



DDP-YD/ETD (2020) 124

3 September 2020

CONSULTATIVE MEETING

Supporting Young Refugees in Transition to Adulthood

through Youth Work and Youth Policy

16-17 June 2020

REPORT

CONSULTATIVE MEETING

Supporting Young Refugees in Transition to Adulthood through Youth Work and Youth Policy

16-17 June 2020

REPORT

Written by Amy Stapleton, Consultant

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Council of Europe.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	4
The consultative meeting.....	5
1. Introduction	7
1. Needs and challenges during the transition to adulthood.....	7
2. Main needs of young refugees related to COVID-19.....	8
Barriers to accessing rights and services.....	8
Increased vulnerabilities.....	8
3. Key challenges for youth work with young refugees during the transition to adulthood	9
4. challenges for youth work with young refugees related to COVID-19	10
5. Examples of responses (<i>good practices</i>)	11
Good practice examples of actions related to the transition to adulthood	11
UNHCR	11
ALL YOUTH – All youth want to rule their world.	11
Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE).....	11
6. Good practice examples put in place during the pandemic.....	12
Member states and local authorities	12
International organisations	13
Refugee-led actions	13
Youth organisations	14
8. Proposals	14
I. Awareness-raising activities and capacity-building of the Council of Europe Youth Sector.....	14
II. Promotion of the recommendation in the member states	15
III. Synergies and connections with the work of different stakeholders.....	16
IV. Strategic actions of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Refugees and Migration.....	17
9. Conclusions.....	19
Bibliography	19
APPENDICES	20
Programme	20
List of participants.....	21

Executive Summary

The transition to adulthood of young refugees has been a priority of the Council of Europe over the past number of years. As part of the [Council of Europe Action Plan](#) on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children, the [Youth. Together project](#) was introduced by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe. The project supported social inclusion of young refugees and their access to education, self-development and autonomy through youth work and non-formal education activities, notably through a long-term training course for youth workers and refugees. It resulted in 32 youth initiatives addressing issues affecting young refugees across Europe and increased self-confidence and resilience of young refugees and youth workers.

In 2019, the Committee of Ministers adopted the [Recommendation on Supporting Young Refugees in Transition to Adulthood - CM/Rec\(2019\)4](#). In this document, the Committee of Ministers recommends the member states' governments ensure that additional temporary support is available to young refugees after the age of 18 to enable them to access their rights. It also acknowledges the important role played by youth work and non-formal education/learning in supporting the inclusion of young refugees, and in developing competences of active citizenship and democratic participation.

Later that same year, the Joint Council on Youth adopted a roadmap for the implementation of the Recommendation inviting member states, youth organisations and the Council of Europe youth sector to work within their roles and means to make the Recommendation relevant. In this roadmap, the Youth Department is expected to:

- support capacity-building and awareness-raising activities with relevant stakeholders in the programme of the European Youth Centres and through activities funded by the European Youth Foundation;
- support the dissemination of this Recommendation in member States;
- include the Recommendation and its principles in other relevant areas of its work (youth policy development and advice, assistance measures to member States) where relevant;
- ensure inter-institutional co-operation in the promotion of this Recommendation.

Despite the significant advancements made at policy level aimed to improve the situation for young refugees during the transition to adulthood, the COVID-19 pandemic has threatened to disrupt the progress in programmes for young newcomers and refugees (Aliyyah Ahad, 2020). During this time, the CM Recommendation on Supporting Young Refugees in Transition to Adulthood and the roadmap have become increasingly important as the needs of those most vulnerable, including young refugees, have become more acute. Young refugees and newcomers are among those with the most limited access to essential services and the pandemic is likely to have further reduced access to services, particularly, education and health. Often already facing difficulties in accessing the labour market, the COVID-19 restrictions may have further limited young refugees and newcomers' abilities to earn a living, leaving them at heightened risk of social exclusion. In addition, young refugees' access to youth work or non-formal education opportunities has become even more difficult. In this context, the Advisory Council on Youth has urged Council of Europe member states to recognise the difficulties facing young refugees during the crisis and to urgently implement the CM/Rec(2019)4 on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood (Advisory Council on Youth, 2020). However, despite the potential risks facing young refugees at this time, to date, there is little understanding of the impact of the crisis on young refugees or on youth work with young refugees.

The consultative meeting

To shed light on these urgent issues, the Council of Europe Youth Department organised the online consultative meeting on Supporting Young Refugees in Transition to Adulthood through Youth Work and Youth Policy aiming to:

identify, prioritise and further organise the ways to support the implementation of the measures proposed by the Recommendation CM/REC(2019)4 through youth policy and youth work.

