

NEEDLES IN HAYSTACKS

Finding a way forward for cross-sectoral youth policy



Youth Knowledge #21

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



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Finding a way forward for cross-sectoral youth policy

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The opinions expressed in this work, commissioned by the European Union–Council of Europe youth partnership, are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of either of the partner institutions, their member states or the organisations co-operating with them.

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Editorial

Magda Nico and Marti Taru

It seems fair to say that everyone in the youth field, and perhaps some people outside the field, have heard of “cross-sectoral youth policy” (CSYP). The defining feature of the idea can be easily grasped: (young) lives are cross-sectoral by nature, and youth policy also needs to be so. This appears to be as clear and easy as ABC. In European countries as well as at the level of the European Commission, cross-sectoralism is taken as one of the underlying principles in the field of youth. However, when one departs from the level of general ideas and starts looking into this topic in a more concrete manner, one can easily be confused by the functional multiplicity of cross-sectoralism in the field of youth. To look to the past to try and make sense of how cross-sectoralism has developed only compounds the problem. Across European countries, the youth field indeed constitutes a haystack consisting of and hiding numerous ways of implementing the principle of cross-sectoralism. Different countries and organisations institutionalise it differently and form different institutional (governmental and non-governmental) applications based on it. There is also a lot of variation in the histories of the emergence of CSYP – in the processes of gradual integration and implementation of this principle at national and local levels. In parallel with the practical and day-to-day implementation of cross-sectoralism are ongoing processes of monitoring, evaluating and rethinking.

For those participating in peer-learning exercises on youth policies,¹ and in other exchanges of knowledge and good practice in the youth field, for instance, the volume and variety of the ways of integrating this principle in the youth field “machine” is even more evident. Indeed, in these contexts, it is not only the ideas of CSYP but also the variety of practices (including everything from emergence to evaluation and repetition) at national and at local levels and their level of success and sustainability that is shared and cherished. Factors behind success are analysed so that opportunities for transferring a policy measure from one setting to another can go through a preliminary evaluation.

But this knowledge sharing that empowers participants and the exchange of good (and bad) practices that helps build a common understanding of the main values and practices is clearly not enough to impact the youth sector in all countries. The written word travels faster. This book seeks to take advantage of this, as was clearly stated in the open call for participation on this book, in two ways. Firstly, by increasing the availability of literature on cross-sectoralism in the youth field, which to date has been rather scant, consisting of reports written in national languages and using different approaches and concepts. Making this literature available will hopefully support the development of a common understanding of what CSYP means in different countries and settings. On the other hand, the book intends to provide a set

1. Many of which were developed by or with the collaboration of the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission in the field of youth.

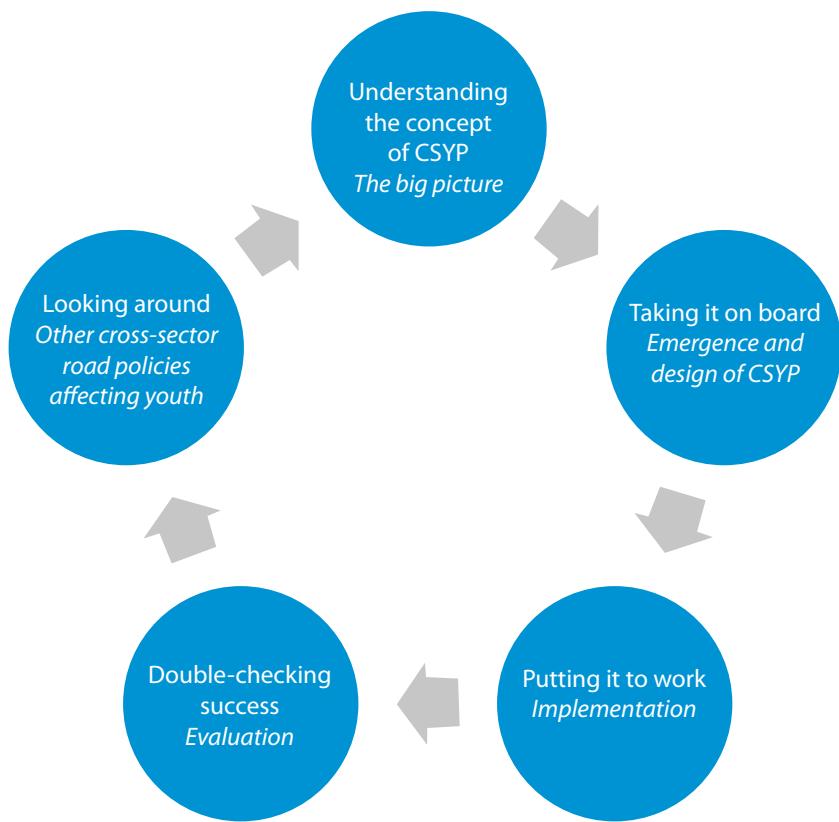
of comparable reports and testimonials of concrete experiences of cross-sectoral youth practices, which could be useful for practical purposes.

