



YOUTH@WORK

FOSTERING YOUTH WORK AND
MANAGEMENT IN NGO'S



TURKIYE NATIONAL REPORT

2023-1-TR01-KA220-YOU-000161069



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union. However, European Commission and Turkish National Agency cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION

2. METHODOLOGY

3. CURRENT SITUATION OF DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN TURKEY AND THE NEEDS OF YOUTH WORKERS WORKING WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

3.1. THE FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN TURKEY

3.2. THE PROFILE OF YOUTH WORKERS IN TURKEY

3.3. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH WORK AND PRIORITIES OF NATIONAL POLICIES RELATED TO YOUTH WORK

3.4. SUPPORT STATUS OF TOOLS AND INITIATIVES AIMED AT EMPOWERING YOUTH WORKERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN YOUTH WORK AND ACTIVITIES OF ORGANIZATIONS CONDUCTING YOUTH WORK

3.6. NATIONAL OUTCOMES OF YOUTH WORK

3.7. KEY CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH WORKERS IN THEIR DAILY PRACTICES WITH DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

3.8. CURRENT STATUS OF DISADVANTAGED YOUTH'S PARTICIPATION IN YOUTH WORK, PROBLEMS RELATED TO THEIR PARTICIPATION, AND INTEGRATION ISSUES

3.9. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE TRAINING NEEDS OF YOUTH WORKERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS

4. GOOD PRACTICES IN YOUTH WORK FOR DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN TURKEY

4.1. TEBESSÜM KAHVESİ (SMILE CAFÉ)

4.2. YEŞİLAY EDUCATION AND COUNSELING CENTER (YEDAM)

5. REFERENCES

- • • • • • • • • •
- • • • • • • • • •

01.

INTRODUCTION



The youth population in Turkey constitutes a significant part of the country's socio-economic structure and societal dynamics. However, the challenges faced by disadvantaged youth necessitate various efforts to improve their integration into society and enhance their overall quality of life. In this context, youth work plays a critical role in enabling disadvantaged youth to benefit from social, economic, and educational opportunities.

This desk research aims to examine the framework of youth work for disadvantaged youth in Turkey, including the profiles and needs of youth workers in this field, national strategies and policies, and the national outcomes of these efforts. Additionally, it delves into topics such as national strategies for youth work, relevant policies, and examples of best practices.

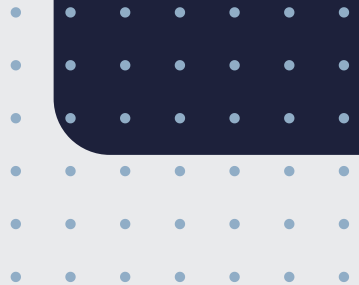
Another objective of the research is to evaluate the effectiveness of policies and practices aimed at disadvantaged youth, identify existing gaps in this area, and develop recommendations for future youth work initiatives. In this regard, successful practices such as Tebessüm Kahvesi (Smile Café) and the Yeşilay Education and Counseling Center (YEDAM) have been analyzed to showcase how disadvantaged youth are supported through these programs.

The study also addresses key issues such as the current state of participation of disadvantaged youth in youth work and the daily challenges faced by youth workers engaging with this demographic. This research seeks to provide critical insights to enhance the effectiveness of youth policies in Turkey and support the social integration of disadvantaged youth.



02.

METHODOLOGY



2.1. Research Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to evaluate the current situation of disadvantaged youth in Turkey and identify the needs of youth workers engaging with this demographic. It also seeks to examine national strategies, policies, and examples of best practices in youth work, identifying challenges and successes in these areas.

2.2. Data Collection Methods

The research is based on an extensive literature review and analysis of existing data. The methods employed include:

- Literature Review: Academic databases (such as Google Scholar, YÖKSİS Thesis Center, Dergipark, JSTOR, EBSCOhost), official government reports, research and reports from the Turkish National Agency, publications from international organizations, and reports by civil society organizations in Turkey were reviewed.
- Examination of Official Statistics and Reports: Statistical data from official sources such as the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), the Ministry of National Education, and the Ministry of Youth and Sports were analyzed.
- Policy Document Analysis: Youth policies and strategies in Turkey were thoroughly examined. These policy documents were obtained from government websites and publications by relevant ministries.



2.3. Data Analysis

The collected data were systematically examined using content analysis. This analysis covered the framework of youth work, profiles of youth workers, implemented strategies and policies, types of organizations, and their activities.

2.4. Scope of the Study

- Framework and Profile of Youth Work: Analysis of the general structure of youth work and the demographic characteristics of youth workers in Turkey.
- National Strategies and Policies: Examination of national strategies and policies shaping youth work.
- Types of Organizations and Activities: Analysis of different types of organizations conducting youth work and their primary activities.
- Best Practices: Detailed investigation of successful examples of youth work in Turkey.

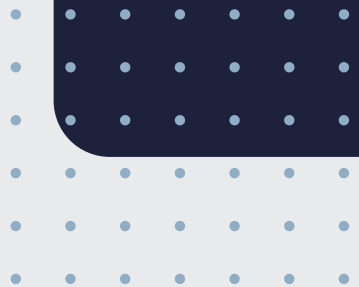
2.5. Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study include challenges in accessing up-to-date data and the absence of some official data. Additionally, the lack of sufficient documentation for certain best practice examples posed difficulties during the information-gathering process.



03.

**CURRENT SITUATION OF
DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN
TURKEY AND THE NEEDS OF
YOUTH WORKERS WORKING
WITH DISADVANTAGED
BACKGROUNDS**



Disadvantaged groups typically consist of individuals marginalized within the socio-economic structure and facing significant barriers to accessing general public services. As noted by the Council of Europe, services for disadvantaged groups should constitute an integral part of essential public and social services such as long-term care, health, social security, housing, and employment. The integration of these services is critical for facilitating the participation of disadvantaged individuals in social life and improving their quality of life (European Commission, 2004, 2014).

According to a definition made in 1974 by Reno Lenoir, the French Minister of Social Relations, disadvantaged groups include individuals with physical and mental disabilities, alcohol dependency, the elderly, offenders, abused children, and single-parent families. Lenoir's analysis revealed that these groups made up ten percent of the French population (Adaman and Keyder, 2007). Similar demographic structures and socio-economic issues are observed in Turkey. Poverty and lack of employment are widespread among disadvantaged groups in Turkey, complicating the creation of social solutions and hindering their integration into the workforce and society (Okur and Erdoğan, 2010).

The Turkish Language Association defines disability as "a person with an impediment, an obstacle, or a deficiency or imperfection in the body" (Turkish Language Association, 2018). This definition emphasizes the physical, mental, visual, or auditory limitations experienced by individuals with disabilities and how these affect their daily lives. The Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons, issued as a supplement to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly, defines disability as "a person who cannot perform activities required to maintain a personal or social life alone due to a congenital or acquired deficiency in their physical or mental abilities" (Pouya, 2016). This definition encompasses not only the physical or mental capacity limitations of disabled children but also the social and personal impacts of such conditions.



A study conducted by UNICEF in Turkey addressed public perceptions and attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. According to the study, when encountering a person with a disability, non-disabled individuals become more acutely aware of the value of their physical integrity, often leading to a desire to distance themselves from disabled individuals and adopt a negative perspective toward them. The study found that 60% of respondents felt sadness when encountering a disabled child, 25% expressed pity, and only 17% behaved normally. In contrast, in the United Kingdom, 85% of respondents treated disabled individuals the same as others and therefore behaved normally (UNICEF, 2018).

These differences highlight that societal perspectives on children and youth with disabilities in less developed and developing countries are often negative. This situation indicates insufficient regulations aimed at improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities in daily life. Compared to developed countries, fewer resources are allocated, and the needs of individuals with disabilities are less often taken into account (Çeviker et al., 2018).

The state of disadvantage can create significant barriers to young people's participation in social life, negatively affecting their interactions with society. Disadvantages experienced during youth often lead to social disconnection and limit young people's ability to adapt to the community they live in. To address these issues, it is crucial to develop and implement policies that promote social integration (GSB, 2012).

Research shows that identifying cases of child maltreatment and conducting comprehensive comparisons of such cases pose significant challenges (Janson, 2018). Disadvantaged children often face inadequate educational opportunities, limited access to healthcare services, and insufficient social support. Environmental factors, which greatly influence the living conditions, educational opportunities, and career choices of children and youth, are particularly pronounced in rural areas (Palmer, 2018).



Among the challenges classified by Klocker (2007) are inadequate educational opportunities, youth unemployment, and difficulties in accessing healthcare services. Young people living in rural areas are more frequently confronted with these problems, placing them at a disadvantage compared to their peers in urban areas. Limited opportunities for leisure and cultural activities also negatively impact their social development and interactions within the community.

Urban poor neighborhoods and informal settlements are among the most vulnerable areas to processes of social exclusion. Since the 1950s, rural-to-urban migration in Turkey has significantly increased urban population density and led to a substantial rise in the number of impoverished neighborhoods. The *Gecekondu* (Informal Housing) Law, enacted in 1966, contributed to the permanence of these areas, making them an integral part of urban development over time (Adaman and Keyder, 2007).

The ongoing urbanization process during the 1980s, coupled with increasing building density, particularly in response to the housing demands of the middle class, led to the valorization of informal settlement areas. Today, central areas of major metropolises are undergoing a transformation, a phenomenon also observed in industrialized countries (Şen and Şen, 2015). Modern cities face challenges from various social groups, including ethnic minorities, impoverished individuals, migrants, and refugees, leading to disruptions that destabilize the social fabric of urban environments (Aytaç, 2016).

Children and youth living in impoverished urban neighborhoods are among the disadvantaged groups. They face significant challenges in accessing education and employment opportunities (Ertürkmen, 2023). International organizations such as the European Commission have developed and implemented economic, social, and educational programs to address these issues. For instance, Lifelong Learning programs, designed to support individual and societal development, aim to enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of these individuals (Tenth Development Plan, 2014). Such programs help disadvantaged groups achieve better social positioning and economic independence. However, the success of these efforts depends on the sustainability of the policies implemented and the establishment of comprehensive support mechanisms.

The Roma, an ethnic group referred to by various names worldwide, are most commonly identified as "Roma" or "Gypsies." The First World Roma Congress, held in London in 1971, highlighted the need for a unified global nomenclature for this group. In Turkey, the Roma are particularly recognized as migrants from Europe, primarily originating from Romania, Greece, and Bulgaria (Özkan, 2000; Çalışkan et al., 2017).

The Roma, who constitute a significant population in the Thrace region, are known for their distinct ethnic and cultural characteristics. Throughout history, they have faced oppression, assimilation, intimidation, and even harsher penalties in the Western lands they migrated to. However, in recent years, social policies developed for the Roma have taken significant steps toward supporting their social integration. In this process, the organization of the Roma as civil society, their establishment of associations, and their collaboration with various institutions play a critical role in fostering social acceptance and integration (Çetin, 2017).

In Europe, the Roma are often perceived as an excluded ethnic identity deprived of citizenship rights. In contrast, the Roma in Turkey, particularly in Western Thrace, are considered a cultural asset and are active in sectors such as entertainment and trade. As Turkish citizens, the Roma enjoy equal rights with other ethnic and religious groups, and the issues they face are generally localized. This situation indicates that over time, the Roma have gained greater acceptance within the social structure and that prejudices have diminished. These positive changes provide opportunities for both individual and communal welfare and development among the Roma.

Conflict and war environments are events that deeply affect the lives of the most innocent victims, particularly children. Millions of children directly impacted by conflicts face trauma such as injury, torture, abuse, disability, or the loss or injury of their parents. Additionally, they struggle with forced migration, exploitation as child soldiers, exposure to all forms of violence, and social exclusion (Bilgin, 2014).



Turkey's Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions have experienced these issues intensely due to more than 40 years of ongoing terrorism. Conflicts between the PKK terrorist organization and security forces in these areas have severely restricted children's access to education and healthcare services. During the 1990s, incidents such as the killing, abduction, or threats against educators assigned to the region by the terrorist organization, along with the destruction of educational institutions, became significant barriers to children's education.

In regions affected by ethnic and political conflicts, special efforts are made by the state and international organizations to mitigate the negative impacts on children's and youths' quality of life and to ensure their access to fundamental human rights. Public officials, utilizing state resources and demonstrating dedication, strive to provide the region's population with access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and security. In this process, social and educational programs designed to reduce the effects of ethnic and political conflicts on children are of great importance.

Globally, every country has designated one or more official languages for education and administrative purposes. However, individuals whose mother tongue differs from these official languages face various social, political, and economic challenges. One of the primary tasks of education systems is to enable individuals with different mother tongues to gain proficiency in the official language, thereby minimizing the disadvantages that may arise due to language barriers (Sarı, 2002).

The issue of mother tongue education remains a complex and challenging problem to solve. In Turkey, students whose mother tongue is not Turkish encounter significant difficulties at the beginning of their educational journey, struggling to express their thoughts in their native language and falling behind academically and socially due to insufficient knowledge of Turkish (Gözüküçük, 2015). This situation prevents students from benefiting equally from educational opportunities and negatively impacts their academic success.



This problem is not unique to Turkey; similar challenges are faced worldwide by Hispanics in the United States, Indigenous people in Canada, and Aboriginal groups in Australia. These groups attempt to pursue education without adequate knowledge of the official language, complicating their social integration. Countries develop various programs and policies to mitigate the educational challenges faced by individuals with different mother tongues. However, these efforts can sometimes become entangled with external political pressures and internal debates, complicating their implementation.

Proposed solutions emphasize the development of comprehensive and effective language education programs within the framework of fundamental rights and freedoms, avoiding ethnic discrimination and classifications. These programs should provide the necessary support for students with different mother tongues to learn the official language and facilitate their integration into society.

