

TAKING IT SERIOUSLY



Guide to Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3
of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
to member States on the access of young people
from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights



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Contributors: Kevin O'Kelly, John Muir
Editors: Mara Georgescu, Rui Gomes

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the Directorate of Communication (F-67075
Strasbourg Cedex or publishing@coe.int.

All other correspondence concerning this
document should be addressed to the
Youth Department of the Council of Europe.

European Youth Centre Strasbourg
30, rue Pierre de Coubertin
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
France
E-mail: youth@coe.int

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Introduction to the guide

This guide accompanies Recommendation CM/Rec (2015)3 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights. It provides explanatory information regarding the recommendation and the measures proposed.

— The Enter! Recommendation was adopted in January 2015 and invites the member states of the Council of Europe to take measures aimed at:

- ▶ improving **living conditions** for young people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods by providing easy access to affordable and youth-friendly public services;
- ▶ implementing measures so as to achieve an **end to segregation and isolation**;
- ▶ promoting opportunities and programmes aimed at consulting young people and ensuring their **participation** in matters related to their living environment;
- ▶ implementing ways to ensure the active role of young people in society, **without discrimination**;
- ▶ recognising the **role of non-formal education** (and those involved in providing non-formal educational programmes, such as youth workers and youth organisations) in preventing discrimination, violence and social exclusion and encouraging the involvement of young people in active citizenship;
- ▶ ensuring that **youth policies are gender sensitive** and support the equal participation of young women and men living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

— In and around many cities, the social and economic imbalances often associated with migrant and minority communities have led to the development of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, where diversity is also accompanied by poverty and often marginalisation or exclusion. This is sometimes combined with different forms and levels of *de facto* social segregation, discrimination and violence.

— At times of economic and social crisis, feelings of powerlessness and anxiety about the future risk deepening local tensions and underlying conflicts. Young people are often at the centre of these tensions because they are more vulnerable and insecure, and because they are more directly affected by uncertainties regarding the development of their autonomy, as well as participation in society and contribution to its development.

— In the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, realities are very different from country to country and from city to city; the responses of local and national authorities are also diverse. Rarely, however, are the root causes adequately addressed. At best, policy responses seem to address epiphenomena (e.g. youth violence or delinquency) during critical events and times of media focus. Repressive measures often draw more attention than preventive approaches.

— The situation of young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods often serves as a barometer of the integration and cohesion within communities and society at large. The problems faced by many young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are often complex and multi-dimensional, sometimes resulting in a spiral, or a vicious circle, of discrimination, violence and exclusion. This complexity, however, cannot justify a lack of action or response. On the contrary, it should stimulate co-operation, creativity and determination in order to prevent the escalation of conflicts and, essentially, to make sure that the social (human) rights of the young people concerned are not denied or violated.

— The Council of Europe has challenged itself to respond to these situations by adopting recommendations for its member states that encourage and support them in finding adequate policy responses to situations of exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In early 2015, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a policy recommendation with proposals for policy measures to member states in order to promote access to social rights for young people. This publication is an accompaniment to this recommendation, and aims to bring its content closer to policy makers, youth work practitioners, youth organisations and young people, and provide step-by-step information and guidance on the implementation of the recommendation.

— Specifically, the publication targets:

- ▶ public representatives and people working in public services or governmental agencies that have in their mission youth policies, social policies and public policies that affect young people;
- ▶ youth workers, youth leaders and members of youth organisations who work on matters of social inclusion.

— The publication offers advice and examples of actions to take and policies to develop in the field of access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods in order to tackle the problems of exclusion, discrimination and violence. The guide has the aim of making the content of the recommendation adopted by the Committee of Ministers more accessible and closer to the realities of policy makers, youth workers and youth organisations. The recommendation itself primarily targets the national governments of the member states of the Council of Europe. However, considering the structure, theme and relevance of the recommendation, local and regional authorities and youth work practitioners will also find valuable proposals in the recommendation to implement at their level.

— The recommendation is the result of the project Enter!, which the Youth Department of the Council of Europe has carried out since 2009. Within this project, the Council of Europe has achieved the following:

- ▶ trained youth workers and youth leaders to promote access to social rights for young people through youth work interventions;
- ▶ supported local youth-led projects on access to social rights;
- ▶ developed knowledge and evidence for policy recommendations, through thematic seminars, and consultations with young people, youth workers, policy makers and researchers.

STRUCTURE OF THE PUBLICATION

— The publication includes the following:

Introductory chapters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ introduction to the work of the Council of Europe in the field of youth policy and youth work; ▶ introduction to the human rights framework of the Council of Europe, and specifically to the social rights framework; ▶ introduction to the Enter! project, as the source for the Committee of Ministers recommendation; ▶ an outline of the main issues relating to access to social rights for young people.
The Enter! recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ introduction to the recommendation, its structure and content; ▶ an analysis of each policy measure included in the recommendation, together with examples of practices based on the content of the recommendation.
“How to ...” chapters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ a step-by-step guide to developing youth-friendly policies, together with a case study; ▶ proposals and suggestions for young people, youth workers and youth organisations to take action for social rights.