The online consultative meeting brought together experts and representatives from the following stakeholder groups:

- The Joint Council on Youth
- Refugee-led youth organisations and youth organisations with projects in support of young refugees
- European Youth Forum
- Council of Europe structures dealing with refugees
- Local authorities with projects for refugees and migrants in transition to adulthood.

The consultative meeting focused on understanding the main needs of young refugees during the transition to adulthood and related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Attendees reflected on the implementation of the Recommendation CM/REC(2019)4 and the Joint Council on Youth's roadmap for the implementation of the Recommendation in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Attendees highlighted the challenges for youth work with young refugees at this time. Challenges related to both young refugees' transition to adulthood and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic were discussed. During COVID-19, attendees found that young refugees and newcomers encountered a range of barriers to accessing to rights and services and faced increased vulnerabilities during the pandemic.

A number of good practice examples were shared to provide inspiration and support to youth organisations, the Council of Europe and its member states on the development of effective and successful measures which can support young refugees.

Finally, the meeting made proposals to the youth sector, the Council of Europe, and its member states for responding to these needs and challenges. Key proposals outlined in the report targeted, principally, three key stakeholders - the Council of Europe, its Member States and youth organisations working with young refugees.

The report discusses the key findings of the meetings, starting by addressing the main needs and challenges faced by young refugees during the transition to adulthood and raised out of the current pandemic. It then highlights challenges facing by youth work with young refugees in member states. Following this, good practice examples of youth work with young refugees are provided and aim to inspire future projects and actions. Finally, the report outlines proposals made for the Council of Europe, member states, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders. The proposals focus on measures which can support the implementation of the Recommendation CM/REC(2019)4 and overcome challenges facing by young as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conclusions of the meeting were communicated to the Joint Council on Youth for possible discussion and adoption.

The meeting was successful in as far as it provided the Youth Department of the Council of Europe with a detailed understanding of the main needs of young refugees during the transition to adulthood but also resulting from the current pandemic, as well as the related challenges for youth work with young refugees. Additionally, the Youth Department gained important insights into good practices to support young refugees and for youth work with young refugees while also receiving inputs into possible future actions of the Council of Europe and its member states.

1. Introduction

Young refugees are among the most vulnerable groups, due to experiences that may have involved violence, exploitation and trauma, as well as continuing risk of violation of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Reaching the age of majority, being no longer under the protection of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, young refugees no longer have access to rights and opportunities previously held as children and, many of them as adults, are likely to face an abrupt change in the possibility of accessing services and support across many sectors, including welfare, education, health care and psychosocial support, leisure and recreational activities, housing and special accommodation, information on relevant administrative procedures, and other essential services (Pasic, n.d.). Lack of support and difficulties in accessing their rights may lead young refugees to go into hiding, thus putting their safety at risk, exposing them to violence, exploitation, and/or trafficking in human beings. The report discusses the key findings of the Consultative Meeting on Supporting Young Refugees in Transition to Adulthood through Youth Work and Youth Policy. The meeting was attended by 32 participants. Half of these participants were young refugees or representatives from youth organisations actively working with young refugees. Relevant Council of Europe departments were represented as well as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, researchers and the Joint Council on Youth.

The meeting aimed to identify, prioritise and further organise ways to support the implementation of the measures proposed by the Recommendation CM/REC(2019)4 through youth policy and youth work. The meeting was guided by five key questions:

1. What are the main needs of young refugees and the main challenges for youth work with young refugees resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What kind of awareness-raising activities and capacity-building activities should the Council of Europe youth sector put into place, organise or support? Are there important guidelines or approaches to safeguard regarding, for example, timing of activities, target groups, partners, resources and evaluation?
3. What needs to be done and prioritised to support knowledge about the Recommendation in the member states?
4. How to secure synergies and connections with the work of youth and human rights organisations?
5. How to benefit from and contribute to the strategic actions of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Refugees and Migration?

2. Needs and challenges during the transition to adulthood

The needs and difficulties facing by young refugees during the transition to adulthood were highlighted during the Consultative Meeting. Attendees highlighted that when young refugees and newcomers turn 18 years, they may lose a range of safeguards and protections (e.g. their guardian or social worker and other specific services for children). The psychological impact of the transition to adulthood on young refugees and newcomers was stressed. Access to accurate information, access to appropriate housing and homelessness, access to education, training and employment, and social exclusion, were emphasised as central issues faced by young refugees transitioning to adulthood. The lack of recognition of young refugees' previous experience and skills was described as a particular barrier to accessing the labour market and said to leave refugee youth exposed to potential exploitation, for example, at risk of entering into the black market.

