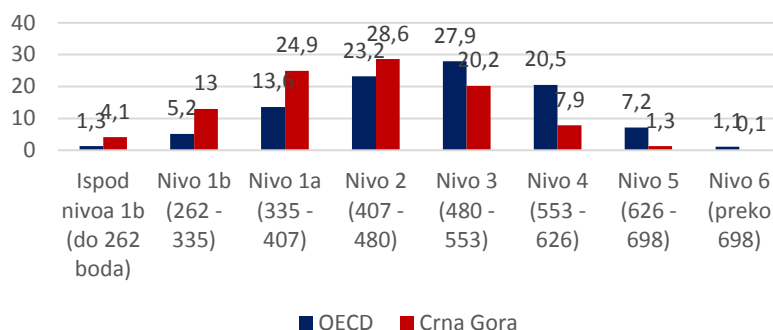
Reading literacy is understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, develop one's knowledge and potential, and participate in society.

PISA definition

The seventh cycle of PISA testing in Montenegro was conducted from 19 March to 12 May 2018 and included 51 schools and 12 primary schools, total 65000 pupils. PISA test are implemented **every 3 years**, and there is a long period allocated for publishing results. Therefore, results from testing done in this year will be available probably in **late 2019**.

If we want to compare data from PISA test implemented so far in Montenegro with data of OECD average, we can notice that Montenegro in 2015 had 4,1 below level (less than 262 points) that is more than 3 time higher than OECD average. The other results are also showing the same trend at level 1a (262-335), 1b (335-407). At the level 2 (407-480) Montenegro results re the closest to OECD average MNE 23,2 / OECD 28,6. Closest to that is level 3 (480 - 553) with OECD average 27,9 / MNE 20,2.

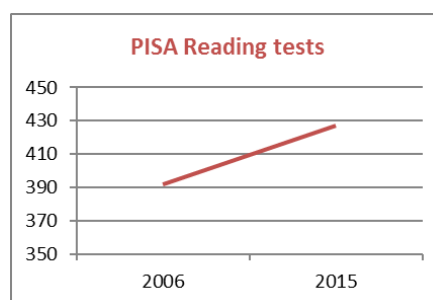
Achievements according to levels of reading literacy - 2015



PISA reading trends are showing improvement in last 10 years, but still there is discrepancy between OECD average and Montenegro results.

	2006.	2009.	2012.	2015.	Difference 2015-2006
Reading	392	408	422	427	35

Table: PISA reading trends 2006 – 2015



If we compare PISA reading average achievements with 3 other countries – Slovenia that was part of the same country before nineties and in that way we could say had similar “starting points” in development of educational system, and e.g. Poland and Estonia, we can notice quite big differences, and significantly lower results in Montenegro.

	Montenegro	Slovenia	Poland	Estonia
Year	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading
2015.	427	505	506	519
2012.	422	481	518	516
2009.	408	483	500	501
2006.	392	494	508	501

Table: PISA reading average achievements comparison with 3 other countries (Slovenia, Poland, Estonia)

It is very important to mention role that **non-formal education** has in bridging the gap and developing additional competences for youth. Besides programs of youth organizations and those working with youth, there is a positive trend of increase in **number of youth and volunteers' clubs** as a places to create and implement programs by youth for youth and encourage young people's social participation. There is increase in support in running them: from the Ministry of sport, municipalities and other different donors, local foundations (e.g. Fakt), but yet that support is mainly short-term and project based, and leading driving force is voluntary engagement of grass root NGOs.

Considering formal education system, and the data on how many young people are giving up from the elementary and secondary education, **Ministry of education** has an electronic system for data gathering, and they have data on dropout from elementary and secondary schools that are accurate for 2016, but cannot be analysed for periods before because of lack of data in that system (Ministry of education).

Dropout from the secondary education in Montenegro	
2015 - 2016 school year	0.17%

Level of education	Number of students who have left education	Total number of students	The percentage of students who have left education
Primary	29	68080	0,04%
Secondary	47	27655	0,17%

Table 2015-2016 school year, Ministry of education

National statistics is more focused on age 18-24, and **MONSTAT** is monitoring **early leavers from education and training**. According to definition, „*Early leavers from education and training* represent the percentage of population aged 18–24 with the lowest secondary education and not participating any more in further education or training “. (MONSTAT)

Early School Leavers (18-24)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total	6,6	5,1	5,1	5,7	5,5
Males	6,3	5,0	5,8,	4,9	4,3
Females	6,9	5,1	4,2	6,6	6,8

Table: Early School Leavers. Source MONSTAT

The enrollment rate in higher education is the ratio of the number of students who enrolled in the studies at institutions of higher education (ISCED 5-8) at the beginning of the academic year per 100 people aged 19 - 27 years.

Enrollment rate in higher education is in the last 2 years has increase of 1,24 but if we compare with previous years, it is still smaller then in 2014-2015. Also, it is interesting to notice that girls are more likely to enroll in higher education and there is a difference of even 8.