Secondly, the book intends to provide some instruments of reflection, design and implementation that could be useful to bring about improvement in young people's lives. Obviously, variations across European countries and settings within counties are large enough to preclude a "one size fits all" solution that can be copied and implemented anywhere. Each country needs to develop working solutions itself; the chapters in this book can provide analytical tools that have the potential to be useful in these processes.

Our previous understanding of CSYP development and implementation underpins the general framework of the book, in which all contributions were invited to "auto-position". This is based on the idea that the efficacy and sustainability of CSYP and co-operation are dependent on how synchronised the various levels of functioning are, from the legal and formal framework to interpersonal and interinstitutional relations. This led to several themes, one of which is certainly bottom-up policy processes (involving young people themselves, or non-governmental organisations that represent them or act on their behalf, or based on local realities) versus a top-down design of youth policies (or public policies that address the young, being designed with more general goals in mind and from a more general perspective). Another theme inherent to CSYP, by definition, revolves around the subject areas of professionals, organisations and ministries involved in collaboration. A third theme is essentially discussions on the need for complex systems of CSYP that encapsulate both vertical and horizontal channels of communication and collaboration.

The outline of the book then emerged from the chapters selected following the open call to contributors. It is organised in four blocks of knowledge that follow, in a way, a chronological yet circular nature (see Figure 1). The first one, with contributions from some members of the editorial team, tries to provide the big (European) picture of CSYP, namely to offer an insight into how official documents and reports produced by key agents in the European youth field reflect and propose understandings of CSYP. The second section is dedicated to the presentation of processes of emergence and design of CSYP, namely the approach they were conceived under (top-down or bottom-up) and personal and institutional (local or national) efforts towards their success. The third section zooms in on the concrete implementation challenges, successes and failures, and strategies for better functionality and efficacy of CSYP when put into practice. The identification of these issues is mostly done *a posteriori*, namely in evaluation processes made by external bodies. Finally, the fourth section deals with cross-sectoral policy that, without being necessarily or primarily youth-based or youth-led, as a result of its own transversal nature, ends up affecting and targeting youth-related issues in particular. In the editorial team's understanding, these should also be considered CSYP or, at the very least, CSYP has to learn from more generalist cross-sectoral policy. This would help us update our policies and practices, really taking into account other sectors' experiences. Isn't that what cross-sectorality is all about?

Figure 1: Steps in CSYP development



The book reflects the diversity of actors involved in the youth field (policy makers, youth researchers, youth workers and workers in the field of youth). It is our desire that these professionals as well as other people interested in the youth field (students, stakeholders, leaders of European institutions, etc.) find in this book a valuable apparatus of knowledge about cross-sectoral policy on behalf of the younger generations.

Part I

Taking a step back to see the big picture – The haystack

Introduction

Magda Nico²

Life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot.
(Charlie Chaplin, 1889-1977)

There are many examples both in real and academic life where shifting the scale of observation significantly changes our views, opinions or understandings. The same is true with understandings and opinions on cross-sectoral policy and practice. We hypothesise that what is considered the “haystack” and the “needles” depends strongly on the scale of observation rather than our specific positioning in the youth field, derived from our professional identity (as researchers, youth workers, policy makers, young people, etc.). What we intend to provide with the first part of this book is an overview of the “haystack”, as constituted by national or local CSYP and practices. The idea is then to provide a “common ground” to the reception of the chapters of this book, each using a specific national or local example and/or a particular theoretical or practical argument. This intended common ground derives from the research of members of the editorial team and, in a way, influences the very nature of the book. The meta-argument of this first part is that the differences between two apparently competing views – local versus structural, national versus European, top-down versus bottom-up – are the result of analytical positions, the result of the shift in the lens and in the window of observation. They do not need to be understood as rival views, but rather as complementary ones.

