Andreas Karsten

John Muir

Yael Ohana

Grzegorz Wolszczak

2013-2014

Research Handbook

A publication of
Demokratie & Dialog e.V.

AUTHORS

Andreas Karsten, John Muir, Yael Ohana, Grzegorz Wolszczak

2013-2014

Research Handbook

Welcome! This is your handbook.

This handbook has been prepared by the global youthpolicy team of Demokratie & Dialog. It is designed to guide and support each country team to plan and conduct their review. The content is based on the experience and learning acquired during the pilot round of the youth policy review series, which took place between 2011-2012. It is an evolving document that, with your input and feedback will be refined as the review series grows and develops.

The handbook is not intended to provide a prescriptive step-by-step process for your work in the research teams, nor does it seek to be a comprehensive 'how to' guide for undertaking academic research and policy reviews, rather, it seeks to act as guidance: It aims to clarify expectations and ensure consistency across the review series, whilst leaving space for you to create, own and direct the review for your country in your research team.

The handbook is divided into six sections:

i. Welcome, introduction and overview
ii. Policy, policy research and our approach
iii. Methods, approaches and techniques
iv. Roles, who's who and resources
v. Dilemmas, challenges & issues
vi. The research process: guiding questions

Parts one and two set the scene. They provide some history and context to the youth policy review series and outline the conceptual framework for policy analysis that has been developed since the inception of the series. This conceptual framework was originally developed in the form of a matrix, the contents of which have been transposed to section 6 – 'The research process: guiding questions'.

Part three introduces some common research methods and techniques that research teams are likely to use during the review. It discusses their application; focusing on their limitations, resource needs, ethical considerations and issues around validity and validation.

Part four outlines the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders, from the research teams to the International Editorial Board and the global youth policy team of D&D. It includes very short teasers about everyone involved in this second round of the reviews.

Part five presents some of the dilemmas, issues and challenges that emerged during the pilot round, with the aim of stimulating reflection and discussion to assist with the planning of this second round of reviews. It also introduces some expectations for how the research will be approached.

Finally, part six showcases some aspects of the final report template. It exemplifies the key contents sections, and illustrates these with guiding questions designed to serve as starting points for your inquiries.

The handbook was developed as a reference document, meaning that you can dip in and out of it and flick between different sections as required. Enjoy!

The first step to understanding is knowledge

Vision and ambition of the Youth Policy Review Series

Commonplace as it may sound, the first step to understanding really is knowledge. Many countries have stated their youth policies, but are they executing them? Do these policies support young people to achieve their rights? In which ways do specific youth policies and broader policies which pertain to young people interact and with which results for young people? What measures might ensure that young people get their fair share of policy attention and resources?

This project's main aim is to contribute to the **elaboration of evidence** on which young people and supporting institutions can advocate not only for the adoption of sound national and international youth policies, but also for their effective implementation.

It further aims at providing youth civil society and supporting organisations with what they need (tools, instruments, knowledge evidence) for **holding governments and international institutions accountable** to the promises they make to young people.

Ultimately, the aim is to **get young people advocating on their own behalves** for improved policy formulation and implementation using the results outlined in the reports.

More specifically, the objectives of the series of youth policy reviews are:

›› To review public policies pertaining to youth (including, but not exclusively, specific youth policies).

›› To make available research that will allow young people to engage in an informed debate on the public policies affecting them and their communities in the countries concerned.

›› To build a pool of young researchers capable of evaluating policies pertaining to youth, including specific youth policies.

›› To contribute to building the capacity of the youth sector in the countries concerned to research public policy issues.

›› To further develop a global evidence base for youth policy and related advocacy activities.

›› To broaden the scope of the international youth sector to include general policies pertaining to youth that go beyond specific youth policies.

›› To develop the capacity of the international youth sector and its partners and networks for evidence-based strategy development for young people and their issues.

It is the ambition of the 2nd round of reviews to develop 'strong recommendations' on the basis of which young people with specific advocacy projects can approach actors responsible for policy making and implementation and hold them to account for the promises they have made to young people.

What have we learned so far?

The series presents a clear account of policy realities and the reports attempt to make sound evi-

dence based judgements on the effectiveness and impacts of policies as they affect young people's lives and situations.

The individual country reports elaborated so far not only shed light on the opportunities and challenges confronting young people, but also on how youth themselves might successfully advocate for the elaboration of reforms and even new policies to remove obstacles hampering the achievement of their human rights. They further consider socio-political barriers young people experience in their transition to adulthood and ways in which society might better value young peoples' potential contributions to their communities.

In terms of overall findings from the pilot round of reviews education, training, employment, access to the labour market, health and youth civic involvement were key issues that drew attention in all the country reports.
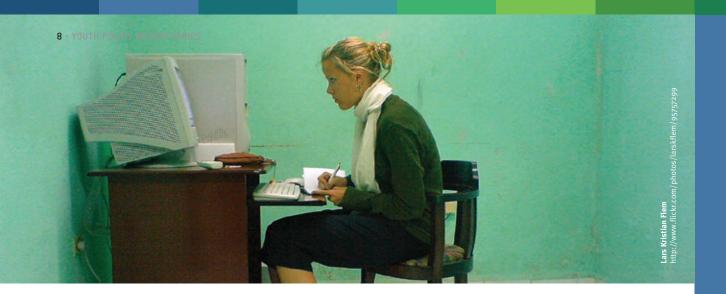
The reports present evidence of the involvement of youth in policy development and the supportive structures that have been established at national through to local levels. It appears that for most countries youth policy implementation, nonetheless, operates with meagre financial resources (often erratically released) and weak institutional structures. On the basis of the first round's results, one can observe that civil society organisations and the private sector have become increasingly important players in youth service delivery, working in partnership with both central and local governments. Financial means may well come from development agencies or foundations. This has hampered countries in their progress towards offering sustainable and appropriate services: where the state is dependent on donor funding for policy formulation, the formulated policies seem to have little impact on what is implemented. Political and other contingencies (including institutional factors) drive implementation to a large extent.

The reports also identify gaps between policy makers, researchers and practitioners. These sectors often worked in isolation with very few institutionalised mechanisms to encourage cooperation and country ownership.

Almost all the country reports also emphasise the fact that vulnerable and marginalised youth groups, although identified in the policies as requiring special support, continued to be sidelined. Certain youth groups were marginalised due to a range of cultural and political issues as well such as language, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. Countries do not seem to have found effective means of integrating all youth groups into even existing programs.

Interestingly, the role of the UN and other multilateral agencies in policy formulation was seldom captured as relevant in the country reports. Given that UN and multilateral agencies often offer technical and financial support to governments, and sometimes to civil society groups, for policy formulation it is interesting that their role was invisible in the policy review process especially with regard to capacity building or institutional strengthening.

All email addresses at a glance

How to stay in touch within and across teams

How to reach an **individual researcher**:
firstname.surname@youthpolicy.org

How to reach the **youth policy team** and **editorial board**:
team.board@youthpolicy.org

How to reach the **lead researchers** of all seven teams:
lead.researchers@youthpolicy.org

How to reach the **international advisors** of all seven teams:
international.advisors@youthpolicy.org

How to reach the **national partners** of all seven teams:
national.partners@youthpolicy.org

How to reach a specific **research team**:

Colombia	**team.col@youthpolicy.org**
Czech Republic	**team.cze@youthpolicy.org**
Guinea	**team.gin@youthpolicy.org**
Hungary	**team.hun@youthpolicy.org**
Mongolia	**team.mng@youthpolicy.org**
Swaziland	**team.swz@youthpolicy.org**
Tunisia	**team.tun@youthpolicy.org**

The three-letter country codes are those defined in the ISO 3166 standard published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

How to reach **everyone involved in this round** of the reviews:

youthpolicy.reviews@youthpolicy.org

This list does indeed reach everyone: the research teams including their lead researchers, international advisors and research team members; the national partners; the editorial board, the global youth policy team. Please use responsibly! This list is moderated.

ii. Policy, policy research and our approach

Elements of good policy

1. What is policy? A very brief introduction

Policy is commonly understood as 'a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed officially by a group of people, a business organisation, a government or a political party' (Cambridge Dictionary 2012).

> ... *Policy ... emerges out of what is in effect a negotiation between interested individuals and the groups and organisations that, formally or informally, represent them. This 'negotiation' is particularly focused on and shaped by the values of those involved – by what they see as right and wrong, good and bad.*
>
> (Davies 2010, 9)

Policy is therefore concerned with *collective action, purpose* and *priorities*; describing *direction* and *intent*, factors which are in turn underpinned by (1) *values*; what people want to achieve, (2) *expectations*; what is thought possible and (3) *negotiations*; what can be agreed upon.

Public policy focuses on the public and its *problems* (Dewey 1927) and is generally *issue-orientated*. However, this focus on problems and issues is not synonymous with a negative-problem focus, neither does it necessitate reductive problem-solution approaches. *Rights-based, well-being-orientated* or *Positive-orientated* approaches have been used to de-emphasise problem orientation and encourage more holistic, positively-framed and systematic policy responses. Parsons (1995, xv) uses this definition to demonstrate the role of policy in defining,

constructing and placing issues on the political and policy agenda. Defining and constructing involves *meta-analysis* (the analysis of the process of analysis) and the use of *frameworks* to do this. Policy is therefore concerned with 'thinking about thinking' and establishing models, maps and metaphors to communicate this thinking.

According to Heidenheimer *et al.* (1990), policy is also the study of '*how, why* and *to what effect* governments pursue particular courses of *action* and *inaction*' – so policy is not only concerned with action, but may also include *inactivity*, or things that are *ignored*, whether that be consciously or unconsciously.

As well as being problem-focused, policy is *multidisciplinary*; drawing on a range of fields such as politics, psychology, sociology, economics, management and philosophy, and *multi-method*; using a range of techniques in its development, delivery and analysis. It attempts to integrate this knowledge in order to analyse or improve decision-making (Parsons 1995).

2. What is a 'good policy'?

Good for whom?

Good policy should provide optimal solutions for citizens and that is an ultimate goal of state action. By implementing good policies a state should run more efficiently and the life of citizens should be easier.

Before delving deeper into the concept of good policies, a public policy researcher should ask herself

a question, what does 'good' really mean? Good is clearly a normative evaluation of a policy, thus 'goodness' will strongly depend on the individuals who assess it, or who are affected by a policy.

Therefore, when tackling the issue of 'good policies', one should first consider for whom a policy is good: Perhaps it is good for one social group, but disadvantageous or bad for other groups, e.g. minorities or marginalised parts of society. Maybe a policy is good for politicians (enabling them to obtain higher support) or state finances (balancing a budget, or generating revenue), but citizens and business will be burdened by its regulation or implementation (introducing higher taxes, more restrictions and obligations towards the state). It might be also the other way round, a policy may yield positive short-term results for one group of citizens, e.g. introduction of lower taxes before elections, but in longer-term it might prove damaging to the whole society and state, because of poorer public services, growing inequality or an accumulation of public debt if lower budgetary income is not compensated for in other areas.

These competing perspectives underpin policy's concern with negotiation between competing interest groups. Therefore, any attempt to analyse 'good' policies has to always take into account the essential question: "Good for whom?"

What does 'good' mean?

Having realised that not everyone understands good policy in the same fashion, a researcher should also ask herself what, in fact, 'good' really means? Is there one commonly shared sense of

'goodness', or is it different to different people? Is it defined by efficiency of state actions, a financial surplus – be it state or citizen budget, the well-being of society, or on a notion of fairness? What are the trade-offs between those concepts and how to assess them against each other? Is social fairness and inclusiveness more important than creating good conditions for business development or environmental policies? Is economic growth or environmental protection more important? Are they mutually exclusive or can policy responses deliver multiple benefits across seemingly different issues? Can the state afford to implement both at the same time? Such comparisons are sometimes extremely difficult, if not impossible to carry out, and certainly they are strongly subjective. Nevertheless, a researcher should strive to uncover the trade-offs that have been made, assessing them against the backdrop of a broader political, social and economic context. In the context of the youth policy review series, researchers should demonstrate where policy is youth sensitive or youth insensitive, where it includes youth or excludes youth – be this intentionally or unintentionally.

The importance of context

High quality analysis of public policy requires a well-grounded and holistic understanding of context. For example, this contextual analysis should consider the political, economic, social, environmental, and historical factors that affect the current policy paradigm. Context specificity is important in any kind of policy, be that innovation-, growth- or youth-centred. Hence, a good policy should be suitable to the given circumstances or context, yet

Figure 1: The policy cycle

simultaneously it should not be bound by habitual thought or the weight of history. Policies that were effective in one country may be ineffective or damaging if transferred to another without adaptation. Such 'good practices' from other environments must be adjusted or contextualised to match local conditions, they have to build on local strengths and address characteristic weaknesses (Devictor 2012). Thus, to re-emphasise, a prior analysis of the overall context is a precondition for both good policy making and research, and context specificity should form a part of research enquiries; asking whether policies have been adopted without an appropriate consideration of local context.

3. Good policy vs. good policy design – elements of good design

The multi-disciplinary nature of public policy and the presence of conflicting philosophical and political perspectives in the public realm complicate efforts to assess, analyse and evaluate policy intent. Further, any assessment of policy must also consider policy implementation or realisation paying particular attention to incongruences between policy rhetoric and 'street-level' reality: Excellent policy proposals frequently do not gain the traction required to see their realisation, and perhaps even more unfortunately, vice-versa.

Evaluating policy design and operational considerations requires both 'objective' (or technical) and subjective evaluations that relate to the different development stages of a policy from its inception to (if appropriate) its realisation. For example, these assessments might refer to the level of resources allocated to a policy initiative, or more subjectively an assessment of the level of intent amongst policy makers.

4. Policy cycle

An admittedly stylised approach that is grounded in a linear and rational-planning perspective – but nonetheless useful for the analysis of policy design – is a **policy cycle** (Figure 1). Sometimes referred to as the 'stagist model' or 'textbook approach' this model is based on an assumption that policies are designed and implemented in a cyclical manner, where phases sequentially follow and build upon each other and where the last phase of one cycle feeds into the initial phase of the subsequent. As Parsons (1995, 80) noted:

> *"… to imagine that public policy can be reduced to such over-simplified stages has more methodological holes than a sack-load of Swiss cheese. However, the idea of analysing policy-making and policy analysis in terms of a 'stagist' framework is not without its advantages and it should not be abandoned lightly."*

Different approaches distinguish a different number of policy cycle elements. The five basic components are: **agenda setting (or policy choice), policy planning (including operationalisation), decision-making, implemsentation and evaluation.**

4.1. Agenda setting

Agenda setting refers to the way in which problems are identified and defined and by whom (and whom not!). The language, thought-processes and assumptions that are employed at this stage set the parameters and constraints for subsequent policy proposals. For example, interpreting youth unemployment as a skills issue rather than an economic issue encourages education and training-focused policies. The articulation of an agenda communicates policy priorities to policy makers and signals the type of policies that will be favoured. This aims to influence the framework within which policy-makers act. For example, a government might stipulate a strong commitment to law and order or may describe young people in terms of deficient or deviant behaviour (e.g. use of drugs, alcohol, lacking respect). Investigating and scrutinising the source of a policy – in particular how and by whom the agenda was set – provides insights into the mindset and biases of the policy making protagonist.

4.2. Planning

Once a 'playing field' has been defined through the process of agenda setting, the planning stage is where a more detailed development of proposals takes place. In a top-down approach this might include a **context and option analysis** and a **spelling out of strategic goals**, which are followed by

subsets of **operational goals**. These operational goals are, in turn, divided into simple **tasks** (Figure 2). This top-down approach with a hierarchical structure of goals, results in a 'clean' and 'ordered' approach, which makes communication of the policy easier and may facilitate efficient and effective policy realisation. Its weaknesses though may be noted when carefully formulated plans are interrogated by policy-minded individuals excluded from the process and when attempts are made to apply solutions to the real world and messier business of operational delivery. One technique that attempts to mix 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches is to ensure that all actors that are deemed important for a given policy field are listened to and included in the process (see section 3, page 31, for more information about the stakeholder analysis). The planning process is commonly associated with power dynamics and researchers should be attuned to this, identifying any restrictions that inhibit the *full* participation of different stakeholders. For example, are young people involved, if so are initiatives 'young-people-led' or is their involvement largely tokenistic?

Context and option analysis

Strategic planning should **start with an in-depth analysis** of the previous policies and instruments, which have been implemented in the given field. This may provide decision makers with interesting lessons and insights. Additionally, the **broader context** should be analysed to provide for compatibility of planned policy with other policy frameworks and the potential utilisation of synergies between different areas. The lack of such an analysis – particularly where it results in contradictory policy ob-

Figure 2: The organisation of policy goals, strategic goals, operational goals and tasks

jectives – can be interpreted as inadequate preparation of the policy.

Limited number of goals and political sponsors

To be effective, a policy should have a **limited number of clear and well-defined strategic goals**, which contribute to the delivery of the overarching goal of the policy. Typically they should have a long-term character and a preferable number hovers around 3-5 goals. More goals may imply that the policy lacks explicit priorities and clear strategic intent, which may impede its effectiveness and efficiency. The goals should be feasible in a prescribed time span and should have political support. The latter can be expressed by naming **political sponsors**, i.e. high rank officials with political clout, who will be responsible for achieving particular policy goals, e.g. ministers or state secretaries and undersecretaries, senior managers, local politicians. Absence of such sponsorship puts policy success at risk from the very outset.

