



22 January 2020

**Youth policy development in member states**

## **Training for youth sector civil servants and NGO representatives**

**50/50 training on strengthening co-operation and  
partnership for promoting youth participation in  
Georgia**

24 to 28 February 2020  
European Youth Centre Strasbourg

### **Report**

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This report gives an account of various aspects of the training.  
It has been produced by and is the responsibility  
of the educational team of the training.  
It does not represent the official point of view of the Council of Europe.

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***Important note: due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the plans and follow-up activities of this course will be postponed, delayed or cancelled. This being a case of force majeure, it doesn't diminish or belittle the accomplishments and outcomes of this course***

## 1. Introduction

Since 1972, the Council of Europe youth sector has been the driving force behind youth policy development and youth work in Europe. Its pioneering co-management system gives an equal say to governments and youth organisations on decisions concerning its programme priorities, activities and budget. One of its major strategic priorities is to support young people and member states to increase the participation of young people in democratic processes as they have a key role in renewing democracy and developing effective citizenship, especially through meaningful participation.

One of the priority objectives of the Youth Department is to promote and support the development of member states' youth policies. With this objective in mind, various principles and values have been developed into a package of support measures to underpin the youth policies of the Council of Europe's members. Ministries, public administrations and policymakers can receive, upon request, specialised and targeted support to address their youth policy-related questions, dilemmas and challenges.

The Youth Agency of Georgia wanted to provide more opportunities for young people to participate in youth-policy and decision-making processes at national and local levels, and requested the organisation of this 50/50 training to bring together representatives of the stakeholders concerned to promote participatory youth policies.

50/50 courses are based on the understanding that effective youth policy needs to include participants from both the governmental and non-governmental sector – the number of participants being split equally between each sector (50/50) – to develop their competences. These two stakeholders play distinct but complementary roles so this training will seek to develop and reinforce these roles to build a relationship of mutual trust and respect, to ensure effective and constructive co-operation.

## 2. Aims and objectives of this activity

The aim of this course was to improve participants' competences to facilitate youth participation in youth policy processes and to implement projects for youth participation in line with the Council of Europe's standards, principles and values.

### **The specific objectives were to:**

- ✓ provide a space for open dialogue and for sharing experiences in order to promote mutual understanding and respect, and to encourage co-operation and networking between the stakeholders within the non-governmental and governmental sectors;
- ✓ look at the current situation of young people (needs, realities, rights and responsibilities) in order to explore ways of engaging;
- ✓ help participants to improve their knowledge and understanding of the skills and competences needed in order to be better equipped to participate in and influence decision and policy-making processes;
- ✓ develop participants' knowledge of the Revised European Charter on the participation of young people in local and regional life and the manual "Have your say!" and reflect on how it is used at local and regional levels;
- ✓ promote and help the participants to understand the Council of Europe's youth sector, its instruments and strategy 2030.

The course contents and methodology were designed so that the participants would be enabled to develop competences for participating in and influencing decision-making and policy processes. The

list of competences below was the reference for the planning and monitoring of learning during the course:

- ✓ learning about the Council of Europe's values and principles;
- ✓ a better understanding of the concept of youth participation and the value of partnerships and co-operation;
- ✓ an understanding of the skills and competences needed to initiate and take part in decision and policy-making processes and to design local youth strategies;
- ✓ an understanding and competences needed to use the Revised European Charter on the participation of young people in local and regional life and the manual "Have your say!";
- ✓ an understanding of the benefits of co-operation and networking.

### **Profile of participants**

The participants were selected by the Youth Agency of Georgia, the National Council of Youth Organisations of Georgia and the Georgian trainers who selected one municipality employee and one youth representative from different municipalities (thirty participants in all). Some of the criteria for the selection were:

- ✓ involved in the development and implementation of youth work and youth policy in Georgia at the local level (or possibly at national level);
- ✓ open, committed and motivated to develop and strengthen dialogue and co-operation between governmental and non-governmental partners in the youth field;
- ✓ in a position to implement and follow-up the results of the course;
- ✓ committed to attending the course for its entire duration.

The youth representatives were to be actively involved in youth work at the local level (possibly national level) and aged preferably between 18 and 30, whereas the municipality employees were to be working on youth issues in local administrations (or possibly the national administration).

The Council of Europe and the Youth Agency of Georgia welcomed applications from all candidates who met the above-mentioned profile, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief or sexual orientation. There were over 200 applicants for 30 positions which showed the need and the interest for this kind of courses.