This is achieved in two ways. My own chapter starts this overview by analysing the relevant, at a European level, documents on cross-sectoral policy. My argument is that it would be difficult, not to mention rather inconclusive, to look for specific “needles” – cross-sectoral practices – if we haven’t yet spotted the “haystack”: the cross-sectoral policy arena. The argument is that without understanding the European political and discursive context, one cannot aim at providing a first draft of a map of CSYP or develop comparative exercises among these different national experiences. This is not, however, denying the importance of bottom-up processes; rather, it is to underline the fact that these policies at a European level influence and contextualise the emergence and development of CSYP at national or local levels. The former end up influencing the latter anyway, in the circular movement presented in the editorial to this book.

The material used was mainly that produced in co-operation with the European Union (EU), the work of the Council of Europe and the experiences of cross-sectoral co-operation of a number of specific countries (more specifically the youth policy reviews developed by international teams on behalf of the Council of Europe). The analysis of the material allows me to conclude that CSYP means different things in

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different contexts, documents and organisations (and to researchers). Understanding can vary between vertical levels of communication (between a youth ministry or its equivalent and young people, namely through non-governmental organisations), and horizontal communication (between a youth ministry or its equivalent and other ministries). The use of the concept can vary from "CSYP as a principle" (used as an umbrella expression to argue that any policy that concerns young people has to be drawn up having in mind every other sector), to "CSYP as collaboration or co-ordination" (which implies very different responsibilities and power resources for the ministry responsible for youth or its equivalent), to "CSYP as the approach using cross-cutting issues" as directly implied in youth policy. Analysis of the youth policy reviews also confirmed, implicitly and explicitly, this lack of conceptual consensus around the term "CSYP" and the variable attribution of the term "cross-cutting issue" to specific youth issues. This lack of precision is considered counterproductive for the exchange of good practices between countries, the analysis of the recurrence of certain issues across time, and ultimately also for the development and implementation of CSYP itself, as it makes the aforementioned "common ground" difficult to pinpoint.

Marti Taru's chapter follows a different approach and methodology, albeit with a similar goal. It departs from the very idea of existing conceptual and definitional clarity, stating that "when we look at the field of youth and public policy, we notice that the situation is far from clear even at the level of core terms like 'youth policy', 'youth work', and perhaps 'youth' itself". Taru's approach to this clarification is to develop three major pillars in the development of CSYP, namely the development of public policy addressing young people at a European level; the development of cross-sectoral co-operation in public administration systems at a European level; and the experiences and views of people working directly in the youth field in national administrations. By separating, in a way, these three aspects, Taru is indeed arguing that the CSYP concept is a recent invention and basically a result of other, more structural, developments in public administration systems.

The opinions and recommendations of CSYP practitioners are the cherry on top of this argument. These participants' inside information is a valuable source of data on the "practical" definitions of CSYP. Among the emergent ideas that came out of the youth policy seminars held in 2015 we find: the need to avoid a gap between CSYP (national) development and its (local) implementation; the need to measure and monitor the success/impact of the objectives proposed by each cross-sectoral policy; the need to open the policy design and implementation arena to young people, fostering their participation from the very beginning, and also the trust between (young) people and institutions; and the need to open and actively maintain channels of communication and co-operation between sectors, among other important issues.

Together, what these two chapters show is that although there is a lack of clarity as well as misconceptions about what CSYP is and what it can be in each country or political climate, and that although there is a lack of institutional memory within and between sectors in this regard and a difficulty in learning from the past and reinventing the future of CSYP, there is a strong consensus in the youth community about what it should not be and how it should not function. This is as good a starting point, or consensual common ground, as any other.