In the 21st century, globalization is regarded as one of the most significant socio-spatial processes of change and transformation worldwide. This process encompasses the transnational circulation of money, capital, goods, ideas, cultural motifs, and people, leading to the expansion of international networks (Deniz and Özgür, 2010).



Migration, defined as the temporary or permanent relocation of people from one place to another for various reasons, holds particular importance for countries like Turkey, which has historically been both a sending and receiving country for migration. The forced migration that began in 2011, characterized by the displacement of millions of people fleeing the Syrian civil war, has significantly impacted Turkey's social and economic structure. Syrian asylum seekers and refugees, who have settled in various cities and villages across Turkey, have exceeded 2.5 million, with this number continuing to rise (Akşit et al., 2015).

The presence of these migrants has introduced new challenges in areas such as poverty, unemployment, access to public services, and urban planning in Turkey. Expenditures for migrants, perceived as a burden on the national economy, reached \$30 billion by 2018 (Sputniknews, 2017). This situation is being addressed through international aid programs and local efforts to support migrant integration, with Turkish society generally displaying an open-hearted attitude toward migrants.

Migrants and asylum seekers face traumas both before and after migration. Pre-migration risk factors include insufficient income, limited access to education, political instability, and inadequate social support systems. Post-migration challenges in the adaptation process include unemployment, a decline in social status, cultural adaptation difficulties, and language barriers (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Research indicates that post-migration stress leads to more psychological issues than pre-migration traumas (Teodorescu et al., 2012). Therefore, the integration of migrants and asylum seekers into society is critical for both individual and societal well-being. How Turkey and other host countries manage these processes will have far-reaching social, economic, and political implications.



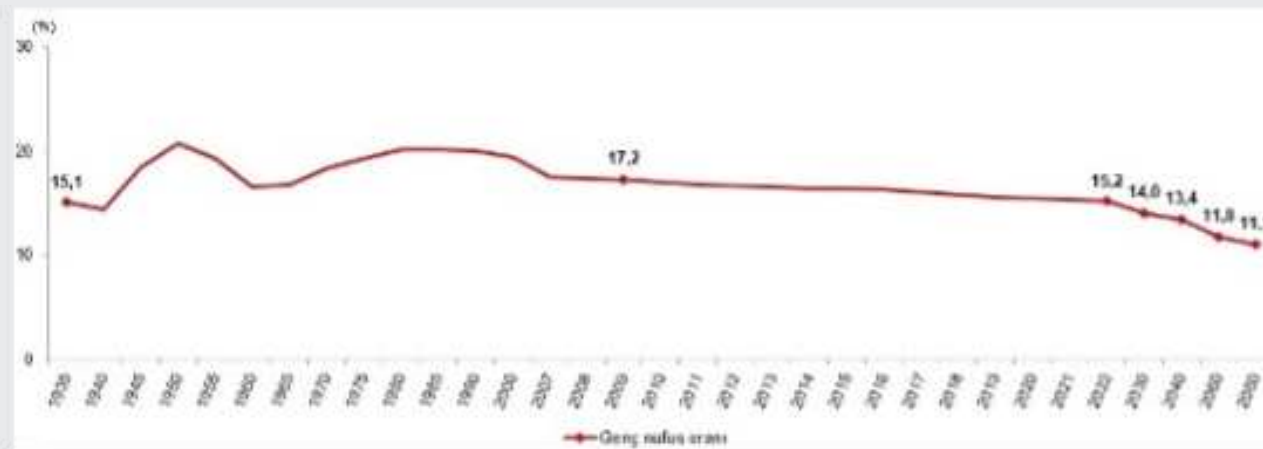
Disadvantaged youth face not only economic deprivation but also social, cultural, and geographical barriers. As noted by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2011), the definition of disadvantage includes social factors such as gender, ethnicity, race, and migration, in addition to income poverty. It also encompasses geographical isolation where access to quality education and job opportunities is limited. These factors create numerous challenges in the lives of young people and complicate their social integration processes.

The challenges faced by disadvantaged youth include:

- Overcrowded living conditions characterized by negative aspects such as vandalism.
- Negative peer influences and intolerance among different cultural groups.
- Limited access to youth activities and difficulties in reaching low-cost sports infrastructure.
- Unemployment, reliance on illegal income sources, low living standards, and dependence on social assistance.
- High crime rates and antisocial behavior.
- Social pressure and substance dependency as survival mechanisms.
- Discrimination and limited social skills.
- Learning difficulties, early school dropouts, and lack of qualifications.
- Language adaptation and cultural participation challenges for young migrants, refugees, and national or ethnic minorities.
- Chronic illnesses, severe psychiatric conditions, and other health problems.
- Young people living in remote, rural, or mountainous areas often face limitations in accessing resources available in city centers.



Young people represent a significant demographic segment within Turkey's population. According to the Address-Based Population Registration System (ABPRS) results at the end of 2022, Turkey's total population was recorded at 85,279,553, with the youth population aged 15-24 standing at 12,949,817. This corresponds to 15.2% of the total population, with 51.2% of the youth being male and 48.8% female (TÜİK, 2022). Population projections predict that the proportion of the youth population within the total population will decrease in the coming years. According to the estimates, this proportion is expected to decline to 14.0% in 2030, 13.4% in 2040, 11.8% in 2060, and 11.1% in 2080. This trend indicates a gradual decline in Turkey's youth population (TÜİK, 2018 Population Projections).

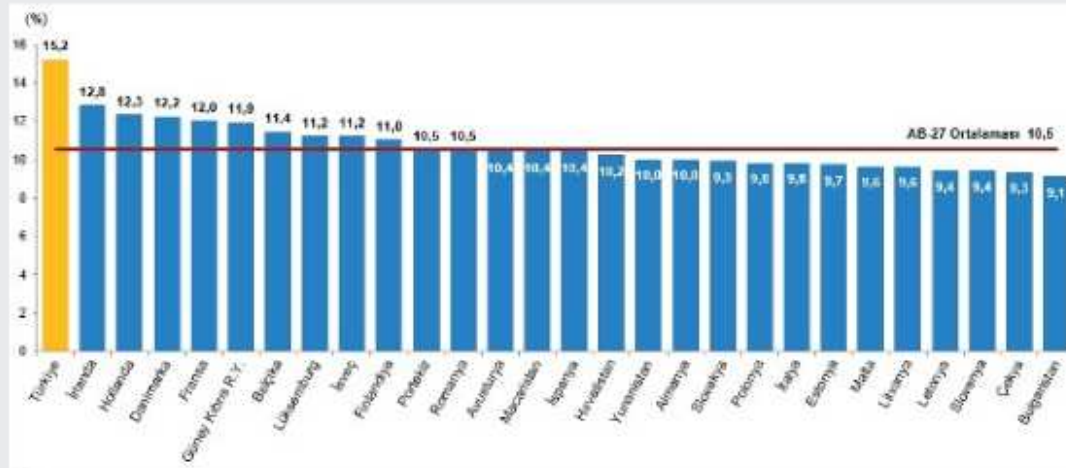


The proportion of the youth population within the total population, 1935-2080

Source: TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute), General Population Censuses, 1935-1990
TÜİK, Population Estimates, 2000
TÜİK, Address-Based Population Registration System, 2007-2022
TÜİK, 2018 Population Projections, 2030-2080



Comparison of the youth population ratio with European Union member countries, 2022



Source: European Union Statistics Office (Eurostat) Database, 2022
 TÜİK, Address-Based Population Registration System, 2022

Comparatively, Turkey's youth population ratio is higher than that of European Union (EU) member countries. As of 2022, the average youth population ratio among the 27 EU member countries was 10.5%, while Turkey had a higher ratio of 15.2%. Among EU countries, the highest youth population ratios were recorded in Ireland at 12.8%, the Netherlands at 12.3%, and Denmark at 12.2%. The lowest ratios were observed in Bulgaria at 9.1%, the Czech Republic at 9.3%, and Slovenia and Latvia at 9.4% (Eurostat, 2022). These figures indicate that Turkey's youth population represents a larger proportion compared to many European countries, highlighting its significance in the country's demographic structure and the planning of socio-economic policies. Additionally, the declining trend in the youth population signals a transition toward an aging demographic structure, which could have adverse impacts on future labor markets, pension systems, and healthcare services.



The youth population ratio by province, 2022

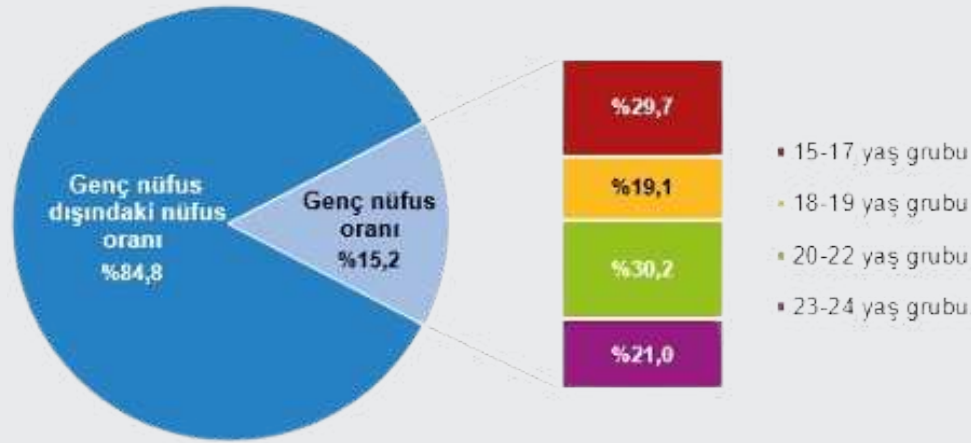


Source: TÜİK, Address-Based Population Registration System, 2022

Overall, when examining the distribution of the youth population in Turkey by age groups, 29.7% were aged 15-17, 19.1% were aged 18-19, 30.2% were aged 20-22, and 21.0% were aged 23-24 in 2022. This distribution reflects the activity of the youth population in education and the labor market as well as their demographic transitions (TÜİK, Address-Based Population Registration System, 2022).



Youth population ratio by age group, 2022

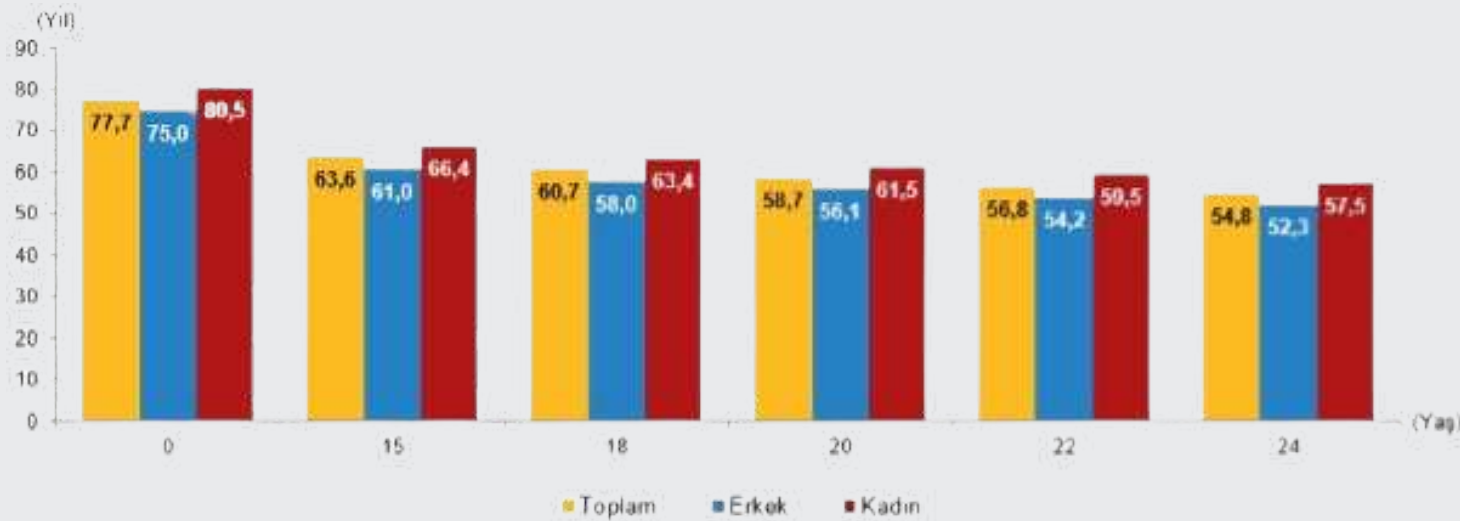


Source: TÜİK, Address-Based Population Registration System, 2022

Additionally, the life expectancy at age 15 in Turkey was calculated as an average of 63.6 years according to the 2019-2021 life tables. This figure was 61.0 years for males and 66.4 years for females, indicating that young women are expected to live an average of 5.4 years longer than young men (TÜİK, Life Tables, 2019-2021).



