



 **Office of Internal Oversight**

Evaluation of the OSCE's Work With and For Youth

Synthesis Report



Report Number: IE 2019/5

Date issued: May 2020

This synthesis report was prepared by Ms. Barbara Torggler, Deputy Director of the OSCE's Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) and Head of Evaluation, and Ms. Laura Trofin, evaluation consultant.

Ms. Barbara Torggler also oversaw the overall Evaluation of the OSCE's Work With and For Youth in the OSCE, which included three evaluation case studies on which this synthesis report is based. The case studies were conducted by Ms. Laura Trofin with the support of Ms. Svitlana Fesenko, National Evaluation Officer with the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine, while on exchange with the Office of Internal Oversight in 2019.

OIO thanks the management and staff of the executive structures involved in this evaluation, especially the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE Mission to Serbia, and the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek, for their inputs and support through-out the evaluation process.

Table of contents

LIST OF ACRONYMS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
I. INTRODUCTION.....	7
II. CONTEXT	8
III. RELEVANCE of the OSCE’s work with and for YOUTH	16
IV. EFFECTIVENESS of the OSCE’s work with and for YOUTH	18
V. SUSTAINABILITY of the OSCE’s work with and for YOUTH.....	21
VI. YOUTH AND GENDER.....	22
VII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	23
VIII. MECHANISMS for the OSCE’s work with and for YOUTH.....	24
IX. THE WAY FORWARD.....	26
Annex 1. Evaluation Terms of Reference	28
Annex 2. List of stakeholders interviewed	34
Annex 3. Bibliography	36

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CaH	Coalition(s) against Hate
CAYN	Central Asian Youth Network
CIO	Chairperson-in-Office
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ExB	Extra-Budgetary
FPYA	Focal Point for Youth Affairs
MBiH	Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina
MC	Ministerial Council
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OIO	Office of Internal Oversight
OMtS	OSCE Mission to Serbia
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
POiB	Programme Office in Bishkek
RYCO	Regional Youth Cooperation Office
UB	Unified Budget
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
YAG	Youth Advisory Group
VERLT	Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism
YFP	Youth Focal Point

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, the OSCE's commitment to promote the role and the inclusion of youth in its peace and security agenda, dating back to its founding document, the Helsinki Final Act, was strengthened by specific Ministerial Council declarations in 2014, 2015 and 2018. These declarations and a large number of other ministerial and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly outcomes and texts have recognised the potential of young people to contribute to political, economic and social development and to the OSCE's work across the three dimensions of its comprehensive concept of security. In line with the OSCE commitments, youth has been continuously on the agenda of the Chairpersons-in-Office (CiO) of the OSCE.

As the topic of youth has previously not been subject of any Office of Internal Oversight independent evaluation, and since there are calls for more knowledge on which to build future strategies and interventions, this evaluation was initiated in 2019. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the OSCE's efforts in this area, to take stock of and analyse the results achieved, and to identify lessons learned. The evaluation thus focused on assessing the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the OSCE's activities. It also looked at monitoring and evaluation, and at the integration of gender considerations in the work with and for youth. As both a retrospective and forward looking assessment, this evaluation aimed to provide relevant inputs for upcoming activities and to feed into future policies and approaches.

For the purpose of the evaluation, a sample of OSCE interventions was analysed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Kyrgyzstan. The sample included two types of OSCE projects: interventions directly targeting young people (youth-targeted), and interventions not directly targeting young people (non-targeted). For the latter it was assessed to what extent and how youth perspectives had been integrated as a cross-cutting topic. The evaluation did, however, not aim to pursue a project-by-project analysis, but rather to draw some general conclusions from the experience at Mission level for the OSCE's work with and for youth. To complement the analysis of activities of the three selected field structures, a rapid assessment of projects planned across the organization in 2018 was undertaken in order to establish to what extent youth perspectives had been taken into consideration OSCE-wide.

The OSCE does not have any official organization-wide agreed strategy or plan for the work with and for young people. An internal *Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security* of the Secretary General (hereinafter referred to as the Framework) was developed in 2018-2019 under an extra-budgetary project in the Secretariat. It is expected "to lay the foundation for a more unified and coherent OSCE approach to working with youth and for youth", and offers recommendations to executive structures supporting the implementation of youth-related commitments. Specific guiding documents for the work with and for youth also exist at the level of some executive structures.

Since 2014, many activities with and for youth have been implemented by the OSCE. These include several OSCE-wide Youth Fora, international conferences dedicated to the topic, the establishment of a Core Group of Experts (consisting of young people) in the context of the Perspectives 20-30 initiative, who presented their vision of a safer future to participating States and partners in 2019, as well as a large number of interventions managed by field structures and institutions.

Data collected for this evaluation showed that the OSCE's youth-related interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kyrgyzstan were aligned with the agendas of governments, OSCE commitments and CiO priorities. They overall responded to the needs of young women and men, and addressed the challenges young people deal with in their countries. The evaluation, however, identified weaknesses with regards to how the needs of young women and girls, men and boys had been identified, in most cases without conducting any systematic needs assessments. For non-

targeted projects, it was also noted that youth perspectives did not represent an integral dimension of the design, implementation and monitoring & evaluation of most of them. In fact, in many instances the integration of youth perspectives was limited to the implementation of one or more youth-targeted 'standalone' activities within the context of larger projects. Across the OSCE, it was found that in 2018, excluding the youth-targeted projects, less than one fifth of all available project proposals integrated youth perspectives in a more meaningful way.

Projects were usually effective in the short run in terms of generating new knowledge and raising awareness of important topics among young people such as of the risks of violence and radicalisation that lead to terrorism, and the importance of enhancing inter-ethnic tolerance. As a result, many young people who had been engaged in OSCE activities reportedly demonstrated new types of behaviour, for instance in terms of strengthening inter-ethnic dialogue in their communities. In the three countries, several projects were also successful in contributing to changes in procedures, policies and practices. For example, in Serbia, the policies and practices related to working with vulnerable young women and men of several relevant organizations were considerably improved. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, measures that are more inclusive were observed in educational practice, and the OSCE's support of the Coalitions against Hate influenced the adoption of Community Cohesion Action Plans by many municipalities and strengthened the involvement of young people in decision-making processes at local level. Likewise, in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, involving Youth Councils in policy-making processes at local level had become an established practice.

Long-term outcomes were mostly observed at local level. Significantly more resources for the work with and for youth and larger interventions would be needed to create visible changes at provincial and national level as well. The evaluation also observed the need for better monitoring and evaluation practices, in particular relating to the integration of youth perspectives in non-targeted projects, for which youth-related indicators were often missing.

Most frequently, gender was mainstreamed in the work with and for youth by encouraging equal access to and participation of both young women and men in the activities organised by the OSCE. Some projects also included gender considerations with regards to the thematic areas addressed. It was noted, however, that, while some positive developments have been observed in recent years, overall gender has not been fully mainstreamed in the interventions with and for youth. Guidance and more efforts are needed to ensure systematic gender mainstreaming.

The assessment of the sustainability of the OSCE's work with and for youth showed mixed results. Several interventions with counterparts were only continued thanks to the repeated support provided by the OSCE. Given that public funds for youth-related projects are scarce in the three countries visited by the evaluation, the continued support of international organizations and donors proved to be essential. Many positive examples were collected concerning the development of individual and organizational capacities. The ability of public authorities to develop and implement youth strategies and measures and to involve young people in these processes had also increased to a certain extent.

The evaluation also looked at the mechanisms in place for the work with and for youth. These include dedicated frameworks, policies and action plans, advisory groups, the OSCE-wide Network of Youth Focal Points as well as focal point networks established at the level of executive structures. A number of challenges related to these were observed, many of which the OSCE field structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kyrgyzstan have already addressed (or are in the process of addressing). Most managers interviewed were of the opinion that an overall OSCE-wide policy framework, adopted by participating States, for the work with and for youth would strengthen the position of the field structures and provide them with a stronger mandate to pursue the youth agenda more systematically, effectively and with a more sustainable perspective. In the absence of such a policy, the SG's newly-developed *Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security* is considered helpful and a step in the right direction.

To support the organization in this endeavour, this thematic evaluation offers the following emerging lessons for the OSCE's future work with and for youth:

- ✓ *In the absence of an OSCE-wide official policy on youth, adopted by participating States, the development of the Secretary General's Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security has been welcomed by many. It needs to be further promoted and shared in order to obtain a coherent and effective organization-wide approach to youth.*
- ✓ *The Framework could be further strengthened by proposing clearer objectives for youth mainstreaming, which is not a goal in itself, and by providing more guidance on how to mainstream gender in the work with and for youth.*
- ✓ *The lack of proper assessments of the needs of young women and men, including of the root causes of their problems, risks limiting the relevance of the OSCE's work for young people.*
- ✓ *Integrating youth perspectives is often wrongly understood to be synonymous with the integration of youth-targeted interventions in non-targeted projects. The proper integration of youth perspectives in all phases of the project cycle is found to be challenging by many. This is an area where clarity of terminology, awareness raising, capacity development, and tools are needed.*
- ✓ *Lack of data on mid- and long-term outcomes makes it difficult to demonstrate results and to develop a convincing narrative on how the integration of youth perspectives contributes to comprehensive security.*
- ✓ *A large part of the OSCE's projects with and for youth pertain to the Human Dimension. In order to fully implement its commitments on Youth and Security, the OSCE should consider intensifying its efforts to include youth perspectives in the Politico-Military and in the Economic-Environmental Dimensions.*
- ✓ *More concentrated and more continuous efforts are needed to ensure a discernable impact on the lives of young people in participating States.*
- ✓ *Overall, the OSCE engagement with and for youth benefits from learning lessons from the work for gender equality, while recognizing that youth mainstreaming is different to gender mainstreaming in commitments, scope and objectives.*

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents cross-cutting findings and conclusions of an analysis of the OSCE's work with and for youth since 2014. It synthesizes the evaluation findings from country level studies undertaken in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Kyrgyzstan, and offers a few additional observations as well as emerging lessons for the organization's future engagement in this area.
2. As the topic of youth has previously not been subject of any Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) independent evaluation, and since there are calls for more knowledge on which to build future strategies and interventions in this area, this evaluation was initiated by OIO in 2019. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the OSCE's efforts, to take stock of and analyse the results achieved, and to identify lessons learned. As both a retrospective and forward looking assessment, this evaluation was expected to provide relevant inputs for upcoming activities and to feed into future policies and approaches.
3. The evaluation had three main objectives¹:
 - a. Identify the relevance and assess the overall achievements of the OSCE's work with youth and for youth at different levels and in the three OSCE dimensions of comprehensive security;
 - b. Assess to what extent (and how) youth is integrated as a cross cutting topic in the OSCE's activities;
 - c. Capture good practices, lessons learned (of what works, what doesn't work and why), and identify recommendations that will contribute to improving the planning, organization and implementation of future activities.
4. The evaluation thus focused on assessing the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the OSCE's work in this area. It also looked at monitoring and evaluation, and at the integration of a gender perspective in the work with and for youth.
5. It covered two types of OSCE interventions: (i) interventions directly targeting young people², and (ii) interventions not directly targeting young people³. For the latter it was assessed to what extent and how youth perspectives were integrated as a cross-cutting topic. For the purpose of the evaluation, a sample of OSCE interventions from both types was selected and analysed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Kyrgyzstan⁴. The evaluation did, however, not aim to pursue a project-by-project analysis, but rather to draw some general conclusions from the experience at Mission level for the OSCE's work with and for youth⁵. To complement the review of activities of three selected field structures, OIO undertook a rapid assessment of activities planned across the organization in 2018 in order to identify the extent to which youth had been included as a topic and / or as a target group across the organization⁶.
6. Document research was complemented by around 140 interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders (OSCE staff, partners and/or institutional beneficiaries, including public authorities and NGOs, and final beneficiaries, i.e. individuals involved in the various projects

¹ The evaluation terms of reference are included in Annex I of this report.