Chapter 1

A primary look at secondary data – CSYP in official documents

Magda Nico³

Introduction: rising against “grounded cross-sectoral policy theory”⁴

Starting this book with an analysis of the documents on cross-sectoral policy is not an innocent choice, but rather an analytical statement, which can be expressed in metaphorical, chronological and political terms. Metaphorically, one can argue that it would be difficult to look for specific “needles” if we haven’t even spotted the “haystack”. In fact, in terms of understanding a phenomenon or a process, “zoom-in to zoom-out” strategies rarely work. Without understanding the European political and discourse context first, how could one aim at drawing a first draft of a map of cross-sectoral youth policies, how could one develop comparative exercises using these different national experiences, how could one subsequently create channels of communication and common understandings on CSYP? How would one look for and identify the needles – the design, implementation and evaluation of these policies – without even acknowledging the amplitude of the meanings and practices they represent, that is the haystack (among many other haystacks or policy arenas, not necessarily youth-related)? National and local cross-sectoral youth policies are in this sense microcosms of the official European discourses disseminated, and the consensuses reached, on this topic. The level to which these microcosms are developed and adapted to national specificities, hurdles and potentialities is a different analytical level. Not only different, but of utmost importance. So much so that most of this book is indeed dedicated to presenting and discussing these aspects (see Parts II, III and IV).

But for now, and taking a chronological approach, one can accept as a premise that the European discourse on cross-sectoral policy is the first (published, accessible, public) material that can be analysed. This is so even if this published discourse may ultimately have been the result of bottom-up processes, of youth lobbies – namely youth organisations, youth workers or any other stakeholders – in decision making, in policy making or in changing the official and politically correct discourse on the need to develop CSYP. These processes, the “meta-causes” of the production of

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4. This chapter is based on Nico (2014).

the published documents, are not analysed here. Official and key documents thus become, in chronological terms, the first analysable data. This is not the same as arguing, however, that they are the spontaneous cause of the production of CSYP resolutions and guidelines at the European level.

Finally, from a political, policy or ideological point of view, European-level discourse represents a meta-discourse that is not easily integrated into a linear, bottom-up process. It might, instead, if not determine the creation, at least influence and contextualise the emergence, development or change of CSYP at national or local level. National bodies may import different aspects of these discourses into their laws, pacts, acts or implementation strategies, but the fact that more or less explicit European guidelines exist in this regard is not something that can be ignored by the key stakeholders –youth workers, researchers or policy makers.

As many of the following chapters demonstrate, and hopefully the reception and use of this book will also validate, the approach towards CSYP should not be one based on “grounded theory”. Grounded theory is a social science theory based on the belief and practice that knowledge must emerge exclusively and directly from the data rather than be based on preconceptions or “pre-knowledge”. It is the result of an inductive process derived from a corpus of data, knowledge or experience. Analysing the documents (first) is, in this sense, a statement that youth policy design or analysis cannot opt for pre-knowledge. Ignorance is not bliss.

On the other hand, CSYP should not be understood in an administrative vacuum. Public administrations increasingly design and handle cross-sectoral governmental strategies in approaching several societal issues and sectors, not only or mainly with the youth sector. The shifts from bureaucracy to “new public management” and subsequently to “new governance” have increased and been mainstreamed to variable degrees in Europe, with several instruments being found adequate for cross-sectoral policy design in general, such as: networks as governance models; co-operation and collaboration as a governance mechanism; formal and informal agreements as preferred legal instruments; and interorganisational focus within sectors/policy coalitions as the preferred organisational scope (Steurer 2007: 208). Even though this chapter does not provide an analysis of the interface between the changes in the discourse on CSYP and these important changes in public administration, a reading should not avoid taking into account this wider context.

This text thus contributes an analysis and understanding of the discourses by key European agents in the youth field as regards CSYP and aims at contributing to the creation of a general and common understanding of both the homogeneity and the heterogeneity in the CSYP concept.⁵

Data and methodology

An overview of existing information on cross-sectoral policy co-operation was provided, mainly based on the material produced in co-operation with the EU, the work of the Council of Europe and the experiences of cross-sectoral co-operation in a number of specific countries (more specifically, the youth policy reviews

5. What it does not do is analyse national specificities, namely welfare states’ traditions and practices, public administration hierarchies and networks, and the role of youth in that regard.

developed by international teams on behalf of the Council of Europe). Key documents were collected, and a selection was subjected to thematic content analysis using the software MAXQDA®. This analysis has two focuses. One is on the formal importance and political recognition provided by European institutions to the cross-sectoral area of youth policy (analysis of official documents). The second is on the approaches and issues regarding national operationalisation of CSYP (from emergence to implementation). Each focus uses specific documents that are available, and available in English (Table 1).