### **3. Overall topic and list of the main contents/issues discussed**

The course was organised by the Council of Europe Youth Department and the Youth Agency of Georgia, in co-operation with the National Council of Youth Organisations of Georgia. It was based on a non-formal educational approach, focusing on experiential and intercultural learning as a basis for addressing the different topics. The programme was defined so as to meet the overall aims and objectives of the course as well as to suit the needs of the participants and of the situation. The main topics were in correlation with the Council of Europe youth sector strategy 2030 and Georgian youth policy, and included: youth participation, advocacy, participatory budgeting, funding, co-management, quality assurance, etc. A visit to the Council of Europe main building and meetings with the chair of the Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) and a local youth NGO (Youth Express Network – YEN) were also part of the educational programme of the course.

## 4. Programme – inputs and discussions

### DAY 1

After the official opening of the training course with key-note speeches from:

- ✓ Sophie Japaridze, Deputy Permanent Representative of Georgia to the Council of Europe
- ✓ Florian Cescon, Head of the Youth Policy Division, Council of Europe
- ✓ Revaz Charkviani, Head of the Youth Agency of Georgia
- ✓ Tina Mulcahy, Executive Director of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg,

the training course was officially opened and participants had a chance to get to know each other through various interactive exercises and sharing. The week's programme was presented as was the educational approach to be used. The day proceeded with an interactive scavenger hunt, a team-building exercise where participants also had an opportunity to get to know the premises of the EYCS better.

Once the main topic had been opened, during the afternoon session some of the burning issues that set the theme for the rest of the week appeared. These issues appeared again during the second morning when talking about the realities of participants and their daily struggles. Participants mentioned that many things needed to be done in the future:

In order to create a peaceful and inclusive society the existing infrastructure meets the criteria only to a moderate extent. It is essential the infrastructure is fully adaptive for every person. In the future, municipalities have to make money available to build more social enterprises, to create workplaces and to finance information and educational campaigns. Besides, participants said that the most important thing is to re-train social workers and to do more information campaigns in order to change people's attitudes. What's more, they mentioned that in the future more and more young people need to be involved in activities and that services must be available for every person.

### DAY 2

The first part of the day was dedicated to the realities of participants, where they were from, their main challenges and accomplishments. It was mentioned that in Georgia, some villages already have day and rehabilitation centres, social enterprises where people are employed, adaptive educational programmes, buildings, conference rooms, etc. In some areas, buildings are equipped with ramps, the number of specialised teachers has increased as well.

Participants also pointed to youth participation in political/social matters and general apathy as critical challenges. The rate of young people's involvement and participation in decision-making processes is very low in Georgia. Participants mentioned several reasons for the low level of engagement of youth in social affairs: Nowadays young people are very sceptical, they don't believe their voices can change the situation in Georgia. Young people are not informed enough about opportunities for participation. In addition to this, in some cases, they are afraid to express their opinions and attitudes.

The popularity of non-formal education was named as one of the challenges. Besides, rural youth is facing a lack of adequate infrastructure and efficient connections, mostly to the city centres. The guarantee of employment and decentralisation could influence positively the reduction of daily migration so rural youth would like to see better infrastructure, good public transport, in the rural areas.

Raising awareness about the strategic priorities of the Council of Europe for the upcoming period was a key narrative of the afternoon. The representatives of NGOs and municipalities from Georgia obtained further information about the priorities of the Council of Europe, besides, participants were given a task to discuss what their country had already accomplished regarding the four priorities of the Council of Europe Youth sector strategy 2030. Moreover, participants were asked to highlight their future endeavours on how they would tackle the remaining challenges by means of the goals of 2030 strategy.

What they saw as the most important was providing relevant information to young people regarding their rights and responsibilities. In order to motivate young people, it's significant to strengthen the role of civil education in schools. The participants pointed to the role of the media in this process. In addition, participants mentioned the role of NGOs in providing information for youth that would increase the participation of young people in exchange programmes, training courses, and international events. Besides, it was mentioned that there should be more support from government for new initiatives.

Strengthening co-operation between the governmental and non-governmental sectors was marked as the main purpose for the participants for 2020 as well. They also mentioned that annual research studies are needed to reflect the respective developments of the whole country. These research studies would be a basis for the national reports which would include all necessary data.