² These are interventions where young people constitute the main target group.

³ These are interventions that do not focus solely on young people, but integrate youth perspectives to a small or large extent (or not at all).

⁴ Overall, a sample of 37 projects was included in this evaluation (19 targeted and 18 non-targeted). Overviews of the interventions analysed are included in the three country reports.

⁵ This exercise proved to be challenging due to the lack of documented evidence of mid- and long-term results in project documentation, and the variety of different approaches in formulating projects adopted by the field operations. For example, MBiH organises the unified budget (UB) around major areas of intervention such as security cooperation, education, rule of law, democratic governance, etc. One single comprehensive UB project proposal is developed for each area of cooperation, which typically includes numerous results and multiple activities. The OIO considered the result areas of such UB project proposals as 'projects' to make them comparable in scope with the projects of other field operations.

⁶ This entailed an analysis of 2018 project proposals of all executive structures available in DocIn.

covered by this evaluation) at country level and in the Secretariat⁷. Fieldwork was undertaken in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kyrgyzstan, and a report issued on the work of each executive structure. All together, the three country reports offer 28 recommendations for consideration of the concerned offices, who have developed action plans for their implementation.

II. CONTEXT

2.1. OSCE policy environment

7. OSCE commitments on Youth and Security draw on the 1975 Helsinki Final Act⁸, which foresees, inter alia, the promotion of awareness raising activities on environmental protection with the participation of young people, as well as contacts and exchanges among young people in different fields. OSCE Ministerial Council Declarations on youth, adopted in 2014⁹, 2015¹⁰ and 2018¹¹, and a large number of other ministerial and OSCE Parliamentary Assembly outcomes and texts (i.e. Decisions, Declarations and Resolutions) on youth and education constitute the OSCE policy environment for the organization's efforts in this area. While the three declarations and the 2018 Parliamentary Assembly "Resolution on a Shared Priority: Fostering Peace and Security through Enabling Young People to Reach their Full Potential"¹² refer specifically to youth, other commitments highlight particular needs and actions relevant for youth in different thematic areas of the three dimensions of the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security.
8. The 2014 and 2015 Declarations recognize the potential of young people to contribute to economic and political development and to support the participating States in implementing OSCE commitments in the three dimensions. At the same time, the Declarations affirm that youth requires particular attention and that the specific needs, concerns and interests of young people should be addressed in a comprehensive manner. The 2018 Declaration recalls previous OSCE commitments, reiterates the importance of and the role youth plays in society and for the OSCE and takes note of (but does not commit to specific actions to expedite the implementation of) the UNSC resolutions 2250 and 2419. While a number of participating States¹³ expressed their preference for a stronger commitment of the OSCE in the field of youth, including mechanisms to "promote a culture of peace, tolerance, intercultural and interreligious dialogue that involve youth" and a concrete mentioning of the areas where youth could fulfil its role in peace and security, in line with UNSC resolution 2250¹⁴, for others the 2018 Declaration represented a major concession.

⁷ Lists of stakeholders consulted at country level are included in the respective country reports. Stakeholders consulted in the Secretariat are mentioned in Annex 2 of the present report.

⁸ Helsinki Final Act 1975. See <https://www.osce.org/helsinki-final-act?download=true>.

⁹ Declaration on Youth, 21st OSCE Ministerial Council, Basel, 4 - 5 December 2014; See <https://www.osce.org/mc/130536>

¹⁰ Declaration on Youth and Security, 22nd OSCE Ministerial Council, Belgrade, 4 December 2015;

See <https://www.osce.org/cio/207266>

¹¹ Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contributing To Peace and Security Efforts, 25th OSCE Ministerial Council, Milan, 7 December 2018. See <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/406436?download=true>

¹² "Resolution on a Shared Priority: Fostering Peace and Security through Enabling Young People to Reach their Full Potential", Adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the Twenty-Seventh Annual Session Berlin, 7–11 July 2018. See <https://www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/annual-sessions/2018-berlin/declaration-26/3742-berlin-declaration-eng/file>.

¹³ In line with the Interpretative Statement under Paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the Rules of Procedure of the OSCE, attached to the Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contributing To Peace and Security Efforts, 25th OSCE Ministerial Council, Milan, 7 December 2018.

¹⁴ A more comprehensive and concrete approach is taken by the 2018 Parliamentary Assembly "Resolution on a Shared Priority: Fostering Peace and Security through Enabling Young People to Reach their Full Potential", which reiterates the challenges youth deals with and calls upon OSCE participating States to prioritise young people and their agendas. The Resolution suggests concrete measures the participating States could take in order to support youth to become involved, empowered and to develop into resilient, independent and civically committed adults.

9. Several other decisions and declarations of the Ministerial Councils and of the Parliamentary Assembly highlight the particular role of young people regarding the (i) fight against intolerance and discrimination and fostering tolerance, mutual respect and understanding between cultures and religions; (ii) equal access to education, of educational programmes and training for combating anti-Semitism; (iii) the fight against the threat posed by narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances; (iv) transitional justice, human rights; and (v) facilitating the access of young people to the labour market. In this context, several declarations refer specifically to young persons in vulnerable groups such as Roma and Sinti, as well as to young women and girls, their access to educational programmes and particular concerns such as violence against women. The 2018 Ministerial Decision on preventing and combating violence against women¹⁵ highlights the importance of adolescence as an important phase in the social development of a person, and the specific risks faced by young women. In the area of Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT), the 2015 Ministerial Declaration on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation that Lead to Terrorism¹⁶ identifies the particular risk youth, including children, are at in terms of being radicalised to terrorism and recruited as foreign fighters¹⁷.
10. The OSCE commitments recall the United Nations normative base on youth, i.e. Resolutions 2250 (2015)¹⁸ and 2419 (2018)¹⁹, the UN Supplement²⁰ to the 1995 United Nations World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)²¹ and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development²². “Youth2030: The United Nations Strategy on Youth”²³, which was officially launched in September 2018, has not yet been referenced by any OSCE commitment.
11. Unlike for gender equality, the OSCE does not have any official organization-wide agreed strategy or plan for the work with and for young people. An internal *Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security* of the Secretary General (hereinafter referred to as the Framework) was developed in 2018-2019 under an extra-budgetary project. It is expected “to lay the foundation for a more unified and coherent OSCE approach to working with youth and for youth”, and offers recommendations to executive structures, in particular the Secretariat, supporting the implementation of youth-related commitments. Specific guiding documents on youth mainstreaming and other aspects related to the work with and for youth also exist at the level of some executive structures. “Youth”, among other vulnerable categories, is furthermore formally presented as a horizontal issue in the OSCE Project Management Manual.

2.2. OSCE working definitions of “youth mainstreaming” and other terminology

12. Most of the OSCE staff interviewed for this evaluation, appreciate that youth mainstreaming or the integration of youth perspectives²⁴ in policies, programmes and projects, do not replace, but rather complement targeted interventions to particularly promote the empowerment of young people or to reduce inequalities (among young people and between young people and the rest of the population). As regards the concept of youth mainstreaming, given the absence of an agreed

¹⁵ Ministerial Council Decision No. 4/18 on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women, 25th OSCE Ministerial Council, Milan, 7 December 2018; See <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/406019?download=true> (MC.DEC/4/18).

¹⁶ Declaration on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalisation that Lead to Terrorism, 22nd OSCE Ministerial Council, Belgrade, 4 December 2015; See <https://www.osce.org/cio/208216?download=true> (MC.DOC/4/15).

¹⁷ Note that a compilation of all youth-related commitments was produced under the ExB project of the Secretariat’s Office of the Secretary General.

¹⁸ Resolution 2250 (2015), S/RES/2250 (2015). See <https://www.youth4peace.info/UNSCR2250/Introduction>.

¹⁹ Resolution 2419 (2018), S/RES/2419 (2018). See [https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2419\(2018\)](https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2419(2018)).

²⁰ ECOSOC Resolution 2007/27; See <https://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/docs/2007/resolution%202007-27.pdf>

²¹ See <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/world-programme-of-action-for-youth.html>.

²² See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>.

²³ Available at <https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-un/>.

²⁴ The concepts ‘youth mainstreaming’ and ‘integration of youth perspectives’ are used interchangeably by this evaluation.

organization-wide policy and definition, a number of executive structures have developed working definitions to help guide their efforts in this area²⁵. One such definition is presented in the 2019 SG's *Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security*, where youth mainstreaming is described as:

"A strategic approach to systemically and meaningfully integrating youth perspectives into all three dimensions of security. It follows a comprehensive youth-responsive approach by:

- ✓ *Engaging young women and men in policy discussions and programmatic processes;*
- ✓ *Responding to the needs of youth and taking them into consideration in any area and stage of a policy or project; and*
- ✓ *Assessing the impact on young people of any planned action."*

13. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (MBiH) has developed a youth mainstreaming policy that supports the Mission's overarching strategic planning and result-orientation approach. In this context youth mainstreaming is defined as:

*"...actions aimed to integrate youth perspectives into programmatic and political work, with the aim of ensuring more effective, relevant and sustainable solutions and results. ... Youth mainstreaming entails that: (i) youth-specific considerations (i.e. needs, priorities, concerns, vulnerabilities, interests and aspirations) are identified, reflected upon and addressed where possible, and that (ii) the impact on/implications for young women and men of planned and implemented activities are assessed and the resulting conclusions used to inform subsequent activities."*²⁶

14. Both definitions are broadly aligned with those in use by other international organizations²⁷. Youth engagement/involvement and needs are considered at policy, programme and project levels and in all stages and no area covered by the OSCE's work is exempted. The evaluation noted, however, that the MBiH's emphasis of the achievement of results adds an additional dimension that, at least implicitly, implies that overall effectiveness of the Mission's work could be increased by mainstreaming youth perspectives in it.

15. In Serbia, the Mission's first Youth Action Plan (2020 – 2022) was under development at the time of this evaluation. It aims to "implement a systemic approach to mainstreaming youth across programmes in order to enhance inclusive youth policies, youth education, and youth participation in decision-making processes in Serbia as cornerstones of progress and stability". The work undertaken in this regard built on an earlier definition developed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Agreed Conclusions (1997/2)²⁸ for gender mainstreaming:

„the process of assessing the implications (for youth) of any planned action, including

²⁵ In their work the Special Representatives of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Youth and Security generally refer to "youth mainstreaming" as "taking the interests of young women and men into consideration in all OSCE projects and policies."

²⁶ See "Youth Mainstreaming. Definition and practice" issued by the MBiH.

²⁷ For instance, the Commonwealth Secretariat defines youth mainstreaming as "strategies for intergenerational equity and justice that enable young people's capabilities, participation and human rights to be an integral dimension of the analysis, design, implementation and monitoring & evaluation of policies and programmes in inter-sectoral planning across all social, political and economic spheres. It enables young people and adults to benefit equally from, and contribute equally to, development outcomes." Commonwealth Secretariat. 2017. Youth Mainstreaming in Development Planning. Transforming Young Lives. This publication also highlights that "the foundation of this definition is the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) definition for gender mainstreaming, as it appears in ECOSOC 1997. It has been revised to highlight key factors the youth sector perceives as important in youth mainstreaming".

²⁸ Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4652c9fc2.html>.

legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making (youth) concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that (youth) benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.”