There was a call for increased recognition and actions on intersectional issues in youth work with young refugees. Although targeted responses have been developed for certain marginalized groups (e.g. LGBTQ people), attendees highlighted that the needs of these particularly at-risk youth are often overlooked. The often-neglected needs of young refugees with disabilities, in particular, were stressed. Attendees advocated for an increase in youth organisations, and targeted activities, focusing on the specific needs of this group. Finally, the diverse practices of family reunification in member states, largely due to limitations in subsidiary protection, were criticised during the meeting. Attendees urged non-discrimination between different status holders and to unify state policy on family reunification.

3. Main needs of young refugees related to COVID-19

At the meeting, attendees discussed two overarching themes related to the main needs of young refugees resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, namely, barriers to accessing to rights and services and their increased vulnerabilities.

Barriers to accessing rights and services

National and regional restrictions, such as border closures and suspension of asylum procedures (either officially or in practice), were found to often reduce access to the rights of asylum, integration processes, and legal procedures, including age assessment procedures, civic integration exams, and services (e.g. referral and child protection services). Attendees discerned that suspension of such procedures and services has limited access to supports, services and potential safeguards and left young refugees and newcomers aging-out of child protection services at particular risk. The COVID-19 restrictions in many member states were also found to have limited the opportunities for family reunification due to flights cancellations and travel restrictions.

Attendees noted their concern regarding the decreased access to the labour market, increased job insecurity and loss of income, particularly for migrant workers and refugees working in informal employment. Violations of the right to education was found in certain cases, for example, due to limited access to online education supports and equipment. With the increased move towards online platforms and service provision, young refugees and newcomers face greater risks of social exclusion as certain individuals may be digitally illiterate, and/or have limited access to software, computers or internet connection.

Finally, attendees denounced the omission of young refugees and newcomers in national response plans across most member states. Several member states were scrutinised for young refugees' and newcomers' limited access to healthcare. Attendees stressed the particular need to ensure that measures are taken for those who are not yet regularised.

Increased vulnerabilities

The transition to adulthood can have already a psychological impact on young refugees but the pandemic was found to further jeopardise the psychological wellbeing of these young people. Often with already limited social networks, attendees noted that the decreased opportunities for social relations and interactions during the pandemic have resulted in increased isolation and mental health challenges for young refugees. The impact of postponement and suspension of legal procedures on the futures (including furthering education after the summer, accessing language classes, accessing employment etc.) were described as an additional source of uncertainty and stress.

In certain member states, social distancing and confinement regulations/recommendations were shown to be difficult to safeguard (e.g. in camps, for homeless refugees, etc.) leaving many young refugees and newcomers without protection. Attendees emphasised concern regarding housing issues and homelessness which were found to leave young refugees and newcomers facing increased exposure and risks during the pandemic due to, for example, inappropriate housing, overcrowding and lack of sanitation. Increased migrant homelessness was also highlighted as a growing concern in certain contexts.

The need for more recognition and an increase in targeted responses for high risk/ marginalised people to facilitate their access to services, supports and resources was highlighted during the meeting. Attendees stressed the particular vulnerability of young refugees and newcomers who have underlying health conditions (e.g. pregnant refugees) and those who are particularly marginalised groups (e.g. LGBTQ people) during the pandemic. Young refugees with disabilities and stateless youth were distinguished as two groups who were largely ignored during the pandemic and attendees called on increased recognition and targeted supports for these groups.

During the meeting, the need for proper protections for migrant workers was underlined, as they were found to often be often working on the front line and facing exposure to COVID-19 without or the necessary sanitation requirements.

Young refugees limited access to (accurate) information was called to attention during the meeting. Language barriers as well as the prevalence of misinformation and fake news on social media and online platforms were highlighted as key issues which contributed to young refugees limited access to information and were found to leave young refugees at an increased risk of exposure to COVID-19. Attendees welcomed and praised the establishment of many online support networks during the pandemic. However, they underlined the need for caution and the potential risks of the use of such informal networks by criminal networks (traffickers, etc.) to target young refugees online.

Finally, the rise of xenophobia and discrimination in member states was a marked concern for attendees who also noted with alarm that refugees and migrants have been, at times, represented as potential carriers of the COVID-19 virus.

4. Challenges for youth work with refugees in transition to adulthood

There are several challenges facing youth work with young refugees during the transition to adulthood. Attendees highlighted the limitations and boundaries of definitions and interpretations of youth work across certain member states, for example, with youth work indistinct from social work in some contexts. The lack of clarity was described as impacting the remit of the youth sector activity and potentially limiting youth work with young refugees. During the meeting, attendees discussed the limited resources facing by youth organisations, who often do not have the capacities, resources or time to apply for funding or effectively monitor and evaluate their projects.