Documents used for this purpose were mainly from the United Nations and the European institutions, including the EU and the Council of Europe in particular (which involved a greater variety of authors and types of documents, and aimed to cover the main agents of political expression in the youth field, such as the European Youth Forum, the Council of Europe and the European Commission) (Table 1). This respects the analysis of the formal and political importance attributed to CSYP. A classification of possible models of CSYP is proposed in this regard, as part of an attempt to organise the heterogeneity discovered.

As mentioned, a second goal consists in analysing the operationalisation of CSYP at the national level. Not all European countries are included since their inclusion depended on the availability of data and reports in English. The main set of documents used in this analysis comprises the youth policy reviews published by the Council of Europe, particularly content related to cross-cutting issues and that presented in the policy review's recommendations. This respects the concrete national experiences as they are interpreted by the international team responsible for the reviews. A multi-layered classification of the cross-cutting issues is also proposed in this regard, as a result of the critical analysis developed.

Table 1: Scope and type of documents collected in relation to CSYP

	Scope	Author	Policy	Policy review	Total
Analysis of the formal importance	International	United Nations	20		20
	European	European Commission	7		7
		Council of Europe	3		3
		Youth Forum	1		1
Analysis of national operationalisation	Country-level	Council of Europe		21	21

CSYP: what does it mean?

The international context and intertwined ambition

The importance of CSYP has been analysed in two contexts. In the international context, we note that from an early stage, the United Nations has: recognised the importance of “national youth policies and programmes of an intersectoral nature”; tried to identify their development on a national basis; and requested more research, monitoring and identification of good practices in CSYP at national level (made especially evident in the quote above). The UN has been promoting national youth “policies that are cross-sectoral and integrated” since the International Youth Year 1985 and since at least 1999 it has been recognised as one of the “priority youth issues for the 21st century”:

It would be interesting to see more evaluation of this improvement. What are the outcomes of those policies? What progress has been made? What are the obstacles encountered? What new approaches are needed to better address the concerns of youth in the context of an integrated and cross-sectoral national youth policy? It would be a service to countries and the international community to devote the necessary resources towards a comprehensive analysis of this experience.⁶

The content of the references to CSYP in the documents on youth produced by the UN is nonetheless quite diverse (see Table 2).

Table 2: Number of references to CSYP in UN policy documents on youth

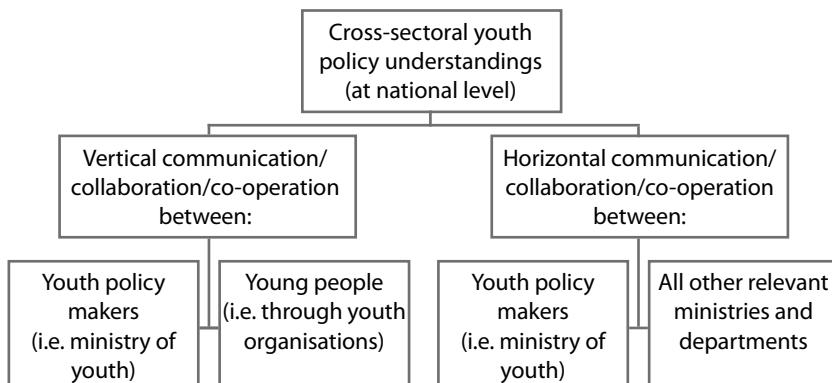
	1979	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2004	2005	2006	2008	2010	2012
Resolutions	0			0		3	1	0		0	1	0
Implementations		12	10		6			0	0	0	1	1
Evaluations								3				

The first point to be noted is that the understandings of CSYP used in the resolutions and in the implementation reports are quite different. In the resolutions, two definitions are attached to CSYP: one focusing on communication and collaboration between the youth organisation sector (the voice of young people) and the policy-making sector, the other referring more to interministerial or inter-departmental collaboration (Figure 2). In this sense, in some resolution documents it is argued that “cross-sectoral youth policies should take into consideration the empowerment and full and effective participation of young people, and their role as a resource and as independent decision makers in all sectors of society”,⁷ which implies that there should be communication between the governmental and non-governmental sector. On the other hand, other documents stress the participation of other – more horizontally situated – partners such as:

6. Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, to the Year 2000 and Beyond, by the General Assembly Economic and Social Council, United Nations, 1999.
7. Resolutions of the General Assembly on policies and programmes involving youth, United Nations, 2002.