Life expectancy of the youth population by age and gender, 2019-2021

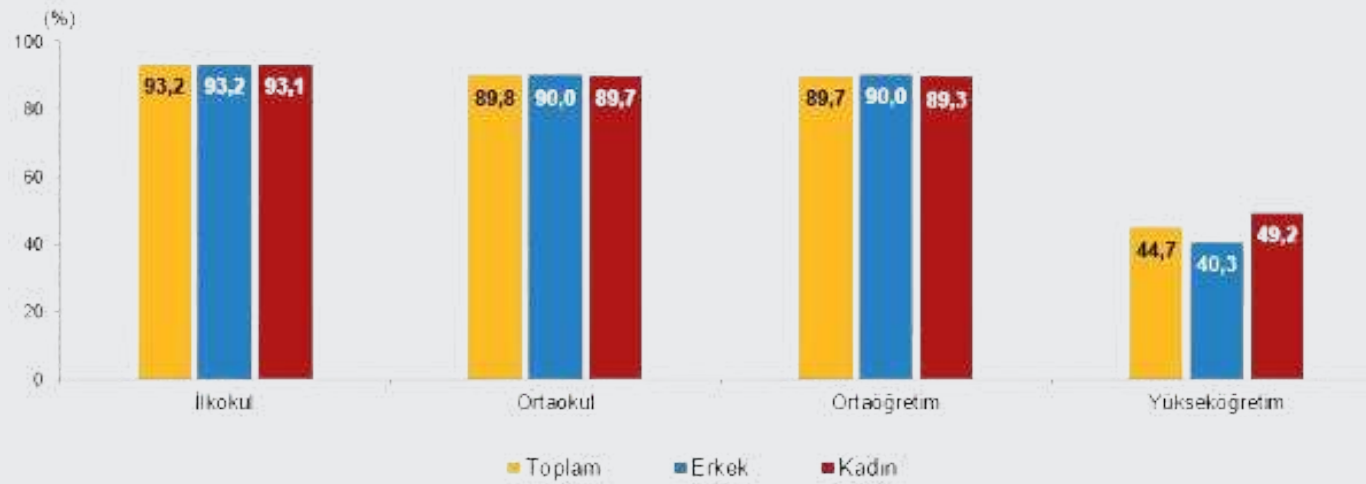


Source: TÜİK, Life Tables, 2019-2021

Regarding legal marriage rates among the youth population by marital status, 3.6% of young men were married, compared to 13.7% of young women. This difference can be associated with factors such as gender roles, marriage age, and education levels.

In Turkey, net enrollment rates in higher education showed a general increase as of the 2021/22 academic year. For men, this rate decreased slightly from 40.5% to 40.3%, while for women, it increased from 48.5% to 49.2%. These figures indicate that women are represented in higher education at a higher rate compared to men (Ministry of National Education, 2021/22).

Net enrollment rate by education level and gender, 2021/22



Source: Ministry of National Education, National Education Statistics, Formal Education, 2021/22

Additionally, the proportion of youth who were neither in education nor employment (NEET) decreased from 24.7% in 2021 to 24.2% in 2022. This decline was more pronounced among young women, highlighting the challenges they face in accessing education and the labor market. The NEET rate for young men fell from 17.5% to 16.4%, while for young women, it decreased slightly from 32.4% to 32.3% (TÜİK, 2022).

When examining labor force participation rates, young men’s participation increased from 53.1% in 2021 to 56.2% in 2022. Similarly, the labor force participation rate for young women rose from 29.7% to 31.0%. Unemployment rates also declined, from 19.4% to 16.4% for young men and from 28.7% to 25.2% for young women.



The labor force status of the non-institutional youth population by gender, 2022



Source: TÜİK, Household Labor Force Statistics, 2022.

In terms of sectoral distribution, 15.1% of young people were employed in agriculture, 31.4% in industry, and 53.5% in the services sector in 2022. Young men were predominantly concentrated in agriculture (14.0%) and industry (36.7%), while young women were more likely to work in the services sector (62.2%). These figures highlight the gender-based dynamics of youth participation in education and labor markets in Turkey, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities young women face in both domains. This underscores the need to reshape education and employment policies with a gender equality perspective.



According to the results of the Life Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), various data have been obtained regarding the health and happiness status of the youth population in Turkey. In 2022, 84.8% of young people aged 18-24 reported being satisfied with their general health condition. This figure shows an increase from 83.5% in 2021, indicating improved health satisfaction among the youth.



The level of satisfaction with general health status among the youth population by gender, 2021 and 2022

Source: TÜİK, Life Satisfaction Survey, 2021, 2022

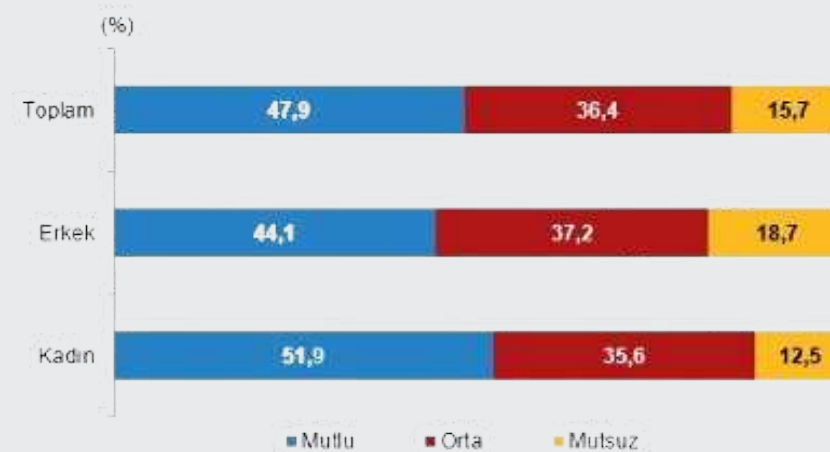


In terms of gender differentiation in general health status, 89.9% of young men reported being satisfied with their health in 2022, compared to 79.5% of young women. This disparity may suggest that young women are less satisfied with healthcare services or exhibit greater sensitivity to health issues compared to young men.

Additionally, the happiness levels of the youth were also assessed. In 2022, 47.9% of young people aged 18-24 stated that they felt happy, while 36.4% reported feeling moderately happy. These figures indicate that a significant portion of the youth population is generally content with their lives.



In terms of happiness levels by gender, young women reported feeling happy at a higher rate than young men (51.9% vs. 44.1%). This may suggest that young women have a more positive perception of life in terms of social and emotional factors. These findings underline the importance of considering the health and happiness status of the youth population in shaping social, economic, and health policies in Turkey. Improving health and happiness levels can enhance the quality of life for young people and contribute to the overall well-being of society.



The general happiness level of the youth population by gender, 2022

Source: TÜİK, Life Satisfaction Survey, 2021, 2022



According to the 2022 Life Satisfaction Survey, health is the most prominent source of happiness among youth in Turkey. A total of 43.8% of young people identified health as their primary source of happiness, highlighting the direct connection between health and happiness. Following health, success (23.4%) and love (15.5%) were identified as other significant sources of happiness (TÜİK, Life Satisfaction Survey, 2022). When analyzed by gender, health (39.4%), success (27.9%), and love (17.0%) were the most important sources of happiness for young men. For young women, health (48.3%), love (21.6%), and success (18.6%) stood out as the primary sources. These differences reflect gender-specific perspectives and expectations, illustrating their impact on social structures.



The values that serve as sources of happiness for youth by gender, 2022

Source: TÜİK, Life Satisfaction Survey, 2022
 *Figures in the chart may not add up due to rounding

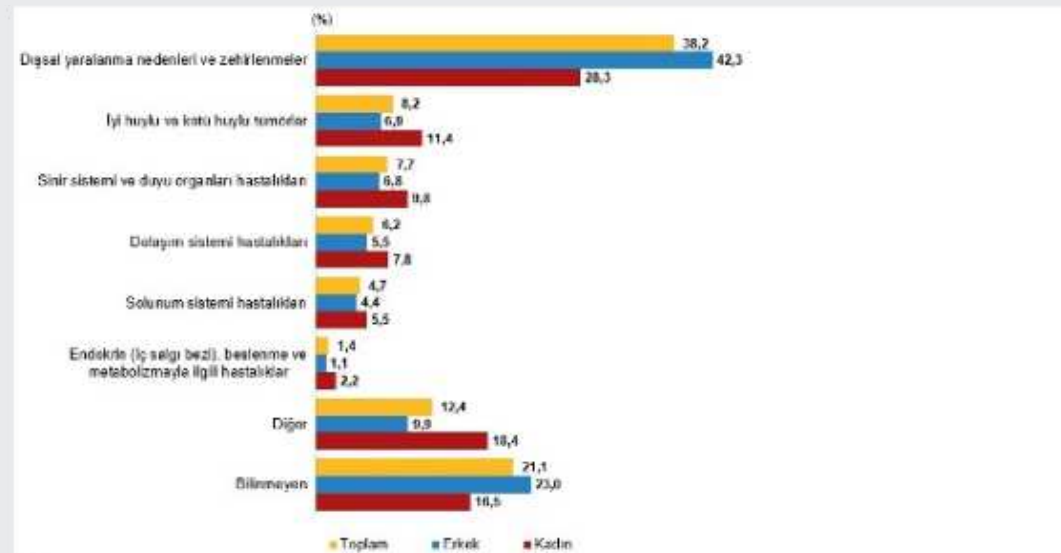


Youth satisfaction with work and education is also noteworthy. According to the research, 82.4% of young people reported being satisfied with their job, while 52.9% expressed satisfaction with their earnings. Satisfaction with education was recorded at 67.0% among youth, with young women (68.5%) showing slightly higher satisfaction levels compared to young men (65.6%).

Among the causes of death in youth, external injuries and poisonings accounted for the highest proportion at 38.2%, followed by benign and malignant tumors (8.2%) and diseases of the nervous system and sensory organs (7.7%). By gender, the rate of young men dying from external injuries and poisonings (42.3%) was higher than that of young women (28.3%). This suggests that young men may be more prone to engaging in risky behaviors.



Lastly, internet usage is highly prevalent among youth; in 2022, 96.9% of young people reported using the internet. The rate of internet usage was slightly higher among young men (97.6%) compared to young women (96.1%). These figures indicate that youth have nearly equal access to technology regardless of gender.

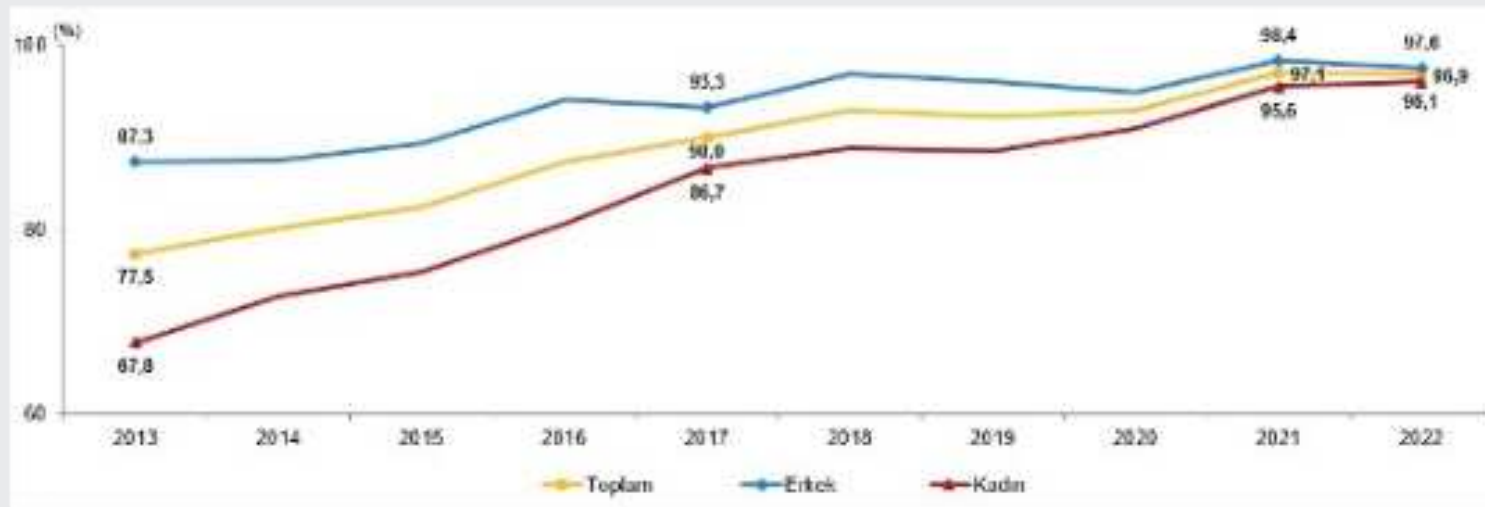


The proportion of deceased youth by cause of death and gender, 2021

Source: TÜİK, Death and Cause of Death Statistics, 2021
 Figures in the chart may not total due to rounding.



These findings underscore the need to develop comprehensive policies focused on health, education, and employment for youth in Turkey, highlighting the importance of strategies aimed at improving the quality of life for young people.



The internet usage rate of youth by gender, 2013-2022

Source: TÜİK, Household Information Technologies (IT) Usage Survey, 2013-2022



A study conducted on youth workers in Turkey focused on their needs and the social position of youth. The research progressed based on two main questions: "What are the needs of youth workers in Turkey or in your locality?" and "If you had opportunities and resources, what would you change in youth work at the local or national level?" These questions provided valuable insights into the current state of youth workers and how perceptions of youth could be improved.

Participants emphasized the need to change the prevailing perceptions of youth in society. During focus group discussions, they addressed the sources of pressure on young people and how societal views on youth contribute to negative attitudes toward youth work. Participants suggested that the definition of youth should be updated and criticized the existing definition by the Turkish Language Association as ironic. For instance, referring to young parliamentarians as "inexperienced" (*toy*) was seen as perpetuating negative perceptions about the abilities and potential of young people.

The participants also highlighted the importance of involving youth more actively in decision-making processes, suggesting that the average age of parliamentarians and bureaucrats should be lowered. They believed that having more young parliamentarians would allow the voices of youth to be heard more effectively. Additionally, they pointed out that promoting young leaders in local administrations and tribal structures could break the existing status quo and enable youth to play a more active role in society.

The study highlights the challenges faced by youth workers and young people, emphasizing the need to take concrete steps to strengthen the social position of youth (TGD, 2020).