### **DAY 3**

The groups presented the current situation with regard to youth participation and what they would like to see change. The participants also talked about the values and strong sides of young people. The youth represented said they were tolerant, eco-friendly, supportive, free, full of new initiatives, enthusiastic, independent, educated, full of desire to make positive changes, responsible. But they are facing some barriers which exist in society – nihilism, stereotypes, the social, political and economic situation, lack of information, bullying, discrimination, a shortage of jobs. In some instances, youth organisations put the blame on the governmental institutions, in others, it was the other way around.

The second part of the day was dedicated to the field visit – participants visited Youth Express Network in the city of Strasbourg community building (*maison des associations*) where the organisation's work and international activities were presented, as were the kind of opportunities the Alsace region and the city of Strasbourg provide for the youth organisations.

### **DAY 4**

The day started with a visit of the *Palais de l'Europe* and a viewing of the Council of Europe film, a guided tour and a meeting with the co-secretary to the Congress' Current Affairs Committee who explained the whole process of the youth delegates to the Congress, their roles and the importance of that initiative.

The second part of the morning was dedicated to discussions and reflection on shared decision-making and co-management – roles, rights and responsibilities on the national level – which governmental bodies we want to be responsible for youth and their responsibilities. The CCJ's outgoing chair Anja Olin Pape gave an overview of the co-management process in the Council of Europe and of the different roles of the Advisory Council and CDEJ and how decisions regarding youth are made.

The afternoon was given over to skills-building workshops where participants had an opportunity to understand better the competencies needed for their work in youth councils, as well as some particular skills, such as participatory budgeting, lobbying and advocacy and quality assurance.





## DAY 5

On the last day of the training, taking into consideration everything that had been learned and the practices of the previous days, participants drafted their follow-up plans.

After a morning spent on follow-up plans, participants had a chance to hear about existing Council of Europe support measures and the European Youth Foundation and to discuss with Stefan Manevski and Celine Guth options and possibilities for funding and additional training and capacity building.

The training was closed with an evaluation of everything that had happened during the week.

Hereafter are the future plans and projects from each of the participating communities as defined by the participants during this training activity:

Action plans (next steps) elaborated by the participants according to the municipalities at the end of training.

### 1. Action plan of Kobuleti Municipality

City Hall of Kobuleti Municipality  
Government of Adjara Autonomous Republic  
NGO "Georgian Medical Group"

- Joint meeting with youth, state and non-governmental organisations;
- Creation of a database of vulnerable young people;
- Survey of young people's needs and interests;
- Support implementation of young people's initiatives;
- Establishment of a youth advisory council;
- Involvement of young people in budgetary processes;
- Strengthening co-operation with non-governmental and international organisations;
- Creation of youth spaces and youth clubs;
- Organising a youth forum;
- Launching proactive information campaigns;
- Co-operation with other municipalities involved in the Youth Agency's pilot project.

### 2. Action Plan of Sighnaghi Municipality

City Hall of Sighnaghi Municipality  
NGO "Knowledge Café"  
NGO "Kakheti Regional Development Foundation"

- Survey and assessment of young people's needs;
- Co-operation with local authorities to develop municipal youth policy document;
- Establishment of local youth initiative group;
- Co-operation with other municipalities;
- Co-operation between Sighnaghi and Akhmeta (which is also located in Kakheti region) municipalities: The group of young people (around 15) from Akhmeta municipality will visit Sighnaghi municipality. The NGO "Knowledge Café" will host them and share its experience. The group will visit the Mayor's office as well. Young people from both municipalities will plan joint actions and projects. After that young people from Sighnaghi will pay a return visit and learn about educational centres, which are organised in Pankisi Gorge (part of Akhmeta municipality populated by ethnic minority group of Kists) by "Kakheti Regional Development Foundation". They will also meet representatives of local authorities and discuss future co-operation.

### 3. Action Plan of Dmanisi Municipality

City Hall of Dmanisi Municipality  
NGO “First European”

- Creation of digital platform, survey of young people’s needs with both online and direct interviews;
- Organising of meetings with different stakeholders to share European practice and experience. Promoting co-operation between local authorities, non-governmental organisations and youth to develop local youth policy document and to implement various activities and projects;
- Development of co-operation with neighbouring municipalities by visits, organising youth exchanges, sharing knowledge and experience, implementation of joint projects, initiatives and activities;
- Active communication and co-operation with the Youth Agency and other stakeholders.