Member States, United Nations bodies, specialised agencies, regional commissions and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations concerned, in particular youth organisations, to make every possible effort to implement the World Programme of Action, aiming at cross-sectoral youth policies, by integrating a youth perspective into all planning and decision-making processes relevant to youth⁸

Figure 2: The two main understandings of CSYP at national level



This dichotomy is at the very core of the conceptual confusion around exactly what CSYP is – and subsequently should be (Figure 2). Stating that these two approaches do not necessarily overlap is not, evidently, equivalent to arguing that they do not or should not co-exist and interact, in effective and efficient ways, depending on national specificities. Horizontal and vertical cross-sectoral policies and practices can and in some cases should co-exist, but their meanings and manifestations are different and pose distinct challenges. This is a problem that is underestimated in the implementation reports of the UN. Although there is a great effort to promote the idea of designing CSYP, the reality departs from the very ambitious ideal of CSYP that includes the two distinct views mentioned above (Figure 2). Basically, this promotes the ideal that youth policy should be built on a “multilevel and cross-sectoral basis”, therefore including “participation of youth-related departments and ministries, national non-governmental youth organisations and the private sector”.⁹ This would represent a much more complex cross-sectoral system than most countries can handle, at least at once or in administrative and organisational vacuums. The development of CSYP could in fact integrate these two levels of communication and collaboration but it is somewhat naïve to believe that all countries have the conditions and the resources to create and maintain the structures to make this happen. The development of cross-sectoral policy can be done gradually, beginning for instance with one level and adding the second when appropriate.

8. Resolution 56/177 of the General Assembly on policies and programmes involving youth, United Nations, 2004.
 9. Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, to the Year 2000 and Beyond, by the General Assembly Economic and Social Council, United Nations, 1997.