Hierarchical and SMART goals

Operational goals are more specific than the strategic ones and they help to steer the policy in the direction indicated by the latter. Each strategic goal possesses a subset of operational goals, and their sum, if achieved, should bring about the fulfilment of the strategic goal. That is why it is important that

operational goals are well designed and comprehensively thought through. Since the operational goals are of a lower hierarchical level, they do not have to be all-encompassing, in fact, they should strive to achieve narrow results. Good operational goals should be **SMART**, which stands for **specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound**. Such goals introduce accountability to the policy making process by providing easy to check targets and deadlines. This hierarchical structure of goals may consist of more than two levels and it depends on the complexity of issues tackled by a policy as well as on the capacity of administration. It cannot be claimed though, that there is a positive relationship between the quality of policy design and the number of goal levels.

Operationalisation

Establishing strategic and operational goals paves the way to their operationalisation, i.e. making the frequently abstract and general language of politics more specific and measurable. Operationalisation helps to make policy more tangible, because it involves describing the kinds of tools, which will be utilised to achieve policy goals, as well as targets and indicators, which will monitor and measure policy implementation and outcomes.

Unambiguous and SMART goals, including well-designed numerical and measurable indicators, to monitor and track performance against a policy's

purpose can be considered as a signal that a policy is well designed. Indicators should pertain to the process of policy implementation, its outputs (direct products), outcomes and impact.[1] In fact, creating or choosing proper indicators, which adequately measure policy progress towards a foreseen goal is sometimes extremely difficult (e.g. policy impact of some changes, like education reform, might be observable only after several years and direct causation is difficult to prove). Care should be taken in the use of targets. Although they may be a useful way articulate intent, importance and a desired state, the use of arbitrary targets established with political motivation can result in unintended consequences such as measure fixation, gaming, myopia and sub-optimisation during the delivery of a policy. There is a wide range of literature on the topic of performance measures, indicators and targets and this handbook does not intend to summarise it.[2] The rule of thumb is that one can get a fairly good impression about the quality of policy design, by looking at indicators utilised in it. Poorly designed policies will have a low number of indicators or will have vague indicators, which cannot measure progress towards the goals.

4.3. Decision-making

Decision-making is the process by which a particular course of action or non-action is adopted (Howlett 2011, 18). Examining the decisions that have been made (and the alternatives that were rejected) provides a strong indication of policy priorities and commitment to a particular issue. For example, a policy proposal might include options to reduce spending on services for young people; a rejection of this proposal would be a strong indicator of political priorities. Depending on their availability, minutes from public meetings (e.g. council/municipality meetings, parliamentary debates on youth, village meetings) can be used to identify the decisions that have been made and the alternative proposals that were either not considered or not included.

4.4. Implementation

Implementation refers to how the accepted recommendations of a policy are put into effect. Analysing the extent to which a policy's recommendations are realised is an essential feature of the youth policy review series. Governments and public bodies may have produced and published comprehensive policies aiming to improve the situation for young people, but for a variety of reasons there may be a gap between the intentions and aspirations of this policy and the reality and realisations. Exploring this incongruence enables researchers to produce evi-

---

[1] More information on indicators might be found e.g. in European Commission reports, like *Indicative guidelines on evaluation methods: Monitoring and evaluation indicators* (2006) accessible from http://www.interact-eu.net/com_guidance/com_guidance_evaluation/270/5887. This website also offers other useful links and materials pertaining to evaluation.

[2] For more details on potential pitfalls with numerical target usage see http://www2.lse.ac.uk/study/executiveEducation/customisedExecutiveEducation/INAP/Targetworld.pdf, or Radnor (2008) *Muddled, massaging, manoeuvring, or manipulated? A typology of organisational gaming*, Int. Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, Vol. 57 (4), pp. 316-328

dence that allows to hold policy makers and public officials to account and helps to identify the potential failings of the system of public administration. When exploring the question of implementation particular focus should be given to 'following the money' and the real experiences of young people (see dilemmas, issues and challenges for further elaboration).

4.5. Evaluation and monitoring

Evaluation and monitoring constitute a strongly intertwined couple. **Monitoring** refers to on-going or periodic inspection of processes, e.g. policy implementation, milestone achievement etc. Monitoring helps to keep things on track and offers early warnings, if the process goes astray, however, it does not explain why this happens.

Evaluation, on the other hand, concentrates on explaining and understanding a broader context, in which a policy functions, and that is why it addresses *why* and *how* questions. *Why* do policies not work as intended? *How* could they work more efficiently? Its goal may be to target different aspects of policies, e.g. relevancy, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, by the means of a **purposefully oriented process of enquiry**, which addresses a set of specific issues and usually concludes with recommendations for future change. According to evaluation timing in respect to the policy implementation process, three evaluation types are distinguished: *ex-ante*, during and *ex-post* (COM 2006, 3-4; COM 2007, 4-10).

Ex-ante evaluations serve a preparatory function and they are carried out before the policy design

takes place. They explore the broader environment, within which the future policy is to operate, identify possible obstacles that may emerge during the implementation as well as strong policy elements. Hence, they provide decision makers with early-stage information, which facilitates good policy design.

During the policy implementation process two evaluation approaches are available, namely mid-term or on-going. A **mid-term** evaluation is a process of a periodic review (or reviews), which takes place according to a pre-planned schedule that verifies policy implementation against the set objectives. Evaluation findings feed into an eventual process of policy adjustment thus leading to the fine-tuning of a policy. An **on-going** evaluation aims at the same goal; however, the process of evaluation is more flexible and not so much driven by a detailed schedule, but rather by needs of policy makers.

Ex-post evaluations assess the implementation process as well as policy's results and impact after its termination. Such *post factum* appraisal verifies the longer-term policy goals and checks policy effectiveness, because it could happen that achieving operational targets does not translate into arriving at the desired main goal. *Ex-post* evaluations measure whether the policy achieved what it initially intended.

Well-designed policies may not only build upon *ex-ante* evaluations, but also embed on-going or *ex-post* evaluation mechanisms into the policy process. This should be accomplished already during the inception phase, i.e. **what** will be evaluated, **how, when** and **by whom**, should be explicit from the start. Moreover, setting aside budgetary re-

sources for conducting the evaluation, constitutes a good practice (Grant 2008, 104). Although, one has to bear in mind that evaluations are resource consuming and it is not possible to evaluate every programme and every policy. For that reason it is important to choose wisely what gets evaluated.

5. Policy Implementation Tools

In addition to the policy cycle, another approach to reviewing policy is to analyse the tools that are used by policy makers. Understanding the tools that are used enables us to make broader conclusions about the frameworks and worldviews of policy makers.

> *While policy goals are manifold and alter over time, and while the choice of policy means is context driven and resource contingent, the toolbox with which designers must work is essentially generic* (Majone 1989, cited in Howlett 2011, 57).

In other words, despite a large variety of policy frameworks, causes and goals, policy makers have at their disposal a limited number of tools to bring them into life. Policy tools can be classified as *organisational, authoritative, financial* and *information-based* (Howlett 2011).

Organisational tools involve the direct use of organisations that are charged with the delivery of public services. This could include national, regional or local public organisations, quasi-independent bodies, state owned enterprises, or third-sector community organisations. Policy makers might also manipulate the policy-making arena by establishing, disbanding, increasing the importance, or reducing the role of different agencies.

Authoritative tools involve direct or indirect steering by the government. This could be via implementing new laws, regulations and administrative orders. This 'command and control' style approach sees policy makers choosing, whether to formally regulate an issue, or indirectly allow for self-regulation by professional associations. For example, government might regulate the sale of alcohol and cigarettes to minors; pass laws about the provision of services (such as education) for young people; indirectly regulate entry to a profession such as youth work or teaching through a non-governmental body or create the conditions for a market for services for young people.

Financial tools consist in transferring financial resources to or away from certain areas or actors and thus promoting, manipulating or discouraging their activity. This could be in the form of taxes, grants, vouchers for public services, preferential procurement, or through the provision of seed money. This may be used to promote one actor over others, hence contributing to changes in society.

Information-based tools referred to as the 'sermon' in the 'carrot', 'stick' and 'sermons' analogy. Information-based tools rely on utilising information to alter behaviour of service and goods users or producers. This could include launching official information or educational campaigns, creating new information, undertaking judicial inquiries or executive commissions, collecting specific data, or making information freely available.

Some of the above-mentioned tools have a direct impact on the regulatory environment others act more indirectly. The selection of policy tools is indicative of the particular biases and priorities of policy makers.

References

COM (2006). Indicative guidelines on evaluation methods: Ex-ante evaluation, European Commission.

COM (2007). Indicative guidelines on evaluation methods: Evaluation during the programming period, European Commission.

Davies, B. (2009) 'Youth work and the youth service', in Wood, J. and Hine, J. (eds) Work with Young People, London, Sage, pp. 187–201. Cited in Harrison (n.d) Youth Work: Introducing Policy – Open University Learning Space http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=4518

Devictor, X. (2012). Public administration reform: Global trends. Final conference summing up the project: Diagnosis and development of recommendations relating to management and flow of information in central government administration, Warsaw.

Dewey (1927), The Public and Its Problems Holt: New York, cited in Parsons, W. (1995). Public Policy – An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis Edward Elgar; Cheltenham UK

Grant, P. (2008). Strategic Review of the Administration of Australian Government Grant Programs.

Harrison (n.d) Youth Work: Introducing Policy – Open University Learning Space http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=4518

Howlett, M. (2011). Designing Public Policies: Principles and Instruments. New York, Routledge.

Majone, G. (1989). Evidence, argument, and persuasion in the policy process. London, Yale University Press.

Parsons, W. (1995). Public Policy – An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Policy Analysis Edward Elgar; Cheltenham UK

A word on terminology

Audits, evaluations, reviews?

It has become quite fashionable to conduct policy reviews, audits and evaluations, and the youth sector is no exception to the 'review' trend. Many actors in the public sphere, from governments and international development agencies to research agencies and youth civil society organizations, to mention just a few, have sought to describe youth policies in specific countries or regions. Several such projects have attempted to distil best practice on national youth policies – how to develop one, how to manage one, etc. Some have stated the case for more attention to be paid to young people in other policy fields, especially development. While these projects differ considerably – in approach, methodology and quality, a point in common is their somewhat ambiguous use of descriptors for their results. Such projects are often interchangeably referred to as policy reviews, audits and evaluations. But, these three terms differ in meaning and the activities they imply are slightly different in content and process. In this section, we will try to make some distinctions that can help stakeholders of the process better understand the nature of the process in which they are taking part.

Dictionary definitions

The Oxford Dictionary of the English language gives the following definitions of Audit, Review, and Evaluation. The origins of these words are also revealing.

The noun **'Audit'** is defined as: *'A systematic review or assessment of something'*. Its origins go back to Late Middle English and the Latin *'audire'* or 'hear' as 'audits' were originally presented orally.[1]

The noun **'Evaluation'** is defined as: *'The making of a judgement about the amount, number, or value of something; assessment'*. Its origins go back to the mid-19th century French *'évaluer'*, to the Latin *'ex-'* (meaning out, from) and to the Old French *'value'* (meaning value).[2]

The noun **'Review'** is defined as: *'Formal assessment of something with the intention of instituting change if necessary'* and as *'A report on or evaluation of a subject or past events'*. The origins of the term are in Late Middle English when it was used to denote a formal inspection of military or naval forces, in the obsolete French term *'reveue'*, from *'revoir'* or 'see again'.[3]

Strikingly, the term *audit*, while sounding stronger and more determined at first, is revealed to be less impactful than *review* and *evaluation*, both of which carry the connotation and intention of making a judgment about the quality of policy and changing something in the way that policy works. And indeed, the youth policy review series aims to do just that: change how policies pertaining to young people work – for the better. However, there is also a role for *audit*: it is difficult, after all, to review and evaluate policies if you have not identified, listed and assessed them first.

---

1 http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/audit?q=audit
2 http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/evaluation?q=evaluation
3 http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/review?q=review

Accumulated practice in other review processes

This process is not the only mechanism to undertake assessment of policies pertaining to young people. The Council of Europe has a longstanding process of national reviews supported by international teams. The review of a particular country is initiated by invitation from the country concerned. Various UN specialised agencies and programmes formulate review instruments and integrate them into their programme planning processes. These are generally conducted on the basis of obtaining information for background descriptions or situation analyses for a country programme document. In the case of UNFPA in 2007, these were conducted for a region (Europe and Central Asia). The World Bank and the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and of course the Youth Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) have all undertaken some form of youth policy review in the last decade.

Most of these have been called 'youth policy review' processes, when in fact they have taken the approach of listing policies that exist and identifying policies that are missing and would be needed rather than making judgements on their effectiveness, impact, etc. Many institutions that undertake such processes, because of their dependence on national governmental mandates, or because of a particular sense of 'research' as 'objective' and 'neutral' have shied away from taking positions on what they consider 'good', 'bad', 'weak', 'strong', 'a success', 'a failure' and from making strong recommendations for improvements. Such processes are valuable for their contribution to the knowledge base about youth policy and other policies pertaining to youth. But, they do not necessarily contribute to a momentum for change. This is one important point of differentiation between this review and evaluation process and the others. In this process, the intention is to create information, knowledge and tools that can be used for advocacy for change.

So what are we doing?

An important consideration if we ask what it is that we are doing – reviews, evaluations or audits – is the depth of the assessment and evaluation we are able to achieve. While it would be our aim for our reviews to be 'evaluations of the impact of policies' we have to be honest and admit that this process does not have sufficient capacity and resources to ensure in-depth impact studies of each policy audited and reviewed. Among the reasons for this are the challenges that exist in most countries in accessing data about youth in the context of sectoral policies. Another is the impossibility of conducting extensive empirical research in this process (for example, large scale surveys with young people across whole countries; budget analysis across policy sectors, etc.). Hence, we have to use the term evaluation with care. At the same time, identifying and listing policies does not go far enough. The reports emanating from this review process must make a concrete link between, and thereby value judgements on, the situations of young people and the effectiveness or ineffectiveness, the impact or lack of impact, of policies that are supposed to address them.

Our approach and methodology

1. A different approach to analysing, evaluating and assessing youth policy

Many actors in the public sphere, from international agencies and governments to research institutes and youth civil society organisations, to mention just a few, have sought to describe youth policies in specific countries or regions. Several such projects have attempted to distil best practice on national and international youth policies – how to develop them, how to manage them, etc. Some have stated the case for more attention to be paid to young people in other policy fields, especially development.

This review process has something of a unique approach, which differs to that of the policy review processes undertaken by other organisations – particularly the global and European multi-lateral and international institutions. It differs in several respects.

›› First, it **takes a broader look at policy in relation to youth**, analysing not only specific youth policies, but also the wider policy dossiers that can affect young peoples' lives, from housing to education, from health to participation.

›› Second, it **attempts to understand the impact of said policies on young people**, and doesn't stop with the description of policies as they have been declared and appear on paper.

›› Third, it **attempts to understand the impact of said policies specifically on the achievement of young people's human rights**, asking the question in which way do said policies support or hinder young people in becoming fully active and engaged citizens. In other words, it takes a 'rights based approach'.

›› Fourth, it acknowledges the role of international exchange and good practice in the development of youth policy knowledge, and **tries to assess the extent to which international policy initiatives, legislation and declarations have influenced the national policy field – for better or worse.**

›› Fifth, it recognises the increasing importance of donors in determining policy, and aims to **capture the way in which national and international donors influence youth policy development and practice.**

›› Finally, and not least importantly, this project **does 'not wait to be asked'**, in that it does not rely on government invitation to consider the merits and possible gaps in a country's policy provisions for young people, thereby making a strong statement as regards the necessity of government to be held to account by citizens.

2. The set-up and approach of the youth policy review series

The evaluation process for each country involves a mixture of desk research, direct consultation with young people and in-depth field visits to ensure corroboration of results and deep analysis. Each country review is conducted by a *national research team* made up of in-country experts in the field of youth policy, young researchers, and grassroots activists with specific expertise in special context related factors for the country in question. Each country research team is further supported by an international expert – the so-called *international*

advisor, who assists in the collection of relevant international literature, with the analysis and drafting process, and in the implementation of the country field visit. *Local partners* supporting the research process support the team with the logistical organisation of fieldwork and the collection of research materials and are responsible for the initial planning and launch of follow-up and advocacy work in the country and internationally, as appropriate. The *International Editorial Board (IEB)*, composed of four international experts, ensures on-going quality control and provides on-demand advice to the country review teams together with the global youth policy team of *Demokratie & Dialog (D&D)*.

To ensure methodological rigour and some comparability of results, the project works with a multidimensional evaluation matrix. The matrix is adapted to the specific country context by the country teams during the planning for their research process and is used as a basis for the evaluation of the impact of public policies on the achievement of young peoples' human rights in each country.

Although the exact process will be determined on a country-by-country basis, the policy reviews typically go through the following phases, which oftentimes overlap and intertwine:

1. **Planning the policy review:** adaptation of the matrix for the country concerned and planning of the entire research process; discussions cover the role and contribution of the international advisor, the youth researchers including the lead researcher, and the national partner organisation; special attention is paid to the involvement of and connection with the national youth (policy) scene and the meaningful participation of young people in the process.