Although there is a call to support young refugees and newcomers to get involved in youth work themselves, many barriers preventing their involvement were found. Attendees described several difficulties faced by youth workers who try to facilitate young refugees and newcomers

to work in the youth sector. In some member states, there are several support and trainings options (voluntary, temporary professional training, or undergraduate courses in youth work) in place. However, often young people often don't have time and/ or the resources to engage in these opportunities. In addition, newcomers may have difficulties in joining or creating their own youth organisations and projects due to their legal status in the country. As a result, they may be forced to develop activities in an unofficial capacity. They may also face limited opportunities to access funding and other resources (e.g. European Youth Foundation funding).

Often the same individuals are found to be repeatedly involved in projects and activities. There is a need to further explore the reasons why many young refugees and newcomers don't wish to engage/ are not engaging with youth organisations. Reasons for lack of participation highlighted included mistrust of organisations, negative previous experiences, lack of information on projects, lack of social and/or communication skills, lack of confidence, etc. Language was also described as a barrier to participation of young refugees and newcomers in international and Council of Europe supported activities, particularly because most of these activities are held in English.

5. Challenges for youth work with refugees related to COVID19

Youth workers with young refugees have worked hard to adapt service provision and actions to meet the needs of young refugees during the pandemic. However, there has been a reduction, or suspension, of many youth services across member states due to restrictions implemented during the pandemic. During the pandemic, much youth work with young refugees has been conducted on online platforms. Despite the development of many innovative and creative online youth projects, an online format was described as ineffective and/or inappropriate for the provision of certain services (e.g. for interviews or evaluations). Challenges of adjusting to online youth work, resulting from lack of competencies and resources, were highlighted during the meeting. Attendees emphasised the difficulties that the youth sector faces when attempting to engage young refugees and newcomers in online activities and supports. Many young refugees and newcomers were reported to have 'gone off grid', losing key connections with youth workers and other key service providers. Internet and digital literacy issues were distinguished as principle barriers to participation in youth work during the pandemic.

Attendees stressed the particular challenges encountered by youth workers who pursued new connections with young refugees and tried to contact difficult-to-reach young refugees especially in remote areas and those most vulnerable. Youth organisations were also described as being at risk from post COVID realities due to regulations on social distancing (e.g. spaces too small). Finally, a lack of youth policy response during COVID-19 was noted in several member states and attendees called for policy makers to develop policy for youth work with young refugees in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. Examples of responses (good practices)

Despite the range of challenges and issues highlighted by attendees, several good practice examples were proposed during the consultative meeting. These examples can give inspiration to member states, the Council of Europe and the youth sector for the development of innovative and effective responses to support young refugees and newcomers going forward.

Good practice examples of actions related to the transition to adulthood

UNHCR

The UNHCR have run several activities to support young refugees, for example:

- Creative competitions
 - A movie/ documentary competition for young refugees which focuses on promoting human rights through more creative forms of projects.
- Mediation activities
 - UNHCR Ukraine often provide support and opportunities for action to youth groups who are not legally registered in the country (due to missing documents, etc) but wish to develop actions. These groups typically seek assistance from the UN agencies or organise their activities under larger events organised by UNHCR.
- Youth Empowerment Seminar: Building Community Initiatives.
 - UNHCR Ukraine and Council of Europe ran a joint training seminar in Kiev in 2018. The seminar brought 46 young people aged 16-25 together from across Ukraine. The aim of the event was to create a common platform and link minority youth with young people from local hosting communities. The seminar had an intense programme based on non-formal education methodologies that combined peer-to-peer learning, group discussions, debates and presentations. The programme supported the young participants to acquire knowledge on human rights and inclusion and trained them on how to conduct needs analysis and develop community projects aimed at improvement of local integration. The project supported youth as multipliers and several local follow up projects were funded by the UNHCR.

ALL YOUTH – All youth want to rule their world.

University of Tampere, Finland.

The multidisciplinary research project explores the capacities of young people (aged between 16 and 25) and the obstacles that hinder their engagement with society. The visions of youth regarding sustainable future, growth and well-being are also explored. Overall, the project aims to create possibilities and facilitate the participation of young people in creating their own communities and the society. In the project, young people (including young refugees) are involved to actively carry out research together supported by professional researchers. Objectives of the project include assessing the legal and policy barriers for participation, developing theoretically grounded participatory action research methods, and creating new kinds of digital models for youth participation.

Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE)

VYRE is an important example of the benefits of inter-organisational collaborations, youth empowerment educational activities and a platform in which young refugees and newcomers

can engage at an international level with decision making. The organisation resulted from a conclusion that refugee youth leaders and refugee workers need to develop their skills in order to improve and reinforce their participation in society. VYRE was launched in February 2008 during an international meeting co-funded by EYF and UNHCR, in Budapest entitled “Raising the voices of young refugees: A step forward to organise ourselves”. This meeting was the follow-up to the training seminar organised by the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe and UNHCR during the “All different-All equal” campaign in December 2006, entitled “Being a Young Refugee in Europe Today”.