The European context and conceptual confusion

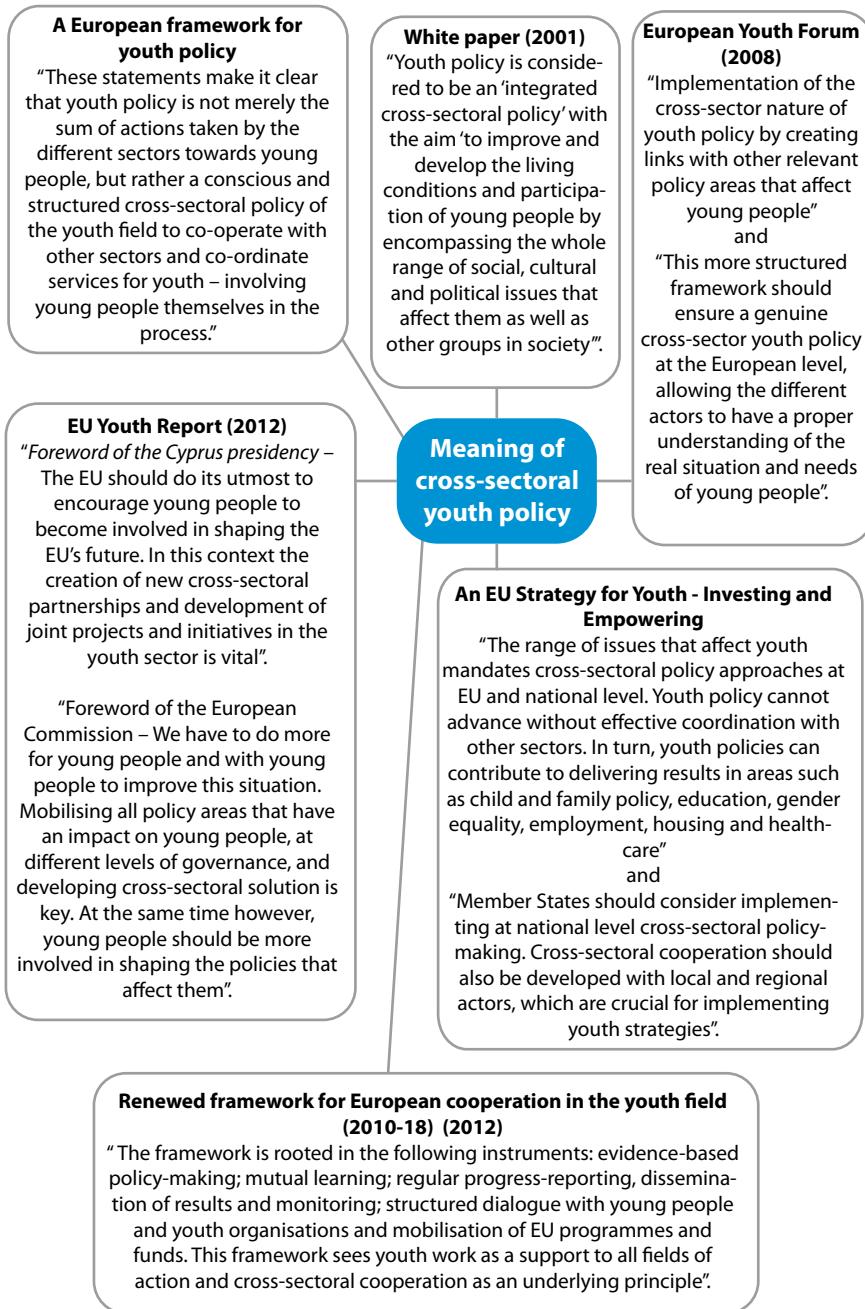
The cross-sectoral aspect as a natural and consensual principle of youth policy

In a comparative analysis of the meanings and importance attributed to CSYP at the European level, we can observe that although there is consensus in the youth field that the design of youth policy must be broad, multidimensional, holistic, integrated and cross-sectoral, the practical meanings associated with this vary considerably (Figure 3). In short, it is clear that youth policy is much more than youth policy per se, and that it must collaborate with, communicate, encompass, integrate or lead a set of coherent plans, actions, programmes and policies that are, in principle, the formal or legal responsibility of other sectors. But again, it also becomes clear that collaboration, communication and integration, etc. are treated as mutually equivalent, thus taking the very concept for granted and approaching it only as an intention, ambition or target, rather than as a method, plan or process (Figure 2):

Youth Policy is a cross-sector, integrated policy aimed at young people, with young people and starting from the needs of young people. Its aim is to improve and develop the living conditions and participation of young people, encompassing the whole range of social, cultural and political issues affecting them and other groups in the society. (European Youth Forum Perspective on European Youth Policy, Lithuania, 1998).

In all documents and statements about CSYP its importance is underlined, and there are some documents that encompass all that is being said about it, for example in their forewords. The 2012 EU Youth Report is a case in point. Characteristics such as "vital" or "key" are used to describe the "creation of new cross-sectoral partnerships and development of joint projects and initiatives in the youth sector" (by the Cyprus presidency) and the development of "cross-sectoral solutions" (European Commission 2012). Other documents, for instance, use the cross-sectoral issue merely as an inherent characteristic of youth policy, a "principle", or something that is part of the very nature of youth policy. This is the case in the definition of youth policy made in the European Commission's 2001 White Paper, where it is stated that "youth policy is considered to be an 'integrated cross-sectoral policy' with the aim, 'to improve and develop the living conditions and participation of young people by encompassing the whole range of social, cultural and political issues that affect them as well as other groups in society'" (European Commission 2001), or in the case of the renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field a decade later, where it is stated that the "framework sees youth work (1) as a support to all fields of action and cross-sectoral co-operation as an underlying principle" (European Commission 2012b: 6).