2. **Conducting desk and some empirical research** as a basis for the drafting of the country report: mapping actors of the youth sector in the country that might be relevant as sources of information for the desk research or as people to meet during the field visit; reviewing documents, legislation, previous reviews of youth policy, youth research on the country in question; conducting some form of direct research with young people (surveys of young people; focus group meetings, testimonial interviews).

3. **Preparation of a draft country report:** drafted in English, including contents investigated using the questions included in the evaluation matrix, and initial reflections on expected findings, open questions and crucial issues.

4. **Preparation of a 14-day field visit in the country:** developing hypotheses based on the draft country report for corroboration or negation during the field visit; preparing questions to test assumptions; listing and arranging meetings with all possible stakeholders of the youth and other policy sectors with whom it would be relevant to check preliminary conclusions from the desk research. Depending on the situation in the country, including the (lack of) availability of statistical data and previous research on youth issues, the character and timing of the field visit may change.

5. **Implementation of the in-country field visit:** conducting meetings with relevant stakeholders; travelling outside the capital to relevant other cities and rural areas to test regional and local perspectives as appropriate; conducting interview style face to face discussions with individual experts; conducting group discussions

with relevant organisations, young people, donor representatives and governmental representatives; collecting supplementary information and documentation; validating the results and conclusions of desk and previous empirical research; relying heavily on the results of the field visit and on comparability of other reports.

6. **Finalising the country report:** incorporating information and perspectives collected during the field visit; formulating initial conclusions and recommendations; considering potential advocacy or follow up activities for making good use of the report together with national and local partners. This phase may include feedback loops with interviewees and discussants from the field visit, e.g. to verify the relevance of recommendations.

7. **Supporting the publication of the country report:** contributions to editing and proof-reading the report; feedback to layouted page-proofs.

3. The multidimensional evaluation matrix as an instrument for analysis

One of the key unique features of this review process is that it was rolled out on the basis of a specifically developed research methodology, originally developed as a multidimensional evaluation matrix. The matrix offers a research framework that encourages breadth and depth of analysis and consistency and comparability between publications.

Summarising in a somewhat reductionist manner, the matrix asks

›› What is the situation of young people in the country? How does the broader country context (socio, political, cultural and economic situation of the country) influence the situation of young people?

›› Which are the public policies that are most relevant to the situation of young people described, independent of their intent to be relevant for youth?

›› Which impact do said policies have on young people, and which policies hinder and support the achievement of young people's human rights?

›› To which extent are said policies effectively implemented and contribute to youth empowerment and development?

›› Which policies are missing? Which policies exist but are not (sufficiently) implemented? Which policies are redundant?

In its most detailed form, the matrix is a table containing several series of interrelated and multidimensional questions about the country context, the youth sector of the country, the general policy situation in the country, the youth policy situation in the country, the situation of youth, the needs and concerns of specific groups considered most vulnerable, the performance of specific policy sectors identified as most relevant to the situation of young people and as key 'youth policy' themes. In the actual process, the matrix has served several purposes:

›› for the research teams it has acted as an indicative research guide so that the country report they produce avoids the typical pitfall of only conducting an inventory of youth policies without evaluating their performance and making judgements on their performance in relation to the achievement of the human rights of young

people (in general, and some specific groups);

›› for the initiators of the review process, it has acted as a 'capacity building tool' that provided structure and content to the orientation activities developed for the research teams and that provided the possibility to ensure a coherent 'quality standard' across the reports produced about such diverse countries and by diverse teams of researchers;

›› for the wider public and the youth sector, it is hoped that in an adapted form the matrix will become a 'good quality guide' for organisations and groups wishing to undertake the evaluation of national and international policies pertaining to youth.

4. Initial reflections on working with the matrix

According to the evaluation conducted by the *International Editorial Board (IEB)* during the pilot round of the reviews, the experience of working with the matrix has been mixed. Country teams were initially a little overwhelmed by its scope. Nevertheless, and despite its complexities and ambiguities, teams were able to adapt and contextualise it for their country research processes. The matrix proved useful in the sense that its purpose was clear, and despite a broad scope, it provided the review team with rather concise questions that could be actively adapted to the country context and pointed in relevant directions for research on policies pertaining to young people across policy sectors. However, the country teams were confronted with a trade-off: the degree of in-country adaptation decided the extent to which the report would be useful for advocacy

within a country versus easy international comparability.

Many of the country teams have interpreted the matrix as a kind of checklist that would help them to identify and classify the issues relating to youth policy in the country under review. Accordingly, certain issues proposed by the matrix are missing in the individual review reports. This can imply that local researchers or their international advisors consciously avoided a topic, but it may also indicate that they considered it irrelevant after serious examination. While the scope and breadth of the matrix provided the teams with a useful framework for guiding their research process, it also meant that in-country certain choices about what to include and what not to include had to be made. In some countries at least, some of these choices were determined by the expertise and interests of the local researchers rather than by the actual situation of young people and policies pertaining to them on the ground.

Adaptation of the matrix was particularly difficult in those countries where public policy structures, governance and generally the agency of government are weak, as a result of a recent political transition or years of conflict. This has raised the question of how to work on public policy evaluation in relation to a relatively 'marginal' policy issue in situations where the institutions and functions of government are weak or are in the process of consolidating, and where other fundamental priorities have to precedence. Several teams were confronted with the fact that 'model' youth policies and other policies pertaining to young people existed on paper – in that they were developed in accordance with accumulated good practice and following international standards (often by international actors) – but due

to a lack of local ownership, capacity, resources and expertise, they remained 'empty shells', without any chance of implementation.

A final challenge identified is if and how the matrix facilitates the identification of 'strong' advocacy relevant recommendations. A general weakness of the process so far, the identification of recommendations on the basis of the analysis and evaluation contained in the country reports is understood to require consideration in the research design and not only at the end of the process when conclusions have already been drawn. The questions contained in the matrix demand that some clear judgements are made in relation to the performance of policies and policy actors, but it is a further step to identify what the implications of this are and what should and could be done about it.

5. Further developing the research methodology including the matrix

The matrix has been evolving along with the policy review process. The evaluation of the pilot round of reviews revealed some relevant information for how to improve the approach and the steps involved in the research process. In response, an effort has been made to simplify the matrix so that it can be more accessible for diverse publics of researchers, and a more useful and adaptable tool for research teams working in very diverse policy and youth contexts. To this end the matrix has been consolidated and transposed to follow the sequence of the research reports in an attempt to create a more workable instrument and guide for the evaluation process (see Part VI of this handbook). The experience of the pilot round has also provided important clues for issues which need to be better high-

lighted in the matrix contents – some of which have relevance for all reports irrespective of the context where they are being researched, others have relevance only for specific contexts, such as transition states or post-conflict countries.

With several reports already available in print, the quality standard to be achieved by the series has been established, which has had implications for the further adaptation of the matrix and the report structure. Finally, key challenges of working with matrix in individual country contexts have been identified and can be drawn to the attention of research teams in the orientation and planning process.

The version of the matrix as presented in Part VI of this handbook is, therefore, in appearance quite different from how it was originally developed and worked with by the research teams in the pilot round of reviews. While making the instrument more accessible, we have tried to ensure its depth, width and substance remain unchanged to avoid implications on the comparability of reports in the series. Care has been taken to ensure that key aspects remain stable and coherent across all reports.

Consequently, certain aspects of the country report structure are not negotiable. The starting point of each report has to be an assessment of the situation of young people in relation to key policy issues for young people and an identification of the key policies that seek to address those situations. The policies considered most relevant may differ from country to country, but the analysis of the situation of youth and some evaluation about the extent to which their human rights are achieved is required. This will ultimately also provide the needed solid basis on which the country reports can bring forward strong recommendations relevant for advocacy.

Patricia Todoran, youthmedia.eu
http://www.youthmedia.eu/media/89973-family

3

Methods, approaches and techniques

1. Introduction

This section provides an introduction and overview of a number of commonly applied research methodologies that are likely to be employed by research teams during the production of the youth and public policy review.

The aims of this section are two-fold; firstly to introduce and emphasise the importance of establishing a robust research plan that is grounded in sound methodology; secondly, to highlight some pitfalls associated with these commonly applied research methodologies.

Despite these aims, this section does not intend to provide a comprehensive account of *all* of the research methods that teams might employ, nor does it intend to provide in-depth and detailed instructions for the application of the various methodologies it sheds light on. For this, all researchers will be able to draw on the copious body of academic literature on research methods as well as the wealth of experience within the research teams, the international editorial board and the global youth policy team of D&D.

2. Overall research design and conduct

2.1. Explanatory numbers or exploratory interviews?

Broadly speaking research methods can be divided into two main research families; namely quantitative and qualitative. The former draws on objective quantifiable data such as datasets or databases, whereas the latter draws on subjective data, related to apparent qualities. An in-depth discussion about the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative and quantitative research methods is clearly beyond the scope of this handbook. However, research teams are expected to make use of and informed choices about both approaches.

A key initial step of every research is to establish whether the research is of an *exploratory*, *descriptive* or *explanatory* nature:

> ***Exploratory research*** *requires flexibility more than precision, since the purpose is to discover possible explanations rather than to test hypothetical explanation.* ***Exploratory research*** *designs need provide only an opportunity to observe the phenomenon in question.*
>
> ***Descriptive research*** *requires accurate measurement of phenomena. In descriptive studies, research design must ensure unbiased and reliable observations if the studies are to produce accurate pictures of the events of interest.*
>
> ***Explanatory research*** *designs must both ensure unbiased and reliable observation and provide a basis for inferring the causal influence of one or more variables on others.*
>
> – (Manheim and Rich 1991, 73)

Naturally, hybrid approaches of these three types are frequently employed and the youth policy review series is no exception to this; yet, oftentimes one aspect predominates. The approach adopted by each research team will depend largely on context; being determined by factors such as the quality of the existing knowledge-base, the research

team's time constraints, the nature of the issues being explored, or the skills of the research team. Owed to the cross-cutting nature of youth policy issues, it will likely be necessary to adjust the mix of exploratory, descriptive and explanatory approaches and methods: while the existing knowledge base on youth and health may be far enough developed to facilitate an explanatory style, the lack of data on juvenile justice may necessitate an exploratory tactic.

Since the approach employed determines the certainty to which deductions and conclusions can be stated, research teams are asked to carefully consider their choices when deciding upon the nature of their enquiries – not the least in light of the role of the review series in building an evidence-base in support of informed policy advocacy.

2.2. Validity, reliability and triangulation

Validity and reliability constitute a pair that is inseparably related to social science research. Whilst planning or conducting social research, one should always bear them in mind and structure the research in a manner that does not neglect either of these two concepts.

Validity refers to whether a research tool really measures what it is supposed to measure, or if research findings reflect the real world. Since it is frequent in social science that one uses imperfect (but measurable) proxies to measure the real world, one has to provide evidence that the measurement really measures what it claims to do (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996, 165-170).

Reliability means consistency of the measurement – the outcome is reliable, when one obtains the same value after measurement iteration (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996, 170-172).

Universal validity and the diversity of youth groups

Universal validity refers to the extent to which research findings are applicable to 'youth' as a social group. Research cannot claim to be universally valid if it does not represent **the whole spectrum of diversity** in a given territorial, social and political setting. Universally valid research focuses not only on views of the mainstream groups, but it also includes **marginalised or disadvantaged** youth groups, e.g. economically or socially excluded young people and (religious, ethnic, sexual, …) minorities. Given that 'youth' is not a homogenous group, care should be taken in ensuring that investigations seek the diversity of perspectives that exist, and to avoid making universal claims that are based on a comparatively narrow sample.

Validation

To ensure high quality research, both data and methods have to be validated, i.e. double-checked for their compliance with standards of good research. In qualitative research, validation often poses challenges because the gathered data tends to be specific for a unique situation or context, and strongly depends on individuals' subjective feelings and understandings. Nonetheless, the researcher has to be able to both prove that data was validated and describe the process or technique of validation. Validation might take different forms;

for example it might involve the use of established methodologies anchored in the traditions of a discipline, or it could involve replication and triangulation. Each research method presented in the subsections below includes reference to commonly applied data validation techniques.

Triangulation

Triangulation is a method that not only helps to validate research outcomes or data, but also deepens an understanding of the research topic. It relies on utilising two or more research methods to analyse a phenomenon, to see whether they yield the same or similar results. Triangulation may be applied to different elements of the research process, such as: the methodology (mixing qualitative and quantitative approaches or applying different qualitative methods); the data (sourcing from different origins or time periods), the investigators (using different and independent researchers) and the theories (analysing data from different theoretical perspectives). Not every aspect of the research design has to always be verified in such a way, but it is worth keeping in mind that triangulation enhances both the credibility and the validity of our research (Davies 2004, 35-37).

2.3. Research ethics

Social research not only has to meet methodological criteria of validity and reliability, but it also has to be ethical. The research cannot be designed in ways that cause harm to its participants – be that on an emotional or physical level – nor should it mislead them to gain particular information or achieve a desired result. **Data protection** and **confidentiality** agreements that are in line with local laws and best-practice guidelines must be established; especially in the research areas pertaining to sensitive topics and vulnerable youth groups such as ethnic or sexual minorities. These agreements must extend to the storage and communication of data. When designing the research or publishing its results, the researcher must consider the potential risks they pose to the study subjects. Explicit written permissions should be sought from individuals and organisations if names and details allowing persons to be identified are to be included in the research report. Where published results include anonymised data or case-studies, care should be taken to ensure that no information that might lead to the identification of subjects is included.

Research teams should also be aware that **'objectivity'** is a theoretical concept, and everyone analyses the social world through certain socio-cultural lenses aligned with one's knowledge and experiences. Having that in mind, research teams should not take sides or be biased while carrying out the research; i.e. lose their distance to the research topic by disproportionate identification with research participants.

Only on the basis of a well-designed and well-conducted research can **clear and sound statements and conclusions** be formulated.

3. Key research methods and techniques

3.1. Stakeholder mappings

Description – main features:

A stakeholder analysis serves identification of interested parties i.e. actors that should be approached during the research to ensure a holistic picture of a given policy field. The research teams should take into account the diversity of an environment and assure that **all** of the **important parties** are contacted and that their opinions are considered in the research.

Importance should be understood **not only in terms of power, or an ability to shape** policies that pertain to youth (coded as **influence**), but should also focus on individuals or groups that are **affected by policies** (coded as **impact**). For example, politicians may have the power to create legislation on same-sex relationships, but the impact would affect members of the LGBT community. Similarly, ministers may have the power to determine education policy (e.g. by setting curricula, changing finance arrangements or amending performance measurement frameworks), yet the changes would affect school students, teachers and parents. The research should seek out these diverse perspectives to gain a full understanding of the different public policies that are reviewed. Where the whole range of diversity cannot be encompassed, an explanation is necessary, arguing why given (sets of) actors were not included in the research and which means were utilised to overcome problems in contacting said actors.

A helpful tool for stakeholder identification is a **stakeholder matrix** (see figures 1, 2 and 3 for examples). This allows visualisation of potential research subjects and missing areas of coverage. Group brainstorming is a useful technique to help research teams populate a list of potential stakeholders. Having identified main stakeholders, short role-playing exercises, during which stakeholders' anticipated attitudes towards the research and their willingness to share information are explored, can help prepare the research teams to rehearse and prepare for face-to-face research.

Goal of a stakeholder mapping:

›› identification of actors necessary to conduct policy analysis (both on the influence and impact side),

›› mapping blank areas in terms of stakeholders inclusion,

›› identification of available contacts,

›› clarifying the research sequence (some actors may be better to talk to prior to other actors).

When to use:

›› during an early planning phase of the research.

What one gets:

›› a checklist of agencies / organisations / groups etc., which should be consulted to obtain as complete as possible a picture.

Strengths & weaknesses:

A stakeholder matrix allows for quick generation of an actor list paired with graphical mapping of parties and potential gaps. On the other hand, presented levels of influence and impact are just an assessment of the brainstorming group and do not have to adequately represent real qualities of these actors.

Important considerations (ethics, validation, etc.):

Diversity of the brainstorming group usually contributes to a more holistic and inclusive mapping of key stakeholders. Research teams may consider involving external actors in this process to ensure that no key groups, individuals and organisations have been overlooked. Similarly, the stakeholder mapping should be a 'live' document that is added to as the research unfolds and different stakeholders are identified.

Time & resources:

›› 1-2 hours should be enough to come up with an actor list and matrix,

›› 4-5 people and a flipchart or a wipe board.

Tools:

›› brainstorm to create a long list of actors, who should be involved during the research and then match them into suitable matrix cells,

›› the best option is to enter into the matrix specific contact person(s) for each actor.