16. In line with the UN approach, the current discussions in Serbia also consider organizational aspects of youth mainstreaming such as hiring procedures for junior level positions and internship policies.
17. So far, no “youth mainstreaming” definition or plan has been developed by the Programme Office in Bishkek (POiB). The Office has, however, expressed its intention to systematically address the needs of young women and men (whenever possible and relevant), as part of its overall Youth Policy, starting with the 2021 budget cycle.
18. During the course of this evaluation, the evaluation team became aware of one aspect that is frequently emphasized in literature related to the topic. It concerns the need for youth mainstreaming (and the desired integration of youth perspectives that is part of youth mainstreaming definitions in use in the OSCE and foreseen in many OSCE documents) to analyse and subsequently address the root causes of the problems that young women and men deal with²⁹. For instance, unequal power relations between young people and other age groups might be at the source of issues affecting them. Shifting these power relations might require working with the main duty bearers of young people’s rights (government, parents etc.). The evaluation observed that questions of power relations are rarely analysed and raised in OSCE documents, and that this aspect of the work with and for youth is often not well understood in the organization. This might diminish the effectiveness and sustainability of the OSCE’s efforts in this area.
19. Another aspect that was pointed out by several of the stakeholders interviewed was the lack of clear objective of youth mainstreaming in the OSCE. Mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end, which has so far not been clearly defined. This is unlike for gender mainstreaming, where the main goal is usually understood to be gender equality. A future revised version of the SG’s Framework could be helpful in providing some more clarity in this area by proposing clearer objectives for youth mainstreaming.
20. The evaluation also noted a certain lack of precision when it comes to the terminology related to the work with and for young people that is used in the OSCE. For instance, the SG’s Framework refers to the “engagement” of youth, and it seems that “engagement” and “participation” are used interchangeably without pointing to potential differences in interpretation and meaning. Most relevant documents (including the SG’s Framework) also refrain from defining and applying more complex concepts such as “youth empowerment” and “youth capabilities”. The development of an OSCE Glossary of youth-related terms could help create a shared understanding of key terminology across executive structures. A selection of definitions used by other organizations is presented below:

Youth empowerment³⁰ is based on the concept of youth “capabilities”³¹. It aims to enhance the capabilities of young people for them to be able to enjoy the “freedom to determine what they want and what they value”. It also highlights the need for economic, social, legal and political enablers that contribute to this empowerment, including, importantly, through duty-bearers

²⁹ See for instance the *Guidelines for Debate. What is a youth perspective?* Vásquez Díaz. 2012, available at youthpolicy.org.

³⁰ Based on Commonwealth Secretariat. 2017. *Youth Mainstreaming in Development Planning. Transforming Young Lives*. Available at http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/events/documents/YMDP_9781849291644.pdf. Section 1.4, page 8.

³¹ Human - such as good health and education; social - such as social belonging, a sense of identity, leadership relations; and psychological - such as self-esteem, self-confidence, the ability to imagine and aspire to a better future.

working with young people (with diverse capabilities and emerging power) in shaping these enablers and outcomes for equality and justice.

Youth involvement³² refers to ensuring *the active participation of young people in decision-making processes on issues that affect them*. Through participation (among other measures) in decision-making processes youth are empowered and thus have a greater control over their lives.

Youth engagement refers to involving youth in different activities, also related to volunteering. There are generally three types of ‘youth engagement’: engagement *in* (usually in education or training), engagement *at* (taking part in an activity), and engagement *with* (being connected in some form of partnership or group work with others).

Youth participation is something young people can do on their own. Adults can involve youth, they can engage youth, but they cannot *participate* youth.

Youth involvement and engagement are mechanisms both for youth mainstreaming and youth-targeted policies/interventions. They contribute to youth empowerment.

2.3. Mechanisms and activities undertaken across the OSCE

21. In line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its pledge that ‘no one will be left behind’³³, and OSCE commitments, youth has been continuously on the agenda of the Chairpersons-in-Office (CiO) of the OSCE. In 2014, the Swiss Chair prioritized, among other issues, the “enhanced involvement of civil society and in particular of young people”. In the following year, under the Serbian CiO, a draft OSCE Action Plan on Youth and Security was developed by 57 young women and men from OSCE participating States, and the first two Special Representatives on Youth and Security were appointed. Even though this Action Plan was never officially adopted, several participating States continued the OSCE’s efforts to engage young people in debates and activities, recognizing that youth can play an important role in preventing and resolving conflicts and countering global and transnational challenges³⁴. A “Group of Friends of Youth”, composed of delegates of participating States, initially established by the Serbian CiO to negotiate the Action Plan, has since then been supporting the OSCE’s youth agenda.

22. Since 2015, nine Special Representatives on Youth and Security (three women and six men)³⁵, appointed by consecutive CiOs, have been working to, inter alia, represent youth perspectives and CiO positions on youth within the OSCE, advise the CiO on youth policy issues, advocate for the needs and rights of young people and for systematic youth participation in the context of the OSCE’s comprehensive approach to security, advocate for the implementation of youth-related commitments and for youth mainstreaming in the OSCE and participating States, and overall bring the OSCE closer to young people³⁶. They have also initiated or participated in Side Events on Youth and Security of the yearly Ministerial Councils or other meetings (e.g. the Human Dimension Implementation Meetings).

23. At a more operational level, a Network of Youth Focal Points (YFPs) was formally established in the OSCE in 2016, when the first OSCE-wide meeting of YFPs was organized. Today, the Network is informally coordinated by the YFP who is part of the Office of the Secretary General in the

³² This and the following two definitions are based on the toolkit *YERP*. Available at <https://yerp.yacvic.org.au/>

³³ United Nations, General Assembly (2015b), preamble, para. 2.

³⁴ Based on the 2014-2018 OSCE Annual Reports.

³⁵ Special Representatives are nominated by the Chairperson-in-Office to help deal with crises or to ensure better coordination of participating States’ efforts in specific areas.

³⁶ Based on the 2014-2018 OSCE Annual Reports.

Secretariat. The SG's 2019 *Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security* calls on executive structures to support the OSCE-wide YFP network by appointing one YFP, and to have informal terms of reference developed for the YFP. Almost all executive structures have by now appointed a main focal point, and some of them have concrete terms of reference. In addition to the main YFPs, there are Youth Contact Points in some Secretariat departments and executive structures.

24. Since 2013, many activities have been implemented at OSCE level. The Ukrainian CiO organized an OSCE Youth Summit in 2013, which brought together many young people from across the OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation. An OSCE-wide Youth Forum took place in 2014 (organised by ODIHR), followed by the 2nd OSCE/ODIHR Youth Leadership Forum in the same year, and a third one in 2019. Several Conferences with a focus on youth were organised such as "Working with Youth for Youth: Protection against Radicalization" in Belgrade in 2015, the 2016 annual Mediterranean Conference "Youth north and south of the Mediterranean: facing security challenges and enhancing opportunities", and the OSCE Youth Conference in Malaga, Spain in 2017, as well as the 2018 "International Conference on the Role of Youth in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism" organised by the Transnational Threats Department's Action against Terrorism Unit in Uzbekistan.
25. Under its *Perspectives 20-30* initiative, the OSCE Secretariat³⁷ established a "Core Group of Experts", consisting of 22 young women and men from across the OSCE area, who were invited to discuss their vision of a safer future in 2030 and beyond with decision makers of participating States. The activities of the Group culminated in the development of a paper³⁸, which served as a basis for discussion at the OSCE-wide Youth Forum in Bratislava in October 2019, which brought together participants and official representatives from OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation³⁹. Young people also conveyed their perspectives for a safer future to the Chairperson-in-Office and the Albanian 2020 Chair at the 26th OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2019⁴⁰.
26. In addition to the above initiatives, the OSCE's executive structures have implemented many youth-targeted projects and some non-targeted projects where youth perspectives were integrated. The interventions conducted by the Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Mission to Serbia, and the Programme Office in Bishkek, which were part of this evaluation, are discussed in more detail in the following chapters. A few illustrative activities organized by other executive structures are mentioned here. For instance, the Transnational Threats Department in the Secretariat has organized the "Leaders against Intolerance and Violent Extremism" (LIVE) training course and the #UnitedCVE (Countering Violent Extremism) campaign, both targeting young women and men and other stakeholders. The Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCCEA) implemented YDEAS⁴¹ (Young Developers and Entrepreneurs to Advance Start-ups in the Western Balkans). The High Commissioner of National Minorities (HCNM) does not have projects specifically targeting youth, but young people are very often among the beneficiaries of interventions in the area of education, e.g. multilingual education in Central Asia and Ukraine. ODIHR has continuously worked on enhancing the participation of young Roma and Sinti in the public and political spheres, and initiated many other activities. In 2014, it organised the first-ever OSCE Roma and Sinti Youth Conference, supported the elaboration of the report, "Activism,

³⁷ In cooperation with the Friedrich Ebert Foundation's Regional Office for Cooperation and Peace in Europe and the Folke Bernadotte Academy.

³⁸ OSCE. Core Group of Experts, November 2019. Discussion Paper. *Engaging Youth for a Safer Future. OSCE Perspectives 20-30 Initiative*.

³⁹ Note that these activities happened after the field work for this evaluation was completed. They are mentioned here for the sake of completeness.

⁴⁰ For more details see <https://www.osce.org/chairmanship/441431>.

⁴¹ For more details see <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/379438>.

Participation and Security among Roma and Sinti Youth”, and organised yearly events on the same topic, e.g. side events of the Human Dimensions Meeting.

27. A similar dynamic is observed at the level of field structures. For example, the OSCE Presence in Albania set up a Youth Advisory Group in 2019, based on the model developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It furthermore implemented projects such as “Youth Trail”, promoting OSCE values in Western Balkans at regional level. The Programme Office in Dushanbe initiated the Youth Network of Gender Champions, uniting over 400 alumni of the Office’s youth events from all over Tajikistan, and organised Model OSCE events for university students from across the country in 2018 (as it was done in Moldova and in Armenia in previous years). In 2017, the Mission to Skopje supported the Agency of Youth and Sport in preparing a guideline on effective Local Youth Councils (LYC) and trained judges, youth workers, young politicians, and law faculty students on how to adequately respond to discrimination and hate crime. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo, together with UNICEF, implemented a media literacy project called PONDER for 80 young people. In 2017, in Ukraine the OSCE Project Co-ordinator supported the Youth Contact Group initiative, whose representatives conducted over 20 workshops on critical thinking, media literacy and human rights across Ukraine, also involving national minorities and internally displaced persons. This is just to mention a few youth-targeted activities conducted by field structures. There are more.

28. To get an indication of the extent to which youth perspectives have been integrated as cross-cutting topic in the OSCE’s portfolio, OIO undertook an analysis of project proposals developed by executive structures in 2018. This is what the data suggests:

Cross-cutting analysis of the project proposals (UB and ExB) developed by executive structures in 2018

Based on a desk analysis of project proposals approved for 2018⁴², the following key points emerged:

- 19 (8%) out of the 244 proposals targeted youth (youth-targeted projects).
- 51% of all proposals did not address youth in any way.
- 22% of all proposals mention youth briefly, but do neither provide any substantive information on youth, nor plan any activities.
- 18% mention youth in several parts of the project proposal, and there is at least one activity within the project dedicated to young people.
- Only 1% of all project proposals fully integrate youth perspectives⁴³.

This means that while almost half of all proposals mentioned youth at least a little, only 27% integrated youth perspectives in a more meaningful way. **Excluding the youth-targeted projects, only 19% of all proposals integrated youth perspectives in a more meaningful way.** In 2018, all of these were implemented by OSCE structures in the field.

When it comes to the distribution of youth-targeted proposals across dimensions, data indicates that:

- Overall (UB and ExB combined) over 60% pertained to the Human Dimension and over 20% were cross-dimensional.
- 86% of UB-funded youth targeted projects pertained to the Human Dimension.

⁴² The evaluation looked at project proposals available in DoCIn. In total, a number of 620 project proposals were considered for the purpose of this analysis (Unified Budget (UB) and Extra-Budgetary (ExB) projects). Only for 244 projects (131 UB-funded and 113 ExB-funded) the information provided in DoCIn was sufficient for an accurate analysis to be undertaken.

Note that hardly any information was available on DoCIn for the OSCE’s institutions and the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan.

⁴³ Meaning that youth needs are integrated throughout the whole project proposal.

