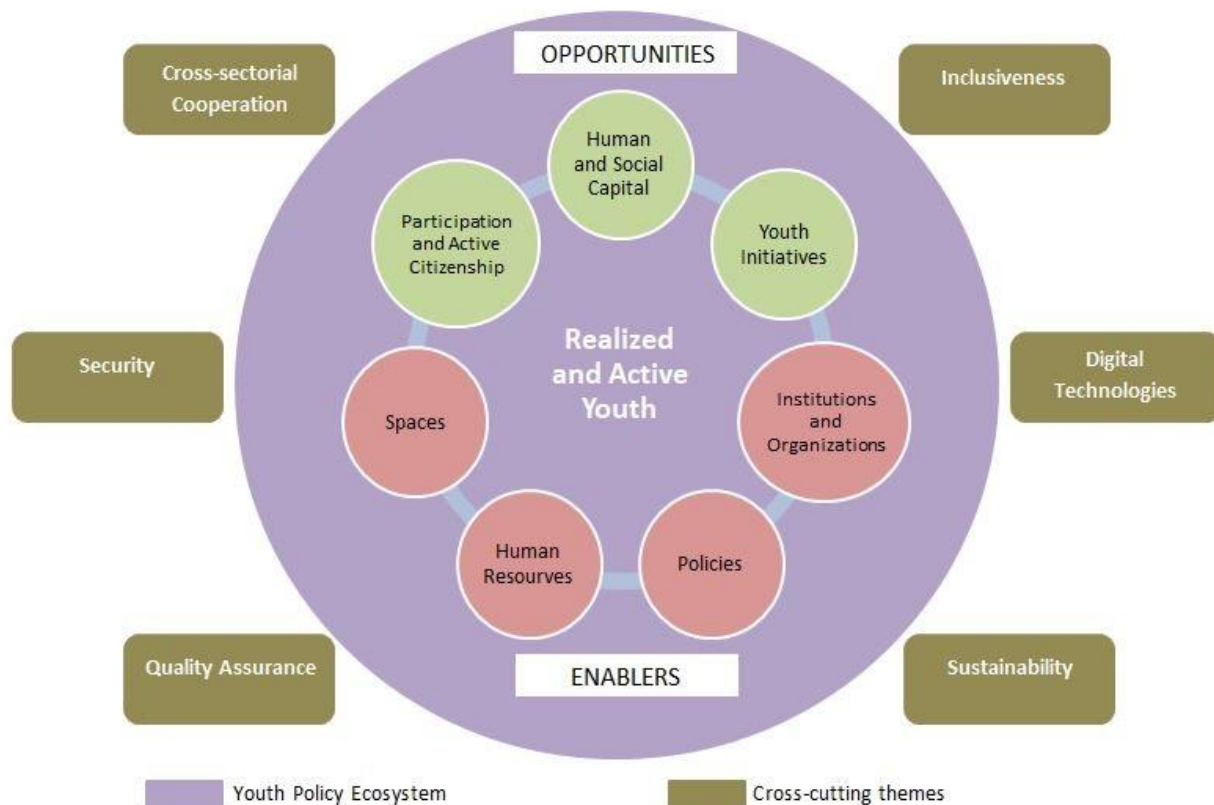




Youth Policy at the Local Level

The Youth Agency of Georgia has a systematic approach to youth policy development at the local level, which is one of the strategic priorities of Agency. It aims at building ecosystem ensuring a comprehensive youth development to fully realize their potential and be actively involved in all the spheres of the public life. The 3-year reform plan envisages that youth policy ecosystem should exit in all municipalities of Georgia.

The ecosystem model according to the Agency's approach consists of 7 key components, described below:



1. Opportunities

Human and Social Capital – Providing young people with services and programs (including non-formal education) which support to develop competences (the set of knowledge, skills and



attitudes) and behaviors; a range of physical, emotional and intellectual capabilities; and access to the formal and informal social networks.

Youth Initiatives – Creating favorable environment for the youth and youth organizations to initiate the projects and entrepreneurial ideas, and giving access to financial and other resources for their implementation.

Participation and Active Citizenship - having the right, the means, the space and the opportunity and where necessary the support to participate in and influence decisions and engaging in actions and activities so as to contribute to building a better society.

2. Enablers

Institutions and Organizations - Capacity building of local governmental, non-governmental and service-provider organizations working with youth to ensure secure, quality and qualified programs and services.

Physical and Virtual Space – Providing youth with safe, friendly and available spaces to gather formally or informally, and to meet, to spend time or to organize their own activities, to learn from one another and engage in civic activities.

Human Resources/Youth Workers – Capacity building of municipal youth workers (local government employees, responsible for youth-related issues), who are managing local youth policy and youth workers, who are directly working with young people and providing for them various services and programs within local governmental or non-governmental organizations.

Policies - An evidence-based, participatory and result-oriented youth policy affects all the other elements of the ecosystem. It must consider young people as a resource, not a problem and as a key stakeholder in the given municipality. It should be articulated in a clear strategy which, in the best way possible, analyses and addresses the real needs of young people, develops concrete goals and objectives and applies measures which, to the best extent possible, achieve the goals that have been set.