Figure 1: Stakeholder mapping for policy analysis – example 1 (adapted from Turner 2002, 58-59)

	Government / public agencies	NGOs / associations	Mainstream groups	Marginalised groups	...
High					
Medium					
Low					

Level of influence on policy shaping

Figure 2: Stakeholder mapping for policy analysis – example 2 (adapted from Turner 2002, 58-59)

	Government / public agencies	NGOs / associations	Mainstream groups	Marginalised groups	...
High					
Medium					
Low					

Level of impact by a policy
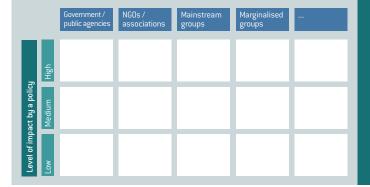
Figure 3: Stakeholder mapping for policy analysis – example 3

Level of power / influence over the policy — High / Low

Low — High

Level of impact by a policy

When this data is unavailable, then a person from the research team should be made responsible to identify a suitable informant within a given deadline.

When translating a stakeholder mapping exercise into a research plan, it is necessary to at least include the perspectives of stakeholders from areas described as 'High'.

3.2. Desk research

Description – main features:

Desk research involves screening accessible materials – such as reports, journal articles, media coverage, statistical data, and more – for information and evidence, and extracting the information that is most relevant and pertinent. Searches can be of a more general (looking with an open mind and following leads to explore the territory) or more specific (looking for a piece of information related to one particular line of enquiry). Although effective internet searches are an invaluable tool[1], a desk researcher should not rely solely on internet sources: not everything is available online, web-based information may be unsubstantiated and, unlike academic journal articles, internet publications are unlikely to have gone through a process of peer review. Paying a visit to a library or local archives is a must for proper desk research. Moreover, D&D's global youth policy team has produced initial reading lists for each country under review in 2012/2013.

Goal of desk research:

Desk research allows for an overview of the research topic; it identifies previous studies (literature review) and datasets in the area. It is indispensable for setting the scope of the research (e.g. discovering "white spots" in the current state of knowledge) and gathering initial data about the stakeholders. The depth and quality of secondary data (i.e. data gathered by others) obtained during the desk research varies greatly and sometime it has to be validated by fieldwork or primary data collection.

When to use:

Desk research is valuable during the whole process of data gathering. It is also a useful preparatory tool before interviews, especially focused and elite interviews (for more details see the section about interviews below), but validation of primary data in the course of desk research is also feasible. Additionally, using past data allows "extension" of research in time or comparison with other groups, e.g. from other countries, which could not be studied during the research (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996, 307).

What one gets:

›› thorough review of literature and accessible materials and data,

›› multiple notes, summaries and analyses with proper bibliographic referencing,

›› gathered archives of literature and dataset.

---

1 See http://www.slideshare.net/chaumanduc/google-search-techniques-1240734 for a presentation on internet search techniques.

Strengths & weaknesses:

Using secondary data such as opinion surveys, interviews, reports, or databases has an advantage of being much faster and cheaper than producing primary data. On the downside, however, secondary data rarely matches the research theme perfectly, hence adjustments or additional data collection are often necessary. Moreover, having no control over the data gathering process, and lacking knowledge on eventual bias or errors, poses a threat to the validity of our own research. The latter might be eased by utilising broadly acceptable and well-known datasets as well as exhaustive screening of research methodologies applied by other studies (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996, 308).

Important considerations (ethics, validation, etc.):

In order to ensure **validity** of data sourced through desk research, researchers should ensure appropriate **citation of data sources** and should **keep archives** of any documents and data included in the final report. Care should be taken to analyse and understand the source of the data – is the organisation reliable and credible? What particular political, theological, or philosophical perspectives influence their work? Similarly, triangulation by identifying comparable data, interpretations or conclusions from independent sources also increases overall validity.

Tools:

›› access to libraries and the internet,

›› journal article databases (open source and subscription restricted – details available from D&D)

›› publicly available documents, reports, strategic plans.

›› The World Bank Open Data Catalogue provides access to over 8,000 indicators from World Bank Data Sets (http://data.worldbank.org)

›› Data sets and reports can be accessed from a variety of sources including: World Bank Open Data Catalogue (http://data.worldbank.org), IMF eLibrary (http://elibrary-data.imf.org), ILO-STAT Database and UN Open Data (http://data.un.org).

3.3. Field visits

Traditionally;

The term field study usually refers to open-ended and wide-ranging rather than structured observation in a natural setting. ... Open-ended, flexible observation is appropriate if the research purpose of the field study is one of description and exploration... In these kinds of field studies, researchers do not start out with a particular hypothesis that they want to test, they often do not know enough about what they plan to observe to establish lists and specific categories of behaviours to look for and record systematically. The purpose of the research is to discover what these might be.
(Marshall and Rossman 2010, 204-205)

In the policy reviews, the research teams combine desk research with field visits. These field visits may follow the approach described by Marshall and Rossman (2010), but are more likely to be highly structured and focused programmes of enquiry us-

ing a range of the techniques detailed below. Field visits enable research teams to generate new data and corroborate data and theories that emerged during desk research. The following subsections present the most common techniques the research teams would typically employ while carrying out field work.

3.4. Interviews

Description - main features:

Interviewing respondents is an important qualitative method to obtain data. Interviews might be conducted either face-to-face or via phone. Three types of interviews can be distinguished; structured (standardised), semi standardised (topic guide) and nondirective or non-structured (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996, 234):

Structured interviews are carried out according to a 'recipe', with strictly prescribed wording and a sequence of questions (questionnaire) that the researcher has to follow. No changes, modifications or digressions are allowed while conducting such interviews.

Semi-structured interviews rely on a topic guide, i.e. a set of themes (without strict, prescribed wording) prepared during the research prior to the interview, and on open-ended questions, which offer an interviewee the opportunity to provide unguided answers (Babbie 2001, 245). This method applies to **focused interviews (in-depth interviews)**, which are conducted with respondents who were involved in a particular event or situation. They usually focus on interviewees'

personal experiences, reasons and perceptions (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1996, 234).

Nondirective (nonstructured) interviews are characterised by a large degree of freedom. No set of questions is prepared in advance nor are there topics that have to be discussed. The interviewer can freely explore areas, adapting the enquiry in response to the interviewees' response.

Goal of interviews:

Structured interviews are mostly applied in large surveys to produce highly standardised and comparative data (Marshall and Rossman 2010, 144). Semi-structured and non-structured interviews play a major role when personal information is desired, or when the researcher intends to either explore the topic or obtain more specific data. A goal of focused interviews (in-depth interviews) is to obtain detailed and highly specific information or to seek clarification about a given situation, a respondent's beliefs, feelings and explanations for actions. Where an interviewer understands the topic well they may clarify inconsistencies in facts and opinions and obtain a nuanced picture of the situation, as perceived by a respondent (Davies 2004, 9-13).

When to use:

Structured interviews are usually applied in surveys with large samples (for more details see the section on surveys), or where a large amount of comparable data is needed, for example in a census or opinion survey. Semi-structured and non-structured interviews are used when more flexibility is desired and

when obtaining data and information that might be of a more personal and subjective character.

Semi-structured interviews, and to a smaller extent nondirective ones, might be utilised in the so-called **elite interviews** (one kind of in-depth interview), where elite is defined as anyone "who in terms of the current purposes of the interviewer is given special, non-standardized treatment" (Lewis 1970, cited in Johnson and Joslyn 1995, 262). Usually this is someone who is deeply engaged in the studied topic or situation and might possess exclusive information (Manheim and Rich 1991, 140; Johnson and Joslyn 1995, 265).

What one gets:

Non-structured and semi-structured interviews yield deep, richly detailed and nuanced records of a given situation. These accounts should usually be recorded and transcribed in verbatim. Other tangible outcomes are a topic guide and an analysis of data obtained during the interview (Davies 2004, 12-13). Structured interviews leave a researcher with a number of filled out questionnaires and a database with coded answers.

Strengths & weaknesses:

Structured interviews provide highly standardised data, which is relatively easy to compare, while at the same time they are inflexible and do not allow for creative responses or adjustments, once the data gathering process has been initiated (questionnaire uniformity ensures reliability of data).

Semi-structured and nondirective interviews are more difficult to analyse and compare, and reliability of data is much lower than in structured interviews, but data validity is higher. Nonetheless, they might provide crucial or unexpected information, which contributes to understanding of particular events and situations (Manheim and Rich 1991, 141).

In terms of face-to-face vs. phone interviews, the latter option is much cheaper, especially when a respondent number is large. The former approach tends to deliver better outcomes (a higher response rate, better rapport etc.), yet also takes more time to execute.

Important considerations (ethics, validation, etc.):

›› **Confidentiality** is an important **ethical** issue one has to keep in mind. In certain circumstances participant consent forms should be completed. Any sensitive or confidential data should be handled with extreme care – for example through the use of password-protected folders. Care should be taken to ensure that sensitive information is anonymised and can not be traced back to the interviewee.

›› **Taking notes or recording** an interview (when possible and agreed upon) is crucial. Relying on ones memory is not sufficient. If an interviewee does not agree to recording, then first try to convince them to change their mind, if not, then take notes during the interview and elaborate them *directly* after the interview. Again, where these notes contain sensitive information, they should be stored with care.

›› Recording an interviewee without consent or using "off-record" information is unethical and therefore such techniques should not be employed.

›› To **validate** or clarify ambiguous statements during the interview, an interviewer may simply restate what they heard, asking an interviewee to confirm whether this is an accurate understanding of what was said. Sending a processed interview transcript or a summary to the interviewee for her acceptance constitutes another validation technique that can be used to avoid confusion or misrepresentation.

›› Scheduling interviews in advance helps, especially when conducting elite interviews.

Time & resources:

›› arranging interviews requires a considerable amount of effort and time (although access to interviewees is sometimes difficult to obtain, efforts should be made to include 'hard-to-reach' perspectives),

›› the length of an interview session varies, though typically an interview will last between 1-2 hours,

›› verbatim transcription is time consuming (taking much longer than the interview itself).

Tools:

›› **questionnaires** for structured and **topic guides** for other type of interviews,

›› even in semi-structured interviews it is worth to have very similar or the same questions in order to be able to compare answers across interviews.

3.5. Focus groups

Description – main features:

Focus groups are an interviewing technique, where a **group of people is interviewed at the same time** (usually 4-8 participants). The data obtained from such groups is in-depth and shaped by interaction between the interviewer and participants. A skilful interviewer is key, because she structures the discussion, brings it back to a relevant topic but does not take sides with participants, widens it to incorporate all group members, challenges participants' views and probes them, as well as ensures balance between sides without dominating the session (Davies 2004, 13-15).

Goal of focus groups:

The main goal of focus groups is to collect data in a more interactive environment than in a one-to-one interview, which helps to identify social dynamics and norms. When carried out at the beginning of the study, focus groups may lead to mapping out the field, whereas they might be used as a reflective and deliberative forum at later stages of the research process to deepen or clarify understandings and interpretations (Davies 2004, 14; Marshall and Rossman 2010, 149-150).

When to use:

When topics are not too personal or intimidating and when social interaction plays an important role in understanding the topic. Additionally, when there is a fear that the topic, because e.g. of its too technical or abstract nature, could dry-up in a one-

to-one interview, or where there is a need for creative thinking and mutual encouraging in revealing information (Davies 2004, 13-14).

What one gets:

Focus groups provide in-depth data and allow a researcher to observe social interaction. Tangible results might include video/audio recordings, verbatim transcriptions or researcher's notes that could make reference to the dynamics of the discussion.

Strengths & weaknesses:

Focus groups are a relatively quick and cheap method of gathering a large amount of in-depth qualitative data. The data gathered tends not to be as deep as in one-to-one interviews, but the scope of themes is usually broader (trade-off between depth and breadth) and the researcher has much more flexibility than in surveys. However, the successful application of the approach is strongly dependent on the interviewer's skills. Moreover, power dynamics in the group may distort the discussion or completely halt it. Last but not least, summarising data and its analysis is difficult (Marshall and Rossman 2010, 150).

Important considerations (ethics, validation, etc.):

›› focus group composition is crucial: the group has to be diverse, at the same time its members have to share some common traits and have somewhat similar understandings of the topic in order to be able to engage in an open discussion. The open and honest expression of opinions might be restricted if individuals participate in a focus group with their supervisors. Similarly, when tackling sensitive topics, too great a variety of a group might stop the discussion;

›› a researcher should reach out and make efforts to include more reserved or introvert members of a focus group;

›› the publication of photos from focus groups should not take place if sensitive topics are discussed since this could lead to persecution or stigmatisation of participants (Johnson and Joslyn 1995, 221);

›› the role of the moderator is key; careful recruitment and selection is vital for the success of the focus group;

›› validation and ethical issues are similar to those in interviews;

›› suitable location and timing of focus groups may prove essential – be flexible.

Time & resources:

›› typically, a focus group session lasts for approximately 1.5 hours, but this is only an indicative timeframe;

›› verbatim transcription is time consuming (taking much longer than the discussion);

›› a moderator and 4-8 participant (sometimes as large as 12);

›› a room with suitable seating arrangements;

›› a tested recording device, best with additional batteries and a backup device.

Tools:

›› a topic guide

Links / examples:

›› More detailed information on focus groups can be found at these weblinks:

› http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/ 10.1046/j.1365-648.1999.00966.x/pdf

› http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU19.html

3.6. Surveys

Description – main features:

Surveys are usually applied in large-scale research projects, which have a high number of respondents, and where not every individual from the population can be consulted. To gather information, surveys utilise **questionnaires**, which are carefully designed sets of questions (usually closed-ended ones), with clear wording and question sequencing, which have to be strictly followed.

Questionnaires are used during interviews with a selected subset of the population, referred to as a **sample**. If the results aim to have universal validity, careful sampling methodology (random selection complemented with proper statistical techniques) should be used to ensure that the sample reflects characteristics of the larger **population**. This enables traits found in the sample to be generalised to the broader population. Surveys might take a form of direct or telephone interviews or mailed, self-administered questionnaires (Babbie 2001, 243).

Goal of surveys:

›› to accurately reflect characteristics of large populations on the basis of sample measurement (can be used to describe, explain and explore issues).

When to use:

›› when the population is too large to observe directly and proper sampling is possible to obtain a random, representative sample.

What one gets:

›› a set of filled in questionnaires and a dataset with coded answers.

Strengths & weaknesses:

High standardisation of answers to a survey questionnaire and large samples assure **comparability** of data and make quantitative analysis feasible, thus surveys work well for describing large populations. Comparability also positively influences **reliability** of the survey. The approach also has relatively low costs, in comparison to the amount of data obtained.

On the other hand, the standardisation of questionnaires and pre-determined answers may result in coercion and manipulation of respondents. Surveys may try to fit social phenomena into categories that cannot describe them, because they are, for example, so general that they stop being relevant. Generality stems from the fact that answer categories in a questionnaire should be applicable to the largest possible number of respondents – a striving

towards the lowest common denominator (Babbie 2001, 274-275).

Important considerations (ethics, validation, etc.):

›› random selection of a representative sample requires knowledge and proper statistical techniques, without which a survey loses any claims to universal validity,

›› the questionnaire has to be tested, adjusted and re-tested before it's used in order to identify mistakes and misunderstandings and provide clarifications. A questionnaire should not be changed after the research has commenced,

›› external validity of a survey might be enhanced by replicating questions from other broadly acknowledged surveys, e.g. World Value Survey – if outcomes are similar then validity is enhanced.

Time & resources:

The resources required to undertake a survey vary according to sample size, territorial dispersion and the length of the questionnaire. Web-based / e-mail / mail, self-administered surveys are the cheapest and fastest, telephone surveys require moderate costs and time, and personal surveys are the most time- and cost-intensive.

Tools:

›› a questionnaire,

›› software for gathering, coding and processing data.

Links / examples:

›› World Value Survey: http://www.worldvalues-survey.org

›› US Census: http://www.census.gov/acs/www/methodology/methodology_main

›› World Bank's Doing Business: http://www.do-ingbusiness.org/methodology

3.7. Case studies

Description – main features:

Case studies can be used to investigate specific situations or events in detail. They are particularly adept in complex situations as they allow for a holistic understanding of a situation; e.g. a young person's experience of their school-to-work transition. Case studies often incorporate many of the above mentioned research methods to obtain as much information as possible and create a complete picture of a given story, situation or event. Due to their encompassing nature they are time and resource intensive but tend to have high explanatory power, although they are very context dependent (low external validity). In terms of purpose, case studies can also be considered as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Johnson and Joslyn 1995, 144).

Goal of case studies:

›› to offer a deep and comprehensive understanding of a given situation, process, organisation entity, which takes into account different viewpoints, perceptions, contexts, interests and so forth (Davies 2004, 37).

When to use:

›› when a thorough and encompassing analysis is needed. Due to their inquisitive nature, case studies are usefully employed to address the questions "why?" and "how?" did something come about (Johnson and Joslyn 1995, 144).

What one gets:

›› A case study may include complex and detailed information. This information is usually well-grounded, multidimensional and highly context specific.

Strengths & weaknesses:

Case studies can provide **powerful explanations and comprehensive understanding**. This might facilitate the creation of tailor made policies (Parker and Kirkpatrick 2012, 8). On the downside, case studies are resource intensive and very context dependent, hence their results are difficult to generalise and transfer to other environments. Additionally, the selection of cases can be manipulated to "prove" a specific research hypothesis. The latter two issues might be partly alleviated by having a series of case studies rather than just one, although that's not possible in every setting (Johnson and Joslyn 1995, 146-147).