### 4. Action Plan of Mestia Municipality (March – June)

City Hall of Mestia Municipality  
NGOs “Youth for Mountains”, “PMC - Policy and Management Consulting Group”

Action	Responsible Units	Deadline
Meeting with the representatives of local government (decision-makers) to discuss outcomes of the training and plan future activities	NGO, municipal department	March
Youth needs survey, analysis and identifying priorities	Municipal department, Youth Agency	March - April
Creation of a database of young people aged 14-29	NGO, municipal department	March
Creation of municipal youth policy document	NGO, municipal department, Youth Agency	By end of June
Approval of municipal youth policy document	Municipal Council	By end of June

## 5. Action Plan of Zugdidi Municipality

City Hall of Zugdidi Municipality  
NGO “Youth for Samegrelo Development”

Action	Responsible Units	Deadline
Meeting with young people and other stakeholders, establishment of working group	Municipal department, NGO	March
Defining responsibilities, duties and activities of working group,	Municipal department, NGO	March
Desk research of youth needs and problems and identifying priorities	Municipal department, NGO, Youth Agency	April
Review of existing municipal youth policy document and its outcomes, development of the recommendations to improve	Municipal department, NGO, Youth Agency	April

## 6. Action Plan of Akhaltsikhe Municipality

City Hall of Akhaltsikhe Municipality  
NGO “Samtskhe-Javakheti Development Centre”

In 2018, the City Hall of Akhaltsikhe Municipality elaborated and adopted its Local Youth Strategy and Action Plan for 2020-2022. In 2019, the Municipality implemented some pilot programmes in line with the strategic objectives (supporting young people’s ideas and initiatives, programme for volunteers, youth exchange programme), which evidenced tangible outcomes. Despite that, many challenges facing young people can’t be addressed by local government alone. The municipality is limited in its resources and finances and cross-sector co-operation is needed to co-ordinate the efforts of all stakeholders.

The municipality has a comprehensive vision of youth policy, but co-ordination mechanisms should be improved. Many departments and other entities of the municipality provide various services and programmes for young people. Civil organisations implement many youth programmes as well. In many cases there is a problem with co-ordination between various units, a lack of exchange of information and sometimes even overlapping, when different stakeholders implement similar programmes. It’s essential to elaborate effective and efficient co-operation mechanisms, exchange information between stakeholders, share experience and distribute resources more efficiently.

Taking this into consideration, the municipality will implement several activities:

- Organising co-ordination meetings involving all stakeholders working with young people, where participants will be able to share current and planned programmes;
- Introducing strategic goals one more time and sharing responsibilities in their implementation;
- Strengthening municipal youth centres both in terms of human and technical resources. These centres are designed as platforms where young people are able to gather, have fun, develop skills, plan and implement activities. These centres are one of the strongest sides, which should implement youth policy on the ground;

- Creation of a monitoring council to monitor and evaluate implementation of the local youth strategy;
- Organising information campaigns, where information will be shared information on how the local strategy is implemented, the challenges and problems and how those challenges should be addressed.

## 7. Action Plan of Ozurgeti Municipality

City Hall of Ozurgeti Municipality

NGO "Student Youth Council"

- Dissemination of information about the planned activities, establishment of a working group, analysis and mapping of existing resources, meetings with civil society organisations and youth initiative groups;
- Elaboration of a concept on a youth council and its establishment by working group;
- Youth needs survey, identifying priorities;
- Starting process of the development of local youth policy document;
- Promoting youth participation in public life;
- Promotion and popularisation of volunteerism among youth;
- Involvement of young people in the budgetary process;
- Supporting youth initiatives, activities and projects by using civil budget methodology;
- Issuing small grants for young people.

## 8. Action Plan of Tianeti Municipality

City Hall of Tianeti Municipality

NGO "For better Tianeti"

Creation of a youth space, where young people will be able to gather and meet each other, plan and implement joint activities	March - April
Involving young people in the planning of activities organised by the youth department. Involving young people in the budgetary process	March - December
Regular consultations with young people and their needs survey	March - December
Elaboration of a local youth policy document	March - June
Establishment of a youth initiative group to support better communication and co-operation between the municipality and young people	March - April
Co-operation and sharing experiences with other municipalities	March - December

## 9. Action Plan of Kutaisi Municipality

City Hall of Kutaisi Municipality  
NGO "Imereti Development Center"

Action	Responsible units	deadline
Collecting demographic data about young people living in Kutaisi	Municipal department, NGO	March
Desk research about the situation of young people	Municipal department, NGO, Youth Agency	March
"Discussion Platform" about needs of young people	NGO	April
Analysis of existing data about youth needs and municipal services and how those services meet the needs of young people	Municipal department, NGO, Youth Agency	April
Mapping of youth organisations and youth workers located in Kutaisi and establishment of partnership	Municipal department, NGO	March - April