The ecosystem model also includes cross-cutting themes that should underpin all 7 key components.



Implementation Programme

In 2020 11 municipalities from all the 10 regions of Georgia were selected for the pilot programme: Kobuleti, Ozurgeti, Zugdidi, Mestia, Kutaisi, Oni, Akhaltcikhe, Gori, Tianeti, Dmanisi and Signaghi. The selection process included direct meetings and consultations with local governments and civil society organizations and situational analysis of the municipalities.

The aim of the programme is to promote and support the development of evidence-based, participatory and result-oriented municipal youth policy. This is done by:

- Training of municipal youth workers (local government employees, responsible for youth-related issues);
- Developing and implementing municipal youth strategies.

Within the programme municipal youth strategies will be developed in 9 municipalities and will be evaluated and revised existing ones in 2 municipalities (Zugdidi and Akhaltsikhe).

Municipal youth strategy development process is based on the special methodology and guidelines (“Guidelines: How to Develop Local Youth Policy”), which has been prepared according to the previous experience of working with the municipalities and various European practices.

The strategy development process is based on the following principles:

- ✓ The strategy has clearly defined goals and ways of achieving these goals;
- ✓ There is a political will to deal with youth-related issues and youth are one of the local priorities;
- ✓ The sufficient resources are available for the development and implementation of the strategy;
- ✓ Young people play an active role at all stages;
- ✓ All the stakeholders are involved in the entire process and there is a strong partnership between the actors;
- ✓ The strategy is based on the research.

Developing Strategy – Steps:



Phase 1 – Discovery (Information, Data) (9 municipalities)	Phase 2 – Strategy Development (9 municipalities)	Phase 1-2 – Revision of Existing Strategies (2 municipalities)	Phase 3 – Implementation (11 municipalities)	Phase 4 – Monitoring, Evaluation and Revision (11 municipalities)
Training 1 – April-May 2020	Training 2 – July 2020		Training 3 – September 2020	Training 4 – November
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs assessment of young people; Stakeholder identification and analysis; Mapping of programmes, services and resources available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of priorities; Drafting strategy and its action plan by involving all stakeholders; Public discussions; Adoption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting the Estonian quality assessment tool; Developing materials and organizing training; Piloting. 		

Two representatives of each municipality (municipal youth workers) attend the trainings (in total 4), which cover the topics according to the guidelines and strategy development process and later they are fulfilling the relevant tasks in their municipalities. After the first training their practical works include:

- Research of young people’s needs and interests (quantitative, qualitative and desk researches);
- Identification and analysis of stakeholders, creating partnership with them;
- Informing young people and the society about the programme and its activities;
- Assessment of different programmes, services and resources available at the local and national levels.

After the second training municipal youth workers will organize the workshop involving other stakeholders and create a draft strategy and its action plans, will hold public discussions about the strategy and submit it for approval to the local council.



In those two municipalities (Akhaltzikhe and Zugdidi) where municipal youth strategies were developed in recent years by using the same approach, Agency will support municipalities to assess and revise existing documents. Agency is cooperating with Estonian Youth Work Agency by implementing joint project. It is planned to take the Estonian existing model for youth work quality assessment for local municipalities and adjust it to the Georgian local context. In Estonia, the afore-mentioned model has shown to be effective for the local municipalities in order to get an overview of the current situation in youth field and plan youth work and development activities in the field. The project will help the Georgian local municipalities in understanding the need for youth work and to offer young people more opportunities and better-quality youth work. The project includes:

1. Adapting the Estonian quality assessment tool to the Georgian reality.
2. Developing instructional materials and organizing training for model implementation.
3. Piloting youth work quality assessment in two municipalities and improving the model.

The two last trainings cover the topics related to youth policy management, implementation, quality assurance, monitoring, evaluation and revision and involve representatives of all 11 municipalities participating in the project. After completing the trainings municipal youth workers receive a certificate.

The Agency offers a package of support measures to municipalities:

- Funding and organizing trainings for municipal youth workers;
- Creating occupational standard for municipal youth workers and certification;
- Providing consultancy services and expertise at all stages of the programme;
- Conducting research of young people's needs and interests in all municipalities;
- Funding programmes outlined in municipal youth strategies;
- Involving municipalities in the international projects and developing international cooperation between Georgian and European municipalities;
- Supporting cooperation with donor organizations.



Evidence-based, participatory and result-oriented policies will enable an effective youth policy ecosystem that has a significant potential to positively impact youth's prospects. Municipal youth strategies will have a major impact on all the other elements of the ecosystem and support their development.

Local Youth Policy Development Programme is a part of Agency's 3-year reform plan and is implemented in conjunction with other programmes which also cover different components of the municipal youth policy ecosystem (youth workers' certification programme, regional and national youth forums, digital youth work, strengthening and capacity building of youth organizations and etc).