Important considerations (ethics, validation, etc.):

›› criteria for case selection have to be clearly stated to prove unbiased choice,

›› validation of the case study is complex and resource intensive, since case studies are an amalgam of the above mentioned methods, their validation is conducted respectively to the method utilised.

Time & resources:

›› time and resource demanding due to an all-encompassing and detail-oriented nature.

Links / examples:

›› Improving outcomes for disadvantaged young people: Case studies of effective practice http://readingroom.ypla.gov.uk/ypla/ypla-improving_outcomes_for_disadvantaged_young_people,_case_studies_of_effective_practice-re-dec10-v1.pdf

›› An analysis of the Three Mile Island nuclear plant disaster can be found in Charles Perrow's book *Normal Accidents: Living With High Risk Technologies*, Princeton University Press (revised edition, 1999).

›› The NIOD (Netherlands Institute for War Documentation) report analysing the Srebrenica Massacre: http://www.srebrenica-project.com/index.php?option= com_content&view=article&id=140:niod-report&cat id=12:2009-01-25-02-01-02

›› An analysis of the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme: http://www.iic-offp.org/

4. Analysis and writing techniques

4.1. Techniques for analysing documents

Tools for qualitative analysis:

OpenOffice Calc, iWork Numbers/AppleWorks and MS Excel are three of the most commonly used and yet powerful tools for undertaking a quantitative analysis of datasets. In addition to all of the basic calculation functions, this software can facilitate data visualisation, helping to make reports more transparent and more interesting to read. Additionally, the use of 'DataPilot' in OpenOffice, 'pivot tables' in MS Excel and 'Table categories' in Macs allows for the presentation and analysis of data in a tabular form.

More sophisticated quantitative software could be also utilised, e.g. STATA, SPSS, SAS, and R. From this quartet, the last one has the advantage of being open source - meaning that it is free of charge. This software is highly flexible and powerful and as a result, it is used in commercial as well as non-for-profit environments (http://www.r-project.org/). Each programme from the remaining trio can be utilised for the purpose of advanced quantitative analysis, but has to be purchased.

4.2. Collaborative writing tools

Collaborative writing refers to **creating a single document by a group of authors**. This collaboration may take place both without and with utilisation of the internet, although the latter makes the exchange of information easier and faster. Currently there are many free online tools facilitating collaborative writing.

The most obvious option is the regular **exchange of text files**. Most word processing software allows tracking changes, inserting comments and comparing documents (e.g. in OpenOffice: "\Edit\Compare documents", in MS word "\Tools\Compare and merge documents"). Other more interactive methods may rely on **web-based solutions** such as Dropbox or other file sharing services. Some of those services "remember" earlier versions of documents (automatic data backup); keep track of changes and users, who modify them and allowing simultaneous editing of the same document. On **youthpolicy.org**, teams can co-create documents as well. In either case, **creating regular back-ups** is vital and should be assigned to one person in the team.

Simple file exchange methods can prove very efficient provided that a writing group is not too large and that the document is not too long. Most difficulties arise during the merging and editing phase, when individual group members take **sequential turns** to read the whole draft, introduce their comments and modifications and then pass it to another group member for further feedback. For that reason, when working with longer documents, it is better to tackle them part by part as they are being created. This also allows for a greater cross-sectional and semantic consistency, as fellow authors know what the colleagues have already included in the text and share common wording. In larger groups this process takes a considerable amount of time and different version of files are difficult to follow. Strict discipline in file naming and sharing is essential to avoid losing data.

When the commenting process does not take a sequential form and co-authors provide **feedback in**

parallel, i.e. working on separate documents without seeing other's comments, one person has to incorporate or dismiss the feedback or a group has to meet to discuss changes. Additionally, such an approach does not enhance the overall coherence of the document, as new remarks might go in diverging directions, or might cause redundancies in different sections of a document. On the other hand, this might save time and invite a "fresh" look from each reviewer, which will not be distorted by previous comments of other co-authors, thus it tends to be more creative.

Both feedback methods are recommended during the writing process. The sequential feedback approach seems to be more feasible towards the end of the writing process, when more attention is devoted to details and fine-tuning. Parallel feedback seems to better suit the early stages of drafting, when the structuring of report sections is taking place and "big" changes are still being introduced.

Research teams should decide about the most suitable solution, which best facilitates cooperation, work division and proper data storage.

Substance-related hints:

›› before starting to write a document, think and talk with the whole team about the general picture,

›› a discussion of the whole document (chapter/ section) structure is necessary to ensure that each person from the writing team understands the overall purpose of the document and the goal of her section(s),

›› the discussion should result in a clear framework, which states the main goal of a document,

›› the framework should name the main sections and subsections of the document. It should also state the overall length of both the whole document and individual parts. Moreover, responsibility for particular sections should be assigned to team members.

Collaboration etiquette:

›› everyone should have an opportunity to provide input at the planning stage of a document. This creates an ownership feeling within the team and makes further work easier,

›› create a schedule, divide work in manageable parts, define milestones, and stick to deadlines,

›› provide clear, subject-related comments when review parts written by colleagues. The best option is to suggest specific changes, which proves essential especially when working under time pressure. General comments like e.g. "the whole paragraph is unacceptable" or "a whole section has to be revised" are not very helpful,

›› make a habit of regular meetings and check-ins to discuss, exchange ideas, update each other, and talk about obstacles.

Technical details:

›› adjust the provided document templates at the very beginning of the process, making sure everyone is familiar with the formatting and how to use it while writing,

›› follow a particular pattern for the bibliography in order to be able to gather it consistently from the very start of research. For the reviews, we follow an author-date-system, more specifically the Chicago 15th B Style. Compiling a bibliography or references retrospectively is time consuming, tedious and usually results in suboptimal outcomes,

›› create a clear structure of folders and a template for file naming. If you exchange many versions of the same document include the date, a version and initials in the file name, this eases file identification e.g. *"filename_20121010_1_initials"*,

›› create a list of phrases, organisation names, legal act names, or commonly used acronyms, especially when they do not have official English translation. This provides consistency across the various sections and subsections of the report,

›› ascribe specific, technical and long-term tasks to individual team members, e.g. document formatting, checking bibliography consistency, updating back up data etc. usually speeds up writing process and helps with consistency.

References

Babbie, E. (2001). The practice of social research. Belmont, CA, Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Davies, P. (2004). Qualitative Research and Evaluation: How do you know why (and how) something works? The magenta book: Guidance notes for policy evaluation and analysis. London, Government Chief Social Researcher's Office.

Frankfort-Nachmias, C. and D. Nachmias (1996). Research methods in the social sciences. New York, St. Martin's Press.

Johnson, J. B. and R. A. Joslyn (1995). Political science research methods. Washington D.C., CQ Press.

Lewis, A. D. (1970). Elite and specialized interviewing. Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press.

Manheim, J. B. and R. C. Rich (1991). Empirical political analysis: Research methods in political science. London, Longman.

Marshall, C. and G. B. Rossman (2010). Designing qualitative research. London, Sage.

Parker, D. and C. Kirkpatrick (2012). The economic impact of regulatory policy: A literature review of quantitative evidence. Expert Papers, OECD.

iv. Roles, who's who and resources

Roles and responsibilities in the review process

Introduction

The series of policy reviews involves numerous people, teams and organisations, among them:

›› the lead researchers, each coordinating one specific country team;

›› the country research teams, composed of up to three young researchers;

›› the international advisors, each supporting one specific country team;

›› the national partners, supporting and faciliating the reviews inside each country;

›› the international editorial board, ensuring quality control and advising country teams;

›› the global youth policy team at Demokratie & Dialog, implementing and overseeing the entire series of reviews; and

›› the Open Society Youth Initiative, initiator and main sponsor of the youth policy review series.

Each of these categories of actors is responsible for specific tasks and for communicating their results, concerns or challenges to the relevant others. An effective communication process between these many different categories of actors involved in the reviews is absolutely essential to the success of the process as a whole and for each individual report.

Roles and responsibilities

In the following section we present a brief overview of the roles, tasks and responsibilities of each category of actor involved in the process.

1 **Lead researchers** guide the in-country research process and support the research team in the development of their research process and of the report. They are expected to guarantee the academic integrity and quality of the country report. They participate in the drafting process, and where necessary re-draft sections of the report. They have a kind of 'mentorship' role towards the members of the research team.

Lead Researchers are **knowledgeable** about the general **country situation** and about the **youth situation** in the country; have an excellent command of the **English** language and the a relevant **local or regional lingua franca**; have a proven track record in youth policy development or evaluation processes and in **applied (youth) policy research ideally** beyond the country; have a strong connection to **youth issues** and be **actively engaged in the youth sector of the country;** ideally some experience of the international youth sector.

Their tasks and responsibilities include:

›› supporting the recruitment of 2-4 youth researchers to complete the country team;

›› coordinating, facilitating and taking responsibility for the country team's research process;

›› coordinating, contributing to and ensuring the quality and timeliness of the draft country report;

›› leading the country field visit together with the international advisor;

›› coordinating, contributing to and ensuring the quality and timeliness of the final country report;

›› liaising continuously with the international advisor concerning progress and feedback;

›› communicating regularly with all members of the research team about their progress, challenges and needs;

›› helping to build and strengthen the competence of the country research team.

2 For each country a research team of up to 3 young researchers is established. **Researchers** implement the research process, conducting the research plan that has been planned collaboratively between them, the lead researcher and the international advisor, they gather evidence and data, analyse and interpret desk and field work. On the basis of the research they conduct, they draft chapters of the report.

The members of the research team have a **track record in youth research** and are **very knowledgeable about the youth situation in the country**; have demonstrable **experience in youth policy development or evaluation** processes and in **applied policy research**; excellent command of **English and the local language**.

Their tasks and responsibilities are to

›› contribute to the overall structure of the report

›› draft chapters of the report

›› conduct desk and empirical research on policies pertaining to young people and their impact on the youth situation in the country

›› conduct qualitative validation of research findings

›› conduct and participate in the in-country field visit

›› prepare full archives of their research material

›› fully document their field work (notes, lists of interviews, etc.)

›› raise concerns and seek advice when research-related ambiguities arise or when methodological assistance is needed

›› prepare and organise bibliographic resources for use in the preparation of the bibliography of the report.

3 **International Advisors** support the research teams (made up of one lead researcher and 3 young researchers) in the development of their research process and of the report. The international advisors are expected to bring a broader international perspective to the analysis and assessment of policy impacts contained in the report. They are expected to ask critical questions, suggest alternative or more elaborate perspectives, identify gaps or omissions, and to suggest improvements to the technical quality of the report. They have a kind of 'mentorship' role and act as a 'sounding board' for the whole team.

International advisors are **knowledgeable** about the general **country situation** and about the **youth situation** in the country; have an excellent command of the **English** language and the a relevant **local or regional lingua franca**; have previous **field experience** in the country or relevant region; have a proven **track record** in **youth policy development or evaluation** processes and in **applied (youth) policy**

research; have a strong connection to local, regional and global youth issues and be actively engaged in the international youth sector.

Their tasks and responsibilities include:

›› supporting the recruitment of 2-4 youth researchers to complete the country team;

›› guiding and supporting the country team's research process;

›› supporting the team with access to relevant materials and people;

›› communicating regularly with all members of the research team about their progress, challenges and needs;

›› complementing the desk research of the country team with knowledge, facts and sources;

›› discussing the draft country report in its entirety with the research team;

›› advising the team on improvements, gaps and issues that need further explanation;

›› leading the country field visit together with the lead researcher;

›› providing extensive support to the research team for the finalisation of the country report;

›› ensuring factual correctness, standard-compliance and completeness of the country report;

›› liaising and regularly communicating with the International Editorial Board concerning progress, feedback and quality control;

›› helping to build and strengthen the competence of the local research team.

4 National partners manage – with support from the Youth Initiative and D&D – the in-country components of the review process. They support the reviews from their initial phase through the field visits all the way to the publication of the reports and subsequent advocacy activities. They are well connected within the youth (policy) field in their country, help forge connections and embed the review process and report in the national context. Depending on the country, national partners can be local or regional offices of the Open Society Foundations or other stakeholders of the review series, or national NGOs chosen specifically for and entrusted with this task.

Their responsibilities include:

›› overall coordination of the national strand of the review process

›› supporting the conceptual development of the country research plan

›› connecting the research team with existing youth and youth policy networks and experts

›› strengthening local relevance and local buy-in of the review process and review outcome

›› handling the logistics of the field visits in the country, including travel and accommodation

›› ensuring translation into local languages if adequate, including quality and editorial control

›› developing and implementing advocacy plans, e.g. kick-off events presenting the report

5 The **International Editorial Board (IEB)**, composed of four high level international experts, ensures on-going quality control and advice to the country review teams throughout the process. They have a guiding, advisory and editorial role, leading researchers and international advisors, helping them to navigate the specificities of this review process. Their main concern is to ensure the coherence and quality of the reviews across the series.

International Editorial Board members have **experience in the development of evidence based youth policy**; a track record in **applied policy research**, **youth research** and in the preparation and implementation of **evaluations**; fluency in English and one other **UN working language**; excellent **collaborative working** and **communication skills**.

Their responsibilities include:

›› reviewing and refining the methodology and process for conducting reviews

›› contributing to the development of support and guidance materials about the review process for use by the research teams

›› contributing to the planning, preparation and implementation of the Orientation Meeting for the review process

›› guiding, supporting and facilitating the implementation of the youth reviews, in particular but not limited to regular liaison with and feedback to the research teams on their progress;

›› consulting with international advisors and lead researchers as well as D&D regularly on issues pertaining to the quality and validity of the research processes, findings and recommendations

›› contributing to the publication the key findings of the reviews on www.youthpolicy.org

6 The implementation of the policy reviews is co-ordinated and managed by **Demokratie & Dialog e.V.** (D&D). D&D is a registered and accredited non-governmental, not-for-profit association working with the ambition to foster democracy and dialogue through the lens of youth policy, youth research, youth media and youth work. It was created in 2008 by leading experts working at the intersection of research, policy, media and practice in the youth field. The organisation is based in Berlin, Germany and currently has 80+ members, maintaining a balance between different angles, traditions and approaches in youth policy, youth research, youth media and youth work. The activities of the association focus on building up a sustainable youth knowledge base.

The following tasks are covered by Demokratie & Dialog's global youth policy team:

›› overall coordination, management and communication of the review process in all countries

›› coordinating the recruitment of international advisors and lead researchers

›› consultation with the national partners on all the recruitment of the national research teams

›› supporting national partners in the preparation of the in-country process including budget preparation, field visit preparation, etc

›› organisation of the orientation meeting for all advisors, lead researchers and national partners

›› revision and further development of the evaluation methodology and the youth policy review matrix

›› quality assurance for the research processes and outcomes through and in cooperation with the international editorial board

›› coordination of the publication of all research reports in a global publication series

›› ensuring the translation of the results of the reviews into relevant contents on www.youthpolicy.org

D&D is a grantee of the Open Society Youth Initiative, which has provided initial funding for its youth policy flagship project www.youthpolicy.org. Following the pilot round of reviews, OSYI sought to outsource the management and implementation of further rounds. D&D, therefore, receives a grant from OSYI to implement the 2nd round of policy reviews in 2012 – 2013.

7 The **Open Society Youth Initiative (OSYI)** is the initiator of the youth policy review series project and is the main sponsor of the 2nd round of policy reviews in 2012 – 2013. It remains involved in the 2nd round to support the national partners many of which are its partners. In the long run, OSYI hopes to spin the policy review series project entirely and to make it self-sustaining.

OSYI's tasks in the 2nd round include:

›› overall project oversight and guidance including quality control and grant management

›› agreement with all national partners on the distribution of the national review expenses

›› participation in the youth policy review Orientation Meeting organised in autumn 2012 in Berlin

›› liaison with national partners and Demokratie & Dialog on progress and key decisions

›› distribution of findings across the network of the Open Society Foundations and beyond

Who's who in the policy reviews?

Abdoul Diallo is the Guinea office program coordinator at the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA). Prior to this, he served at the US Embassy in Conakry in different positions including Senior Political Specialist and received the Superior Honor award. He currently works on democracy, good governance, human rights and women and youth issues.

Ahmed Allouch works as an advisor at the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly. Having been active in civil society through many NGOs, Ahmed is currently the vice-president and project manager at "Youth Without Borders," a Tunis based NGO aiming to support youth engagement in society. Ahmed is a specialist in the youth field with a focus on sports management. He also is a national and international election observer and election observer trainer.

Alpha Barry has worked in the youth field since 1999. While at Conakry University he founded the first national NGO specialised in the governance sector. Later on he joined Peace Child International as Africa Desk officer and UNIDO as a youth employment specialist. In 2008, he supported the implementation of a regional UN programme on youth in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte D'ivoire. He returned to Guinea in 2011 and works as a consultant for several international developpement agencies.

Andrea Romero is a Colombian political scientist and master in political studies with experience in youth, participation and public policy issues. She has worked in public sector, academy and civil society organizations. Andrea is the executive director of Ocasa, a non-profit organization founded in 2003 to promote empowerment, leadership and active participation of young people in political and social processes.

Andreas Karsten works as a hybrid between researcher, author and educator in the youth field. Operating at the junction of research, policy and practice, he attempts to permanently weave media, new and old, into his work. He currently heads the global youth policy team at Demokratie & Dialog, a Berlin-based NGO aiming to build a global evidence-base for youth policy.