## 10. Action Plan of Bolnisi Municipality

City Hall of Bolnisi Municipality  
NGO "Salam"

Action	Deadline
Joint meeting between the representatives of the City Hall and non-governmental organisations operating in Bolnisi in order to plan future co-operation	March
Youth Needs Survey	April
Elaboration of municipal youth policy strategy based on the survey and other evidence	May
Meeting with the community-based centres located in Marneuli Municipality and sharing experience	April
Creation of co-working spaces for non-governmental and community organisations operating in Bolnisi	2020

## Conclusions and recommendations

In conclusion, during the training course, the non-governmental and governmental sectors discussed the type of problems they face today. The representatives of NGOs talked from young people's perspective, the problems they encounter today and what should be done to overcome the situation and increase youth participation in country. The representatives of local municipalities discussed what they can offer youth, how they can help them to reach their goals. NGOs and municipalities made common strategic plans which they plan to implement in the foreseen future to have effective communication and accordingly, increase youth participation in decision-making processes.

The recommendations after the course are:

- there should be follow-up capacity building for the youth organisations in Georgia, and a stronger multiplying effect;
- more focus should be put on quality measures, both of the youth centres, but also of youth work as such;
- more training in participatory budgeting and fundraising;
- further exposure of Georgian participants to other European best practices and Council of Europe practices, etc.

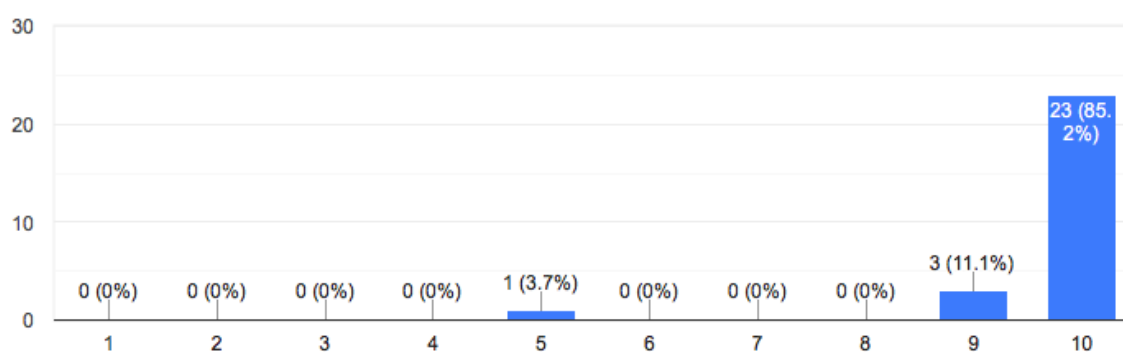
**Important note: due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the plans and follow-up activities of this course will be postponed, delayed or cancelled. This being a case of force majeure, it doesn't diminish or belittle the accomplishments and outcomes of this course.**

### Evaluation by the participants

The participants filled in a questionnaire to evaluate the learning outcomes, the organisation of the activity and their engagement in the process of training implementation. The questionnaire was accessible online, and all participants were given a certain amount of time to complete the survey. Participants could choose to stay anonymous; however, slightly more than half of the respondents decided to share their names with the organisational team.

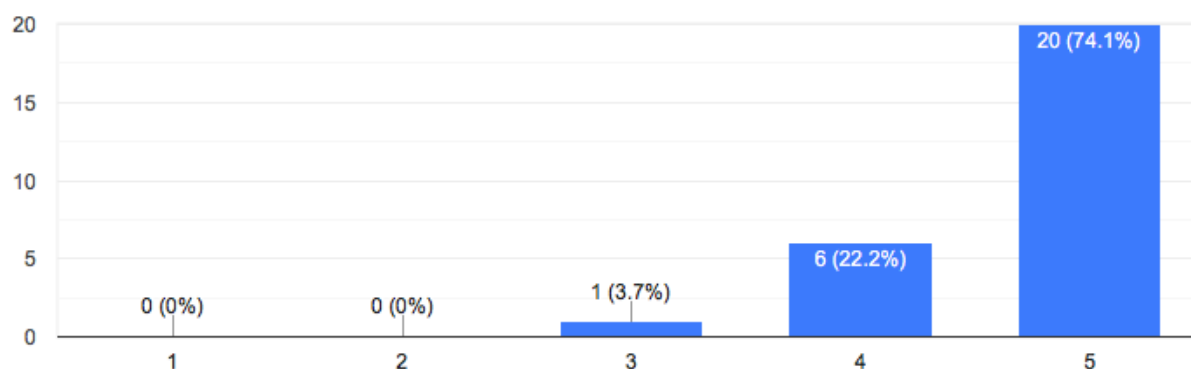
In total, 27 out of 31 participants contributed to the survey. An analysis of the data received shows that nearly all participants found the training course to be successful for their learning. Only one participant stated the average position. "I am pleased to be part of the training course because I learnt a lot and got myself acquainted with the European experience. I will do my best to use the knowledge and skills I have developed here in my community for the well-being of young people" - stated by one of the participants.