The definition, recognition, and acceptance of youth work as a profession have been significant topics of discussion in the field of youth work. According to the findings of the study, youth workers shared the following perspectives on these issues (TGD, 2020):

- Youth workers stated that the lack of a clear definition, framework, and boundaries for youth work brings about numerous challenges. This ambiguity leads to difficulties in identifying youth work within society, public institutions, families, and the broader environment, resulting in diminished respect for the work being done.
- The lack of recognition for youth work contributes to it not being seen as a profession and not being taken seriously by public institutions. This prevents youth workers from being respected, acknowledged as stakeholders, and consulted on youth policies.
- Recognizing youth workers and accepting youth work as a profession could help prevent abuse and exploitation in the field. It is believed that this recognition process would lead to greater respect for youth workers, who are often expected to work continuously on a voluntary basis, and reduce the likelihood of exploitation.

At this point, efforts must be made to recognize youth work and establish youth workers as professionals. Such efforts will contribute to a better understanding of youth work in society and help ensure that youth workers receive the respect they deserve.



Institutions involved in youth work play a significant role in areas where youth activities are conducted. According to the findings of the study, youth workers expressed the following views on these issues (TGD, 2020):

- Flexible working hours are highlighted as an essential aspect of youth work. Participants emphasized that institutions should provide youth workers with flexible work schedules, enabling them to perform their duties more efficiently and effectively.
- Institutions are expected to work in harmony with youth workers, improve working conditions, create spaces for youth work, and allow for creativity. Furthermore, it is crucial for institutions to ensure transparency and accountability in their activities, especially in projects involving young people, which should be conducted transparently and shared with stakeholders.
- Institutions involved in youth work should include young people in their management styles, remain open to the ideas of youth workers, and align their activities with the needs of youth workers. Participants expect institutions to prioritize both themselves and young people.
- Participants stressed the importance of collaboration among institutions engaged in youth work to develop joint activities. However, some institutions' competitive attitudes toward one another were noted to harm the field. Therefore, it is crucial for institutions to come together to establish a common language, joint activities, and shared goals.

At this point, it is essential for institutions involved in youth work to provide flexible working opportunities for youth workers, improve working conditions to create spaces for youth activities, ensure transparency and accountability, prioritize young people and youth workers, and collaborate to develop joint activities



Participants' views on volunteering within the education system are as follows (TGD, 2020):

- Participants argued that mechanisms supporting volunteering within the education system should be strengthened. In this context, it was emphasized that the concept of volunteering should be discussed in schools (kindergarten, primary, middle, and high school) and that children and young people should be encouraged to engage in volunteering.
- It was noted that volunteering awareness should especially be instilled in children at the primary school and kindergarten levels. Participants believed that the presence of a platform integrated into the education system could contribute to raising more conscious and responsible individuals in the future.
- At the university level, participants stressed the need to increase programs that encourage volunteering. While some universities already offer such programs, participants generally felt that relationships between universities and the field of youth work should be strengthened. Universities should provide more support for activities in the youth work field and enhance collaboration. However, some participants complained that universities do not recognize organizations operating in the field of youth work. This was perceived as a shortfall in the youth work sector. Therefore, collaboration and communication between universities and organizations in the youth work field must be strengthened.



The research on inequalities and regional disparities highlights significant findings based on the experiences of youth workers from the Southeastern Anatolia, Eastern Anatolia, Black Sea, and Mediterranean regions:

- Participants emphasized noticeable differences between western regions and other regions in terms of the distribution of resources and budgets allocated for youth work and training programs for youth workers. This was noted to create regional disparities and inequalities in opportunities within the field of youth work. For instance, a participant with experience working in Southeastern Anatolia expressed that there was no equality of opportunity in the region and that access to resources was unequal. Similarly, training sessions were generally held in major cities, making it difficult for those from other provinces to attend, further exacerbating regional disparities and inequality.
- Regarding decision-making in youth work, participants noted that youth workers emerging from field experience in Turkey's civil society organizations have limited influence, while those with theoretical training tend to be more effective. They pointed out the impact of grant-providing organizations on this dynamic.
- Youth work is viewed as a reflection of participatory democracy, and the importance of youth involvement in decision-making processes was stressed. Consequently, effective relations with public institutions and bureaucracy are considered crucial for youth work.
- Participants highlighted that prolonged permission processes required to conduct youth work lead to demoralization for both young people and youth workers, hindering the efficiency and effectiveness of such activities.
- Furthermore, participants underscored the need to strengthen collaboration with public institutions. However, they noted insufficient cooperation between different institutions in the regions, which hampers the effective implementation of youth work.
- Additionally, participants called for public institutions to be more selective in appointing youth workers and to prioritize individuals with knowledge and experience in the field. They believed that employing experienced youth workers would contribute to more effective and efficient youth work.



The need for youth workers to come together was clearly highlighted during focus group discussions. This need stems from their desire to learn about new opportunities and resources, share experiences, exchange ideas, and disseminate good practices. It was emphasized that such gatherings would enrich the field of youth work and strengthen networking.

Participants particularly emphasized the importance of youth workers forming networks and chains at the provincial or regional level. Considering that each civil society organization works in different areas and interacts with various individuals, opportunities for collaboration exist, but access to these opportunities is often challenging. Hence, there is a significant demand for a centralized pool or platform that can bring together youth workers in the field of youth work.

Resources in the field of youth work were categorized into two main areas: resources allocated for youth workers and resources designated for youth activities. Youth workers expressed dissatisfaction with the inadequacy and irregularity of resources allocated to youth activities, emphasizing that this hinders the ability to carry out sustainable projects in youth work. Therefore, they advocated for an increase in the number of institutions or organizations providing grants in the field of youth work.

Youth workers also requested better access to both domestic and international resources, information about these resources, and efforts to increase their availability. Furthermore, the lack of resources for youth workers negatively affects their sustainability. Participants noted that salaries and budgets are crucial for livelihood but expressed that these resources are insufficient.

The limited budgets allocated for youth workers in projects impact the employment of youth workers. This issue is seen as one of the barriers preventing young people from becoming youth workers. Additionally, those who wish to work in the field of youth work are often compelled to take other jobs or conduct youth work voluntarily, creating a vicious cycle.

Participants called for institutions and youth workers involved in youth work to participate in capacity-building activities and for these activities to be increased. They highlighted the need for youth workers to continuously update themselves to keep up with youth trends. Therefore, they emphasized that capacity-building training should not only include international opportunities but also domestic ones.

Regarding mentorship, participants stressed the need for improvements, noting that youth work often results in amateur mentorship being provided to young people. Youth workers also expressed a need for support in professional guidance and requested that international resources be translated into Turkish and shared with them. Non-formal education techniques and psychological support were also identified as important areas by participants.

Youth participation, a critical component of youth work, was emphasized as a significant issue. Participants stressed the importance of creating spaces that facilitate youth participation, working with disadvantaged youth groups, and establishing mechanisms to encourage and motivate youth involvement.

Participants highlighted that youth should be regarded as the target audience in youth work. They identified the inability to reach different youth groups, especially disadvantaged ones, as a major shortcoming in the field. The exclusion of these youth groups disrupts their right to voice and decision-making.

Participants also noted a lack of spaces created for young people in youth work. They advocated for the creation of secure and tangible spaces for youth, emphasizing that these spaces should be provided independently of institutions or organizations.

Another area where participants desired increased youth participation was politics. They believed that empowering youth in the political sphere would strengthen youth participation in politics and enhance youth policies overall.



Participants emphasized the need for an increase in mechanisms that facilitate youth participation, such as city councils, youth councils, and youth assemblies. They stressed that both the number of these mechanisms and youth participation in them should be expanded.

The importance of youth workers being organized was also highlighted. Participants believed that organizing youth workers would support youth policies, help prevent the exploitation of youth workers, and contribute positively to the civil sector. They suggested that such organization could enable youth workers to combine their strengths and be more effective. Organizing was also seen as a means to help youth workers define their identities. However, participants noted that youth workers might face challenges in organizing, particularly due to the lack of a formal definition of their role at the public level. Overcoming such obstacles in the organization process was deemed necessary.

It was further stated that the need for organization among youth workers might not even be recognized at the local level, and if society does not identify youth workers as such, the desired outcomes cannot be achieved. Therefore, participants emphasized the importance of collective action and organization among youth workers.

Participants also underscored the importance of youth policies and noted their absence. They stressed the need to create policies that reflect the desires and needs of young people. Such policies could address gaps in the youth field, increase youth participation, and enhance their inclusion.

The lack of youth policies was noted to negatively impact the youth work field, the professional recognition of youth workers, and youth participation and inclusion in activities. Participants emphasized the need to work toward developing and implementing youth policies that address the needs of the youth field and encourage youth participation (TGD, 2020).



3.1. THE FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN TURKEY



Youth work can be defined as activities carried out in the civil sector, actively involving young people and aligning with their needs and goals. These activities typically aim to encourage youth participation, respect their rights, actively involve them in decision-making processes, and enable them to take on more active roles in social life (Nemutlu, 2008). According to the *Youth Work Guide: 5N-3K Roadmap* (TGD, 2017), a youth worker is defined as "a person who conducts youth work." However, youth work exhibits regional differences and does not hold the same meaning for everyone, making its definition broad and varied rather than confined to a single explanation.

Youth work encompasses activities where young people and youth workers come together to share, connect, engage in cultural exchange, and derive mutual benefits. These efforts aim to support and empower young people in social, cultural, and political domains. Youth work also includes activities that enhance young people's capacity to address their problems and foster personal development. Considering regional disparities, youth work in the western regions of Turkey often focuses on social entrepreneurship, whereas in the eastern regions, it is more commonly associated with sports activities (TGD, 2020). This diversity underscores the need for youth work to be designed according to the specific needs of young people, framing youth work as activities centered on and tailored to the needs of youth.

The **Youth Work Guide: 5N-3K Roadmap** defines a youth worker as "a person who conducts youth work," but this definition lacks clear boundaries and is not universally accepted. Some literature sources suggest that definitions provided by the Turkish National Agency and the Ministry of Youth and Sports are inadequate and need to be further developed. Youth workers require a more comprehensive and inclusive definition (TGD, 2020).



3.1. THE FRAMEWORK OF YOUTH WORK IN TURKEY



Focus group research on the definition and roles of youth workers in Turkey has proven critical for deeply understanding the identity and needs of youth workers. Participants indicated that existing definitions are often insufficient and that a more clearly defined framework is necessary. While the *Youth Work Guide* defines youth workers as "people conducting youth work," participants argued that this definition does not sufficiently encompass the diversity of youth workers. They also noted that definitions by the Turkish National Agency and the Ministry of Youth and Sports do not fully reflect the essence of youth work, which requires both individual and institutional competencies (TGD, 2017).

Participants suggested that the definition of a youth worker should include elements such as knowledge, youth-centric approaches, adherence to principles and values, identity, and personal characteristics. Within this framework, youth workers are responsible for understanding the needs of young people and developing effective programs accordingly. In alignment with practices in Europe, participants emphasized that youth workers' training should be continuous and inclusively defined to cover all stakeholders in the youth field.

Expanding these definitions has highlighted the need to differentiate between youth leaders and youth workers. While youth leaders are often salaried and supported by the state, youth workers typically operate on a voluntary basis, leading to ambiguities regarding professionalism and occupational identity.



3.2. PROFILE OF YOUTH WORKERS IN TURKEY



The profile of youth workers in Turkey necessitates a comprehensive knowledge base and diverse competencies. Research findings reveal that youth workers need to be open to continuous development, stay updated with current trends, and possess in-depth knowledge of the youth field. They are expected to be well-versed in youth rights and related legislation, as well as to have a thorough understanding of youth policies and various mechanisms involved in youth work (Acar, 2006).

Research also highlights that youth workers should thoroughly understand the situations of disadvantaged youth and develop tailored strategies to meet their needs. In this context, youth workers must grasp the social, cultural, and economic contexts of young people and use this understanding to shape their policies and practices.

Moreover, youth workers must not confine their knowledge to theory but translate it into behaviors and attitudes. This enables them to serve as role models in their interactions with young people, encouraging youth to adopt these positive attitudes. Consistency in both training and daily practices enhances the reliability and effectiveness of youth workers.

Sensitivity to local dynamics is another essential attribute for youth workers. They need to be well-acquainted with the social and cultural structures of the regions where they operate and develop communication strategies that align with these contexts. This approach facilitates more effective communication with young people and allows for the development of solutions tailored to their real needs.

Youth workers in Turkey are defined as individuals who are sensitive to the needs of young people and actively develop solutions to address these needs. Research shows that youth workers play critical roles in understanding and responding to the social and economic needs of youth. Social needs include the integration of young people into the social sphere, enhancing their social inclusion, strengthening their autonomy, encouraging active participation in life, and supporting their personal development. Economic needs, on the other hand, involve enhancing young people's economic independence, expanding employment opportunities, and improving their economic well-being.

Youth workers are also expected to act as guides for young people. This role involves mentoring and providing support for their personal and professional development.



3.2. PROFILE OF YOUTH WORKERS IN TURKEY



Research emphasizes that youth workers should provide an open and supportive environment for young people, creating conditions that allow them to express themselves and have a voice. Adopting a needs- and rights-based approach enhances the effectiveness of youth work and strengthens the position of young people in society.

In this context, youth workers play a central role in identifying the needs of young people and developing programs and policies tailored to those needs. To fulfill this role, youth workers must continuously update their knowledge and skills, stay informed about new developments, and establish effective communication with young people.

Youth workers in Turkey are not only defined by the skills and knowledge they possess but also by the principles and values they apply in their work. Research indicates that due to the dynamic nature of youth, youth workers adhere to a continuously evolving set of principles and values. These include non-discrimination, honesty, a rights-based approach, anti-racism, avoidance of stereotypes, professional ethics, absence of negative biases, non-partisan politics, transparency, fundamental and universal values, and gender equality. Adopting these values is crucial for youth workers in building relationships with young people and implementing youth programs. These values enhance the trustworthiness and professional reputation of youth workers within society while positioning them as positive role models in their interactions with young people.