Academic year	The enrollment rate (All)	The enrollment rate male	The enrollment rate female
2013/2014	34,28	30,94	37,85
2014/2015	35,41	31,98	39,06
2015/2016	33,29	29,80	37,00
2016/2017	34,53	30,48	38,85

In the academic year 2017/2018, at the higher education institutions in Montenegro, 20 250 students were enrolled in basic studies, which is **5.5% less** than in the previous academic years. The share of female students is 55.2% (11 168), and male students 44.8% (9 082).

During 2017, 3 048 students **graduated from higher education institutions** in Montenegro, which is **2% less than in the previous calendar year**. Of the total number of graduates in primary studies, 57.6% (1 756) is female and 42.4% (1 292) male.

The highest number of undergraduate students finished at public higher education institutions 72.9% (2 222), while in private higher education institutions 27.1% (826) students. The number of graduated students in public higher education institutions was lower by 0.8%, and in private higher education institutions by 5.1% compared to the previous year.¹

In the academic year 2017/2018, 3 576 students enrolled at **postgraduate and doctoral studies** at higher education institutions in Montenegro.

3 524 students enrolled postgraduate studies: specialist studies 2 907, master studies 617. Out of the above number of students, the share of female students is bigger - 57.6%, while male students account for 42.4%.

The number of students enrolled in specialist studies compared to the previous academic year increased by 1.4%. On the other side, 617 students enrolled in master studies, which is 9.9% less than the previous academic year.

In total, 52 students enrolled in doctoral studies, of which 21 females and 31 males. **This is the only level in which a larger number of male students are enrolled.**

ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION OF YOUTH

NEET - proportion of the population not in employment, education or training represent the percentage of young people aged 15–24 years (15–29 years) who are neither in employment nor in education or training.

As an indicator it is included in EU monitoring frameworks and also as youth-specific target for the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 8 to “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. Within the Goal, youth are identified in two proposed targets: (i) by 2030 achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value, and (ii) by 2020 substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET).

Following NEET rate of young people in last 3 years in Montenegro, we can notice that in general it is decreasing: for 15 – 29 23,4 in 2015 to 20.4 in 2017.

However, among youth age 15 – 29 NEET rate is slightly bigger among girls than boys.

For this age group, it is also interesting to notice that this gap among male and female is actually bigger with years: in 2015 it was -1.3, in 2016 it was 1.5 and in 2017, it is -3.8! (see the table)

NEET rate for 15 – 29 (youth according to Youth law in MNE)	2012	2013	2014	2015	Gap M-F	2016	Gap M-F	2017	Gap M-F
Total	23,8	23,2	22,6	23,4		22,3		20,4	
Males	22,3	23,4	22,7	22,8	-1.3	21,6	-1.5	18,5	-3.8
Females	25,3	22,9	22,4	24,1		23,1		22,3	

¹MONSTAT, Graduated students - basic studies. Available at: <https://bit.ly/2J13eO4>

NEET rate for 15 - 24	2012	2013	2014	2015	Gap M-F	2016		2017	Gap M-F
Total	16,9	17,8	17,7	19,1	1.6	18,4	0.7	15,5	0.3
Males	17,2	19,4	18,8	19,9		18,7		15,6	
Females	16,6	16,2	16,5	18,3		18,0		15,3	

Table: NEET rates 2012 – 2017 and gender gap 2015-2017

In the majority of Member States, female inactive NEET rates and gender gaps tend to increase with age as well, and it could be that it is connected with more young women have children and leave the labour market, but we cannot jump into that conclusion because there are no deeper researches done in this area. Like in Montenegro, gender differences in NEET rates for the 15–24 age group in the EU are relatively small, and also in 13 countries of EU NEET rates are even slightly higher for males than for females.

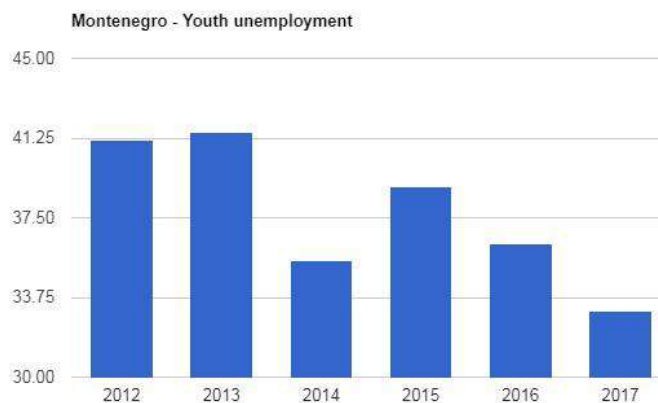
What all of this means? It is not easy to give an answer. According to ILO (2013b) "Because they are neither improving their future employability through investment in skills nor gaining experience through employment, NEETs are particularly at risk of both labour market and social exclusion." But according to OECD (2013) "Having few individuals who are neither in employment, nor in education or training is a sign of a healthy transition from school to work." Is it possible that data are showing us level of discouragement and possible social exclusion of youth, specifically young girls, since as Quintini and Martin (2014) wrote "for many young people inactivity is the result of discouragement and marginalization, which may reflect the accumulation of multiple disadvantages such as the lack of qualifications, health issues, poverty and other forms of social exclusion."? Maybe all stakeholders should deeply consider the reasons for this situation and possibility that "discouraged youth are without work and available to work but did not seek work for one of the following reasons: not knowing how or where to seek work; an inability to find work matching their skills; previous job searches had led to no results; feeling too young to find work; and the sense that no jobs were available in the area" (ILO2015)