— A bibliography and a glossary are appended to the publication.

— We invite readers to use this publication as a real companion to their work and to seek out specific information and guidance that will support their work on access to social rights for young people.

— The recommendation can be consulted on the Enter! project website www.coe.int/enter. A user-friendly version is also available on the website.



Chapter 1

The Council of Europe and young people

The Council of Europe and young people

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1949. It currently has 47 member states and is based in Strasbourg. Its main values and mission are human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Council of Europe sets standards for its 47 member states, co-operates with its member states and civil society in the fields related to its main mission, and monitors human rights and the implementation of its standards in its member states.

— Before entering into matters related to social rights, we will describe the main approaches of the Council of Europe in the field of youth policy and youth work. In relation to the themes of this publication, the main project of the Council of Europe is the Enter! project on access to social rights for young people, which resulted in its recommendation to its member states. The project's approaches, its activities and results will also be described in the chapters that follow.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND YOUTH POLICY

— For the Council of Europe, social cohesion is an essential complement to the promotion of human rights and dignity. It is firmly based on human rights as well as an acceptance of shared responsibility for the welfare of all members of society, especially those at risk of poverty or exclusion.

— The Council of Europe promotes guidelines and human rights standards for social policies and social rights. These will be explored in the following chapters in detail. The Council of Europe also develops policy standards and guidelines in relation to youth policy in order to support its member states to have youth policies that aim to "provide young people ... with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society".¹

— The Youth Department of the Council of Europe promotes youth policies in its member states. It works through a co-management system, involving both non-governmental youth organisations and public institutions active in the youth field in its member states, in order to develop its programme, which includes a wide range of activities in its European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest, as well as activities in its member states.

— The Council of Europe devotes particular attention to the specific situations and challenges affecting young people with fewer opportunities, and those facing greater obstacles to participation and the enjoyment of their social rights. The mechanisms to support policies for the social inclusion and integration of young people put into place by the Council of Europe include:

- ▶ training programmes for youth workers;
- ▶ youth policy recommendations and guidelines for social inclusion;
- ▶ educational resources for participation;
- ▶ support by the European Youth Foundation² to pilot projects carried out by young people.

— The recognition and promotion of youth work and non-formal learning in Europe are also part of this effort. Non-formal education has proved to be an efficient approach when working with young people, through its learner-centred dimension and the fact that it also addresses young people outside formal school curricula. Non-formal education enables youth workers to address young people's daily realities and to develop their skills, attitudes and knowledge on the basis of their own experiences.

— The European Youth Centres in Budapest and in Strasbourg have pioneered innovative intercultural education training concepts for youth workers and youth leaders. The partnerships with the European Commission in the field of youth, with the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) and the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card are additional instruments that increase our potential for action and positively impacting young people through those who work with young people.

— Furthermore, the All Different – All Equal European youth campaigns and the more recent No Hate Speech Movement youth campaign have provided many examples of good practice and results achieved when governmental and non-governmental youth actors co-operate towards common goals.

1. Committee of Ministers Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe.

2. European Youth Foundation, available at www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation, accessed 9 June 2016.

— For the Council of Europe, youth policy is a strategy implemented by public authorities with a view to providing young people with opportunities and experiences that facilitate their successful integration into society and enable them to be active and responsible members of their societies, as well as agents of change. It involves four dimensions referring to all aspects of young people's lives: a. being in a good shape (physically and mentally), b. learning (informal, non-formal and formal), c. participation and d. inclusion. Youth policy may combine different means of intervention (legislation, specific programmes, etc.) and be part of a long-term educational perspective. Youth policy targets all young people but should pay special attention to those who are socially, economically or culturally vulnerable.

— With this understanding, youth policies must not consider and approach young people and their issues only as “problems to be solved” – the so-called “fire-brigade” approach – but holistically across policy domains and through clear objectives that can be assessed” (Council of Europe 2003). Youth policy should also respect the role and “agency of young people while recognising the specific challenges and obstacles they face” (ibid.), depending on their position and the possibilities open to them.

— An extremely important approach of the Council of Europe in the field of youth policy is the promotion of youth participation, that is, the involvement of young people in all policy matters that concern them.



THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE AND YOUTH WORK

— Youth work around Europe is conducted by a large number of different institutions and organisations and by many different people, individually and in teams. It is very diverse, taking many different forms. Youth work is commonly understood as a tool for the personal development, social integration and active citizenship of young people. It is a “keyword” for all kinds of activities with, for and by young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. It belongs to the domain of “out-of-school” education, most commonly referred to as either non-formal or informal learning. The main objective of youth work is to create opportunities for young people to shape their own futures.



Chapter 2

The Council of Europe and the social rights of young people