When looking at non-targeted project proposals, the analysis showed a similar picture in that most of the projects where youth had been integrated in a more meaningful way pertained to the Human Dimension or were cross-dimensional, whereas the Politico-Military and Economic and Environmental Dimensions had comparatively many more projects that did not address youth at all.

Overall, this data suggests that, in order to fully implement its commitments on Youth and Security, the OSCE might need to intensify its efforts to include youth perspectives in the organization's work, in particular in the Politico-Military and in the Economic-Environmental Dimensions.

2.4. National context and youth policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kyrgyzstan

29. The three countries visited for the purpose of this evaluation have adopted youth laws and strategies/policies. The strategies focus on matters that are relevant for young people, such as employability, active participation in the labour market, health, leisure time, safety, social inclusion, mobility. In Serbia the Law on Youth⁴⁴ has been in place since 2011, and a National Youth Strategy (2015-2025)⁴⁵ and two subsequent Action Plans were adopted. In Kyrgyzstan, based on the 2009 Law of the Kyrgyz Republic on Youth Policy, in 2016 a Youth Strategy for the years 2016-2020⁴⁶ was adopted, and in 2017 the new government of the Kyrgyz Republic approved the programme "Development of a Youth Policy for 2017-2020"⁴⁷. Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a national youth policy, but youth laws and strategies were adopted both in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska⁴⁸. These commitments at the level of policy and legislation, however, contrast with the general impression gained by this evaluation of a prevailing overall dissatisfaction by many with the level of interest demonstrated by decision-makers in the actual implementation of the measures envisaged in the respective national legislative and strategic frameworks.

30. The capacity and involvement of youth organizations in the three countries vary. In Serbia, three national organizations, called the three "pillars" of youth policy, play an important role in the implementation of the National Strategy, i.e. the National Youth Council (KOMS)⁴⁹, the National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR)⁵⁰ and the National Association of Local Youth Offices (Association KZM)⁵¹. The Government also has an Advisory Council on Youth. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kyrgyzstan youth organizations, particularly the youth councils foreseen by the national legislations, are more developed at local and regional (canton, in FBiH) levels, but further steps are needed to capacitate them adequately in the entire country.

⁴⁴ Available at https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261806/Serbia_2011_08_09_-_Zakon_o_mladima_ENG_final.pdf/6341a7a7-ba81-4d19-a882-3e80542a09c6.

⁴⁵ Available at <http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/Nacionalna%20strategija%20za%20mlade%20-%20ENG.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Available, in Russian, at

http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=93650&p_country=KGZ&p_count=276

⁴⁷ Available at <http://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?rgn=100090>.

⁴⁸ These are the Law on Youth Organization of the Republika Srpska and the Youth Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. For the period 2016-2020 a Youth Strategy was adopted for the FBiH as well as a third Youth Policy in the Republika Srpska. The Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have laws or strategies on youth.

⁴⁹ The highest representative body of youth in Serbia, KOMS is a federation of associations that currently unites 97 members (youth and youth organizations) from the whole territory of the Republic of Serbia.

⁵⁰ The National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) was initiated in May 2008. At the time of the evaluation, NAPOR had 68 member organizations delivering youth work in Serbia. The topics covered are various.

⁵¹ KZM is a non-governmental association bringing together most of the youth offices in Serbia (more than 120 out of the 140 youth offices in the country, which were established in roughly 85% of the municipalities).

31. In all three countries youth, as defined by the existing laws, constitutes an important part of the total population (i.e. roughly 20% in Serbia and in BiH, and approximately 50% in Kyrgyzstan and in some areas of Serbia such as Novi Pazar). “Youth” is defined as people from 15 to 30 years of age in Serbia and BiH, and from 14 to 28 years of age in Kyrgyzstan.

32. The evaluation observed that young people in the three countries face some common challenges in the context of sometimes divisive and unstable political climates. They have low levels of trust in public authorities and democratic values⁵², as well as little media literacy⁵³, and a certain level of disengagement from civic, political and social life can be observed. Stereotypes, which hinder reconciliation and inter-ethnic cohesion, persist and young people are often exposed to violence and the risk of radicalisation in contexts marked by unemployment and limited development opportunities. As a consequence they find themselves in precarious economic situations (particularly at local level and in remote, rural areas). As a consequence, many young people have chosen to leave their countries. The rapidly increasing trend of outmigration and related brain drain put pressure on the governments to deal with the specific concerns of the younger generation.

2.5. OSCE work with youth and for youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kyrgyzstan

33. The evaluation observed a growing preoccupation by the three OSCE field structures with the implementation of the OSCE commitments on youth. The OSCE’s engagement is also influenced by the importance given to advancing the youth agenda by the national governments and by the positions taken by other international organizations.

34. The OSCE’s focus on youth in these participating States has been increasing since 2014 with the majority of initiatives having been implemented in the Human Dimension and in the Politico-Military Dimension. The evaluation witnessed fewer activities pertaining to the Environment and Economic Dimension. Some projects were already initiated as early as 2011 (e.g. supporting the Youth Councils in Kyrgyzstan), several of them with a focus on the local level where young people tend to have fewer opportunities, and youth councils and organizations are less developed. The three field structures follow different approaches with regards to youth mainstreaming, as already mentioned in an earlier chapter of this report. A more detailed discussion of the work of the three OSCE field structures is presented in the following chapters.

III. RELEVANCE of the OSCE’s work with and for YOUTH

35. Overall, the OSCE’s work with and for youth supported participating States’ efforts to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including with regards to its Sustainable Development Goals, many of which contain youth-specific targets⁵⁴. The OSCE’s engagement in this area was also found to be aligned with the agendas of the three governments, OSCE commitments and priorities of the Chairpersons-in-Office.

3.1. Relevance of youth-targeted projects

36. Regarding the relevance of particular youth-targeted projects, data indicates that the OSCE’s interventions that were subject of this evaluation respond to the needs of young women and men and of the wider community, and address the challenges young people deal with within their countries. For instance, several OSCE interventions, such as the Youth Councils supported by the

⁵² For example, the „Alternative report on the position of youth in Serbia” published by the National Youth Council of Serbia in 2017 found that 70% of youth do not agree that democracy is the best form of governance.

⁵³ For example the Media Literacy Index 2019 ranks Serbia the 30th and BiH 32nd among 35 countries. Report available at https://osis.bg/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/MediaLiteracyIndex2019_-ENG.pdf

⁵⁴ There are 20 youth-specific targets spread over six key SDGs: Goal 2 (hunger), Goal 4 (education), Goal 5 (gender equality), Goal 8 (decent work), Goal 10 (inequality) and Goal 13 (climate change), and many more targets that relate to young people implicitly.

POiB in Osh and Tokmok, work on enhancing inter-ethnic tolerance. Similarly, projects implemented by the OSCE Missions to Serbia and to Bosnia and Herzegovina to enhance cooperation among Serbian and Albanian youth actors, and to abolish the segregation of schools, connect young people across ethnic divides and help to overcome them.

37. Another example is the prevailing risk of violence and radicalization of young people that lead to terrorism, which is recognized in all three countries and addressed through activities such as the “Countering Violent Extremism Dramatic Production Contest” in BiH, which involved young people, and the sub-regional “Workshop on Perspectives from the Western Balkans” to discuss the role of young women and men in the prevention of violent extremism, as well as the ample trainings on the prevention of radicalisation implemented together with the Ministry of Interior in Kyrgyzstan⁵⁵.
38. The regional approach taken by the OSCE both in the Western Balkans and Central Asia responds to cross-border challenges, and aims to strengthen inter-ethnic tolerance as well as regional reconciliation. To that end, OSCE supported initiatives such as the Regional Youth Cooperation Office (RYCO), the Central Asian Youth Network (CAYN), the Young Policy Advisers Course (YPAC), as well as the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, which are aligned with the connectivity agenda developed in the framework of the Berlin process for the Western Balkans, and regional cooperation endeavours in Central Asia.
39. Despite the observed overall relevance of the OSCE’s youth-targeted interventions to the needs of young people, this evaluation identified a number of weaknesses when it comes to how these needs were assessed. For instance, rarely were the needs of the target group identified, classified and prioritized as per OSCE guidance on project management⁵⁶. This is evident in project proposals, where it is not uncommon for the same or a very similar text to be “recycled” several times.

3.2. Relevance of the integration of youth perspectives in non-targeted projects

40. The evaluation found that for the non-targeted projects in most cases youth perspectives did not represent an integral dimension of their design, implementation and monitoring & evaluation. In fact, in many instances the integration of youth perspectives was limited to the implementation of one or more youth-targeted „standalone” activities within the context of larger projects⁵⁷.
41. This was the case, for instance, in interventions that facilitate youth involvement in policy- and decision-making processes at local level (e.g. in BiH several youth organizations participate in the Coalitions against Hate (CaH)⁵⁸, and many of the activities undertaken by CaH target youth). Another example is the project “Consolidating the democratisation process in the security sector in the Republic of Serbia” that awarded several mini-grants to organizations for the implementation of youth-related activities such as the youth security analysis and development of an action plan in Novi Sad. The evaluation also observed that usually, these youth-targeted activities implemented in the framework of non-targeted projects were aligned with the needs of the young women and men in the respective countries, government priorities, OSCE commitments and CiO priorities.

⁵⁵ These activities are undertaken in the framework of the project “Enhancing Awareness and Capacity of Young Men and Women to Address Issues of CVE” (2018).

⁵⁶ Which recommends conducting fully fledged needs assessments and situational analysis for projects with a budget above 50,000€. All projects considered in the framework of this report have a budget higher than 50,000€, thus this recommendation applies to all of them.

⁵⁷ Examples of this approach are the “Youth and Security Summer Schools” and the support to the European Youth Parliament in the framework of the “Security Cooperation annual project in BiH”, and the “Youth Summits on CVE” in the framework of the „Support to Dialogue on the Prevention of Violent Extremism in Bosnia and Herzegovina” project; in Serbia the „School of Democracy” organised in the framework of the project „Strengthening the oversight role of the Serbian Parliament, as well as accountability, transparency and public participation in the Parliament’s work”, seminars with students on transitional justice in the project “Support to Monitoring of National War Crimes Trials”; in Kyrgyzstan the environment protection activities engaged youth under the “Promoting environmental security and sustainable nature resource management in Kyrgyzstan 2018”.

⁵⁸ For more details see <https://www.osce.org/bih/163731>

42. Given the small number of *fully* youth-mainstreamed projects, the relevance of the mainstreaming itself to young people could not be assessed. It was noted, though, that the already mentioned lack of proper assessments of the needs of young people at the project preparation stage often complicated or even hindered the integration of youth perspectives during implementation and monitoring. This might impact the overall relevance of non-targeted projects for young people. In this context it is worth pointing out that despite the commitments, scope and objectives being different, it might be worth exploring more systematically if any of the lessons learned from mainstreaming gender in the project cycle could be relevant for youth mainstreaming as well⁵⁹.

IV. EFFECTIVENESS of the OSCE's work with and for YOUTH

4.1. Effectiveness of Youth-targeted projects

Changes in knowledge and attitude (short-term outcomes)

43. Overall, the evaluation found the youth-targeted projects implemented in the three countries to be very effective in the short run. Awareness was raised and new knowledge of many important topics was generated among young people. Youth-targeted projects also facilitated the engagement of young women and men in a variety of activities, and, to a more limited extent, their involvement in decision and policy-making processes (e.g. through the Youth Councils in Kyrgyzstan, the Security Summer Schools in BiH, and the support to the three national pillars of the national youth policy in Serbia). The evaluation also encountered a number of young leaders in the three countries who had accepted leadership roles after participating in capacity development activities organized by the OSCE.