Batjargal Batkhuyag works as an executive director of the Mongolian Education Alliance (MEA), one of the leading NGOs in Mongolia dedicated to improving the quality of education for all children and promoting youth participation. Batjargal serves as a Board member of the Network of Education Policy Centers and is a founding member and a board member of the "All for Education" Mongolian National Civil Society Coalition. His interests lie in promoting and advocating for access, equity and quality education for marginalised groups.

Bence Ságvári is a sociologist-researcher focusing on several topics (youth, internet and digital media, human values) and working on different projects in the world of academia, public policy and business consultancy. He currently acts as the national coordinator for the European Social Survey (ESS) in Hungary. Bence has more then ten years of experience in both quantitative and qualitative empirical research, and he also worked in several projects in the field youth and digital inclusion policies.

Betty Kyaddondo heads the Family Health Department at the Population Secretariat in Uganda, where she is responsible for policy and advocacy as well as programme design & planning for reproductive health interventions in the country. Her work regularly focuses on young people, youth research and youth policy advocacy.

Csilla Szabó has studied international relations and European studies at the Corvinus University in Budapest where she became interested in EU and youth related affairs. She worked as a TCP officer in the Hungarian National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme being responsible for training and cooperation projects for seven years. Maybe the next seven years will be dedicated for recognition and validation issues in her present professional activity as a coordinator at the Tempus Public Foundation in Budapest.

Dabesaki Mac-Ikemenjima is a researcher, advocate and policy consultant. His interests are dynamic and diverse and his current focus is on post conflict youth policy, the intersections between education and youth development and measures of youth well-being. He is currently studying at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, United Kingdom working on developing a measure of students quality of life in Nigeria. Between these activities he is engaged in a 'Save the Port Harcourt Zoo' Campaign.

Gerelmaa Amgaabazar is the manager for education and social policy programs at the Open Society Forum Mongolia. As a program manager, she combines the role of a policy analyst advocating for equitable access to public services with that of a grant manager overseeing capacity building grants. Since 2009, she has been running youth-focused grant programs, including support to NGOs creating programs in disadvantaged areas and small grants to young individuals to support youth engagement and volunteerism.

Gina Romero, a democracy activist for more than 10 years, has vast experience in social projects related to youth empowering, citizen participation and anticorruption. Currently she is one of the general coordinators of the Latin American and the Caribbean Network for Democracy, and member of the steering committee of the World Movement for Democracy and its youth chapter.

Grzegorz Wolszczak is trained as a public policy analyst with a research methodology bent. He has deepened his experience and knowledge, while working in the public sector, NGOs and academia. He continuously strives to understand the machinery of complex, multi-level organisations, such as regional and state level governments, and support them in making good evidence-based policies, which stem from rigorous research methods and thorough social consultations.

Gyorgy Lissauer is a program coordinator at the Open Society Foundations Youth Initiative. He comes from a mixed background of international youth work (with an interest in complex processes) and academia (looking at processes through a (socio-)legal lens that take place in international communities). His daughter, two dogs and cooking however often takes priority.

Harini Amarasuriya is a lecturer in Sociology at the Open University of Sri Lanka. Her research interests are on youth and politics, policy, and the state. She worked in the development sector prior to joining the university for several years and continues to work with a couple of local NGOs in Sri Lanka mainly on gender, child protection and psychosocial issues.

Hleliswa Luhlanga is a young and passionate feminist and the founder and National Coordinator for the Swaziland Young Women's Network (SYWON), an initiative established after realizing several gaps within the women's movement on the participation of young women. Hleliswa graduated from the University Of Swaziland with a Diploma in Law and is currently studying towards a BA Degree of Arts in Development Studies with the University of South Africa.

Jacob Kreyenbühl is currently doing his masters in computer science at the Technical University of Berlin. He has created readcandy, a platform for information exchange about literature, magazines and newspapers and contributed to Borderless, a worldwide social peace network for all involved in or affected by warlike operations and conflicts. Together with Andreas Karsten and Bowe Frankema, Jacob is responsible for the technology that makes our website run.

Jan Husák is active in the political science field as well as a practitioner in the youth field and youth policy. He has a master in European Studies and international relations and continues with his PhD in political sciences at the University of Economics in Prague. His academic focus is on the relations between the state and civic political participation, youth policy, and issues of nationalism and identity. Jan is a board member of the Czech Council of Children and Youth.

John Muir is a qualified youth worker and a former local government policy officer (i.e. a recovering bureaucrat), attempting to bridge the fields of practice and policy. He is driven by a desire to address social injustice and economic exclusion – particularly through systems change. John's motivation is drawn from the insights that emerge in the contrast between local and international. He is a new member of the global youth policy team at Demokratie & Dialog and enjoys yoga, cycling and green space in his spare time.

Josef Bocek has been working in the youth sector for 8 years. In his previous position as the Head of the Czech National Agency of the EU's Youth in Programme he helped to kick off the development of a new national youth strategy. Josef's present professional activities encompass youth policy consultation for state, regional and local authorities in the Czech Republic, management of international projects for NGOs and research-based monitoring of the Youth in Action Programme.

Juliana Aguilar has studied Political Science and International Relations. She has international experience in child and youth rights, peace building and advocacy with a focus on children and young people's participation in specific situations of armed conflict. She has worked in development and emergency contexts including Uganda, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, The Netherlands & Colombia. Juliana is currently living in Cota, Colombia with her family.

Katalin Széger is an education researcher and educator with 6 years of experience in education for democratic citizenship for youth and teachers, organization development for schools and NGOs and auxiliary material and policy recommendation development for democratic citizenship education. She works part time for the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development and part time on international projects about education for sustainable development. She is the vice-chairperson of the Hungarian arm of the European Democratic Education Community http://www.eudec.org.

László Milutinovits has been active in the field of European youth work since 2002. He used to work for Mobilitás, the Hungarian youth service and later for SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre in Slovenia. He graduated in History and English Studies, and wrote his thesis about policies aiming the integration of Roma and Travelers in the UK. Currently he is active as a freelance youth expert and trainer and also works on the accreditation of youth NGOs in frames of EVS neighbouring partner countries.

Leila Younis just completed her MA with a focus on cultural anthropology and theories of culture at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. Prior to joining the global youth policy team of D&D as an intern, she worked with Arabic asylum seekers at the Center for Peace Studies in Zagreb. She currently also manages a project for the NGO Interkultura on sustainable cooperation at local level, which deals with participative democracy in decision making.

Manfred Zentner is a youth researcher and a lecturer and trainer for qualitative research methods. The Institute for Youth Culture research - jugendkultur.at in Vienna is his professional home base, but in reality he spends most of the time on tour because he is member of diverse European networks and works as international expert on youth policy. His main interest in youth research focus on youth cultures, on diversity, on media usage and on youth participation and its acceptance in political life.

Martina Novotna works as a project coordinator and a lecturer in the Education Department in the People in Need organisation in Prague, cooperating with the Czech and other European schools, teachers, and students, NGOs and policymakers. She is currently returning from a part-time maternity leave back to work. She has experience in research in the field of education and youth development.

Michelle Engeler is a researcher fascinated by the sociology of youth and the state in Africa. She is especially interested in understanding the relations between youth group activities and socio-political transformation processes. Her regional expertise concentrates on West Africa, in particular Guinea-Conakry. Besides that she loves teaching and gives lectures on qualitative social research and youth as actors of social change. Michelle currently works at the Institute for Social Anthropology at the University of Basel, Switzerland.

Milosz Czerniejewski is living and working in Poznan, Poland. He is a passionate about human rights education, although during the last years he dedicated a lot of time into seeing how figures and budgets can make impact on reality. He likes work that is important but not so visible - management, logistics, background research, analytical tasks.

Noel Selegzi directs the Open Society Youth Initiative, which seeks to empower youth to become active citizens who are willing and able to influence public life and promote open society ideals. He earned a double BA from Amherst College in American studies and political science before going on to receive a master's degree in political science from Columbia University. Before coming to the Open Society Foundations in 1997, he worked in technology and financial services. He has coached debate at Hunter College Campus Schools since 1989.

Nondumiso Dlamini works for the "Vessel Of Glory Creative Arts Organization" in which she is the youth programme's director. Her work, experiences and passions are a mix of the arts, alternative education and community youth programmes. Nondumiso has a background in information technology, business management and social science.

Ntombikayise Nyoni is a young feminist lawyer passionate about human rights, access to justice for women and children, law review and issues regarding youth, in particular the empowerment of young women. She currently works for the Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse as Legal and Advocacy Officer.

Ondrej Bárta is a researcher focusing on youth and non-formal learning. He is currently a doctorate student at Masaryk University in the field of Educational Sciences, and he also studies Sociology and Adult Education. As a researcher, his works included evaluating Youth in Action Programme on both national and international level, as well as evaluation of specific youth-oriented non-formal learning projects.

Rayed Khedher holds an MA in Applied Anthropology and is currently a doctoral student and a Teaching Assistant in Anthropology at UCLA. His areas of interest, research and teaching include transnational migration, human rights, North African diaspora, politics and the art of resistance, media, and Islam. Rayed's primary training on those issues date back to his NGO career that he has started in the mid-1990s in Tunisia.

Robert Thomson trained as a psychologist and has a degree in theology. Now working in global health diplomacy as a government scientific adviser, he spent a couple of decades in the UN system in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe and Central Asia responsible for adolescent health, sexuality education and finally youth engagement. A Scout, he also organises a disability sports federation.

Simangele Mavundla is passionate about Human rights and is driven by the desire to promote justice and to be a voice to the voiceless. She currently is a consultant in the area of governance at the Leadership Development Foundation (LDF) where she is empowering youth and citizens ahead of the 2013 elections. She has undertaken research on women and children's rights, gender equality and the eradication of gender-based violence.

Simon Bart has been concerned with the international comparison of youth policy in several occasions, including the pilot round of the youth policy reviews. Since 2006, he has been a member of Politools, an interdisciplinary research network in Switzerland that develops web-based projects in order to enhance political interest and to improve the level of political knowledge among citizens, particularly with regard to young people.

Siyka Kovacheva is a researcher and university lecturer (associate professor) in sociology and social policy at the University of Plovdiv, Bulgaria. In her practice of comparative youth research and teaching with young people she looks at the policy implications of her findings in different social contexts and how a global evidence-based policy can support young people in a changing world.

Velaphi Mamba is a Human Rights activist and pro-democracy campaigner in Swaziland. He works as Programme Officer for the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and is based in Swaziland. Velaphi has a strong passion for youth activism and advocates for a greater role for young people in governance. He has been at the forefront of establishing a youth debate movement in Swaziland and is leading other efforts aimed at educating and engaging the youth of Swaziland.

Yael Ohana is a specialist of non-formal education, international youth work and youth policy. She is co-founder and principal project officer at 'Frankly Speaking - Training, Development & Research' a small educational consultancy which provides project support services to the international civic and not-for-profit youth and development sectors. She has been actively working with the advisory board of the Open Society Youth Initiative since 2008. Yael is currently based in Berlin.

Zsófia Fekete studied international relations and economics. She worked for the Hungarian National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme and has coordinated numerous international youth projects. She is mainly interested in youth participation and the international aspects of education. Currently Zsófia works in a project about the internationalization of higher education in Hungary.

Resources on youthpolicy.org

At youthpolicy.org, we are building a global evidence-base for youth policy. We generate and consolidate knowledge and information on youth policies, including an annual report on the state of youth policy and an overview of national youth policies. Read more about what we do, and what we offer, at http://www.youthpolicy.org/about/.

Youth Policy Library

www.youthpolicy.org/library/

Our youth policy library is growing to become the most extensive global online resource for documents on public policies for youth, from declarations and resolutions to research reports and policy evaluations. The powerful search lets you combine aspects such as titles, authors, regions and languages. We will add key documents from your research to the library as we go along.

Youth Policy Mappings

www.youthpolicy.org/mappings/

We have several mappings online, namely (1) the mapping of the international youth sector, (2) mappings of the regional youth scenes for all continents, (3) a mapping of donor engagement in the international youth sector, and (4) mappings of youth funding in the different regions of the world.

Youth Policy Overview

www.youthpolicy.org/nationalyouthpolicies/

Every year, we publish the most recent overview of the state of youth policy. A list of all countries & the current status of their national youth policy, as far as known. In 2013, of 198 countries, 99 (50%) have a current youth policy. The 2013 Report on the State of Youth Policy describes the current situation and is available at http://www.youthpolicy.org/blog/2013/01/state-of-youth-policy-2013/.

Overview of national youth policies

Youth Policy Community

www.youthpolicy.org/community/

We are building up the community section as a place to discuss youth policy across the globe. There are discussion fora for each region of the world, and within those, for each country of the world. This is a good place for discussions involving a wider community and gives you a tool to concentrate online stakeholder participation.

Youth Policy Fact Sheets

www.youthpolicy.org/facts/

Fact sheets for countries provide a quick overview of policies pertaining to young people's rights and realities.

Where available, basic statistical data on youth will be included, as well as a summary of the the findings of youth policy reviews.

Youth Policy Events

www.youthpolicy.org/events/

The event calendar lists upcoming youth sector events. For each youth policy event, various details can be provided, from agenda to directions.

It is also possible to run registration for events through the calendar.

v. Dilemmas, challenges & issues

Dilemmas, challenges & issues

During the pilot of the youth policy review series, research-related dilemmas emerged, challenges were encountered and issues – that impacted upon the process and quality of final publications – arose. This section of the research handbook outlines these with the aim of stimulating reflection and discussion to assist research teams in their planning and delivery.

Dealing with dilemmas

1. Standardisation or variation?

The evaluation matrix, report templates and guidance in this handbook serve as a framework for enquiry across the review series. They aim to guide and support the research, setting out important lines of enquiry with the aim of ensuring that the final publication is comprehensive. In doing this it is hoped that we can achieve some consistency across the publication series in order to allow for comparability. To achieve this, some level of cross-publication standardisation is required. Yet standardisation can stifle creativity, inhibit emergence, mask difference, and can feel like an external imposition. The reports should be locally owned, and this necessitates a high level of autonomy. A detailed discussion on the role of the matrix can be found in the 'Our Approach' section of this handbook.

2. Who to speak with – the centre or the edge?

The impact of the youth and public policy reviews is dependent on our ability to access, report and influence – at an appropriate distance – the views, thoughts and perspectives of people at the centre, in leadership and decision-making roles. The people that we need to access – such as Ministers for Youth, Politicians, Chief Executives of national youth agencies or NGOs, Directors of public organ-

isations – may operate behind seemingly closed doors of power. It is essential that we make efforts to include their voice in the review.

… But the future is here; it's just unevenly distributed – finding it requires us to move to the edge, away from established organisations, structures and powerbases. So as well as accessing senior leaders and decision makers we will need to search out and interact with innovative, novel and experimental ideas that are emerging at the periphery. There may be examples of youth led communication and association, young people or civil society organisations pushing boundaries, novel applications of new technologies. These may be ideas that current policy makers are yet to comprehend. Where are these ideas emerging? How might we access and acknowledge these?

Where will you focus your enquiries? Which will give a more accurate picture of reality? What would an appropriate balance between these two perspectives feel like?

3. The old or the new?

Where it exists, the review should draw on existing knowledge base. Yet the review series aims to move the dialogue on youth policy beyond its current discourse. To do this we will need to identify gaps and blind spots. Is one area of research, policy or practice prioritised at the expense of others? We will therefore need to pursue unexplored tangents,

gather new data and generate new knowledge. Yet, the only way that this can be done effectively is with a full, but critical, understanding of what has been done before.

4. Misleading rhetoric or progressive intention?

Many countries have established youth policies, but whether they are implemented remains unclear. Yet at the same time, policy is frequently a future-orientated statement of intent and so by its very nature will differ from the current situation. Does the existence of a policy – even one that is unmet – demonstrate significant progress that should be welcomed? Or is incongruence between policy and reality evidence of policy failure? Is the use of rhetoric a tool to mobilise action or to hush dissent? In each case this is a matter of judgement. Each research team will have to distinguish rhetoric from reality, to make critical judgements about the level of intent that accompanies policies, and to pitch their conclusions accordingly.

5. Impartial research or campaign and advocacy tool?

The Youth Policy Review Series aims to produce publications that are academically rigorous and that make a significant contribution to the knowledge of youth issues. The series also seeks to establish an evidence base for advocacy. The project is not dependent on governmental mandates (see 'Our Approach' and 'A Word on Terminology), which gives us a level of independence that is not often associated with reviews of public policy. The publications aim to speak truth to power. It is essential that the views of young people and those that work in the field are not lost to compromise. This requires research teams to adopt an advocacy role and develop an advocacy and dissemination plan, whilst maintaining academic credibility and the impartiality that this sometimes entails.

Gathering diverse perspectives

1. Youth policy and youth issues

The youth policy review series is an account of public policy pertaining to youth, rather than an account of the issues which young people face: The latter however, *may* be an indicator for the quality of the former. The review will therefore need to explore both public policy *and* youth issues, ensuring that the primary focus – an analysis and evaluation of policy, is supported by contextual information, data and case studies that illustrate the effectiveness of public policy and the issues young people face. In order to do this we will have to explore and clarify our understanding of the relationship between policy and youth issues – ensuring a distinction between the two things. Are public policies compounding or responding to youth issues?

