



INDICATORS FOR A NATIONAL YOUTH INFORMATION POLICY

(as adopted in Ljubljana on 24 November 2005 by the 16th ERYICA General Assembly)

Introduction

Youth information has become a key area of national and European youth policies. It is one of the four priority areas of work of the Common Objectives adopted in November 2003 by the European Union Member States, and it is the subject of the Council of Europe's 1990 Recommendation (90) 7 on Youth Information and Counselling, and of the European Youth Information Charter, which was updated and adopted on 19 November 2004 in Bratislava (Slovakia) by the 15th ERYICA General Assembly.

In addition to the involvement of young Europeans in youth initiatives and projects, in youth clubs, and in youth organisations, youth information can play an important role in the development of their autonomy and in their non-formal education.

*As part of the Agency's work that aims to assist governments to develop quality youth information services, ERYICA member organisations have formulated the following indicators for a national youth information policy. **These indicators, now adopted as an ERYICA policy statement by the ERYICA General Assembly, are proposed as guidelines for people in government departments and other official bodies responsible for youth policy, as well as for other persons who are interested in the development of youth information work.***

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Set of 12 Indicators

INDICATOR 1: Governmental Role

Youth information should be considered by Governments to be an important task that is an integral part of its overall youth policy, for which it needs to develop a national policy (or strategy) that seeks to develop a comprehensive, coherent and co-ordinated approach to the provision of youth information services throughout its country, as recommended in the European Union's Common Objectives for Youth Information. Such an approach should include a recognition of the independence of youth information services in the accomplishment of their objectives, as well as the establishment of an appropriate national co-ordination or support unit.

INDICATOR 2: Youth Information Legislation

According to which level of government has the legal competence for youth policy in a country, the provision of youth information services should have a legal basis in the relevant youth legislation.

INDICATOR 3: Stable Funding and Staffing

In order to be able to provide their services on a professional and sustained basis, youth information services should be adequately funded and staffed, on the basis of an annual (or pluri-annual) work-plan and budget.

INDICATOR 4: Equal Access for All

Youth Information services, whether provided through youth information centres, through youth-related services in other structures, or via Internet or other media, should be accessible to all young people. This implies a policy concerning the implantation of youth information centres, as well as measures to ensure physical access to services, and the use of various methods to reach groups or persons with special needs.

INDICATOR 5: Regional and Local Dimension

According to which level of government has the legal competence for youth policy in a country, the national youth information policy (or strategy) should have a regional and local dimension in order for youth information services to reach a maximum number of young people. Regional and local authorities should be actively involved in supporting the provision of youth information.

INDICATOR 6: Scientific Research and Expertise

A youth information policy (or strategy) should be based on a sound knowledge of the information needs and expectations of young people. This knowledge can be acquired by consulting young people (including by having them conduct the consultation), by consulting those who work with young people in the locality concerned, and by conducting scientific research on issues relating to youth information.

INDICATOR 7: Innovation

Youth information services must aim to improve constantly the quality of the information and counselling services that they provide to young people. This requires that a youth information policy (or strategy) should promote innovation, and should encourage reflection by youth information workers and by young people about how to develop creative ways of meeting established and new needs and challenges.

INDICATOR 8: Participation of Young People

Promoting the active participation of young people in youth information work should be an important element of a youth information policy (or strategy). Possibilities should be created for young people to participate directly and in a meaningful way at all levels of the youth information process, including in the management and evaluation of projects and services.

INDICATOR 9: Cross-Sectoral Co-operation

A comprehensive and coherent youth information policy will require consultations and co-operation between a wide range of actors, including governmental departments, official youth services, voluntary youth organisations and young people. A possible way to guarantee the necessary cross-sectoral co-operation is the establishment of a cross-sectoral committee or working-group, which has the tasks of developing, supporting, supervising and monitoring the implementation of the national youth information policy (or strategy).

INDICATOR 10: Quality of Services

A youth information policy (or strategy) should include measures to maintain and develop the quality of the youth information and counselling services provided to young people. These measures may be based on the European Youth Information Charter (2004) that is widely accepted as a set of guidelines in many European countries, or on a similar national Charter. Such a charter serves as a basis for the definition of minimum standards and for developing methods of assessing the application of quality factors, which can lead to a recognised quality label for youth information services.

INDICATOR 11: Training

A priority component of a national youth information policy is support for the basic and continued training of youth information workers, since the presence of trained staff is a pre-condition for installing and maintaining a high level of quality in the youth information services offered to young people.

INDICATOR 12: Diversity in the Delivery of Information

Over the course of time, youth information work has undergone many evolutions. In recent years, it has integrated the use of modern information and communication technologies in the management of data, and in the delivery of information. In particular, Internet offers new possibilities to facilitate the access of young people to information and counselling, and can be used to increase the media competence and social skills of young people.

In spite of these developments, face-to-face contact remains an essential component of the information and counselling process that is requested by users and that can only be supplemented by modern technologies. In the future, youth information centres, information points and mobile services will continue to be an integral part of youth information work.

In order to reach the largest possible public, and to meet the needs of specific groups, a youth information policy (or strategy) should enable youth information services to use a wide range of communication media and methods, including peer-involvement, outreach work, and co-operation with other structures (e.g. schools) and events which are frequented by young people.

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