VYRE has now developed into a strong network, in which members can share experiences and raise common concerns, acquire new skills and strengthen their capacities. Members are supported to contribute to Europe with greater knowledge of the reasons for being a refugee and with greater capacity for building social cohesion with intercultural learning as a base. Membership aims to be accessible to both youth organisations and individuals. Supporting individuals to become members of VYRE aims to provide opportunities to those who want to actively participate in youth work but who may not wish, or have access, to local or national youth organisations.

Good practice examples put in place during the pandemic

Several good practice examples were highlighted during the consultative meeting. The good practices outlined are run by different stakeholders, namely, member states and local authorities, international organisations, and youth organisations.

Member states and local authorities

A number of Council of Europe member states have developed policy responses which have supported young refugees and newcomers during the pandemic and been highlighted by attendees as good practices:

- 1) The government of Portugal legalised and granted residency to a number of newcomers. They also sought to involve young refugees and newcomers in local responses which targeted communities impacted by COVID-19. For example, in Braga, young refugees supported in kitchens and cafeterias to distribute food to people in need.
- 2) In Flanders, the local government and civil society have collaborated to develop several responses to support young refugees and newcomers during the COVID-19 crisis. For example:
 - Local government created measures which aimed to provide all families in Flanders with access to computers and internet.
 - Youth organisations developed digital activities, distributed play packages to young refugees and newcomers, and conducted outreach through individual talks, awareness raising in small groups and telephone calls. Many organisations also opened up their facilities to provide young refugees and newcomers a space to complete their homework.
 - Youth organisations developed summer camps for youth in collaboration with authorities to develop protocols and guides to guarantee safety during these camps. These camps have been described as important supports for young refugees and newcomers.

- The Flanders authorities developed an action plan for young people with fewer opportunities. A significant part of the budget was allocated to supporting initiatives with young refugees and asylum seekers. The funding was easily accessible and straightforward with few administrative burdens aiming to support organisations to react faster during the pandemic. Six actions were funded under the action plan:
 1. Delivering packages and handouts;
 2. Restarting recreational activities in youth care facilities;
 3. Homework guidance by volunteers;
 4. Chat line and online support for violence and abuse;
 5. Assistance to youth organisations already experienced in digital youth work to support other organisations;
 6. Targeted project call for actions by youth organisations, and for collaborations with schools etc., that work with disadvantaged youth.

Examples of projects funded:

- Babelbuddies matched young newcomers with Belgian nationals. 260 young people were matched in total (130 pairs). The aim of the project was to support newcomers to continue to develop their language skills and tackle social isolation and loneliness. The project started during the second week of restrictions in Belgium and was replicated by many organisations. Babelbuddies used previous made connections in both youth sector and migration sector. Organisations contacted those who wanted to get involved and registered students; local collaborations were developed.

International organisations

- 1) “My Hero is You” is a story book to help children understand and cope with COVID-19 a unique collaboration of over 50 UN agencies, national and international NGOs. The book – aimed primarily at children aged 6-11 years old – is a project of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings, a unique collaboration of United Nations agencies, national and international nongovernmental organizations and international agencies providing mental health and psychosocial support in emergency settings. The book has been translated into several languages.
- 2) Several UNHCR responses have demonstrated good practice with young refugees during the pandemic. For example:
 - UNHCR partners provided information on the evolving situation of the pandemic through, for example, hotlines and social media.
 - UNHCR Regional Representation for Northern Europe has created a dedicated COVID-19 website listing country official information and publications regarding COVID-19.
 - UNHCR has published press releases on specific issues such as gender-based violence during coronavirus.

Refugee-led actions

- 1) There was a growth in the development of informal youth networks/groups who worked on the frontline during the pandemic. For example, In Germany, young refugees got involved to support service provision during the pandemic by creating a platform of newcomers and

young refugees to provide services during lockdown. They contributed in several ways, including, making masks, doing shopping for others, and translation services.

Youth organisations

- 1) Two youth organisations in Lille, France developed several activities to tackle social isolation and support psychological wellbeing during the COVID-19 restrictions. These projects aimed to support young refugees and newcomers to stay connected with the people and share activities together. For example:
 - Association Mitrajectoires aims to improve the living conditions of people in migration, particularly young people, acting as a sort of ‘project incubator’ to support young refugees and newcomers, as well as young people from host communities, to come together to develop local actions. During the pandemic, free online workshops were organised for newcomers and young refugees to keep in touch and participate in different activities, for instance, organising cine-debates and virtual expositions.
 - DEEP France (Dialogue, Empathie & Engagement pour la Paix) aims to create spaces which promote dialogue, meeting the ‘other’, interculturality and peace. During the restrictions, DEEP organised an online group for sharing member activities during the quarantine and weekly video calling open to all members to reassure and support each other.