2. Youth in public policy

A search for policies with an exclusive focus on youth may result in a limited number of findings. Yet practically every area of public policy will, directly or indirectly, affect young people. The review should reflect the way in which youth cut across public policies – even if the public policy process

has yet to identify this. This will require disaggregation, prioritisation, analysis and interpretation.

3. Stakeholders mapping

Poor quality stakeholder mapping can undermine the legitimacy and perception of the youth policy review. Failure to include the perspectives of key players can result in them dismissing the review, seriously limiting its potential for advocacy activity. Yet, effective stakeholder mapping should not only identify organisations and individuals in positions of power; but should also consider those who are most affected by particular policies, and those - such as donors - who are attempting to set the agenda for public policy. Pages 31-32 describes the stakeholder mapping process and provides links for further reading.

4. Involving young people

Despite all the rhetoric regarding youth participation, by and large, young people are marginalised from policy formulation, even from those policies that will directly affect them. Failing to fully involve young people in the research review is incongruent with the aims of the series and delegitimises calls to address their marginalisation. Young people's voices must be heard in the review, this requires considering their meaningful inclusion from the outset.

5. Including excluded perspectives

The review should also identify how other forms of discrimination and marginalisation affect young peoples' lives. Factors such as homophobia, racism, sexism or discrimination related to religious belief, disability, and socio-economic status - must be explored, and prejudices must be named. Ignoring contentious issues or politically sensitive topics limits the credibility of the publication. This equalities perspective is an essential feature of the series and should be evident in everything we do such as, the stakeholders we identify, the way we organise field visits, and the framework through which we analyse our findings. Yet, it is acknowledged that addressing these taboos may present a serious challenge for local researchers who are under pressure from their national society to avoid or downplay certain issues.

6. Interdisciplinary analysis

The review series needs to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the youth field; drawing on different bodies of knowledge. However, although the knowledge base of different disciplines may be theoretically and empirically sound, aspects of a field's enquiry may have a predominantly problem-focused enquiry contributing to stereotypes and clichés about young people. Do particular disciplines view youth in terms of 'pathologies', 'problems' or 'issues'? How well are the different research disciplines combined in the production of policy? How able are policy makers able to analyse a situation using the perspectives of different disciplines?

7. Analysing our own perspective

For the review to stand up to scrutiny, we will have to assess our personal perspectives, prejudices, gaps or blind spots. What are the assumptions as-

sociated with our own experience, discipline, area of expertise, or political ideology. How may these have been assimilated into our research perspective? What are your personal perspectives on good and effective policy? What limitations of our approach might a critic of the final publication identify? How might these be compensated for?

8. Using the triangle: Researchers, policy-makers and practitioners

Although the primary focus of the review is policy, policy-makers, researchers and practitioners will all have perspectives that should be incorporated into the review. These different views will help us understand and assess the in-country policy making process from different perspectives. What are the links and relationships between policy makers, researchers and practitioners? What is the quality of the communication between these camps? In what ways do they critique each other?

9. Following the money

Policies – however well intentioned – are limited in their ability to affect change unless the requisite institutional structures, political will and resources are in place. The flow of money through a system highlights the intended and unintended priorities of an organisation or administration. Likewise the absence of financial resources for particular issues

can be taken as a counter indicator of the importance of those issues to policy makers. Where *is* and where *isn't* they money going? How does this compare with the explicit aims? The allocation of financial resources should be considered inline with an organisation or administrations stated purpose. Any incongruence between purpose and the allocation of budgets to initiatives that will realise this purpose should be highlighted. What percentage of a budget is reaching the ground and allowing the work to happen? How much is absorbed by administration and management costs? How much money is spent on responding to problems and how much on early-intervention initiatives designed to prevent problems occurring?

Working collaboratively

1. Group dynamics

The process of group formation and the cooperation, negotiation and compromise required to produce a collaborative piece of work can be associated with challenges and difficulties – for the research teams as much as their individual members. These challenges can be exacerbated by straightforward personality clashes or by lack of clarity about roles. Avoiding or resolving issues will draw on the skills and experience of every member of the research team. In order to avoid role ambiguity, the 'Who's Who' section outlines the different responsibilities of international advisors, lead researchers, researchers, the D&D global youth policy team, the international editorial board, and the national partner organisations.

2. Cross-cultural working and hegemony

The challenges associated with group dynamics can be compounded by cross-cultural differences and perceptions of hegemony. Many of us will be working in second or third languages, perhaps in unfamiliar contexts. All of us will at some time be 'outsiders' – whether that is the global youth policy team in Berlin, or international advisors and researchers interviewing practitioners from a local NGO. Managing this effectively requires patience and humility on all sides.

3. Research team communication

The spread of teams in each country and globally presents a communication challenge that is made more complex in locations with limited access to a reliable internet connection. Will the use of internet calling and file sharing software suffice or will more regular face-to-face contact be required? The most effective approaches to communication will vary from location to location, and this requires research teams to give thought to the most effective methods of communication.

4. Sequencing and iterations

Although the production of the review has a clear beginning and end, the sequence of the review is far from linear. Research teams may decide to organise the work by phases, thematic work strands or in some other way – this will need to be determined by each individual team. Either way, it is likely that the research will be iterative and cyclical, requiring the research team to move backwards and forwards – tweaking and changing lines of enquiry along the way. That may mean gathering data whilst writing the report, or analysing whilst revisiting desk research. This process will require dialogue and the continuous sharing of learning across the review team.

Keeping on task

1. Managing time and sustaining commitment

The different phases of the project require different intensities of work at different times and the overall duration of the project requires sustained commitment. Significant time spent in the desk research or fieldwork will be wasted if it is not accompanied with effective analysis or write-up. Similarly, the quality of the review and its contribution to the youth policy debate will be undermined by hasty research and fieldwork that doesn't generate new knowledge. How will the project's peaks and toughs fit with our other commitments? How will we maintain the enthusiasm required to finalise the publication?

2. Communicating progress

Each research team will identify country specific intermediate deliverables as part of their unique research plan. Failing to communicate progress against these or long periods of silence – either within teams or to the different parties coordinating different aspects of the project – leads to drift, saps

motivation and enthusiasm, and usually results in some form of crisis management later in the process. How can we prevent that?

3. Dealing with data

The qualitative and quantitative data collected, shared, analysed and interpreted by each review team will be drawn from a wide range of primary and secondary sources using different techniques. It will then be analysed and interpreted in a variety of ways. Data without context and a narrative describing its origins, its limitations and the way in which it was analysed is either meaningless or misleading. It is crucial that consistent approaches to collecting and verifying data are established and a system for communicating the narrative that accompanies that data is set up. What questions will be asked, to whom, by whom? How will responses be recorded? How will you ensure consistency and verify your understanding? How will files be labelled and stored? What content should be included in the notes and descriptions that accompany these files? How was data analysed? The section on page 30 provides more in-depth detail and links to further reading, exploring validity, validation and triangulation when working with data.

4. Generating content

Writing is much a matter of personal taste and members of the review team will have cultivated their own personal style and approach. Although the final publication should have internal consistency, attempting to corral different writing styles into one uniformed approach – particularly at the stage of inception – risks loosing the diversity of perspectives and insights that exist within each team. From the outset, the focus should be on producing content. In terms of style, consistency throughout the publication and across the series can be established during 'quieter times' once the content has been generated.

5. Developing recommendations

With exception, people seem to prefer generating recommendations and ideas to implementing those made by others. The field of public policy is awash with recommendations annexed to the end of reports – many of which are unrealistic in their aspiration, vague in their strategic intent and established without reference to the systems of accountability required for their implementation. Yet, perhaps more subtly the existence of recommendations influences and shapes the dialogue, which in turn leads to change. Our recommendations need to have intent, ideally some accountability for their delivery and perhaps most importantly should be co-created with people in the field: the recommendations do not belong to the research team or publication series, but to the people who are affected by a particular situation.

Ensuring integrity

1. Archiving and building an evidence-base

A robust and easily accessed evidence-base should accompany the final publication. This evidence-

base should enable people to understand the deductions and conclusions that have been reached. This will require the use of one central 'library' and filing system, that draws together all of the work – whether that be notes, transcripts, data, analysis, minutes from planning meetings.

2. Referencing

Failure to collect and record references systematically can result in nightmarish levels of backtracking and poor consistency across the series. It is likely that we are all familiar with different approaches. In order to harmonise these approaches we ask you to use the Chicago referencing style (author-date system, i.e. the Chicago 15th B Style), details of which can be found here – http://www.library.uq.edu.au/training/citation/chicago15B.pdf.

3. Adhering to plagiarism guidelines & copyright restrictions

Plagiarism is the act of including and presenting the work of another person as your own without adequate acknowledgement of having done so – either deliberately or unintentionally. Guidance on plagiarism is readily available online and each research team should ensure that the final publication does not contain material from other sources that is inadequately referenced or acknowledged.

Similarly, where a publication includes substantive parts of another publication, artwork, maps, charts, tables, photographs and other visual representatives permission must be sought from permissions department of the publisher. Obtaining written permission to use copyrighted material is the author's responsibility. This written permission should be accessible in the project archive. Further guidance can be found here http://www.wiley.com/legacy/authors/guidelines/stmguides/3frames.htm.

6

Analysing the situation of young people

The main aim of this chapter is to provide an accurate in-depth analysis of the situation of young people and embed this analysis in the wider socio-political context of the country and region.

Overview of the chapter

1. **Introduction and context**
2. **Key statistics**
3. **Political and historical context**
4. **Key themes**

4.01. Youth and crime
4.02. Youth and conflict
4.03. Youth and corruption
4.04. Youth and culture
4.05. Youth and disability
4.06. Youth and education
4.07. Youth and employment
4.08. Youth and family
4.09. Youth and gender
4.10. Youth and health
4.11. Youth and housing
4.12. Youth and intergenerational justice
4.13. Youth and juvenile justice
4.14. Youth and leisure time
4.15. Youth and media

4.16. Youth and migration
4.17. Youth and minorities
4.18. Youth and mobility
4.19. Youth and participation
4.20. Youth and non-formal education
4.21. Youth and politics
4.22. Youth and poverty
4.23. Youth and racism
4.24. Youth and rights
4.25. Youth and religion
4.26. Youth and social care
4.27. Youth and social mobility
4.28. Youth and sustainability
4.29. Youth and violence

5. **Youth in the media**
6. **Conclusions**

Key questions for inquiry in this chapter

1. Introduction and context

Main question: What is the situation of young people in the country?

What are the basic demographics of young people? Which political and historical factors frame the situation of young people and their perception and role in society? Which themes are crucial for young people, and why? How are young people portrayed in the media, and why? How should the overall situation of young people affect the development, delivery and assessment of public policies for young people?

2. Key statistics

Main question: What are the basic demographics of the youth population?

Who are young people? Where are they? What do they die of? What do they get sick with? When and how do they work? When and how do they make unions? How do young people compare to the average population? How (in)visible are young people as a statistical category? Who and where are the least advantaged young people; young people from minority backgrounds; young people experiencing discrimination; young people from migrant backgrounds; young people from marginalised communities? Who are the most vulnerable young people (e.g. those in the criminal justice system)? Are specific young people excluded, deliberately or inadvertently?

3. Political and historical context

Main question: Which political and historical factors frame the situation of young people and their perception and role in society?

What is considered a youth population? Which cohorts does this definition include? Who considers themselves "young" and why? What are the basic understandings and definitions of youth in use in society and among relevant authorities? How have these definitions evolved over time? What and who is driving the development of youth policy? What are the global/supranational/international influences? Does policy take specific ideological position on the role and place young people should have in society? If yes, does this limit the autonomy of young people, and if so in which ways? Can the approach of the government to youth issues be considered as corresponding to any overall typology of a youth policy regime?

4. Key themes

Main question: Which themes are crucial for young people, and why?

From the list of twenty nine themes, choose those 4-6 which are currently most relevant for young people. For each of these chosen key themes, exemplify why they are crucial and explain how they affect the situation of young people. Keep in mind that the questions below can only be starting points for your inquiry and should by no means be considered exhaustive.

4.01. Youth and crime

In which ways and to what extent do young people commit misdemeanours or felonies? In which ways and to what extent, are young people the victims of crime? How is youth crime distributed in terms of indictable and non-indictable offences? Which crime prevention policies are targeted directly at the situation of children and young people?

4.02. Youth and conflict

Have young people experienced conflict as either perpetrators or victims? Are there visible or invisible social divides resulting from armed struggle or other kind of conflict involving and/or affecting young people? Are any conflict-preventing measures in place, and do they work?

4.03. Youth and corruption

What are public perceptions of corruption? (See Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index) What types of corruption are prevalent, and in which sectors? Are issues of corruption addressed, if so, how? In what ways and to what extent does corruption affect young people?

4.04. Youth and culture

In what ways do young people differentiate themselves from the parent culture of their community? In what ways do young people form voluntary groupings or youth subcultures? What practices – e.g. rituals, ideologies, language, dress, or music are associated with these groupings? How do young people use sub-cultures, leisure and culture to 'win space'?

4.05. Youth and disability

What are the prevalence rates for different types of disability amongst the youth population? What are the prevailing attitudes towards disability? To what extent and in what ways are young people with disabilities discriminated against, excluded? What types of support are offered to young people with disabilities and their families? Does this support aim maximise the autonomy and independence of young people with disabilities? In what ways does the legal system promote the rights of young people with disabilities? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that the voices of young people are heard and included?

4.06 Youth and education

Which logics and approaches does the education system adhere to and aim to instill in young people? Which young people does the education system fail to support adequately, e.g. in terms of drop-out rates of disadvantaged young people? Which pedagogies and approaches dominate formal education?

4.07. Youth and employment

What proportion of young people is not in employment? Is youth unemployment increasing or decreasing? How many young people suffer from precarious work conditions or are under-employed? Which states of precariousness are most common among young people? Are the rights of young people at work different from other population groups? Do employers have (or are they supported by government to develop) employment opportunities and training programmes for young people?

4.08. Youth and family

How is the relation of young people to their parents changing, e.g. through delayed independence? How is the foundation of own families by young people changing, if at all, and for which reasons?

4.09. Youth and gender

What is the situation of girls and young women compared to boys and young men? Are equal opportunity policies in place, and are they effective? Which social, political, economic, cultural factors create gender imbalances?

4.10. Youth and health

What is the overall health situation of adolescents and young people? Which acute and chronic illnesses affect young people most, and what are they induced or compounded by? What is the quality of health care provision and health information for young people? Is health understood as the absence of disease, or as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being?

4.11. Youth and housing

What are the characteristics of young people's transitions to independent living? Which groups of young people have most difficulty in transitioning to independent living? What types of housing tenure do young people occupy (private rented, social rented, owner-occupied)? In what ways do housing legislation and regulatory frameworks aid or disadvantage young people? What information, advice and support are available to young people making housing transitions – particularly for those who are disadvantaged (e.g. young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, those with disabilities)? What proportion of young people live in over-crowded conditions, sub-standard or inadequate housing? What are the rates of homelessness amongst young people and what support is offered to young people affected? What proportion of income do young people spend on accommodation costs?

4.12. Youth and intergenerational justice

What is the proportion of young people in the population generally? What is the proportion of young people without significant life chances (youth un-

employment, school drop out, etc)? Are young people considered a social threat?

4.13. Youth and juvenile justice

How are crimes committed by children or adolescents who have not attained the age of majority dealt with? What is the age of majority in law, i.e. the age of criminal responsibility? Which rights to juvenile defendants have? Which realities do juvenile delinquents face in prison?

4.14. Youth and leisure time

Which leisure time opportunities do young people have? How adequate are these opportunities? Are leisure time activities considered a right or a privilege? Are infrastructures in place to provide meaningful and constructive leisure time opportunities? Is the paradigm exlusively problem-based?

4.15. Youth and media

How many young people have access to media, including social media? Which role have media, including social media, played in stimulating youth unrests, uprisings and revolutions? Which media, if any, are co-produced by young people? (Note that there is a separate chapter on youth in the media.)

4.16. Youth and migration

Is there extensive movement of young people in, out or inside (e.g. rural-urban) the country? What are the main motivating factors (push and pull factors) for youth migration patterns? What are the realities of young migrants on arrival? Where they exist, do young migrants have access to social security and health care systems, do they have voting rights? How have the levels of migration changed over time? How does the migration momentum relate to age? Are the migration patters short-term or long-term? Are there instances of human trafficking in, out or inside the country?

4.17. Youth and minorities

Which youth minorities exist? Which rights do they have in theory and reality, and which of their rights are frequently violated? What is the level of youth violence against (youth) minorities? Which aspects of the situation of minorities do public and policy discourses focus on most? What is government policy in regard to external migration? How are migrants treated on their arrival in the receiving country?

4.18. Youth and mobility

What opportunities do young people have for national and international mobility? Is the right to freedom upheld for national and international mobility? What restrictions on mobility do young people experience? Which groups of young people experience most restrictions on their mobility? What opportunities exist for young people to participate in national or international mobility? Are these opportunities funded privately, charitably or through public funds? Are these coordinated at a local, national or supranational level? To what extent are opportunities for mobility exclusive or inclusive?