44. Examples of areas where awareness was raised include the topic of violence and radicalisation and their consequences. For instance, in Kyrgyzstan, the country-wide seminars with the participation of almost 4700 community members, including young women and men, as well as dedicated training to improve understanding of issues related to VERLT, generated increased awareness and knowledge of a range of related issues (legal consequences, mediation, cybercrime, religious aspects etc.) among participants. Furthermore, supporting the Youth Councils in Osh and Tokmok contributed to increasing inter-ethnic understanding in the two communities⁶⁰.

45. In Serbia, the support provided by the OSCE generated increased levels of knowledge and skills of the three pillars and of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) for the work with vulnerable sub-groups of young people, and cooperation at the national and local levels (among themselves and with local authorities). RYCO's capacity to prepare and organise calls for proposals and to appraise the applications received also increased through OSCE support.

Changes in practice and policy (mid-term outcomes)

46. The most evident change in behaviour identified by this evaluation concerns young people who strengthened inter-ethnic dialogue and exchanges in their communities after having participated in activities supported by the OSCE. Notable examples of projects that generated such mid-term outcomes are those undertaken by the MBiH to fight the „two school under one roof” by addressing inter-ethnic tensions; the project on “Enhancing regional connectivity among Serbia and Albania youth actors”; and “Promoting Inter-Ethnic Tolerance and Capacity for Regional Cooperation amongst Young People” in Kyrgyzstan. As regards the prevention of radicalisation, a positive example is Kyrgyzstan, where representatives of the Ministry of Interior reported to have observed several young people at risk of radicalisation who renounced radical views and even became trainers themselves in subsequent project activities. The evaluation also encountered initiatives, such as the drama contest in BiH (involving Bosnian, Serbian and Croat students and

⁵⁹ OIO's 2017 Thematic Evaluation of the Implementation of the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality might offer some inspiration in this regard.

⁶⁰ As one interviewee mentioned, “the relevance of differences disappeared when youth carried out joint activities”.

pupils), that have the potential to generate behaviour change if they were organised by schools every year.

47. The evaluation also identified some *changes in procedures, policies and practices* generated by the OSCE's youth-targeted projects. For example, in Serbia the policies and practices of the three national pillars related to working with vulnerable youth have considerably improved, and the number of young people engaged in voluntary work has increased. In the education area, the MBIH contributed to a greater degree of local ownership in school development planning and to the elaboration of more inclusive measures in educational practice. In Osh, Kyrgyzstan, involving Youth Councils in the policy-making processes at local level (in matters related to inter-ethnic tolerance) has become an established practice; and in Serbia, RYCO has simplified its procedures and practices for generating, appraising and monitoring projects thanks to the support provided by OMTS.
48. In terms of generating changes in practice and policy, the following approaches were appreciated as particularly effective by stakeholders interviewed: inviting young people with different ethnical backgrounds and mind-sets to share and exchange opinions on contentious issues; applied courses and educational activities involving high level national and international experts (e.g. as in the case of the OSCE Academy); and the award of mini-grants that provide young people with immediate opportunities to utilise and consolidate new knowledge (e.g. in the projects "Enhancing regional connectivity among Serbia and Albania youth actors", and Promoting Inter-Ethnic Tolerance and Capacity for Regional Co-operation amongst Young People").
49. With regards to the availability of data on the mid-term outcomes of the OSCE's work, the evaluation observed that little to no information is collected on a systematic basis on how young women and men capitalise on the new knowledge gained at a later stage, for example how knowledge acquired during CAYN meetings, the Policy Advisors Course, or the Youth-Media training for journalists in Kyrgyzstan, is utilised after activities are completed. This not only makes it difficult for the evaluation to draw any final conclusions on the matter, but also for the OSCE to demonstrate what has been achieved (other than by providing anecdotal evidence).

4.2. Effectiveness of the integration of youth perspectives in non-targeted projects

Changes in knowledge and attitude (short-term outcomes)

50. Similar to youth-targeted projects, youth-related interventions implemented in the framework of non-targeted projects generated important short-term outcomes in terms of increased awareness and knowledge among the engaged young women and men. For example, the activities of the Coalitions against Hate in BiH raised awareness of hate crimes and the need to promote diversity and tolerance for living together peacefully. Engaging young people in the activities of the Aarhus Centres in Osh and Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan changed their perspectives about environmental challenges and their consequences for the country⁶¹. The seminars on transitional justice and the study visits to war memorials made a strong impression on the young participants in Serbia. Activities implemented in Novi Pazar helped young women and men recognise discrimination and strengthened their capacity to counter-act, to communicate assertively and to better self-regulate their behaviour in groups. Through comprehensive assessments and analyses OSCE projects also generated significant knowledge on the topic of VERLT in Serbia, as well as about violence and radicalisation risks among juvenile offenders⁶².
51. The evaluation also learned about young men and women who had been involved in OSCE activities for years, going through a complete process of capacity-building, which helped them appreciate the value of activism. As a consequence, in the Western Balkans young Roma professionals became

⁶¹ Between 2015 and 2018 the Aarhus Centre in Bishkek involved 4000 young women and men in conferences, workshops, meetings with local authorities and public hearings, round table discussions, debate clubs and clean-up actions of parks and the Issyk-Kul lake.

⁶² Analysed in the Valjevo prison, the only prison for juvenile offenders in Serbia.

key resources at the local level where they organised a variety of initiatives. They subsequently also kept being involved by the OSCE as key local partners and community facilitators in other projects benefiting young Roma.

Changes in practice and policy (mid-term outcomes)

52. The evaluation identified several examples of changes in behaviours, procedures and practices that were driven by OSCE activities. Participants became politically engaged and candidates in elections. For instance, it was reported that some young participants in the summer school organised in the framework of the project “Assisting the Kyrgyz Republic in consolidating the electoral system based on the lessons learnt from past elections (2018)”, became candidates of existing parties or parties set up by themselves. In Novi Pazar in Serbia, inter-ethnic respect and cooperation among pupils of schools increased, as demonstrated by students of different ethnicities respecting each other’s holidays (e.g. Easter, Slava, Ramadan) and celebrating them together.
53. OSCE support to the Coalitions against Hate in BiH fostered their engagement with local municipalities, which influenced the adoption of Community Cohesion Action Plans by many of them. CaH have also strengthened the involvement of young people in the decision making processes at local level, which is referred to by some young participants as “the next level of activism”. Several of these young women and men initiated advocacy activities aiming at the improvement of legislation related to hate crime, while others became educators and initiated follow-up activities.
54. A good example in terms of mid-term outcomes generated by the OSCE is the Club for Children in Novi Pazar, Serbia, which was established by the local Association of Psychologists. The Association developed a 360° methodology for the work with vulnerable young people with risky behaviour. It comprises the provision of psychological support in cooperation with schools, parents and centres for social work, combined with training on youth security and safety delivered with peer support. This approach had beneficial effects on the young people involved, as it helped them better understand the roots of their behaviour, and its consequences at the individual and community level. Based on the experience gained by the Association of Psychologists with the Club for Children and Youth, the social protection system was reorganised by the municipality of Novi Pazar.
55. Overall, the evaluation observed that the implementation of youth-related interventions influenced the achievement of mid-term outcomes by non-targeted projects in instances where several activities addressed this target group, and where they were concentrated geographically, as it was the case, for instance for the work with the Coalitions against Hate in BiH, the project “Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization Threats in Serbia through Community-Based Early Warning and Preventive Engagement”, and “Assisting the Kyrgyz Republic in consolidating the electoral system”.
56. On the other hand, data on how and in what ways the integration of *single* youth-targeted activities influenced the achievement of the desired mid-term project outcomes is usually not collected, which did not allow the evaluation to draw any conclusions in this regard⁶³. This points to the need to improve project intervention logics so that they better reflect how the work with and for youth

⁶³ For example, under the project “Strengthening law enforcement capacities to fight organized crime, drug trafficking and cybercrime”, the link between the approach taken to address problems faced by young people (i.e. a drug prevention campaign aimed at awareness raising among adolescents and adults in Bishkek), and the strategy and results of the project is not explicit. In other words, it is not clear how the drug prevention campaign, together with the other activities planned, is expected to contribute to an enhanced capacity of the Ministry of Interior to counter organized crime, drug trafficking and cybercrime. The same applies to the project “Assisting the Kyrgyz Republic in consolidating the electoral system based on the lessons learnt from past elections”. In that case, the project involved youth, people with disabilities, and youth with disabilities, but how this contributed to a consolidation of the electoral system was not clearly spelled out.

that is part of larger non-targeted projects connects with other project elements, and what role it plays in terms of overall project effectiveness.

Changes at the level of society (long-term outcomes of targeted and non-targeted projects)

57. The evaluation identified a small number of instances where OSCE projects generated substantial improvements related to higher-level goals in the thematic areas addressed. For instance, systemic changes (e.g. as regards the electoral reform in Kyrgyzstan) were registered by projects that address structural reforms comprehensively, and that are implemented with the full engagement of the responsible authorities. The OSCE also contributed, to a certain extent, to positive change through the promotion of youth interests at the national, regional and local levels, e.g. in Serbia, through the work with the three national pillars of youth policy.
58. Usually, however, long-term outcomes are more visible at the local level, in communities where interventions are concentrated, for instance in Novi Pazar (Serbia) regarding the reduced risk of violence and radicalisation and improved inter-ethnic communication, or in cities where a youth security strategy has been implemented. Another example creating local impact are the numerous awareness raising activities organized with young people by the Aarhus Centres in Kyrgyzstan, which had certain ripple effects locally in that communities and citizens overall became more mindful of the environment, and waste sorting increased in popularity. Most youth-related interventions are, however, small in scale and quite isolated, and thus their potential to generate impact is low.
59. Significantly more resources for the work with and for youth and larger interventions would be needed to also produce more long-term outcomes at provincial and/or national level. Of course, other factors and mechanisms intervene in this regard, too, such as the level of commitment of decision-makers, the socio-economic situation of young people, and the scale of interventions implemented by other donors.

V. SUSTAINABILITY of the OSCE's work with and for YOUTH⁶⁴

60. The assessment of the sustainability of the OSCE's work with and for youth showed mixed results. Several interventions with counterparts were only continued thanks to the repeated support provided by the OSCE (e.g. the CAYN, the Policy Advisors Course, the Youth-Media training of journalists in Kyrgyzstan, the Summer Schools and Youth European Parliament in BiH, the targeted projects in Serbia). The OSCE Academy in Bishkek, while also relying on continuous OSCE support, mobilized additional funds from other donors. Given that public funds for youth-related projects are scarce in all three countries, the support provided by and the coordination among international organizations and donors often proved to be essential.
61. With regards to the development of individual and organizational capacities, many positive examples were collected by this evaluation. For instance, many young women and men trained with OSCE support further engaged in youth work at community and national level⁶⁵. Trainings conducted for NGOs, for instance on project management and fundraising proved to be successful with several of them growing stronger and more sustainable (e.g. the Coalitions against Hate in BiH, the Youth Councils in Osh in Kyrgyzstan, beneficiaries of grants in Serbia in the framework of the projects "Enhancing regional connectivity among Serbia and Albania youth actors" and „Consolidating the democratisation process in the security sector in the Republic of Serbia"). In Kyrgyzstan, according to stakeholders interviewed, building the capacity of the Ministry of Interior to work with youth and religious leaders at local level was instrumental for the continuation of VERLT prevention activities once POiB's projects had ended.

⁶⁴ Sustainability of the results is assessed at four levels: strategic, operational, personnel capacity, and resources.

⁶⁵ Members of YAG, young security experts and Roma Young Professionals in BiH, the members of the three pillars of the national youth policy in Serbia and members of Youth Councils in Osh and Tokmok.