7. Proposals

The proposals developed during the consultative meeting aim to promote and apply the guidelines of the Recommendation to ensure that young refugees receive additional temporary support after the age of 18 to enable them to access their rights, and to further strengthen the role of youth work and the youth sector. Meeting attendees made proposals to the Council of Europe and Member States as well as youth, and other relevant organisations working with young refugees in the following areas:

- Awareness-raising activities and capacity-building activities organised or supported by the Council of Europe youth sector;
- Promoting knowledge and information about the Recommendation in the member states;
- Cooperation between youth and human rights organisations;
- Benefiting from and contributing to the strategic actions of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Refugees and Migration.

Awareness-raising activities and capacity-building by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

1. Develop educational activities and resources which target young refugees, newcomers and youth organisations working with young refugees.
2. Implement targeted awareness raising activities to support and promote the rights of particularly marginalised young refugees and newcomers, namely, young refugees with disabilities, stateless and undocumented young people, migrant workers and LGBTIQ refugees and newcomers.
3. Provide educational activities to strengthen youth organisations to better tackle internal intersectional issues, deliver effective and accessible online non-formal education and human rights education activities and develop their project and organisational management capacities.

4. Aim at increasing the inclusion of young refugees and newcomers in all aspects of youth organisations working with young refugees.
5. Develop a number of training of trainers activities to increase the participation and ownership of young refugees in the structures and projects of youth organisations, and within Youth Department's activities. For example, a training of trainers to support refugee youth workers to deliver human rights education and tackle rights violations and a training of trainers to support young refugees and youth workers to adapt English language resources and training materials to other languages.
6. Advocate for the improvement of member states' COVID-19 responses targeting young refugees and newcomers, including the development of national youth policy frameworks which aim to support youth work with young refugees during and after COVID-19 pandemic. Attendees noted the need for further and ongoing online consultations with young refugees and newcomers, requesting the increased involvement of researchers to ensure evidence-based outputs. Attendees also proposed that the Youth Department collaborates with member states to ensure that young refugees and newcomers have easy and rapid access to emerging information on COVID-19.
7. Increase the accessibility and rapidity of funding applications of the European Youth Foundation (EYF):
 - Provide targeted training and guidance for refugee-led organisations applying to EYF.
 - Support follow up projects developed during the educational activities of the Youth Department.
 - Fund longer-term local projects as well as provide targeted funding calls for refugee-led projects, projects which encourage refugee youth and host communities to work together, and for projects which support the rights of those at particular risk (those with disabilities, LGBTQI, stateless and undocumented youth and migrant workers).
 - Include crosscutting issues aiming to increase the participation of young refugees in all aspect of youth organisations in general funding calls were also requested.
 - In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, to provide rapid response funding calls for urgent situations (such as pandemics, or other national urgent issues).
 - Review the accessibility of current funding procedures and calls of the EYF with local, national and international youth organisations.

Promotion of the recommendation in the member states

Council of Europe

8. Take actions related to the implementation of the Recommendation including allocating resources and developing activities focused on exchanging and promoting good practices, increasing support for related advocacy, awareness and educational activities, translating the Recommendation into other languages, and providing guidance to support increased co-management and refugee youth-led projects and actions.
9. Develop an accessible platform uniting experiences and practices of the implemented measures across different member states.

10. Initiate collaboration and cooperation between different relevant stakeholders: institutions, member states, local/ national authorities and the youth sector
11. Guide and support member states in the implementation of the Recommendation and creating awareness and understanding of the recommendation.
12. Encourage, monitor the implementation of the Recommendation

Member states

13. Translate, disseminate, promote the Recommendation and progress on its implementation
14. Ensure targeted state support (financial, capacity building, developing collaborations, etc.) for youth organisations working with young refugees, and refugee-led groups in the implementation of the Recommendation.
15. Increase efforts to promote and implement pre-existing measures, such as European qualifications passports programme.
16. Ensure that the Recommendation is implemented effectively, particularly in light of the current pandemic: namely, increase recognition and implementation of pre-existing measures which support young refugees, develop initiatives to increase access to information for young refugees using multiple distribution channels, include young refugees in risk education, standardise measures to ensure the right to family reunification across all member states, include young refugees and migrants in national responses during times of crisis, increase outreach and mental health support for young refugees, particularly during times of crisis, integrate digital literacy programmes in reception, integration and care services, and extend language supports and training programmes to all newcomers in member states.

Youth organisations

Actively engage in measures which support the Recommendation, implement educational activities related to the Recommendation and its dissemination, and develop collaborations to share practices and experiences related to the implementation of the Recommendation.