Additionally, research reveals that the identity of youth workers is defined in various ways. Youth workers are described with terms such as "professionals," "volunteers," "non-professionals," or even "undefined professionals." This diversity reflects how youth workers are positioned within different social and institutional structures and underscores the interdisciplinary and multifaceted nature of the youth work field.

The effectiveness of youth workers in Turkey is closely linked to their personal attributes. Key personal qualities necessary for successful interaction with young people include understanding, empathy, tolerance, strong communication skills, and effective listening abilities. Youth workers must understand the ideas, emotions, and needs of young people and act based on this understanding.



3.2. PROFILE OF YOUTH WORKERS IN TURKEY



Youth workers must effectively utilize various communication channels. The widespread use of digital platforms and social media among young people necessitates that youth workers be proficient in these areas. Diversity and creativity in communication are critical in capturing young people’s attention and encouraging their participation in activities.

Youth workers are also responsible for creating safe and supportive environments for young people. These environments contribute to personal development while promoting social integration and active participation in society. Thus, youth workers are expected to facilitate young people’s openness to change and adaptability to new circumstances.

In studies on youth work in Turkey, the age and experience of youth workers and their impact on interactions with young people are significant discussion points. Data indicate that being young is not a mandatory requirement for youth workers. However, the ability to work effectively with young people is linked to the capacity to feel and think youthfully. This highlights the importance of youth workers reflecting the energy and dynamism necessary for meaningful and profound communication with young people.

Research shows that age is not merely a number but also symbolizes the experience and knowledge of youth workers. The transfer of experience from older youth workers to younger individuals in the field is considered critical for enriching youth work. Mentorship and guidance by older workers are recommended as models to ensure the sustainability of youth work.

However, there is a risk of hierarchy and stagnation due to age differences in youth work. The constant need for innovation and renewal in this field requires youth workers to stay updated and adapt to the changing needs of young people. In this context, older youth workers should also be encouraged to remain active and renew themselves within this dynamic field (TGD, 2020).



3.3. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH WORK AND PRIORITIES OF NATIONAL POLICIES ON YOUTH WORK



This section was developed by examining Articles 58 and 59 of the Constitution, the 10th, 11th, and 12th Development Plans, GSB strategic planning, and policy documents. It is acknowledged that youth play a critical role in the development of their societies, and the social and economic contributions of young people should be evaluated, particularly considering demographic advantages. While Turkey stands out with its high youth population ratio, it is essential to utilize this demographic advantage effectively for sustainable development. Turkey's population policies and youth strategies are designed to support this demographic structure.

Investments made to ensure that young people receive quality education are fundamental in preparing them for the labor market and enabling them to contribute to society. Providing equal opportunities in education and increasing learning facilities are among the main objectives. Programs to facilitate the integration of young people into the labor market and policies to encourage youth entrepreneurship are critical for the sustainability of economic development. On-the-job training programs and internship opportunities are being expanded to support young people in their job search processes. To ensure the active participation of young people in social life, access to cultural and sports activities has been facilitated. Moreover, including young people in decision-making processes is vital to strengthening democratic participation. Protecting the physical and mental health of young people, increasing access to healthcare services, and encouraging young people to adopt healthy lifestyles are prioritized.

Issues such as gender equality, the rights of people with disabilities, and support for minority groups are integral components of youth policies. To maximize the potential of the youth population, Turkey must not only implement existing policies but also continuously review and update them. Flexible and innovative approaches must be adopted to respond to the changing needs of young people, which will be decisive in achieving national development goals.

The vision of youth policies is to nurture young people who respect universal and human values, adhere to national and spiritual values, are environmentally conscious, knowledgeable, self-confident, active, and entrepreneurial. This vision also aims to create opportunities and environments that enable young people to fully realize their potential as individuals with a strong sense of social belonging, who are aware of and exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms, and who can compete on an international level.



3.3. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR YOUTH WORK AND PRIORITIES OF NATIONAL POLICIES ON YOUTH WORK



The main objectives of youth policies are as follows:

- Establishing a correct and solid perception of youth within society.
- Accurately identifying the needs, expectations, and concerns of young people.
- Defining institutions and organizations working in the field of youth and ensuring cooperation and coordination among them.
- Providing necessary support and incentives to strengthen and enhance the activities of civil society organizations in the youth field.
- Allocating resources in a way that fully supports the development of young people.
- Supporting the personal and social development of young people.
- Promoting citizenship awareness among young people.
- Enabling young people to realize their potential by considering the needs of different youth groups.

The fundamental principles and values of youth policies are as follows:

- Human Rights and Democracy
- National and Cultural Values
- Rights-Based Approach
- Prevention of Discrimination and Equal Opportunity
- Social Wealth and Solidarity
- Research and Evidence-Based Approach
- Priority for Disadvantaged Youth
- International Standards
- Participation and Accessibility
- Inclusivity and Applicability
- Accountability and Transparency
- Locality

In line with these fundamental principles and vision, Turkey's youth policies provide a strategic roadmap for nurturing young people as active and independent individuals within society (GSB, 2013).



3.4. TOOLS AND SUPPORT STATUS FOR EMPOWERING YOUTH WORKERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS



According to Düzcü's research, initiatives launched by the government in southeastern Turkey to empower youth workers with disadvantaged backgrounds are supported through various education, employment, and psychosocial programs. These initiatives include the following key aspects:

- The government organizes vocational training courses aimed at increasing the employability of young people. Through these courses, the participation of disadvantaged youth in the labor force is encouraged, and their economic independence is supported.
- Expanding educational opportunities and facilitating access to education for young people is another critical goal. The government provides supportive courses to help young people succeed within the education system, thereby reducing educational inequalities for disadvantaged youth and supporting their academic achievements.
- Programs designed to support the social integration and psychosocial well-being of young people have also been implemented. These programs aim to help youth assume active and positive roles in post-conflict society. Thus, the goal is to enable young people to break free from cycles of violence and participate as contributors to peace and reconciliation processes within the community.

The research emphasizes the importance of involving local communities and civil society organizations in these processes alongside government-supported initiatives. This approach aims to enable programs to respond more effectively to local needs and specific circumstances, thereby enhancing their success (Düzcü, 2020).

Şenyuva's research examined the support mechanisms for youth workers in Turkey within the scope of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action program (E+/YiA). The findings of the study are detailed as follows:



3.4. TOOLS AND SUPPORT STATUS FOR EMPOWERING YOUTH WORKERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS



The research highlights that training and support activities have significantly contributed to the personal development of youth workers. These activities have greatly helped participants enhance their personal competencies, with notable progress observed in knowledge acquisition, skill development, attitude changes, and intercultural awareness. Additionally, the training has been found to boost the self-confidence of youth workers and positively influence their overall perception of the European Union.

The research demonstrates that training and support activities are also effective at the institutional level, providing significant contributions to the goals of youth work and the future perspectives of organizations. However, challenges have been noted in integrating the acquired experiences into institutional structures, indicating the need for more systematic mechanisms.

The research also reveals that training and support activities create opportunities for networking and collaboration in the youth field. However, these opportunities often remain at the individual level and are not fully utilized for institutional development.

According to the research findings, the participation of youth workers in training and support activities has significant impacts at both individual and institutional levels, but better integration of these impacts is needed. While the importance of more systematic support mechanisms and programs to enhance institutional capacity is highlighted, it is recommended that the experiences gained be utilized in shaping youth policies (Şenyuva, 2018).



3.4. TOOLS AND SUPPORT STATUS FOR EMPOWERING YOUTH WORKERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS



Yurttagüler's study analyzing the impacts of youth policies in Turkey focuses on empowering disadvantaged groups. The study emphasizes that youth policies are designed to encourage young people's active participation in social life and decision-making processes. It specifically highlights the effectiveness of these policies in areas such as youth employment, family policies, migration policies, and spatial planning.

In terms of youth employment, various programs and initiatives are stated to be offered to increase young people's participation in the workforce and facilitate their access to job opportunities. These programs provide vocational training, career planning support, and encourage youth entrepreneurship.

Family policies aim to support young people through their families. These policies have the potential to strengthen young people's roles within their families while enhancing their social and economic independence.

Migration policies are specifically designed to support the social integration of young migrants. These policies aim to facilitate the adaptation of young people to new communities and increase their participation in social and economic life.

Spatial planning and urban transformation projects include social housing initiatives for young people, aiming to improve their quality of life.

Yurttagüler's study thoroughly examines how youth policies address the needs of disadvantaged groups and shape young people's roles in society. However, it emphasizes the need for continuous evaluation of these policies in terms of their implementation and effectiveness (Yurttagüler, 2016).



3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN YOUTH WORK



A study on the types of organizations and activities of institutions involved in youth work (TGD, 2017) found that young people express the concept of "youth" in various ways. Descriptions such as "full of life energy, curious, excited" stand out among these expressions. These definitions reflect how young people perceive their identities and societal roles. The study explored in detail how young people define the concept of "youth." Participants divided into five different groups described youth as "working or not working, studying or not studying, in love, energetic, curious, dynamic, and having a homogeneous structure." These definitions offer diverse perspectives on young people's identities and social roles.

In Turkey, three different ministries define youth differently based on age range, highlighting the importance of establishing a unified definition of youth.

The Council of Europe defines youth work as "social, cultural, educational, and political activities carried out with young people outside of school using non-formal education methods." In Ireland, the Youth Work Act defines youth work as "a planned educational program that encourages voluntary participation to contribute to the personal and social development of young people."

Research indicates that youth work in Turkey needs to be reshaped considering young people's economic, geographical, and educational challenges. Instead of focusing solely on exam preparation, it is recommended to create free spaces where young people can express themselves, share their thoughts, and enhance their social participation. This approach would require significant changes at the beginning and throughout the process of youth work (TGD, 2017).



3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN YOUTH WORK



Youth work is supported through various activities aimed at contributing to the individual and societal development of young people. These activities are organized and implemented across a broad spectrum to meet the social, cultural, and educational needs of youth. According to the European Commission, youth work activities can be categorized into six main groups:

- **Awareness-Raising Activities:**

These activities are organized to enhance young people's awareness of various issues. They aim to increase understanding of social, economic, and environmental topics.

- **Information and Counseling Activities:**

These activities provide counseling services to young people and help them acquire knowledge. Guidance is offered on topics such as education, career planning, and health.

- **Activities Supporting International Development and Civil Volunteering:**

This category includes activities that contribute to young people's international development and encourage participation in volunteering efforts. They aim to foster intercultural understanding and increase global responsibility awareness.

- **Leisure-Based Courses and Activities:**

These activities involve courses and events designed to help young people make productive use of their free time. They provide opportunities to develop skills in areas such as arts, sports, and hobbies.

- **Self-Initiated Project Activities by Youth:**

These activities allow young people to develop and implement projects on their own initiative. They aim to enhance leadership and project management skills.

- **Street Work and Social Assistance Activities:**

These activities target disadvantaged segments of society. They include social support and assistance efforts aimed at young people living on the streets or individuals in need of help.



3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN YOUTH WORK



The activities of organizations conducting youth work in Turkey are diverse. Based on research, the primary activities carried out by these organizations include:

1. Education and Vocational Development Programs: Youth organizations organize various educational programs to enhance the vocational and personal skills of young people. These programs are designed to facilitate their integration into the labor market and make them more competitive.
2. Social Activities and Events: Youth centers and organizations host social activities and events to develop young people's social skills and foster their growth as active members of society. These activities include sports, arts, music, and other cultural events.
3. International Exchange Programs: Many youth organizations arrange exchange programs to provide international experiences and promote intercultural understanding. These programs allow young people to interact with different cultures and develop a global perspective.
4. Counseling and Guidance Services: Organizations offering counseling and guidance services support young people in career planning, educational choices, and personal development.
5. Youth Camps and Thematic Camps: Various camps for young people are organized during summer and winter. These camps are often thematic, covering topics such as education, cultural activities, sports, leadership, and teamwork.
6. Youth Centers: Youth centers across Turkey provide young people with various activities and services, such as sports activities, art workshops, music events, language courses, and counseling services.



3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN YOUTH WORK



7. Youth Festivals and Events: Organizations involved in youth work frequently organize festivals, concerts, theater performances, and other cultural events for young people. These events provide opportunities for youth to socialize and engage in cultural exchanges.

8. Social Responsibility Projects: Youth organizations often run social responsibility projects to encourage young people to be sensitive to societal issues. These projects typically involve activities such as environmental cleanups, assistance to disadvantaged groups, and preschool education.

9. Youth Forums and Conferences: Youth organizations regularly hold forums and conferences for young people. These events aim to bring youth together to exchange ideas, discuss issues, and propose solutions.

10. Youth Competitions and Awards: Youth organizations organize various competitions to highlight the talents and achievements of young people. Examples include painting competitions, poetry contests, and short film festivals.

11. Volunteer Programs: Youth organizations offer volunteering opportunities to young people. These programs promote community service, develop leadership skills, and support personal growth.

12. Youth Research and Reports: Youth organizations conduct research and produce reports on the status and needs of young people. These efforts contribute to the formulation of youth policies and the design of more effective programs for young people.

13. Career and Job Placement Support: Some youth organizations provide career counseling and job placement assistance to young people. These services aim to prepare youth for the job market and facilitate their employment opportunities.



3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN YOUTH WORK



These activities are carried out to support the integration and active participation of young people in society, to develop their personal and professional skills, and to promote a culture of solidarity and cooperation among youth (Yılmaz, 2017).

Youth is a critical phase of life with long-term impacts on an individual's development. Positive or negative traits acquired during this period often become lasting characteristics throughout life. Although the youth phase typically lasts 5–6 years, its effects can resonate for 50–60 years. Scientific studies underscore the significant influence of youth on the development of character and personality. By the end of this phase, individuals acquire traits aligned with the expectations of their surrounding environment. While these expectations may vary based on geographic and cultural differences, the changes brought about by youth are universally recognized.