27 responses



Participants also evaluated the achievement of the initial objectives of the training course.

Almost all participants stated that the training programme and methodology were designed according to the objectives. Therefore, they considered the objectives to have been either fully achieved or achieved. Only one participant gave an average evaluation of the achievement of each objective.



The evaluation shows that participants learned:

- ✓ Mapping and assessing the realities and needs of local young people.
- ✓ Promoting effective co-operation between representatives of governmental and non-governmental sectors.
- ✓ Advocating for the interests of young people at the local level.
- ✓ Creating structures and mechanisms for meaningful youth participation.
- ✓ How the Council of Europe functions and how it can support participants in implementing local follow up initiatives.

Some of the participants' impressions included these statements:

*"I fully understood what are the needs and interests of young people, including vulnerable young people, what their realities are and the kind of barriers they are facing to participating at the local level. I am better skilled now to promote their meaningful participation at local level. I feel especially empowered to advocate for the rights of local young people".*

*"I realised the importance of evidence-based youth policy and the need for reflective quality-assurance mechanisms. As a representative of the local municipality, I understood that my role is to take care of the quality of youth participation at the local level."*

Participants also appreciated the expertise and professionalism of the trainers' team and the interactive nature of the programme. They mainly found the field visits, such as visiting the Council of Europe headquarters and the Youth Express Network, necessary for their learning.

**Finally, participants recommended that:**

- ✓ They need to be supported during the implementation of their follow-up initiatives;
- ✓ They are interested in being informed about ongoing opportunities by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe;
- ✓ They appreciate the networking opportunities during the training course. They would like to initiate a shared vision on how to stay in touch and support each pair in implementing their local actions.

## Appendices

### Final Programme, as executed

Date	23 Feb	24 Feb	25 Feb	26 Feb	27 Feb	28 Feb
<b>Session 1</b> 09.30 – 11.00		Official opening Introduction Aims and objectives NFE approach Getting to know each other	Reality check	Charter in practice Have your say	Visit Palais de l'Europe Congress, PACE, CCJ	EYF CoE tools
<b>Break</b> 11.00 – 11.30						
<b>Session 2</b> 11.30 – 13.00		CoE values and principles	State of local youth policy and self-assessment	Forms of youth participation	Co-management Participation bodies	Next steps Evaluation
<b>Lunch</b> 13.00 – 14.30						
<b>Session 3</b> 14.30 – 16.00	13.00 Team preparatory meeting	Team building	CoE policy and instruments, standards Youth sector strategy 2030	Visit to SXB municipality Good practices	Skills workshops (all afternoon, 3x1hr): Quality assurance/standards- Fundraising/participatory budgeting Advocacy	Team evaluation meeting
<b>Break</b> 16.00 – 16.30						
<b>Session 4</b> 16.30 – 18.00	Team preparatory meeting	Why/why not youth participation	Evidence-based youth policy	Debriefing of visit	Skills workshops cont	Team evaluation meeting
<b>Dinner</b> 19.00						Farewell dinner/party
<b>Evening programme</b>	Welcome evening					



## Participants list

Municipality	Organisation
Akhaltzikhe Municipality	Samtskhe-Javakheti Development Centre
Zugdidi Municipality	Youth for Samegrelo Development
Bolnisi Municipality	Salam
Tianeti Municipality	For better Tianeti
Ozurgeti Municipality	Student Youth Council
Ajara Autonomous Republic	Georgian Medical Group
Mestia Municipality	PMC - Policy and Management Consulting Group
Kobuleti Municipality	Youth Workers' Association of Georgia
Dmanisi Municipality	First European
Gori Municipality	Institute for Democratic Changes
Sighnagi Municipality	Knowledge Cafe
Kutaisi Municipality	Imereti Development Center
Oni Municipality	Sector 3
Tbilisi	Georgian Student Organisations Association
Rustavi	Kakheti Regional Development Foundation