62. The ability of public authorities to develop and implement youth strategies, plans and measures and to involve young people in these processes has also increased to a certain extent in the three countries. For example, the Ministry of Youth in Serbia considers that the OMTS has played an important role in strengthening its policy-making capacity, including with regards to the engagement of partners in this process. The evaluation also learned that the OSCE made an important contribution to the implementation of the youth policy in Kyrgyzstan by supporting the Youth Councils in Osh, whose twelve leaders became salaried staff members of the Committee for Youth Affairs (YAC) located in the Mayor's Office. POiB also worked on strengthening the security aspects of the "Youth Policy for 2017-2020", and the project "Assisting the Kyrgyz Republic in consolidating the electoral system based on the lessons learnt from past elections" contributed to the integration of the specific interests of young women and men in a national strategy developed with OSCE support.
63. In the education area, addressing inclusive education in BiH through the elaboration of school development plans with the involvement of the Cantons' ministries and parents contributed to ensuring sustainability at the policy level. Furthermore, several Coalitions against Hate in BiH reached a level of maturity that ensures continuity of actions despite political instability. The 15 Community Cohesion Action Plans (CCAP) put in place by the CaH and adopted by the municipalities, play an important role in this regard.
64. With regards to outputs produced by the OSCE, the evaluation identified several instances where it was not clear whether they continued to be utilised beyond project completion. For example, in the case of the project "Enhancing regional connectivity among Serbia and Albania youth actors", the knowledge platform <https://youthumans.net/>, containing numerous tools for youth organizations, was known by project beneficiaries interviewed but not in use any more at the time of the evaluation⁶⁶. Other important outputs, such as the manuals for preventing drug consumption among young people in Kyrgyzstan seem to be hardly in use after project completion.
65. Overall, the evaluation observed that individual and institutional capacities, including for policy development and implementation, have been strengthened by OSCE projects. These benefits will most likely remain once the OSCE's support has ceased. Continuation of interventions, however, largely depends on the continued availability of funding, and the commitment of governments. Both are not always guaranteed.

VI. YOUTH AND GENDER

66. Most frequently, gender was mainstreamed in youth-related interventions by encouraging equal access to and participation of both young women and men in the activities organised by the OSCE (e.g. in the Security Summer Schools in BiH, Youth Councils and VERLT prevention seminars in Kyrgyzstan, and the School of Democracy in Serbia). Consequently, in terms of gender marker ranking a majority of the assessed interventions would fall into the first category of "projects only gender mainstreamed in terms of participation and/or only gender mainstreamed to a small extent, like participation aspects". Some projects also addressed gender-sensitive topics, such as gender-based violence and the consequences of radicalisation for both genders in the framework of the CVE Dramatic Production Contest in BiH; or harmful cultural practices such as polygamy, early marriage, and bride-kidnapping in the trainings on VERLT in Kyrgyzstan.
67. A review of project documentation shows that, similar to the observed overall shortage of information on any proper assessments of the needs of young people conducted prior to project development, consequently proposals also tend to lack data on the specific problems and needs faced by girls, young women, boys and young men. As a consequence, specific objectives and activities to address the identified needs are also missing. Usually, the data collected for monitoring

⁶⁶ The webpage has not been visited for nine months, based on a visit of <https://youthumans.net/> on 28.07.2019.

the youth-related interventions is also not disaggregated by sex, although in several cases the project proposals commit to such an approach. Consequently, many self-evaluation reports lack details on whether and how gender was mainstreamed in youth-related interventions and what gender-specific outcomes were obtained. Overall, the evaluation found that gender mainstreaming still needs to be significantly strengthened in the OSCE's work with and for youth.

68. It was also positively noted, however, that in terms of gender mainstreaming the situation has improved in recent years in some executive structures. Good examples of promoting gender equality in the OSCE's work with and for youth were, for instance, identified in Serbia, where the OMtS developed the inclusion chapter of the National Youth Strategy, and ensured that gender was mainstreamed in other chapters and in the monitoring and evaluation provisions of the Strategy. OMtS also supported the "OSCE Dialogue Academy for Young Women", organized annually in the framework of the "Follow Us" initiative implemented by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, as well as the mini-project "Women of Albania and Serbia: We Can Do It!"⁶⁷.
69. In this context it is worth pointing out that the SG's newly-developed *Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security* does not provide much guidance for gender mainstreaming in the work with and for youth. Strengthening this aspect of the Framework could help executive structures enhance their own gender mainstreaming efforts.

VII. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

70. With regards to monitoring and evaluation of the projects included in this evaluation, differences were observed between youth-targeted and non-targeted interventions. Output level indicators were found to be usually in place for the former, and these were also reported against in self-evaluation reports (particularly since 2016). Some outcome level indicators were also noted, in most cases relating to short-term outcomes. An analysis of project reports showed, however, that means of verification and evidence to substantiate the reported outcomes were lacking in many cases.
71. Regarding the non-targeted interventions, the evaluation established that in many instances no youth-related indicators (neither at output nor outcome level) had been established, which means that progress in terms of supporting young people was also not systematically monitored against any indicators. Even projects that had objectives related to young people and produced significant outputs in terms of youth engagement, often did not have related indicators. Likewise, for some of them self-evaluation reports did not contain any relevant information. On the other hand, the evaluation also identified a few projects, where the opposite applied, i.e. youth-related output data was collected despite the absence of relevant indicators (e.g. in case of the Coalitions against Hate in BiH).
72. Good examples in monitoring OSCE activities with and for youth were also identified. For instance, the youth-targeted "Legal Learning Project for Southwest Serbia"⁶⁸ monitored progress made against youth-related short-term outcome indicators; the non-targeted project "Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization Threats in Serbia through Community-Based Early Warning and Preventive Engagement", and the project "Support to Monitoring of National War Crimes Trials" had youth-related indicators for several of the expected outcomes, even when these

⁶⁷ Implemented under the initiative "Enhancing regional connectivity among Serbia and Albania youth actors". For more details see <https://youthumans.net/projects/we-can-do-it/>.

⁶⁸ As an example, the following information was collected: 100 participants in the programme components expressed increased understanding of the rule of law and judicial institutions in Serbia; at least 50% of students, who participated in the Moot Court Legal Learning Pilot, have improved knowledge of courtroom procedures and improved skills in developing briefs and arguments; and at least 75% of students participating in study visits to local and state run institutions expressed an increased understanding of these institutions.

outcomes or the related objectives did not explicitly refer to youth. In Kyrgyzstan, recent measures have led to significant improvements in the monitoring of youth interventions as well.

73. With regards to external project evaluations (“commissioned evaluations”), by the time of the present evaluation only one external evaluation of a youth-targeted project had been commissioned. The evaluation was managed by the POiB in 2016 and looked at the Youth Councils in Osh and Tokmok, Kyrgyzstan. It identified the project outcomes achieved for the young people involved in the projects as well as their sustainability. Three evaluations were commissioned of non-targeted projects⁶⁹. Evaluations of the project “Consolidating the democratisation process in the security sector in the Republic of Serbia” did, however, not particularly focus on youth, although numerous activities were implemented by youth organizations or for the benefit of young people. The other two represent good evaluation examples, as they both conducted in-depth analyses of the youth-related interventions implemented in the context of the two projects, and their impact on young people. They did, however, not attempt to analyse how overall project effectiveness and sustainability had benefited from the integration of youth perspectives.

VIII. MECHANISMS for the OSCE’s work with and for YOUTH

74. In the OSCE a number of mechanisms were put in place to support the organization’s work with and for young people. These include the frameworks, policies and action plans that several executive structures have introduced, and which were discussed in an earlier chapter of this report. There is also the OSCE-wide Network of Youth Focal Points (YFPs). The three field structures included in this evaluation each have one (or several) such focal points, who are members of the larger Network. They are by many of their colleagues recognized as those responsible for or even as champions of the work with and for young people, and a lot of the progress made in this area is attributed to their engagement. The focal points also share information on the topic with colleagues, and support the integration of youth perspectives across portfolios.

75. This system does not come without its challenges, however, some of which were identified by this evaluation. One relates to the absence of dedicated terms of reference for the YFPs in many executive structures, which means that their mandate is not always clear. As a consequence, the YFPs are not systematically involved during the project design phase, which creates challenges for youth mainstreaming. A case in point is the observed general absence of proper assessments of the (sex-disaggregated) needs of young women and men during project preparation, the fact that the link between youth-related activities and the overall project objectives is not always clearly established, or that youth perspectives are not taken into consideration in monitoring and evaluation, or that they are not taken into consideration at all.

76. The field structures involved in this evaluation have already drawn some lessons from this situation. For instance, the MBiH proposed a number of key actions in 2018 in order to improve this state of affairs. Apart from the adoption of a Mission-wide definition/understanding of youth mainstreaming, these involved the promotion of practical examples of youth mainstreaming, the establishment of Youth Affairs Points of Contact at local level and of an inter-departmental working group on youth affairs, as well as a number of measures to ensure youth mainstreaming in the project cycle and related documentation. It was furthermore recommended to have a youth mainstreaming performance objective as part of the Performance Management Process (PMP) for some staff members. A number of the proposed recommendations have been implemented, others are in the process of being implemented.

⁶⁹ These are the evaluations of the projects “Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization Threats in Serbia through Community-Based Early Warning and Preventive Engagement” and “Consolidating the democratisation process in the security sector in the Republic of Serbia”, and of the “OSCE Mission’s engagement in combating hate- and bias-motivated incidents and crimes through supporting the Coalitions against Hate” in BiH.

77. Overall, the results of these measures still remain to be seen. For instance, although the Focal Point for Youth Affairs (FPYA) at the Sarajevo Head Office has been more systematically involved in project development since then, this evaluation was not able to identify any projects where youth had been fully mainstreamed (in line with the definition adopted by the MBiH itself). A lesson learned in this regard is that YFP/FPYAs do not only need a clear mandate, but also to have access to senior leadership, as well as sufficient time and resources to effectively work with project managers⁷⁰. Moreover, for a large Mission like the MBiH, having one FPYA serve the entire mission was found to be insufficient. Appointing Youth Affairs Points of Contact contributed to creating a stronger Mission support structure for youth mainstreaming in the future.
78. The MBiH also has a Youth Advisory Group (YAG), which is coordinated by a staff member and composed of a group of young people. It was established as early as 2014. Since then it has been considered a flagship mechanism for integrating youth perspectives into the Missions' projects. In recent years, in order to improve the functioning and relevance of the YAG, the capacity of its members was strengthened, and its level of involvement in project activities increased. However, overall, the role of the YAG is still not well known by all project managers in the Mission, and the YAG's strategic contribution to programme/project design and evaluation stages is modest. Ensuring the YAG members' representativeness and specialisation remains a challenge to be addressed.
79. In Serbia, no policy or specific mechanism other than the YFP was in place before 2019 to integrate youth perspectives in the work of the Mission. Although the work of the YFP was much appreciated, the Mission recognized that the resources at the YFP's disposal were insufficient compared to the efforts required to design, manage and coordinate the Mission's portfolio in the area of youth, and to enhance cooperation with project managers. This is when the Mission embarked on a major initiative to shape up its efforts in this area.
80. With the support of PeaceNexus Foundation, Youth Contact Points were established in all departments, their capacity was strengthened in line with their newly adopted terms of reference, cooperation between the YFP and the Youth Contact Points intensified, and different tools were developed and tested (e.g. guidelines containing multiple easy-to-use instruments to support staff in enhancing different aspects of youth mainstreaming, including a Youth Project Check). The Mission also developed its first biannual Youth Action Plan, which aims to "implement a systemic approach to mainstreaming youth across programmes in order to enhance inclusive youth policies, youth education, and youth participation in decision-making processes in Serbia as cornerstones of progress and stability". Considering the timeline of these new measures, which partly coincided with this evaluation, their effectiveness could not be assessed.
81. The Programme Office in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, also has a Youth Focal Point, whose overall responsibility for the coordination of the POiB's youth-related activities, cross-dimensional co-operation and contacts within the OSCE and external partners was recently refined⁷¹. So far, no other mechanisms were put in place to facilitate the integration of youth perspectives in the POiB's projects. At the time of the evaluation there was also no dedicated policy or strategy to provide a framework for the work in this area⁷².
82. When working on improving the mechanisms for the work with and for youth, several of the field structures involved in this evaluation also tried to learn some lessons from the work on gender,

⁷⁰ In the MBiH, the FPYA role was added to a regular position in the Policy and Planning Section (PPS) of the Office of the Head of Mission.