Young people should gain their independence, establish social relationships beyond their family, and maintain friendships. During this process, they require support not only from their families and close circles but also from institutions and organizations. It is crucial for young people to understand their identities without experiencing confusion, attain emotional maturity, develop a worldview, and progress toward a career. This journey enhances their sensitivity toward society and nurtures a more tolerant outlook. Consequently, youth approach life with a more positive perspective and contribute more significantly to society.

In Turkey, various social aid institutions and organizations provide support to young people. These institutions aim to help youth adapt to societal expectations and support their personal and professional development through a range of programs and activities. These include educational programs, career counseling, social events, and psychological support services (Ministry of National Education, 2011).

Social aid institutions and organizations supporting youth in Turkey are described below:



3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN YOUTH WORK



Social Services and Child Protection Agency

The roots of the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHÇEK) date back to Mithat Paşa's governorship of Tuna Province, eventually evolving into the "Turkey Child Protection Agency" in 1935. Currently known as SHÇEK, the organization provides care and support services for children in need, youth, individuals with disabilities, and the elderly. The agency operates various care homes, children's shelters, hospitals, and dispensaries and offers support to families of martyrs and veterans. These activities are financed by government support and public donations.

SHÇEK's child and youth centers are tasked with rehabilitating and reintegrating children and youth living on the streets or subjected to child labor. These centers aim to protect children and youth from physical, mental, and emotional harm, meet their basic needs, and carry out vocational rehabilitation programs. They also support activities that establish relationships with families and communities.

The General Directorate of SHÇEK operates at the central level, represented by provincial social services directorates in each province and district social services directorates in towns. The centers provide temporary shelter and social services to children and youth facing difficulties due to marital discord, neglect, illness, substance abuse, poverty, abandonment, and similar reasons. Units such as observation houses and night shelters address the immediate needs of these children.

Child and youth centers collaborate with SHÇEK's national and local units to support the social integration of children and youth. Coordination and evaluation boards consist of various specialists and center personnel, tasked with preparing and implementing social service programs and supporting them with necessary training.



3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN YOUTH WORK



Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay)

The Turkish Red Crescent was founded on June 11, 1868, in Istanbul and renamed the "Red Crescent Society" in 1935. The organization's primary mission is to assist those affected by wars, natural disasters, and other emergencies both domestically and internationally, provide healthcare services, and promote social solidarity. Through collaboration with international organizations, the Red Crescent has established a global network of solidarity.

Kızılay offers disaster preparedness and response services during wars and emergencies, including immediate aid for those affected by natural disasters and post-disaster recovery efforts. In peacetime, the organization provides healthcare and social aid services, such as medical centers, psychosocial support, and first aid training. The Red Crescent also plays a vital role in blood services, managing blood donations and distribution.

The Red Crescent supports youth through various programs and projects aimed at enhancing their societal participation and personal development. Key programs include youth camps, scholarships, and dormitory services. Additionally, the organization promotes volunteer activities among young people, fostering a sense of community service.

Kızılay is also active on an international level, coordinating humanitarian aid and disaster response programs in collaboration with similar organizations worldwide. These partnerships enhance global capacities for humanitarian assistance and disaster intervention.

The organization's funding comes from membership fees, the sale of materials such as publications, stamps, and badges, as well as income from events like lotteries and balls. Donations from citizens and rental income also serve as significant financial resources, enabling the Red Crescent to sustain its wide range of social services.



3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN YOUTH WORK



Turkish Green Crescent Society (Yeşilay)

The Turkish Green Crescent Society, commonly known as Yeşilay, was officially established in 1920 in Istanbul as a civil society organization. Its primary goal is to reduce the consumption of tobacco, alcohol, and other harmful substances within Turkey, aiming to foster a healthier generation and society. By combating the dangers these substances pose to human health, Yeşilay seeks to protect the community, especially young people, from their negative effects.

Yeşilay employs various methods in its fight against harmful habits. These include organizing conferences, broadcasting on radio and television, hosting exhibitions and seminars, and conducting cultural and artistic activities to raise awareness about addiction. The organization also provides guidance and support during addiction treatment processes and supplies educational materials, videos, and printed resources for awareness activities in schools and other educational institutions.

To help young people avoid harmful substances, Yeşilay organizes youth camps, educational programs, and various social activities designed to raise awareness and protect them. The organization also runs programs that promote a culture of volunteerism among young people.

Yeşilay collaborates with government agencies and international organizations to enhance the effectiveness of its fight against harmful habits. These partnerships expand Yeşilay's reach and strengthen local strategies with international expertise.

Operating through branches, representatives, and school clubs across Turkey, Yeşilay ensures its activities reach a wide audience. Each academic year, it works to raise awareness about the dangers of alcohol and drug use, implementing preventive measures nationwide.



3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN YOUTH WORK



National Education Foundation (Millî Eğitim Vakfı)

The National Education Foundation was established on February 19, 1981, to support the critical role of education in advancing Turkey to the level of modern and developed nations. The initiative began with the "Build Your Own School" campaign, which yielded positive results nationwide through contributions from citizens and public institutions.

The foundation addresses the educational and instructional needs of schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education and takes measures to support the social and cultural development of young people.

Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (Türkiye Eğitim Gönüllüleri Vakfı)

The Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey aims to ensure that Turkey has well-educated citizens. The foundation's primary goal is to promote the more intensive use of technology and information tools in education and to make knowledge more permanent. To this end, it establishes various education parks and focuses on educational technologies, enabling young people to benefit from these resources.

The Turkish Youth Foundation

The Turkish Youth Foundation was established to ensure and facilitate the implementation of contemporary and advanced systems and methods in the field of education and training in Turkey. The foundation aims to serve Turkish culture and support the development of young people within this cultural framework. In line with this goal, it organizes educational programs and cultural activities for youth by providing the necessary material and moral conditions and opportunities.



3.5. TYPES OF ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN YOUTH WORK



Turkish Youth Foundation (TÜGVA)

The Turkish Youth Foundation (TÜGVA) is a non-governmental organization established to support the development of young people in the fields of education, culture, and sports in Turkey. The foundation's primary goal is to nurture active and exemplary individuals in society by offering programs focused on leadership, entrepreneurship, and moral values. In line with this objective, TÜGVA organizes various educational workshops, seminars, conferences, and social responsibility projects. Additionally, fostering national and moral values, promoting scientific thinking, and contributing to the personal development of young people through social activities are among the foundation's significant activities.

Turkey Youth and Education Service Foundation (TÜRGEV)

The Turkey Youth and Education Service Foundation (TÜRGEV) was established to provide services for young people in the areas of education and accommodation. The foundation's primary aim is to support the academic and social lives of students by offering high-standard educational opportunities and quality dormitory services. Through scholarship programs, student dormitories, libraries, and educational centers, TÜRGEV directly contributes to youth education. The foundation also provides professional development services such as career counseling to help students prepare for the workforce. TÜRGEV's activities include cultural and artistic events aimed at promoting the social integration and cultural development of young people.

Turkey Youth NGO Platform (TGSP)

The Turkey Youth NGO Platform (TGSP) unites youth-focused NGOs across Turkey to promote social responsibility, participatory youth culture, and awareness of social issues. TGSP fosters collaboration, shares expertise, and addresses youth challenges through events and projects. It advocates for youth rights, encourages participation in democratic processes, and contributes to shaping youth policies, empowering young people to play active roles in societal development.



3.6. NATIONAL OUTCOMES OF YOUTH WORK



The study titled "Youth Work and Policy in Turkey" by Nemutlu, Kurtaran, and Yentürk provides a detailed analysis of the effects of youth policies and programs on education and employment in Turkey. According to the study, youth policies in Turkey support the integration of young people into education and the labor market, increase employment rates, and strengthen their economic independence. The implementation of such policies enhances young people's vocational skills, boosting their competitiveness in the job market.

Youth programs encourage young people to take active roles in civil society. These activities increase their participation in democratic processes and raise their awareness of social issues. The political and social interactions of young people contribute to a more inclusive and democratic society.

International youth exchange programs are highly significant for young people. These programs improve their intercultural understanding and collaboration skills. Such initiatives strengthen global citizenship awareness among youth, fostering increased dialogue and understanding between different cultures.

Youth work makes substantial contributions to policy development processes at local and national levels. It plays a vital role in shaping policies that reflect the needs and priorities of young people. This process enables a better understanding of the societal needs of youth and facilitates the development of policies aligned with these needs (Nemutlu et al., 2008).

The study conducted by Şenyuva examines in detail the contributions of Erasmus+ Youth Mobility programs to participants' personal development and self-confidence. According to the findings, young participants reported increased self-confidence as a result of interacting with different cultures and learning from these interactions. These interactions not only enhanced participants' negotiation skills but also provided them with new perspectives.

The research highlights that Erasmus+ programs significantly improved participants' foreign language skills and cultural awareness. Through the program, participants became more adept at engaging with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, a process that enhanced their capacity to understand and appreciate cultural diversity.



3.6. NATIONAL OUTCOMES OF YOUTH WORK



Erasmus+ Youth Mobility programs have made significant contributions to the development of young people's professional skills and access to career opportunities. The research indicates that participants reported increased job prospects and expanded professional networks thanks to these programs. These initiatives play a crucial role in preparing young people for the workforce and integrating them into the global labor market.

The programs also strengthened young people's ability to address social issues more sensitively and effectively. Participants became more active in their communities and more involved in social responsibility projects. This process enhanced their contributions to social change and positively impacted the overall well-being of society.

Şenyuva's research provides a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of Erasmus+ Youth Mobility programs on young people in Turkey, demonstrating that these programs serve as an important bridge from education to employment. Additionally, the programs strengthen connections between young people in Turkey, the European Union, and other countries, fostering intercultural understanding and collaboration (Şenyuva, 2018).

The study by Lüküslü and Osmanoğlu, titled *"Youth Work in Turkey: A Sector Newly Emerging and Marked by Political Competition,"* highlights that youth work in Turkey has undergone significant evolution, particularly during the country's candidacy process for the European Union. The study notes that youth policies and youth work are carried out differently by central government, local administrations, and non-governmental organizations, emphasizing that political competition has become a significant component of youth work.

The research focuses on the impact of local dynamics and political competition on the development of youth policies and youth work. It particularly points out that the tensions between local governments run by different political parties and the central government have a direct effect on youth centers and youth policies.



3.6. NATIONAL OUTCOMES OF YOUTH WORK



Findings indicate that youth centers are often used as tools in political competition. Different political parties attempt to gain political support and influence over young voters by interacting with them through these centers. This leads to the prioritization of political interests in the mission and activities of youth centers. The study reveals that youth centers across Turkey generally focus on sports and student services. However, youth centers established by local administrations tend to implement youth policies in a more arbitrary and less standardized manner.

Lüküslü and Osmanoğlu's study emphasizes that youth work in Turkey is still a developing field and is not a priority in the public policy agenda. Political competition plays a significant role in shaping and implementing youth work, influencing how youth policies are developed at both local and national levels (Lüküslü and Osmanoğlu, 2018). The study conducted by Şahin and others examines the effects of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) youth on education and employment in Turkey. The research highlights that factors such as early school dropout and lack of integration into the labor market contribute to higher NEET rates. This situation makes it difficult for young people to achieve economic independence and become socially active. The study indicates that NEET youth often experience social isolation and face family-related issues. Lack of family support or negative family dynamics adversely affects their participation in education and employment. These social and familial factors weaken their social ties and increase their isolation.

The research shows that being NEET has significant psychological and emotional effects on individuals. Issues such as frustration, hopelessness, and low self-esteem are commonly observed among NEET youth. These challenges decrease their quality of life and make it harder for them to adapt to society. NEET youth are noted to have limited access to public policies and face difficulties in reaching social services. The study draws attention to the environmental and economic challenges that cause NEET youth to feel disconnected from society and lose trust in public policies.

Şahin et al.'s study provides important insights into how youth policies and programs in Turkey can be improved to better address the needs of NEET youth. It emphasizes that increasing education and employment opportunities, strengthening social support mechanisms, and addressing family dynamics can help young people transition out of NEET status (Şahin et al., 2023).



3.7. KEY CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH WORKERS IN THEIR DAILY PRACTICES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS



The study titled "Needs Assessment of Youth Workers" conducted by Toy Youth Association highlights resource shortages as one of the primary challenges faced by youth workers in Turkey who work with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. According to the study, youth workers experience significant difficulties in accessing adequate financial and logistical resources, negatively impacting the quality and accessibility of services provided to young people.

The research also draws attention to the challenges in accessing educational materials and quality education for disadvantaged youth. These access issues hinder youth workers from effectively carrying out educational activities and make it difficult for young people to achieve equal opportunities in education.

The study notes that fostering harmony and building positive relationships among young people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds is a significant challenge for youth workers. This suggests that cultural diversity and social barriers can reduce the effectiveness of youth services.

The various psychological and emotional difficulties experienced by disadvantaged youth test the capacity of youth workers to provide adequate emotional support and psychological counseling. The study emphasizes the need to enhance the competencies of youth workers in this area.

Finally, the study reveals that young people living in disadvantaged regions face various socioeconomic challenges, such as financial difficulties and low levels of education. These challenges are identified as critical factors directly affecting youth work.



3.7. KEY CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH WORKERS IN THEIR DAILY PRACTICES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS



The research by Toy Youth Association demonstrates that the challenges faced by youth workers engaging with disadvantaged youth significantly hinder the integration of these young individuals into society and reduce the capacity of youth workers to deliver effective interventions. The study emphasizes the need for increased support and resources for youth workers to overcome these difficulties (TGD, 2020).