Synergies and connections with the work of different stakeholders

Council of Europe

17. Support sharing of good practices among human rights organisations, youth organisations and international networks in order to ensure that successful projects are adapted and implemented to new contexts.
18. Develop, support and fund educational and awareness raising activities which aim to increase participation of young refugees and other young people in human rights issues of their concern
19. Promote research and evaluation of educational activities and support the development of positive relationships, collaborations and networks among the youth sector and human rights organisations.

20. Create an interactive, accessible online platform for projects to support sharing good practices and cooperation between youth and human rights organisations who seek to work on similar areas or wish to get support to fill in competency gaps.
21. Allocate funding for follow up projects which promote collaborations between youth and human rights organisations
22. Develop collaborations with youth and human rights organisations to increase access to funding for young refugees who are not in registered organisations, and create targeted calls for refugee-led organisations and refugee activist groups to support the development of refugee youth-led local or national actions.

Youth Organisations

23. Develop positive relationships and collaborations with refugee-led groups, service providers (e.g. mental health experts), and other youth and human rights organisations, particularly to those who have overlaps in missions/ objectives, and/or who can offer expert knowledge and skills to projects
24. Establish collaborations with academic institutions and researchers to better understand and evaluate the implementation of projects and to ensure evidence-based practice
25. Promote and support the increased inclusion and participation of young refugees and newcomers in youth work and decision making.
26. Promote refugee-youth led projects and activities, increase opportunities for young refugees and newcomers to get involved in youth organisations, and support other organisations to increase the meaningful participation of young refugees and newcomers in their organisational structures and projects.

I. Strategic actions of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Refugees and Migration

27. Advocate and develop actions to ensure that member states include young refugees and newcomers in all national response plans.
28. Increase and strengthen collaborations between the Youth Department, the youth sector and young refugee-led groups.
29. Invite the Youth Department, young refugees, newcomers and youth workers working with young refugees to contribute to the Action Plan and to evaluate its implementation through consultative meetings.
30. Engage with youth stakeholders on gathering best practices on refugee policies, feedback on the Recommendation implementation, and include them to preparation, assessment and follow up of fact-finding missions and provision of information on the ground.
31. Initiate and support collaborations between the network of focal points and relevant youth organisations working on the rights of young refugees and newcomers.
32. Develop opportunities (e.g. co-management) for young refugees and newcomers to participate and advise on activities of the Special Representative.
33. Defend of and advocate for the rights of young refugees and newcomers, particularly in regard to the following issues:

- a) Non-discrimination between different status holders and for the unification of state policy on family reunification.
 - b) The inclusion of **all** young refugees and newcomers (including unregularized young people) in the implementation of the recommendation by member states and in all policy responses related to COVID-19.
 - c) Proper protections for migrant workers, particularly those who are working on the front line and facing exposure to COVID-19 without the necessary sanitation requirements.
 - d) Increased recognition and targeted measures for young refugees and newcomers with disabilities.
 - e) Greater recognition and implementation of existing measures, for example, the European Qualifications Passport.
34. Develop an accessible and comprehensible complaints' mechanism for young refugees to defend their rights in member states
 35. Instigate online fact-finding missions with young refugees and youth workers who work with young refugees during restrictions and in post-pandemic time
 36. Monitor and support the implementation of the Recommendation in the member states
 37. Investigate the challenges related to family reunification and the transition to adulthood regarding the Recommendation and support young refugees to access their right to family reunification
 38. Document cases of xenophobia and discrimination in member states and develop targeted actions to document human rights violations in member states during and post-COVID-19.

8. Conclusions

COVID-19 and the resulting restrictions increased challenges already faced by those in a particular vulnerable situation. The pandemic revealed many structural shortcomings in responses for young refugees and newcomers in different member states. Often issues have been complex and multi-faceted, requiring a multi-faceted and multi-stakeholder response.

Already marginalised and among the hardest hit, migrant and refugee children and young people have been often forgotten in national responses to COVID-19. For the particularly marginalised of these young refugees, the impact of the pandemic was even more damaging. There is, thus, a need to recognise the rights of young refugees and to strengthen the youth sector to support these rights. The best interest of young people, and human rights principles and frameworks should underpin all responses and the important contributions that young refugees have made in their communities during the pandemic needs to be recognised.

The consultative meeting, and the resulting report, has outlined the needs and challenges faced by young refugees and youth organisations working with young refugees, highlighting the exacerbation of many already complex challenges as a result of the ongoing pandemic. The report has also provided a range of good practice examples to inspire increased action to support young refugees and newcomers during the transition to adulthood and the pandemic. Finally, the report has laid out proposals to the Council of Europe, Member States and youth organisations working with young refugees to ensure the successful implementation of the Recommendation.