⁷¹ It is worth noting that in 2016 the German CiO Special Representative on Youth and Security, in cooperation with the Centre in Bishkek (at the time, now called POiB), organised the first ever OSCE Youth Focal Points' meeting with the participation of OSCE representatives responsible for youth portfolios from 12 OSCE field structures and institutions.

⁷² OIO understands from the POiB's management response to this evaluation that the Office plans to strengthen its mechanisms in the future.

while acknowledging that the commitments, scope and objectives differ from those for the work for gender equality. The Mission to Serbia, for instance, identified lessons learned from gender mainstreaming that are of relevance for its youth agenda. In BiH, the Mission combined both portfolios in a Gender and Youth unit to make the best use of procedural synergies between the two. Given the timing of the evaluation, it was too early to assess the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach.

83. Overall, with regards to the OSCE's mechanisms for the work with and for youth, most managers interviewed were of the opinion that an overall OSCE-wide policy framework, adopted by participating States, for the work with and for youth would strengthen the position of the field structures and provide them with a stronger mandate to pursue the youth agenda more systematically, effectively and with a more sustainable perspective. In the absence of such a policy, the newly-developed SG's *Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security* is considered helpful and a step in the right direction.

84. Several recommendations proposed by the Framework were confirmed by this evaluation as necessary measures if youth mainstreaming is the objective, e.g. the preparation of general guidelines on the principles of responsive and meaningful youth engagement, the establishment of youth-sensitive situation and conflict analyses, the development of youth-specific indicators, strengthening the capacity of OSCE staff and mission members to better understand and address the needs of young people etc. In order to better integrate youth perspectives through-out the project cycle, OSCE staff particularly stressed the need of a set of guidelines and good practices that are concrete, operational, and easily adaptable to the particularities of each dimension and geographic area.

IX. THE WAY FORWARD

85. The three field structures that were the focus of this evaluation have been among the most active in the OSCE. There are, however, others whose engagement in this area has also been important. These include the OSCE Presence in Albania, the Programme Office in Dushanbe, and ODIHR. The Secretariat has also implemented significant projects in this area. Together with the Special Representatives of the CiO it has furthermore managed the OSCE Network of Youth Focal Points, organized a number of international youth conferences, and taken the lead in the development of the first SG's *Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security*, which was finalized in 2019.

86. This evaluation has shown that youth-targeted projects implemented by the OSCE Missions to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to Serbia, as well as by the Programme Office in Bishkek, have achieved good short-term and some longer-term results. A few good practices of youth mainstreaming were also identified. Given that the latter is an area where more work is planned for the future, and which is found to be challenging by many, these should be shared across executive structures. For all efforts related to the integration of youth perspectives in programme and project design and implementation, including the establishment of the required structures, mechanisms and processes to make it happen, lessons should also be learned from the OSCE's work for the promotion of gender equality. Some of the challenges identified by this evaluation resemble those faced by the organization in its work on gender equality.

87. This thematic evaluation offers the following emerging lessons that are meant to inform the OSCE's future work with and for youth:

- ✓ *In the absence of an OSCE-wide official policy on youth, adopted by participating States, the development of the Secretary General's Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security has been welcomed by many. It needs to be further promoted and shared in order to obtain a coherent and effective organization-wide approach to youth.*
- ✓ *The Framework could be further strengthened by proposing clearer objectives for youth mainstreaming, which is not a goal in itself, and by providing more guidance on how to mainstream gender in the work with and for youth.*
- ✓ *The lack of proper assessments of the needs of young women and men, including of the root causes of their problems, risks limiting the relevance of the OSCE's work for young people.*
- ✓ *Integrating youth perspectives is often wrongly understood to be synonymous with the integration of youth-targeted interventions in non-targeted projects. The proper integration of youth perspectives in all phases of the project cycle is found to be challenging by many. This is an area where clarity of terminology, awareness raising, capacity development, and tools are needed.*
- ✓ *Lack of data on mid- and long-term outcomes makes it difficult to demonstrate results and to develop a convincing narrative on how the integration of youth perspectives contributes to comprehensive security.*
- ✓ *A large part of the OSCE's projects with and for youth pertain to the Human Dimension. In order to fully implement its commitments on Youth and Security, the OSCE should consider intensifying its efforts to include youth perspectives in the Politico-Military and in the Economic-Environmental Dimensions.*
- ✓ *More concentrated and more continuous efforts are needed to ensure discernable impact on the lives of young people in participating States.*
- ✓ *Overall, the OSCE engagement with and for youth benefits from learning lessons from the work for gender equality, while recognizing that youth mainstreaming is different to gender mainstreaming in commitments, scope and objectives.*

Annex 1. Evaluation Terms of Reference

Evaluation of the OSCE's Work With and For Youth

RATIONALE FOR CONDUCTING AN EVALUATION ON THE TOPIC OF YOUTH

We are currently living in a generation with the largest group of young people in history. According to the UN, there were 1.2 billion youth⁷³ aged 15-24 years globally in 2015, accounting for one out of every six people worldwide. By 2030, the number of youth is projected to have grown by 7 % to nearly 1.3 billion. Some countries have well over half of their population under 30 years of age. Approximately 38% of the OSCE's population is aged less than 30 years⁷⁴. Young women and men have great potential to be agents of positive change, but are also at high risk of social exclusion.

BACKGROUND

The OSCE's commitment to promote the role and the inclusion of youth in its peace and security agenda dates back to its founding document, the Helsinki Final Act, and was strengthened through many subsequent OSCE decisions. To this end, OSCE participating States (pS) have repeatedly recognized the contribution of youth to enhancing peace and security, with over 50 ministerial-level decisions and declarations including provisions on youth and education adopted since the contribution of youth was first recognized in the Helsinki Final Act of 1975⁷⁵. These build the cornerstone of the organization's engagement with and for youth⁷⁶. Importantly, two consecutive Ministerial Council (MC) declarations, in 2014⁷⁷ and 2015⁷⁸ recognised the potential of young people to contribute to political, economic and social development and to the OSCE's work across the three dimensions of its comprehensive concept of security. More recently, at the 25th MC meeting in Milan (December 2018), the "Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contribution to Peace and Security Efforts" was adopted.

The OSCE's Secretary General stated that "*the participation of young women and men in peace and security efforts is crucial for achieving sustainable and inclusive results*"⁷⁹. Youth has furthermore been a continued priority of the Chairpersons-in-Office.

Specifically, and according to the mandate first established in 2015 (in line with the 2014 Basel Ministerial Declaration on Youth and the 2015 Belgrade Declaration on Youth and Security), the Special Representatives on Youth and Security support the CiO in, inter alia, representing a youth voice within the OSCE; representing positions of the CiO on youth and related topics; advising the CiO on youth policy issues⁸⁰. Since 2017, the Office of the Secretary General has been implementing an ExB

⁷³ In the absence of an OSCE consensual definition of youth, the framework proposed by UNSC Resolution 2250 (2015) defining youth as persons between 18 and 29 years old is used. See also: OSCE Declaration on the Role of Youth in Contributing to Peace and Security Efforts MC.DOC/3/18

⁷⁴ Resolution on a Shared Priority: Fostering Peace and Security through Enabling Young People to Reach their Full Potential, Final Berlin Declaration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, 11 July 2018.

⁷⁵ See Annual Report to the OSCE Permanent Council OSCE CiO Special Representatives on Youth and Security, 20 December 2018, CIO.GAL/186/18/Rev.1

⁷⁶ Document from Side Event on the occasion of the 25th OSCE Ministerial Council: *The Role of Youth in Contributing to Peace and Security Efforts*, Friday, 7 December 2018

⁷⁷ Declaration on Youth, 21st OSCE Ministerial Council, Basel, 4 - 5 December 2014;

See <https://www.osce.org/mc/130536>

⁷⁸ Declaration on Youth and Security, 22nd OSCE Ministerial Council, Belgrade, 4 December 2015

See <https://www.osce.org/cio/207266>

⁷⁹ <https://www.osce.org/secretary-general/335321>

⁸⁰ Hereunder also; Advocating for the needs and rights of youth toward various stakeholders, primarily participating States (pS) and OSCE executive structures; Promoting youth mainstreaming within the OSCE and pS; Bringing the OSCE closer to youth, contributing to outreach on the OSCE, its values and concrete activities; Advancing priority topics, including on counter

project on strengthening the OSCE's efforts on youth and security, which proposed a framework⁸¹ for this work. The project intends to lay the foundation for a unified and coherent approach for the work with and for youth, which is currently lacking in the organization. A Framework on Strengthening OSCE efforts on youth and security was presented by the Secretary General to participating States on 1 March 2019 at the Group of Friends on Youth and Security. It inter alia proposes a working definition of youth, thematic pillars and actionable recommendations for Executive Structures. Simultaneously, efforts are also partially addressed through the continuous work of multiple field operations and underlined as a priority within the OSCE Youth Focal Points Network.

Against this backdrop, there are different roles and projects in the OSCE addressing this topic. There is an emphasis on promoting youth participation in areas like preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT), inter-communal, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, education, tolerance and non-discrimination and political participation. Youth can be directly targeted in initiatives but often also as a crosscutting issue as part of various other projects.

ACTIVITIES

The OSCE takes the work related to youth forward through operational project activities on the ground, carried out by several Executive Structures including OSCE field operations; in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, youth-related projects and activities are run with partners on the ground. Some initiatives in point are, for example:

- The **Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina's** Youth Advisory Group, which gives youth a voice in the implementation of the Mission's activities. The Mission further implements a wide range of activities, such as organising Youth and Security summer schools, engagement of young people in efforts to counter hate crimes, VERLT etc.
- The Central Asian Youth Network (CAYN) supported by the OSCE **Programme Office in Nur-Sultan** and the **Programme Office in Bishkek** brings together students from the region each year to discuss and share perspectives on regional security, stimulating critical thinking and encouraging a co-operative approach in line with the OSCE's values and principles. The Programme Office in Bishkek also directly focuses on a range of other issues with emphasis on youth councils, conflict prevention, promoting inter-ethnic tolerance and regional cooperation, trainings on VERLT etc. Youth is also targeted as a crosscutting issue as part of various projects.
- Enabling youth perspectives and youth participation is part of the **OSCE Mission to Serbia's** work across three OSCE dimensions. The Mission works with youth, youth oriented civil society organizations, youth offices, national youth policy actors, national minority councils and other institutions toward development of inclusive youth policies. The Mission promotes human rights of youth and their active citizenship and enables capacity building on advocacy, intercultural learning, gender equality, regional connectivity, transitional justice and working with vulnerable youth. In this regard it is piloting an innovative initiative on youth

terrorism, cyber security, digitalization, trust and confidence building, as well as combatting intolerance and discrimination; Promoting the implementation of UNSCR 2250(2015) on Youth, Peace and Security within the OSCE region; Collaboration on and support of the OSCE Secretariat's project Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security; Assisting initiatives to build up and support youth-led and youth-related networks and organizations throughout the OSCE area (e.g. Youth Advisory Groups, the Central Asian Youth Network, and the Regional Youth Cooperation Office).

⁸¹ "Working with youth and for youth", Framework for strengthening OSCE efforts on youth and security working document, 1 March 2018.

mainstreaming, which will allow embedding a youth focus in the Mission's activities in a *systematic* way, from the conception to the implementation of projects related to democratization, rule of law, security cooperation, media and regional cooperation.