Yılmaz, in the study "Evaluation of Youth Work in Turkey and Examination of Youth Workers' Integration into the Workforce," highlights the significant challenge of limited financial resources, which prevents youth workers from effectively implementing their programs. This limitation constrains the quality of services and their accessibility to young people, ultimately hindering the full realization of youth services' potential benefits. The study underlines that insufficient training and limited opportunities for professional development negatively affect youth workers' ability to work effectively with disadvantaged youth. These shortcomings are further complicated by the lack of adequate support for professionalizing youth work.

Yılmaz's research also points to the need for youth workers to address social stigma and cultural barriers faced by young people from their families and communities. Such barriers can discourage youth participation and engagement in programs, thereby reducing the effectiveness of youth initiatives.

Another challenge noted is the short-term impact of youth work, which often falls short of creating long-term change. This limitation makes it difficult to assess the sustainability and overall effectiveness of youth programs, highlighting the need for innovative approaches in program design and implementation. The study also notes that insufficient youth policies and regulations can limit the capacity of youth workers to conduct their activities effectively and hinder the development of services tailored to the needs of young people. Yılmaz's work suggests that enhancing the training and support for youth workers, increasing resources, and strengthening youth policies are critical strategies for addressing these challenges. Such measures could significantly improve the effectiveness of youth services and the integration of young people into society (Yılmaz, 2017).



3.8. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF PARTICIPATION OF DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN YOUTH WORK, ISSUES RELATED TO THEIR PARTICIPATION, AND INTEGRATION CHALLENGES



In Alp's expertise thesis titled "Participation of Disadvantaged Groups in Employment: Successful Practices in G20 Countries," significant barriers to education and employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth are detailed. The research highlights that these young people often struggle to find employment due to low education levels and insufficient skills, with high unemployment rates and unstable work histories being prevalent among this group.

Alp's study identifies social and economic barriers as primary factors limiting the participation of disadvantaged youth in the labor market. Challenges such as discrimination, social exclusion, and inadequate family support make it difficult for these young individuals to secure jobs and integrate into the workforce. The study proposes welfare state approaches, active labor market policies, and social inclusion strategies as potential solutions to address these issues.

Various successful policies and programs implemented in G20 countries are examined, focusing on supporting the employment of disadvantaged youth. These policies are based on integrating young people into the labor market and expanding vocational training and skill development programs. The importance of comprehensive support systems and employment incentives tailored specifically for disadvantaged youth is particularly emphasized.

The research emphasizes the critical role of international collaborations and strategies in supporting the economic and social integration of disadvantaged youth. The G20 platform fosters the exchange of knowledge and best practices among policymakers, demonstrating the significant importance of such international partnerships for the integration of young people into society.

Alp's study highlights the necessity of coordinated efforts at both national and international levels to enhance the participation of disadvantaged youth in youth work. The implementation of effective policies and programs holds the potential to ensure the full integration of these young individuals into society and the economy (Alp, 2014).



3.8. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF PARTICIPATION OF DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN YOUTH WORK, ISSUES RELATED TO THEIR PARTICIPATION, AND INTEGRATION CHALLENGES



In Alp's expertise thesis titled "Participation of Disadvantaged Groups in Employment: Successful Practices in G20 Countries," significant barriers to education and employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth are detailed. The research highlights that these young people often struggle to find employment due to low education levels and insufficient skills, with high unemployment rates and unstable work histories being prevalent among this group.

Alp's study identifies social and economic barriers as primary factors limiting the participation of disadvantaged youth in the labor market. Challenges such as discrimination, social exclusion, and inadequate family support make it difficult for these young individuals to secure jobs and integrate into the workforce. The study proposes welfare state approaches, active labor market policies, and social inclusion strategies as potential solutions to address these issues.

Various successful policies and programs implemented in G20 countries are examined, focusing on supporting the employment of disadvantaged youth. These policies are based on integrating young people into the labor market and expanding vocational training and skill development programs. The importance of comprehensive support systems and employment incentives tailored specifically for disadvantaged youth is particularly emphasized.

The research emphasizes the critical role of international collaborations and strategies in supporting the economic and social integration of disadvantaged youth. The G20 platform fosters the exchange of knowledge and best practices among policymakers, demonstrating the significant importance of such international partnerships for the integration of young people into society.

Alp's study highlights the necessity of coordinated efforts at both national and international levels to enhance the participation of disadvantaged youth in youth work. The implementation of effective policies and programs holds the potential to ensure the full integration of these young individuals into society and the economy (Alp, 2014).



3.8. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF PARTICIPATION OF DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN YOUTH WORK, ISSUES RELATED TO THEIR PARTICIPATION, AND INTEGRATION CHALLENGES



The article by Gündoğdu and Asal highlights "Participation Limitations" as one of the key challenges faced by youth workers engaging with disadvantaged youth within the framework of the National Youth and Sports Policy. The study notes that the limited number of young people who can participate in youth work makes it difficult to provide equal services to all disadvantaged youth, creating a natural barrier to accessing such programs.

The article emphasizes the difficulty of accurately identifying disadvantaged youth and organizing effective programs for them. Youth workers are described as being in a constant struggle to verify whether individuals are genuinely disadvantaged and to provide them with appropriate services.

According to the research, the limited resources necessary for the effective implementation of programs targeting disadvantaged youth restrict the capacity of youth workers to carry out their activities, which, in turn, affects the quality of services provided to young people.

Despite policies developed to promote the active participation of disadvantaged youth in social and economic life, their integration into society remains a significant issue. Challenges in implementing social inclusion policies prevent these youth from fully engaging in processes of social cohesion.

The article points out that difficulties in effectively implementing policies and programs for disadvantaged youth in the field hinder youth workers from delivering impactful services. These obstacles make it harder for programs to achieve their objectives and meet the needs of young people.

Gündoğdu and Asal's study identifies the primary barriers limiting the participation of disadvantaged youth in youth work and complicating their integration into society. According to the research, youth workers must continually improve themselves and develop new solutions and methods to overcome these challenges and provide better services to young people (Gündoğdu and Asal, 2017).



3.8. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF PARTICIPATION OF DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN YOUTH WORK, ISSUES RELATED TO THEIR PARTICIPATION, AND INTEGRATION CHALLENGES



According to the research by Aykara and Albayrak, the participation of disadvantaged youth in youth programs is limited due to insufficient social and economic resources. Practical barriers such as transportation, program costs, and lack of information significantly restrict their participation.

The study highlights that the low appeal of offered activities or the lack of awareness about them among young people reduces participation rates. Programs that fail to adequately address the interests and needs of youth further limit engagement.

Disadvantaged youth were observed to hesitate in joining youth programs due to societal expectations and family pressures. The research particularly emphasizes that participation of girls in such programs is hindered by gender roles and societal expectations.

Among participants, integration of individuals from different social, ethnic, or economic backgrounds was noted to be challenging. This often leads to group conflicts and feelings of exclusion among some youth.

Ineffective implementation of youth programs is frequently attributed to inadequately trained personnel, financial constraints, and program content that does not align with the target youth population. These factors diminish the positive impacts of the programs on young people.

Aykara and Albayrak's study provides an in-depth analysis of the challenges faced by disadvantaged youth in participating in youth work. It emphasizes the need to overcome these barriers to design and implement youth programs more effectively. The research underscores the importance of developing solutions to address these challenges in the design and execution of youth work (Aykara and Albayrak, 2016).



3.8. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF PARTICIPATION OF DISADVANTAGED YOUTH IN YOUTH WORK, ISSUES RELATED TO THEIR PARTICIPATION, AND INTEGRATION CHALLENGES



In his research, Kayaarslan identifies economic and social barriers as significant factors limiting the participation of disadvantaged youth in youth programs. These barriers include financial difficulties, social stigma, and challenges in accessing educational materials. Additionally, the exclusion of youth from these programs due to non-inclusive social and cultural structures is highlighted as a major issue.

Disadvantaged youth are found to face severe challenges in social interaction and integration. This leads to social exclusion and isolation, which hinder the effective implementation of youth programs.

Young people with limited education and career opportunities are often unable to benefit from high-quality youth programs. This restricts their personal and professional development and reduces their chances of socioeconomic mobility.

Current youth programs are not adequately designed to meet the specific needs of disadvantaged youth. The limited accessibility and applicability of these programs prevent their participation and complicate their integration into society.

These findings provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of disadvantaged youth participation in youth work and the challenges they face. To develop effective solutions, it is recommended that youth programs be redesigned to be more sensitive to and accessible for the needs of disadvantaged youth (Kayaarslan, 2022).



3.9. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE TRAINING NEEDS OF YOUTH WORKERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS



The Turkey National Report authored by Şenyuva includes significant recommendations regarding the training needs of youth workers engaging with disadvantaged youth. These recommendations aim to enhance the effectiveness of youth workers and better equip them to address the challenges they face.

The report emphasizes the importance of comprehensive training programs specifically designed for youth workers who work with disadvantaged youth. These programs should provide in-depth knowledge to help youth workers understand the challenges and needs of these young people.

It advocates for the continuous professional development of youth workers through regular training sessions, seminars, and workshops. Such initiatives would keep them informed about the latest developments and best practices in the field.

The report also recommends strengthening psychological support and guidance services for youth workers. These services would help them manage their emotional and psychological needs more effectively and cope with challenging situations.

Cultural competency training is highlighted as essential for youth workers to work effectively with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds. These trainings would enable youth workers to better understand diversity and learn how to communicate effectively with each individual.

In addition to theoretical knowledge, the report suggests offering practical, field-based training for youth workers. Such hands-on training would allow them to reinforce what they have learned by practicing in real-world scenarios.

These recommendations aim to ensure that youth workers are adequately equipped to work more effectively with disadvantaged youth. Implementing effective policies and programs would enhance the professional competencies of youth workers, ultimately improving the quality of services provided to young people (Şenyuva, 2018).



3.9. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE TRAINING NEEDS OF YOUTH WORKERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS



The "Needs Assessment of Youth Workers" report by Toy Youth Association provides an in-depth examination of the training needs of youth workers with disadvantaged backgrounds in Turkey. The report offers several recommendations aimed at developing solutions to the challenges faced by these professionals:

- **Development of Inclusive Training Programs:** The report recommends designing inclusive training programs specifically tailored for youth workers with disadvantaged backgrounds. These programs should enhance their effectiveness across diverse social, economic, and cultural contexts while offering practical solutions to field challenges.
- **Support for Continuous Professional Development:** Regular training sessions, workshops, and seminars are suggested to ensure that youth workers are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and best practices.
- **Mentorship and Support Systems:** Establishing mentorship and support systems led by experienced professionals is advised. These systems should provide guidance and practical advice to youth workers throughout their career paths, particularly in managing challenges.
- **Field-Based Learning Opportunities:** Practical learning opportunities in real-world settings should be offered alongside theoretical knowledge. This approach would help youth workers combine theory with practice, better preparing them for field challenges.
- **Adoption of Rights-Based Approaches:** The report emphasizes incorporating rights-based approaches into training programs, raising awareness among youth workers about human rights, youth rights, and social justice. Internalizing these principles would enable youth workers to engage more effectively with disadvantaged youth.

These recommendations aim to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of youth workers, enabling them to provide better support to disadvantaged youth and address the challenges they encounter in the field (TGD, 2020).



3.9. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE TRAINING NEEDS OF YOUTH WORKERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS



Recommendations regarding the training needs of youth workers with disadvantaged backgrounds were comprehensively addressed in the "Needs Analysis Report" conducted as part of the "REACH OUT" project. This report focuses on empowering youth workers to effectively engage with young migrants and refugees. The consolidated recommendations are as follows:

- Development of Innovative Training Curricula: The report emphasizes analyzing the training needs of youth workers and developing innovative curricula to enable them to work effectively with young migrants and refugees.
- Enhancing Professional Knowledge and Skills: Increasing the professional knowledge and skills of youth workers in migration and refugee studies is identified as a critical step to improving the quality of youth work and delivering more effective services.
- Preparation of Trainer Guides: Creating trainer guides is recommended to serve as a valuable resource for youth workers, enabling them to train other youth workers and provide services to migrants and refugees. These guides should include information on training methods, techniques, and intercultural counseling.
- Designing Programs to Promote Intercultural Understanding: Training programs that foster intercultural understanding should be developed to teach youth workers how to communicate effectively with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Fostering Local and International Partnerships: Establishing collaborations and partnerships at local and international levels is suggested to create a broad pool of knowledge and experience. These partnerships can play a pivotal role in developing and implementing training curricula.

These recommendations aim to strengthen the capacity of youth workers, enabling them to address the unique needs of young migrants and refugees and deliver more impactful services (Pöshl et al., 2016).



3.9. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE TRAINING NEEDS OF YOUTH WORKERS WITH DISADVANTAGED BACKGROUNDS



Recommendations regarding the training needs of youth workers with disadvantaged backgrounds were comprehensively addressed in the "Needs Analysis Report" conducted as part of the "REACH OUT" project. This report focuses on empowering youth workers to effectively engage with young migrants and refugees. The consolidated recommendations are as follows:

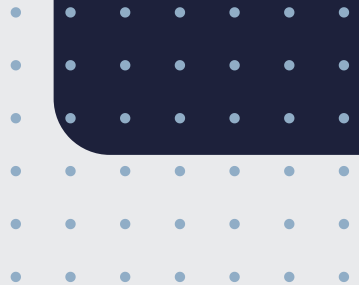
- Development of Innovative Training Curricula: The report emphasizes analyzing the training needs of youth workers and developing innovative curricula to enable them to work effectively with young migrants and refugees.
- Enhancing Professional Knowledge and Skills: Increasing the professional knowledge and skills of youth workers in migration and refugee studies is identified as a critical step to improving the quality of youth work and delivering more effective services.
- Preparation of Trainer Guides: Creating trainer guides is recommended to serve as a valuable resource for youth workers, enabling them to train other youth workers and provide services to migrants and refugees. These guides should include information on training methods, techniques, and intercultural counseling.
- Designing Programs to Promote Intercultural Understanding: Training programs that foster intercultural understanding should be developed to teach youth workers how to communicate effectively with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Fostering Local and International Partnerships: Establishing collaborations and partnerships at local and international levels is suggested to create a broad pool of knowledge and experience. These partnerships can play a pivotal role in developing and implementing training curricula.