The findings of the report will be communicated across several channels. Firstly, it will be communicated to Programme Committee on youth with the aim of informing future funding calls and proposals. The report will also be sent to bureau of Joint Council on Youth who will use the document to inform their priorities, future actions and cooperation with different Council of Europe departments and future actions. The report will provide a platform for the Advisory Council on Youth to reach out to the Special Representative and provide inputs into the upcoming Action Plan.

Bibliography

- ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH 2020. World Refugee Day. Council of Europe
ALIYYAH AHAD, C. L. C., HANNE BEIRENS 2020. Using Evidence to Improve Refugee Resettlement: A Monitoring and Evaluation Road Map. Migration Policy Institute.
PASIC, L. n.d. Young Refugees' Transition to Adulthood Literature Review and Policy Brief. Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

APPENDICES

Programme

16 June, Tuesday

- 09:30 Introduction and opening of the meeting
Presentation of participants and expectations from the meeting
- 10:00 Rights and priorities of young refugees' rights in the reality of COVID 19, with:
Ambassador Drahoslav Štefánek, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on Migration and Refugees.
Jutta Seidel, Officer in Charge of the UNHCR Representation to the European Institutions in Strasbourg
- 11:00 *Break.*
- 11:30 The Council of Europe work on Social inclusion of Young Refugees, by **Rui Gomes**, Head of the Education and training division, Youth Department
- 11:50 Main needs of young refugees and the main challenges for youth work with young refugees - Reflection in 3 breakout groups, with introductory inputs from:
Razan Damlakhi, Munier Elhassan, Voices of Young Refugees in Europe
Zaher Barod, The Young Republic
Ntobuah Julius Mvenyi, Vårdanalis
- 12:50 Conclusions of the groups
- 13:00 Closing of the day

17 June, Wednesday

- 09:30 Welcome activity
Re-calling the conclusions of the previous day
- 09:45 Youth policy examples from Flanders, by **Jan Vanhee**, European Steering Committee for Youth and **Silke Cuypers** (Tumult)
- 10:15 Measures to support the implementation of the CMRec(2019)4 on Supporting Young Refugees in Transition to Adulthood
Group 1: Awareness-raising activities and capacity-building activities organised or supported by the Council of Europe youth sector
Group 2: Promoting knowledge and information about the recommendation in the member states
Group 3: Cooperation between youth and human rights organisations
Group 4: Benefiting from and contributing to the strategic actions of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Refugees and Migration
- 11:15 Break
- 12:00 Presentation of the group's conclusions and proposals
- 12:30 Conclusions and follow-up to the meeting
- 12:45 Evaluation and closing of the meeting

List of participants

Joint Council on Youth

JAN VANHEE	European Steering Committee for Youth (Belgium)
PEGAH MOULANA	Advisory Council on Youth
CARLOTTA MUSTON	Advisory Council on Youth

Participants from Youth. Together

ZAHER BAROD	The Young Republic, Sweden
NTOBUAH JULIUS MVENYI	Vårdanalys, Sweden
LINOS VIGKLAS	Second Chance School of Volos, Greece
DOHA FARAJ	LOYAC Lebanon
MAYSSA ALANI	Association Migrations, Solidarité et Echanges pour le Développement, France
JAWID BABAI	Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE), Turkey
JOKE VAN DOOREN	PIN, Belgium
MINA VARGA	Isusovačka služba za izbjeglice - Jesuit refugee service, Croatia

Refugee / Youth organisations

RAZAN DAMLAKHI	Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE)
MUNIER ELHASSAN	Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE)
CHOUGHER MARIA	YMCA Syrian Armenians
DOUGHRAMAJIAN	
EBOUANEY MBIME ANDRE	Istituto dei Sordi di Torino
KARL JORESS	
POLAK SINGHE-ROBINSON	NOW Association
ALAA KADRI	The Young Republic
SILKE CUYPERS	Tumult

Researchers

HAYTHEM BADAWI	University of Luxembourg
SOFIA LAINE	University of Helsinki

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - Representation to the European Institutions in Strasbourg

JUTTA SEIDEL	Officer in Charge
DELPHINE LENEUTRE	Legal Associate
PAUL BLANCHARD	Trainee

Council of Europe

DRAHOSLAV ŠTEFÁNEK	Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees
KINGA JENSEN-MAGYAR	Office of the Special Representative
RUI GOMES	Education and Training Division, Youth Department
TANYA BASARAB	Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth
NATALIA CHARDYMOVA	Educational Advisor, Youth Department
FLORIS COOIJMANS	Trainee, European Youth Centre Budapest
MARGIT BARNA	European Youth Foundation
MATTHEW FOSTER	European Youth Foundation

Consultant

AMY STAPLETON	Rapporteur
---------------	------------

European Youth Forum (apologised)

ESZTER SOMOGYI	Secretariat
ANDREA CASAMENTI	Member of the Bureau