One thing is for sure – like in other segments related to economical participation, women and girls are facing not only the same but also gender specific problems, and in order to improve situation, they must be addressed separately and deeper needs analysis and participatory research on this topic should be made.

When analyzing the data on **youth unemployment, ages 15-24**: for that indicator, World Bank provides data for Montenegro from 1991 to 2017. The average value for Montenegro during that period was 49.05 percent with a minimum of 33.09 percent in 2017 and a maximum of 64.17 percent in 1994.

Note: Youth unemployment is the percent of 15-24 year olds who are part of the labor force but are unemployed. Recall that the labor force includes the employed and the unemployed people. Definition: Youth unemployment refers to the share of the labor force ages 15-24 without work but available for and seeking employment. (Global economy²)

² Economic indicators, Global economy www.theglobaleconomy.com/Montenegro/Youth_unemployment/



Source: TheGlobalEconomy.com, The World Bank

Chart from: *Economic indicators, The Global economy, The World bank*

Data for the last three years, according to World bank, are showing: 38.95 in 2015, 36.28 in 2016 and 33.09 in 2017.

When analyzing the trends, not only in the last 3 years, but since 2012, we can notice specific years on rapid decrease, and those could be connected with the years of implementing short-term youth employment measures.

Data that can be obtained from the statistics of MONSTAT are not fully in line with data from Montenegrin employment agency, due to different system on analysis.

Policy recommendations and issues for advocacy

During 2018 representatives of Prima took part in consultations organized by Ministry of Sport - Directorate for Youth, related to drafting the new *Law on Youth* by taking part in the public consultation events and by sending comments and suggestions to relevant ministry.

Although there has been noticeable progress in the area of policy regulation of youth data collection (measures mentioned in *Youth Strategy – Monitoring plan* specifically, and in the *Action plan for 2018 Youth strategy*, adopted at the end of the year 2017, there are still no unified and available data related to position of youth. Therefore, it is needed to:

In the sphere of Social participation of youth, it is necessary to:

- Increase quality of care in the institutions and by institutions, and improve system for implementing programs for prevention, support, and reintegration and resocialization of youth that are at risk or has already been in conflict with the law.
- Improve standards for identification and statistics of different forms of discrimination of young people, and provide mechanisms for their elimination, including judicial protection.
- Ensuring equal access to educational, social and health

- Provide more funding for youth research
- Unify data collection in state institutions so they can be analyzed and compared more easily.

In the sphere of political participation, it is important:

- To make visible and accountable young people that are already in decision making positions: in parliament, ministries, local self-government structures;
- To work on strengthening youth structures and support establishment of Youth Council as a network or youth CSOs that can represent youth needs and advocate for youth rights.
- To improve work of existing and establishing of new Councils for Youth in all municipalities that will be financed by local self-government and whose opinion will be taken into consideration when making decisions on local level.

services for all young people in the country, with special focus on vulnerable groups of youth and youth at risk of social exclusion.

In sphere of economical participation, it is relevant to repeat conclusions and recommendations from M. Katnić³ (April 2017), and improve following areas:

- Labor market regulation - regulation of labor relations and wage regulations
- Tax policy - Reduction of tax burden, simpler application procedures and payment of tax obligations
- Social protection system and incentives related to motivation to work and formalization of work
- Pension system
- Education system and its relationship to the labor market
- General business environment.

Also, recommendations from previous monitoring report are still relevant, and there is a need for:

- Provision of access to an effective, free and timely legal protection in all cases of equality rights violation at labour market.
- Amending the Law on Child and Social Protection and Law on Health Insurance, so as to guarantee full refund of maternity and paternal leave expenses.
- Provision of bigger number and budgets for state funds for support of youth self-employment and entrepreneurship.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATION that is that it is very important for monitoring of the situation of youth, including their level of participation to actively work on the **"Improvement of statistics at the national level and knowledge of youth."** This was recognized by the state as well, and is mentioned in Youth Strategy 2017-2021 and previous NGO Prima policy recommendations.

³ (UN) EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN MONTENEGRO - Policies to increase youth employment. prof. dr. M. Katnić, April 2017, UNDP