4.19. Youth and participation

To which extent are young people active participants of society (civic participation, social partici-

pation, economic participation, other forms of participation)? Which young people do not participate in which spheres, and why?

4.20. Youth and non-formal education

Do young people have the opportunity to participate in organised educational activity outside of the formal education system? Who are the main organisers of this activity? Do training and professional development opportunities exist for youth work practitioners? How much statutory funding is allocated to the provision of non-formal education?

4.21. Youth and politics

In what ways do young people engage in politics? What are the age demographics of politicians and parliamentarians? Do young people choose to involve themselves in formal political organisations and structures? Do these organisations or structures have youth wings? In what ways are the views of young people incorporated into political discourse? What are the main similarities and differences in the political discourse between different generations?

4.22. Youth and poverty

How is (youth) poverty defined in the country? Does this definition differ across population groups and in comparisation with global standards? How many young people live in extreme poverty? What is the poverty gap ratio? Which other national poverty indicators exist?

4.23. Youth and racism

What is young people's contemporary understanding of racism? What is the political narrative in relation to racism and young people? Which groups of young people suffer from racism, which groups perpetrate racist acts, and what is being done about it? What are the predominant segregation and discrimination patterns?

4.24. Youth and rights

How is the notion of human rights, as it applies to young people, defined in society and policy? In what ways and to what extent are young people actors of their own human rights? Which rights of young people are most easily and most often violated? Which rights are considered specific to young people?

4.25. Youth and religion

How do young people experience and understand religiosity, religious identity and spirituality? What proportion of young people hold a religious belief? Which religions do young people follow? What role do religious organisations play in the lives of young people? Do young people experience persecution or stigmatisation as a result of their religious or spiritual beliefs? What is the relationship between the state and different religious denominations? How does this affect the life opportunities of young people?

4.26. Youth and social care

What support is offered to young people and parents/carers with complex needs? Who are the main providers of social care services? What legislation

is in place to safeguard young people? What care options exist and how are care proceedings administered? Do families have access to legal aid/support? Do services that work with young people coordinate and share information? Is there a referral system for vulnerable young people? Do organisations that work with young people have, understand and apply child protection and safeguarding policies? What is the quality of training for social workers, psychologists, counsellors and other relevant professionals?

4.27. Youth and social mobility

What is the national GINI index measure? What are the trends for income and wealth inequality? How does this compare internationally? In what ways and to what extent are the life trajectories and economic status of young people pre-determined by those of their parents? Is access to different professions according to educational or socio-economic background monitored (e.g. law, medicine, government)? In what ways and to what extent does the economic model and social support system promote or inhibit social mobility (e.g. access to; education, health care, second chance opportunities, etc.)? In what ways is the taxation system and benefits system (if one exits) socially progressive or regressive?

4.28. Youth and sustainability

What is the relation of young people to sustainability? How is that relation changing? How is sustainability related to other topics such as intergenerational equity? What are the major forms of youth engagement with sustainability? What are the main motifs of young people to engage with the topic?

4.29. Youth and violence

What is the level of youth violence, and how has it changed over time? How do youth homicides, youth bullying and other forms of violence compare to the rest of the population? What are common strategies to prevent youth violence, and how successful are they?

5. Youth in the media

Main question: How are young people portrayed in media, and why?

Is the recognition of youth in the media positive or negative? Why? Does the portrayal of young people differ within and across various media types and typologies? What are those differences based on (topic, age, gender, religion, minority, geography)? Which stereotypes of young people are perpetuated through the media? Has the portrayal of young people in the media changed over time? Is the portrayal of young people in the media congruent with wider societal perceptions? Is the media coverage of young people fact-based, e.g. does the coverage of juvenile crime relate to the actual crime rate?

6. Conclusions

Main question: How should the overall situation of young people affect the development, delivery and assessment of public policies for young people?

Analysing the overall policy context

The main aim of this chapter is to illustrate the factors driving and framing public policies on youth, and to embed this framework analysis in the general political and historical context of policy development in the country.

Overview of the chapter

1. **Introduction and context**
2. **The broader policy context**
3. **Key definitions of youth across policy domains**
4. **Legal frameworks underpinning youth policies**
5. **Rights and responsibilities of young people**
6. **Perceptions about young people in policy**
7. **Needs of young people**
8. **Conclusions**

Key questions for inquiry in this chapter

1. Introduction and context

Main question: What drives and frames public policy development on youth issues?

Are there clear and identifiable traditions of policy that affect the approach taken by public policy to young people? How is youth defined across various policy domains, and how do these definitions differ across contexts? What are the key legal stipulations and provisions on youth, and how do they deviate from international frameworks? What are the rights and responsibilities of young people as defined in policy frameworks and documents? What is the prevalent perception of young people, and how does it inform or distort public policy development on youth issues? Are the needs of young people known and considered?

2. The broader policy context

Main question: Are there clear and identifiable traditions of policy that affect the approach taken by public policy to young people?

Has the conceptualisation of youth in policy changed over time, and if so how? Are there clear ideas concerning the role policies pertaining to youth play for the overall mission of the government? Does a clearly formulated conception of youth exist that is applied in the development of policies related to young people? What kind of effects do these traditional and/or evolving understandings of youth in policy have on the conception and nature of

policies pertaining to youth? Are particular kinds of policy intervention dominant over others? Is there a prevailing understanding of what the policy priorities should be and what public policies should achieve in relation to young people? Does policy take specific ideological position on the role and place young people should have in society? Is there a tradition of youth policy at national or regional level? Can the approach of the government to youth issues be considered as corresponding to any overall typology of a youth policy regime? To which extent does institutional vulnerability in situations of transition impact on the situation of young people and the effectiveness of policy action?

3. Key definitions of youth across policy domains

Main question: How is youth defined across various policy domains, and how do these definitions differ across contexts?

What kind of nomenclature is used to categorise defined youth populations (young adults, older children, adolescents)? Which age groups apply in these nomenclatures? How do the authorities define youth? What are the basic understandings and definitions of youth in use in various policy fields and among the relevant authorities? How have these definitions evolved over time? How does the definition of youth differ from one policy domain to another, and from level to level?

4. Legal frameworks underpinning youth policies

Main question: What are the key legal stipulations and provisions on youth, and how do they deviate from international frameworks?

Which legal provisions pertaining to young people are present in the law? What is the age of consent? What is the minimum age of criminal responsibility? What is the minimum age for admission to employment and work? What are the legal consequences to being defined as young in all these instances? Do any of the legal definitions violate international frameworks, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Minimum Age Convention of the International Labour Organisation, and if so how? How do these definitions diverge from typical and/or legally codified understandings in the region?

5. Rights and responsibilities of young people

Main question: What are the rights and responsibilities of young people as defined in policy frameworks and documents?

Which provisions pertaining to young peoples rights are present? How do these provisions differ, e.g. between laws and policy documents, across policy domains, across spatial levels? How is the notion of human rights, as it applies to young people, defined in law, in policy and in society? Are policies to address the specific situations of young people and their rights largely present or largely

absent? How are the first generation human rights of young people being supported by public policies? Are there monitoring mechanisms in place, either generally or specifically for a certain group of rights? Are there protection mechanisms in place, either generally or specifically for a certain group of rights? In how far do these protection mechanisms work? Where and why do they fail? How are rights and responsibilities balanced? In what ways and to what extent are young people actors of their own human rights?

6. Perceptions about young people in policy

Main question: What is the prevalent perception of young people, and how does it inform or distort public policy development on youth issues?

What kind of nomenclature is used to categorise defined youth populations (young adults, older children, adolescents)? Which age groups apply in these nomenclatures? How do the authorities de-

fine youth? What are the basic understandings and definitions of youth in use in various policy fields and among the relevant authorities? How have these definitions evolved over time? How does the definition of youth differ from one policy domain to another, and from level to level?

7. Needs of young people

Main question: Are the needs of young people known and considered?

Is there general awareness of young people's needs and concerns in the policy making community? Is there widespread and accurate knowledge of young people's situations and needs among policy makers? How do those responsible for making public policy describe the situation of young people? Does the dominant rhetoric tally with the reality of young people? What is the capacity of civil society (youth and other) to represent the needs and concerns of young people and act as a representative partner to government in policy making? Are there needs of young people that are not captured or covered by any public policy? How differentiated is the analysis and consideration of needs? Are references in policy documents and political discourses mostly about all young people? How are specific categories of youth with different needs considered, if at all?

8. Conclusions

Main questions: Which factors drive and frame public policies on youth? How does the general political and historical context of policy development shape public policies on youth?

Analysing the various policy realities

The main aim of this chapter is to document which public policies pertaining to young people exist, and to record in detail how they function.

Overview of the chapter

Key questions for inquiry in this chapter

1. Introduction and context

Main question: Which public policies pertaining to young people exist, and how do they function?

Which public policies pertain to young people, directly and indirectly? What are approaches, structures and conditions for implementing and delivering public policies pertaining to youth? Who are the young people impacted by policy, and who benefits? How are policies evaluated, and who can hold policy makers to account? How are policy implementation and delivery mechanisms coordinated and aligned across policy domains and actors? How meaningful is the policy involvement of young people? How robust is the evidence-base informing policies on youth? What influence and impact do international actors have in relation to youth policy?

2. An overview of existing policies

Main question: Which public policies pertain to young people, directly and indirectly?

Which policies directly intervene in, influence, or control young people's lives? Is there a specific and formulated youth policy, either overarching or sectoral? Do sectoral policies consider a youth dimension? How? Which sectoral policies have young people as their main beneficiaries or one of their main beneficiaries? What is the main aim of the described policies? Is the focus largely on youth empowerment and autonomy or on solving youth problems and assist young people? In what ways

do existing policies limit young people from attaining autonomy?

3. Policy implementation and delivery

Main question: What are approaches, structures and conditions for implementing and delivering public policies pertaining to youth?

Are there governmental structures dealing with youth? If so, which ones? What do they do? What is their situation? Are they alive and kicking? Are there non-governmental structures dealing with young people? If so, which ones? What do they do? What is their situation? Are they alive and kicking? Do frameworks for the implementation of specific youth policies exist? Are these centralised or decentralised? Which commitments have the authorities made to young people? Which authorities, bodies and/or agencies are responsible for the implementation of commitments made to young people? What mandate do these structures have? What kind of structures and mechanisms for the implementation and delivery of public policies exist? Are they effective? Are there any sanctions in place for the case of the non-implementation of policy directives? In what ways and to what extent do the authorities concerned have the capacity (staff, funds, time, competence) to fulfil their youth policy implementation tasks? In what ways and to what extent are the human resources tasked with implementation and delivery of public policies pertaining to young people qualified and competent in relation to youth

issues? Does implementation take place in a centralised, decentralised or mixed fashion? What is the budgetary situation? What are the expenditures on youth across all sectors and at all levels of policy implementation?

4. Policy coverage and equity

Main question: Who are the young people impacted by policy, and who benefits?

Who are the young people impacted by the policies identified? Which young people benefit, which don't? Why? Are there needs of young people that are not captured or covered by any public policy? Do all young people have equal access to (the results of) policy-making? Are there young people who choose not to avail of the opportunities available to them? How does policy support young people in groups of special concern? Which groups are considered to be of special concern? Young people from minority backgrounds; young people from migrant backgrounds; vulnerable young people (e.g. those in the criminal justice system), or young people experiencing discrimination (based on ethnicity, race, gender, class, status, religion, ability, orientation, …)? What special measures are in place to guarantee the rights of special concern groups of young people? How do being young and being a member of a special concern group interact to their disadvantage or advantage? What channels exist for special concern groups of young people to make their needs known? How are special concern groups of young people involved in policy and decision-making? Which place do special concern groups of young people have in the overall policy concept?

5. Policy accountability and evaluation

Main question: How are policies evaluated, and who can hold policy makers to account?

How does policy guarantee youth access to rights, justice, information and opportunities? What political commitments have been made to young people? Do frameworks for evaluating the implementation of political commitments made to young people, and indicators for their evaluation, exist? Do frameworks for evaluating the implementation of specific youth policies and indicators for their evaluation exist? Are these centralised or decentralised? Are there any sanctions in place for the case of the non-implementation of policy or non-achievement of commitments? Does civil society have the capacity and competence to assess, evaluate and critique existing policy? In what ways, if at all, are youth policies and attendant strategies reviewed, evaluated and monitored in relation to their youth objectives? In what ways and to what extent are policy evaluation and monitoring efforts informed by latest youth research results and developments in the youth sector or other relevant evidence? Are the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms comparably rigorous to those in place in other sectoral policy areas?

6. Intersectoral cooperation and coherence

Main question: How are policy implementation and delivery mechanisms coordinated and aligned across policy domains and actors?

Is there collaboration across policy fields and sectors providing policies relevant to the situations of young people? Is there cooperation between government, parliament, national and local levels, governmental and non-governmental sectors to achieve policy coverage? Is the intervention of international actors in relation to youth and policy effective, relevant, useful, positive? Is there a lot of duplication across policy sectors? In what ways and to what extent do public policies pertaining to young people complement each other? In what ways and to what extent do public policies pertaining to young people contradict each other? Do the authorities responsible for sectoral policies cooperate and coordinate with the authorities responsible for youth? How does this cooperation take place? Is it effective? Is there evidence of several policy sectors being responsible for the same tasks without significant coordination between them?

7. Recognition and involvement of youth in policies

Main question: How meaningful is the policy involvement of young people?

Do the strategies developed for the implementation of these sectoral policies take the needs and aspirations of young people into account? Are young people or their representative organisations involved in relevant policy making? Are the beneficiaries of the policies concerned consulted? What is the capacity of civil society to represent the needs and concerns of young people and act as a critical partner to government in policy making? What kind of support does public policy offer young people? What pathways exist for accessing this support? Are these pathways well known, used and effective? In what ways and to what extent is the support offered

adequately backed up with money and resources? Does any special provision for youth information exist? Is the youth information available relevant and attractive? Is it reaching the young people it is supposed to reach? In what ways and to what extent are young people engaged in policy- & decision making relevant to their needs? Who are the young people that are actively engaged? Are specific young people excluded, deliberately or inadvertently? What barriers exist to effective participation?

8. Research and knowledge underpinning policies

Main question: How robust is the evidence-base informing policies on youth?

In what ways and to what extent do public policies pertaining to young people address realities that are important or relevant to young people's needs and situations? Is there any research evidence on the situation and needs of young people as compared to those outlined in policy documents? Is there any evidence of the perception of young people's needs by young people themselves, and if so how are these taken into account? In what ways and to what extent are policy development efforts informed by latest youth research results? In how far does youth research consider the situation and concerns of young people from special concern groups?

9. Policy alignment with international frameworks

Main question: Which influence and impact do international actors have in relation to youth and policy?

What are the global/supranational/international influences? Which international actors are driving the development of youth policy? In what ways and to what extent are policies pertaining to young people informed by international standards or benchmarks for youth policies? Which international conventions, declarations and agreements are drawn from, if any? Which provisions in policy and law mirror or adopt international agreements? Is the intervention of international actors in relation to youth and policy effective, relevant, useful, positive? Is there any evidence documenting the effectiveness, relevance and usefulness of interventions made by the international community in relation to youth, youth policies and/or other policies pertaining to youth?

10. Conclusions

Main questions: Which public policies pertaining to young people exist, and which policies are absent? How are the various policies operationalised, and how do they function? How robust are these policies, e.g. based on evidence, responding to specific needs, operationalised in transparent ways, evaluated thoroughly?

Analysing the impact of policies

The main aim of this chapter is to analyse and document the impact of public policies on young people and contrast their actual impact with their own intentions.

Overview of the chapter

The contents of the chapter will be informed by the research findings (literature review, field visits, policy analysis) and shouldn't be predetermined.

Key questions for inquiry in this chapter

The impact of policies pertaining to youth

Main questions: What are the intended and unintended impacts of public policies on young people? Which policies have no impact at all? Which policies have backfired? Which policies are absent, but would be needed?

In this part of their report, research teams will analyse a carefully chosen set of policies from among those that were described and analysed in the previous section "Analysing the various policy realities."

Which policies will be included here can only be decided in response to the to-be-conducted desk research, field visits and policy analysis. It is hence impossible to preempt the main lines of the impact analysis for each of the to-be-selected policies ahead of time, but aspects of the interrogation could include:

›› *policy intent vs policy effect* – comparing the original intention of a policy, e.g. contributing to specific social change, with its actual effect on young people, verifying whether any change has actually occurred;

›› *rights addressed vs rights effected* – comparing the rights of young people that the policy intended to protect or strengthen with how those rights were actually effected in reality;

›› *needed resources vs available resources* – comparing the resources (staff, support, infrastructure) needed to implement a policy with the resources that were actually made available;

›› *participatory ambitions vs engagement practice* – comparing the philosophy of the policy in relation to the meaningful involvement of young people with the (tokenistic?) reality of youth participation;

›› *needed knowledge vs utilised knowledge* – comparing the knowledge base needed to inform a particular policy with the knowledge base that had been available, and how that knowledge base has been put to use;

›› *stakeholder evaluation vs beneficiary feedback* – comparing the findings of (possibly utilitarian) policy evaluations with feedback from (intended and unintended) beneficiaries of such policies.