EVALUATION PURPOSE

As the topic of youth has previously not been subject of any Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) independent evaluation, there are calls for more knowledge on which to build future strategies and interventions in this area. The purpose of this evaluation is thus to assess the OSCE's efforts and to generate an analysis of the results achieved and lessons learned. As both a retrospective and forward looking assessment, this evaluation will then provide knowledge and relevant inputs for future activities, feed into policies and approaches, and inform the development of a potential new youth mainstreaming strategy/framework.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the evaluation are to:

1. Identify the relevance and assess the overall achievements of the OSCE's work with youth and for youth at different levels and dimensions,
2. Assess to what extent (and how) youth is integrated as a cross cutting topic in the OSCE's activities, and to
3. Capture good practices, lessons learned (of what works, what doesn't work and why), and to identify recommendations that will contribute to improving the planning, organization and implementation of future activities.

The primary users of the evaluation are OSCE staff at all levels working on activities involving youth.

EVALUATION SCOPE/SELECTION OF THE CASE STUDY COUNTRIES FOR THE EVALUATION

The evaluation will cover:

- 1) A sample of OSCE interventions across all three OSCE dimensions that directly target young people⁸². The focus will be put on activities undertaken from 2016 to 2018 by a few selected executive structures (in Kyrgyzstan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia most likely).
- 2) A sample of OSCE interventions (not directly targeting youth) to assess to what extent and how youth has been integrated/applied as a cross-cutting issue in ongoing efforts across the portfolios of the three selected executive structures.
- 3) An overarching cross-cutting analysis of activities undertaken across the OSCE in 2018 to identify the extent to which youth had been included as a topic and / or as a target group.

The identification of the projects to be included in this evaluation was undertaken following a preliminary desk research, and consultations with relevant staff members in the Secretariat and in the concerned field structures. Selection criteria included: the size and volume of engagement; the use of "innovative" methodologies; the availability of relevant documentation, and the possibility to influence future policy design and project development.

⁸² Thematic/focus areas to be potentially included in the evaluation are: inter-cultural dialogue, regional connectivity projects, youth councils, the Central Asian Youth Network (CAYN), Youth Advisory Groups, conflict prevention, VERLT, the fight against intolerance and discrimination; inclusion and inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue (Annual Report, Special Representatives of the CiO on Youth and Security Permanent Council, 21 December 2017).

KEY TENTATIVE EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Policy environment

- Does the OSCE have an enabling policy environment to engage youth in policy formulation, programme planning and implementation? If not, what would be the most appropriate framework for this work?
- To what extent do existing OSCE commitments provide sufficient clarity to efficiently work with youth and for youth in a unified and coherent manner?

Relevance

- To what degree is the OSCE's youth-related work relevant to the respective target groups, addressing the issues affecting young people in the targeted localities?
- What is OSCE's comparative advantage/added value in this area, compared to other actors working on youth in the OSCE region?

Youth participation, leadership and results

- What (short- and medium-term) results have been achieved during the period under evaluation?
- What has been achieved in terms of integrating youth perspectives into the overall work of the OSCE as crosscutting issues? What are the approaches, tools and mechanisms used, and how effective have they been?
- To what extent has the OSCE contributed to increasing youth leadership, participation and engagement?
- To what extent are the OSCE's youth approaches and initiatives gender mainstreamed and contributing to gender equality?
- To what extent have the OSCE youth projects been inclusive to engage young women and men from different marginalized groups?

Sustainability

- To what extent are the benefits of the projects going to be sustained by committed national partners (and civil society stakeholders) once the OSCE's support has ended?

Lessons learned

- What are the good practices and main lessons learned from the OSCE's work with youth?
- Which tools and approaches with and for youth have worked and which have not? Are there any innovative practices?

Monitoring and Evaluation

- To what extent has the work with and for youth been guided and informed by a strategy, result framework and functioning monitoring and evaluation system?

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach used for this evaluation relies on a cross-section of data sources and using mixed methods to ensure triangulation of information:

- Document review/desk studies of relevant OSCE decisions, policies, strategies; programmatic documents, reports, prior evaluations and reviews etc. related to the case studies selected for this evaluation;

- Phone/webex and in-person semi-structured interviews with relevant OSCE Secretariat staff/relevant staff at other executive structures (programme managers, youth focal points other staff) or delegations that support politically (e.g. through the Group of Friends or funds to youth ExB)
- Phone/webex and in-person semi-structured interviews with other key stakeholders including beneficiaries of projects/participants in activities (e.g. youth advisory group members), programme/project partners, from government and civil society, other international organizations or external experts/researchers working with youth in the OSCE region
- Country visits to selected project sites
- Survey (potentially)

The evaluation will apply a participatory approach, including an evaluation reference group, and allowing time for extensive discussion and consultation during the process.

EVALUATION TEAM / DIVISION OF LABOUR

The evaluation will be managed and conducted by OIO with the assistance of one external consultant. The consultant will participate in the data collection, including on-site in three countries, the data analysis and is expected to draft three case study reports (of a number of selected targeted youth projects in each one of the three countries - each 20 pages max).

The consultant will also conduct an analysis of a selection of prominent (non-youth targeted) activities, to assess the extent to which youth had been included as a cross cutting issue, and prepare a report on the emerging findings.

Findings from the case studies, the cross-cutting analysis, and the overall OSCE portfolio analysis, will be synthesized in an overall evaluation report to be prepared by the consultant. OIO will manage the evaluation and participate in the data collection, interviews and analysis through-out the evaluation process.

The evaluation will have the following main deliverables:

- 1) Three case study reports (each 20 pages max.), including lessons learned and good practices;
- 2) An analysis of how youth had been integrated as a cross-cutting issue in a selection of projects in each one of the three countries;
- 3) an overarching analysis of the integration of youth as a cross-cutting theme across the OSCE's portfolio in 2018;
- 4) A final synthesis report (20-30 pages max.) on the main findings and conclusions emerging from 1) – 3) above; and
- 5) an edition of *OSCEval News*, OIO's newsletter dedicated to the topic.

Deliverables 1) three case study reports, 2) analysis of youth as a cross-cutting issue in a selection of projects in three countries, and 4) will be undertaken by the consultant. OIO will conduct the cross-cutting analysis (deliverable 3) and prepare an edition of *OSCEval News* dedicated to the topic (deliverable 5).

REFERENCE GROUP

OIO will set up an informal evaluation reference group to accompany the evaluation process. Representatives from several executive structures will be invited to join.

The members of the group will be invited to comment on the draft evaluation concept note, and on the draft evaluation report, and to provide advice through-out the evaluation process. The communication and exchange with the reference group will be managed by OIO.

Table: Tentative timelines

Tasks	Responsible for delivery	Timeline
Development of concept paper	OIO	Jan/February 2019
Initial consultations	OIO	Jan/February 2019
Development of terms of reference for consultant	OIO	February 2019
Recruitment of consultant	OIO / DHR	March-April 2019
Desk study	OIO / Consultant	April 2019
Data collection: interviews in and out of Vienna	OIO / Consultant	April 2019
Cross-cutting analysis overall OSCE portfolio 2018	OIO	April - May 2019
Field Missions (TBC) Kyrgyzstan Serbia and Bosnia Herzegovina	Consultant / OIO	May – June 2019
Case study preparation and cross cutting analysis (three countries)	Consultant / OIO	May 2019
Final case study reports and cross-cutting analysis report	Consultant / OIO	June-July 2019
Draft overall evaluation report	Consultant	June-July 2019
Consultation process on draft overall evaluation report	OIO	July 2019
Integration of comments in final draft evaluation report	Consultant	July 2019
Management response	Management	July 2019
Final evaluation report	OIO	July - August 2019
<i>OSCEval News</i> edition	OIO	July 2019

Annex 2. List of stakeholders interviewed

Name	Position	Unit
OSCE Secretariat		
Albano Theresa	Economic Affairs Officer	Office of the Co-ordinator for Economic and Environmental Affairs / Economic Governance Unit
Albon Mary	Senior Adviser	Office of the Secretary General / Executive Management
Bekkers Paul	Director	Office of the Secretary General / Executive Management
Butsman Andrey	Associate Project Co-Ordination Officer	Conflict Prevention Centre / Programming and Evaluation Support Unit
Deiningger Anna-Katharina	Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Youth and Security	
Esebua Natia	Acting Head of Programming and Evaluation Support Unit	Conflict Prevention Centre / Programming and Evaluation Support Unit
Goda Samuel	Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office on Youth and Security	
Hejduk Agnieszka	Assistant Programme Officer	Transnational Threats Department / Action Against Terrorism Unit
Klosinska Alexandra	Associate Project Officer	Transnational Threats Department / Action Against Terrorism Unit
Melis Christian	Environmental Governance Officer	Office of the Co-ordinator for Economic and Environmental Affairs / Environmental Co-operation Unit
Ndifi Tarik	Analyst/Researcher	Conflict Prevention Centre/Operations Service
Osdoby Katz Margaret	Strategic Planning and Resource Mobilization Co-ordinator	Office of the Secretary General/Executive Management
Strobachova-Budway Vera	Senior Co-Ordination Adviser	Office of the Secretary General / Gender Issues
Talegon Campoamor Ignacio	Executive Officer	Office of the Secretary General / Executive Management
Van Adrichem, Maaïke	Gender Adviser	Office of the Secretary General/Gender Issues
OSCE Institutions		
Featherston Augusta	Associate Democratic Governance Officer	Democratic Governance and Gender Unit/ODIHR
Stephan, Sarah	Project Officer	CIS and Baltics Section/ HCNM

The stakeholders interviewed at country level are listed in the respective country reports.

Annex 3. Bibliography

OSCE sources

- OSCE.2007. *Ministerial Council Decision No. 10/07. Tolerance and Non-Discrimination: Promoting Mutual Respect and Understanding (MC.DEC/10/07)*. Available at <https://www.osce.org/mc/29452?download=true>
- OSCE. 2010. *Project Management in the OSCE. A Manual for Programme and Project Managers*. Available at <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/70693>
- OSCE.2014. *Ministerial Council Declaration No.3/14 on Youth (MC.DOC/3/14)*. Available at <https://www.osce.org/mc/158436?download=true>
- OSCE.2015. *Ministerial Council Declaration No.5/15 on Youth and Security (MC.DOC/5/15)*. Available at <https://www.osce.org/ministerial-councils/230741?download=true>
- OSCE.2017. *Office of Internal Oversight Independent Evaluation of the Implementation of the 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*.
- OSCE. 2018. *Ministerial Council Declaration No.3/18 on the Role of Youth in Contributing to Peace and Security Efforts (MC.DOC/3/18)*. Available at https://docin.osce.org/docin/llisapi.dll/fetch/2000/107257/222921/25757282/25784809/25784257/25789971/MC.DOC_0003_18_-_Declaration_on_the_Role_of_Youth_in_Contributing_to_Peace_and_Security_Efforts_%28ENG%29.pdf?nodeid=25790343&vernum=-2
- OSCE.2019. *Working With Youth and For Youth. Framework for Strengthening OSCE Efforts on Youth and Security*.
- OSCE.2019. *Compilation of OSCE Commitments on Youth and Security Education*.
- OSCE.2019. *2019 "Survey of OSCE Field Operations"*. Available at <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/74783>.
- OSCE.2019. Core Group of Experts. Discussion Paper. *Engaging Youth for a Safer Future. OSCE Perspectives 20-30 Initiative*.

Third-party sources

Sources:

- United Nations. 2016. *Policies and programmes involving youth*. Available at <https://undocs.org/E/CN.5/2017/5>
- Commonwealth Secretariat. 2017. *Youth Mainstreaming in Development Planning. Transforming Young Lives*. Available at http://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/events/documents/YMDP_9781849291644.pdf
- Freechild Institute. 2019. *Youth Mainstreaming Guide*. Available at <https://freechild.org/youth-mainstreaming-guide/>

In addition, OSCE resources and third-party sources were considered for the three country studies on the OSCE's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kyrgyzstan. These are listed in the respective country reports.