These recommendations aim to strengthen the capacity of youth workers, enabling them to address the unique needs of young migrants and refugees and deliver more impactful services (Pöshl et al., 2016).



04.

**GOOD PRACTICES IN YOUTH
WORK FOR DISADVANTAGED
YOUTH IN TURKEY**



GOOD PRACTICE 1



| | |
|--|--|
| Name/Title of the Good Practice/Project (National, Regional, or Local): | Tebessüm Kahvesi (Smile Café) |
| Year of Implementation: | 2016–present (Ongoing project) |
| Organizing Institution/Entity: | Üsküdar Municipality |
| Analysis of the Good Practice Considering Cultural, Generational, or Gender Issues: | Tebessüm Kahvesi adopts an inclusive approach that considers gender equality and intergenerational interaction. The café is specifically designed to promote the social integration of individuals with Down syndrome. It aims to enhance the professional and social skills of individuals of varying ages and genders while maintaining cultural sensitivity. By providing a supportive environment, it encourages intergenerational collaboration and fosters gender equality within the workplace. |
| Key Activities Conducted During the Implementation of the Good Practice: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vocational Training: Organizing vocational training sessions for young individuals with Down syndrome to develop skills in café operations and customer service.• Development of Social Skills: Teaching young participants essential social skills such as customer interaction and collaborative teamwork.• Two-Shift Working Model: Introducing participants to a two-shift working model to help them adapt to the demands of professional life. |
| Key Achievements of the Good Practice: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young individuals with Down syndrome acquire professional and social skills, enabling their active participation in society.• The skills gained at Tebessüm Kahvesi boost the self-confidence of participants and help them see themselves as valuable contributors to the community.• By enhancing their vocational skills, the participants gain opportunities for income generation, thus increasing their economic independence. |
| References: | Official documents and digital promotional materials of Tebessüm Kahvesi. https://www.tebessumkahvesi.com.tr |

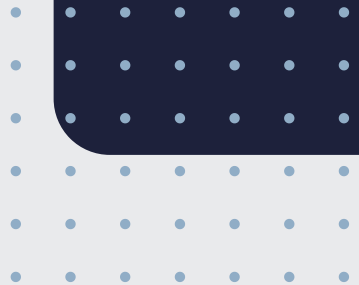
GOOD PRACTICE 2



| | |
|--|---|
| Name/Title of the Good Practice/Project (National, Regional, or Local): | Yeşilay Eğitim ve Danışmanlık Merkezi (YEDAM) |
| Year of Implementation: | 2015–present (Ongoing project) |
| Organizing Institution/Entity: | Green Crescent Society of Turkey (Türkiye Yeşilay Cemiyeti) |
| Analysis of the Good Practice Considering Cultural, Generational, or Gender Issues: | YEDAM has established a framework that takes into account Turkey's cultural and demographic diversity, aiming to reach individuals from all age groups and social backgrounds, especially youth with disadvantaged histories. The project provides comprehensive services to individuals regardless of gender, age, or social status, thereby promoting gender equality and fostering intergenerational interaction. This inclusive approach serves as a significant model for addressing social challenges. |
| Key Activities Conducted During the Implementation of the Good Practice: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of a Counseling Hotline: A hotline was launched in 2015 to provide assistance to those seeking help for addiction-related issues. • Face-to-Face Counseling Services: Pilot face-to-face counseling services were initiated in Istanbul in 2016, offering more effective support. By 2022, this service expanded to every province in Turkey. • Educational Programs: Training programs on addiction were organized for personnel working in public institutions and organizations. |
| Key Achievements of the Good Practice: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A psychosocial support model specific to Turkey was developed, providing comprehensive support to individuals and families dealing with addiction. • As of 2022, YEDAM operates 105 counseling centers across 81 provinces in Turkey and Northern Cyprus, ensuring widespread accessibility. • Free psychosocial support has been offered to young individuals and families dealing with issues such as alcohol, tobacco, substance, gambling, and technology addiction. |
| References: | Official websites of Green Crescent and YEDAM. https://www.yesilay.org.tr http://www.yedam.org.tr |

05.

REFERENCES



REFERENCES



- Acar, H. (2008). How Should Youth Policy Be Shaped in Turkey During the EU Process? *International Journal of Human Sciences*, Sakarya.
- Adaman, F., & Keyder, Ç. (2007). Poverty and Social Exclusion in Squatter and Deprived Neighborhoods of Turkey's Major Cities. Boğaziçi University, Istanbul.
- Akşit, G., Bozok, M., & Bozok, N. (2015). Forced Migration, Problematic Encounters: The Case of Syrian Migrants in Hisar Village, Nevşehir. *Journal of Maltepe University Faculty of Arts and Sciences*, Istanbul.
- Alp, L. (2014). Participation of Disadvantaged Groups in Employment: Successful Practices in G20 Countries. Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Expertise Thesis, Ankara.
- European Commission. (2004). Equality and Non-Discrimination in an Enlarged European Union (Green Paper).
- European Commission. (2014). Working with Young People: The Value of Youth Work in the European Union. Brussels.
- Aykara, A., & Albayrak, H. (2016). Reflections of Sports Activities on Youth within the Positive Youth Development Approach. *Journal of Society and Social Work*, Ankara.
- Aytaç, Ö. (2016). Urban Poverty and Potential for Social Disorder. *Mukaddime*, Elazığ.
- Bilgin, R. (2014). The Problem of Children Growing Up in Conflict and Violence. *Firat University Journal of Social Sciences*, Elazığ.
- Çalışkan, V., Özey, E., & Bay, A. (2017). A Traditional Ethnic Group in the Entertainment Sector: Roma in Local Fairs. *Electronic Turkish Studies*, Istanbul.
- Çetin, B. I. (2017). Roma Identity in Turkey: Evaluation of the National Strategy Document and Phase 1 Action Plan for Social Inclusion. *Journal of Management and Economics Research*, Eskişehir.
- Çeviker, A., Mumcu, H. E., Şekeroğlu, M. Ö., & Bayrak, M. (2018). Social Integration of Disadvantaged Groups in Turkey through Sports Activities According to UNICEF. *Siirt University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, Siirt.
- Deniz, A., & Özgür, E. M. (2010). Transnational Migration from Russia to Turkey: Russian Migrants in Antalya. *Aegean Journal of Geography*, Izmir.
- Düzcü, M. (2020). Empowering Youth in Southeastern Turkey Through Government Initiatives. Mustafa Kemal University, Hatay.
- Ertürkmen, G. (2023). Disadvantaged Groups and Employment in Turkey. *R&S - Research Studies Anatolia Journal*, Kayseri.
- Eskiocak, M., & Akbaşak, D. (2017). Roma Health in Edirne: Social Determinants and Findings on Health Status. *Turkish Journal of Public Health*, Balıkesir.
- Gözüküçük, M. (2015). Problems and Solutions in Teaching Literacy to Primary School Students Whose Native Language is Not Turkish. Pamukkale University Institute of Educational Sciences, Doctoral Thesis, Denizli.



REFERENCES



- Gündoğdu, Ş. M., & Asal, Ö. (2017). A Decision Support System for Identifying Disadvantaged Youth According to the National Youth and Sports Policy. *Journal of Social Research in Turkey*, Ankara.
- Kayaarslan, S. (2022). *Disadvantaged Youth and Education from an Interdisciplinary Perspective*. İksad Publications, Ankara.
- Kirmayer, L. J., Narasiah, L., Munoz, M., Rashid, M., Ryder, A. G., Guzder, J., ... & Pottie, K. (2011). Common Mental Health Problems in Immigrants and Refugees: General Approach in Primary Care. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 183(12), E959–E967.
- Lüküslü, D., & Osmanoğlu, B. (2018). *Youth Work in Turkey: A Newly Emerging Sector Defined by Political Competition*. Yeditepe University, Istanbul.
- Nemutlu, M. (2008). *Youth Work and Youth Policies in Turkey*. Bilgi University Press, Istanbul.
- Okur, N., & Erdugan, E. F. (2010). *Social Rights and Disabled Individuals: A Historical Assessment within Disability Models*. 2nd Social Rights Symposium Proceedings, Istanbul.
- Özkan, Ö. (2000). *The Roma of Turkey*. Ministry of Culture Publications, Ankara.
- Pöschl, P., Meier, M., Özerim, G., & Kalem, G. (2016). *Empowering Youth Workers to Reach Young Migrants and Refugees*. Yaşar University, Izmir.
- Sarı, M. (2002). *Challenges of Bilingual Children Learning Literacy through Analytical Methods*. Çukurova University Journal of Social Sciences Institute, Adana.
- Şahin, L., Kocakaya, M. E., & Akgül, O. (2021). *NEET Youth in Turkey: Education, Employment, and Training*. Istanbul University, Istanbul.
- Şen, B., & Şen, A. A. (2015). *The Other Side of Istanbul and Those in Limbo: Migration, Poverty, and Migrant Spaces in Inner Istanbul*. *Journal of Suleyman Demirel University Institute of Social Sciences*, Isparta.
- Şenyuva, Ö. (2018). *Research-Based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action (E+/YiA) (RAY-MON)*. Middle East Technical University, Ankara.
- Teodorescu, D. S., Heir, T., Hauff, E., Wentzel-Larsen, T., & Lien, L. (2012). Mental Health Problems and Post-Migration Stress Among Multi-Traumatized Refugees. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 53(4), 316–322.
- Toy Gençlik Derneği. (2020). *Needs Assessment of Youth Workers*. Eskişehir.
- Toy Gençlik Derneği. (2017). *Youth Work Guide in Turkey: 5N-3K Roadmap*. Eskişehir.
- Yılmaz, E. (2017). *Evaluation of Youth Work in Turkey and Examination of Youth Workers' Integration into the Workforce*. European Union Ministry, Ankara.
- Yurttagüler, L. (2016). *Youth Policies in Turkey*. Bilgi University Press, Istanbul.

OFFICIAL SOURCES



- European Union Statistics Office. (2022). Youth Population Ratios in European Countries.
- Ministry of Youth and Sports. (2013). National Youth and Sports Policy Document.
- Ministry of Youth and Sports. (2019-2023). Strategic Plan.
- Ministry of Youth and Sports. (2023). Activity Report.
- Ministry of Youth and Sports. (2024-2028). Strategic Plan.
- Ministry of National Education. (2011). Institutions Providing Social Services to Youth. Ankara.
- Ministry of National Education. (2023). National Education Statistics: Formal Education 2021-2022.
- Official Gazette. (1982). Constitution of the Republic of Turkey.
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Strategy and Budget Directorate. 11th Development Plan.
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Strategy and Budget Directorate. 12th Development Plan.
- Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Strategy and Budget Directorate. 10th Development Plan.
- Turkish Language Association. (2024). Definition of Disability.
- Turkish Language Association. (2024). Definition of Youth.
- Turkish Statistical Institute. (2022). Results of the Address-Based Population Registration System.
- Turkish Statistical Institute. (2022). Household Information Technology (IT) Usage Survey, 2013-2022.
- Turkish Statistical Institute. (2022). Household Labor Force Statistics.
- Turkish Statistical Institute. (2022). Population Projections, 2030-2080.
- Turkish Statistical Institute. (2022). Death and Cause of Death Statistics.
- Turkish Statistical Institute. (2022). Life Satisfaction Survey.
- International Labour Organization (ILO). (2011). Social and Economic Integration of Youth.

WEBCITES








- Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK). Data and Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.tuik.gov.tr/>
- Ministry of National Education (MEB). Data and Information. Retrieved from <https://www.meb.gov.tr/>
- Ministry of Youth and Sports (GSB). Data and Reports. Retrieved from <https://gsb.gov.tr/>
- Ministry of Health. Health Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.saglik.gov.tr/>
- Turkish National Agency. Data and Program Information. Retrieved from <https://www.ua.gov.tr/>
- Üsküdar Municipality. Official Website. Retrieved from <https://www.uskudar.bel.tr/>
- Turkish Language Association. Official Dictionary. Retrieved from <https://sozluk.gov.tr/>
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Turkey Country Office. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/>
- Sputnik News. Global News Website. Retrieved from <https://sputnikglobe.com/>
- European Union Statistics Office (Eurostat). Official Statistics. Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>
- Social Services and Child Protection Agency. Child Welfare Services. Retrieved from <https://www.aile.gov.tr/chgm>
- Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay). Official Website. Retrieved from <https://www.kizilay.org.tr/>
- Green Crescent (Yeşilay). Official Website. Retrieved from <https://www.yesilay.org.tr/>
- Turkish Youth Foundation (TÜGVA). Official Website. Retrieved from <https://tugva.org/>
- Turkey Youth and Education Service Foundation (TÜRGEV). Official Website. Retrieved from <https://www.turgev.org/tr>
- National Education Foundation (MEV). Official Website. Retrieved from <https://www.mev.org.tr/>
- Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey (TEGV). Official Website. Retrieved from <https://tegv.org/>
- Turkish Youth Foundation. Official Website. Retrieved from <http://www.turkgenclikvakfi.org/>
- Turkey Youth NGOs Platform (TGSP). Official Website. Retrieved from <https://tgsp.org.tr/tr>
- Tebessüm Kahvesi. Official Website. Retrieved from <https://www.tebessumkahvesi.com.tr/>
- Green Crescent Counseling Center (YEDAM). Official Website. Retrieved from <http://www.yedam.org.tr/>





stmü
Sivil Toplum Merkez Üssü

     **stmutr** **stmu.org.tr**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Funded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union. However, European Commission and Turkish National Agency cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.