Figure 3: Meanings of CSYP in key documents (a summary)



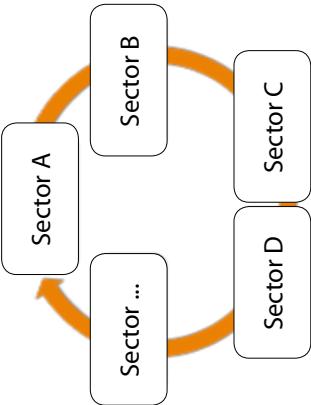
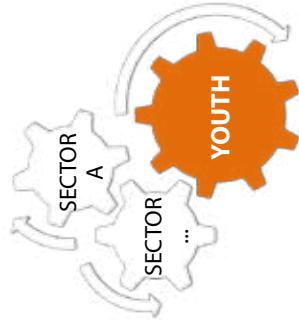
“Cross-sectoral” policy as an umbrella for different systems of collaboration and interaction

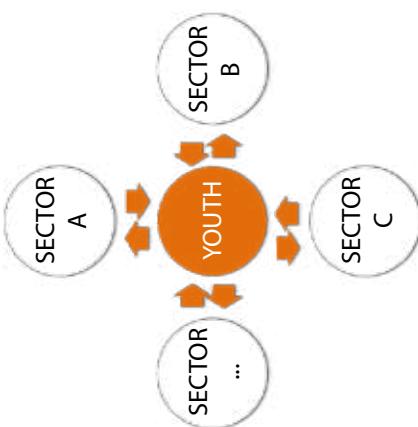
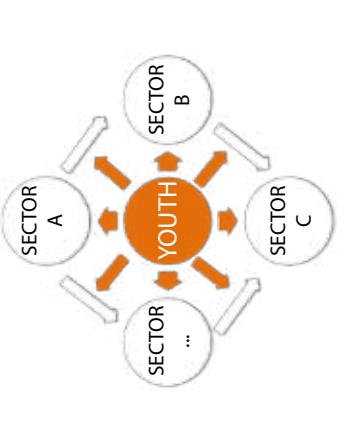
There is a general consensus on the importance of the cross-sectoral nature of youth policy. But this is not the case when it comes to:

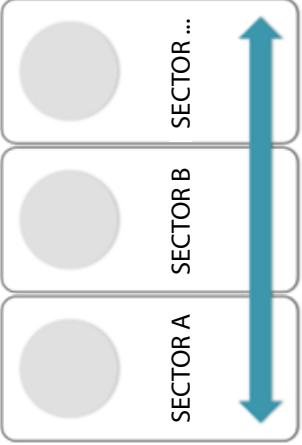
- ▶ the content of CSYP;
- ▶ the role of youth policy in other sectors (visible, for instance, in the statement “a structured cross-sectoral policy of the youth field to co-operate with other sectors and co-ordinate services for youth – involving young people themselves in the process”, A European framework for youth policy by Lasse Suriala, and “Implementation of the cross-sector nature of youth policy by creating links with other relevant policy areas that affect young people”, European Youth Forum 2008);
- ▶ the levels of governance involved (e.g. “Cross-sectoral co-operation should also be developed with local and regional actors”, European Youth Forum, 2008; and “Mobilising all policy areas that have an impact on young people, at different levels of governance, and developing cross-sectoral solutions is key”, European Commission 2012a).

Taking into account the heterogeneity of the meanings and understandings of CSYP in key documents by key actors in the field of youth, and the need to tackle and map this heterogeneity, Table 3 is an attempt to summarise, organise and separate the different paradigms and definitions.

Table 3: The nature, missions, definitions and issues of CSYP

Nature and mission As a principle	Narrow definitions and some issues The field of CSYP	Mechanism – Example Youth policy
	<p>Youth concerns all other sectors “The Ministers responsible for youth policy should also ensure that youth-related concerns are taken into account in these other policies” (European Commission 2001).</p> <p>This would imply a kind of “supervision” role of the ministries responsible for youth, which is inconsistent with the position they usually occupy within the formal hierarchy. This is therefore extremely ambitious.</p> <p>This principle would imply the existence of information on what sectors to select for specific policies, on what occasions, with what urgency, and when this transversality would take place. It is therefore too abstract.</p>	 <p>Youth sector as an element in other sectors.</p>  <p>Youth sector as one of the cogs of the system.</p>

As a process with fixed roles			
	Cross-sectorial	Co-operation/co-operation	Co-ordination
	<p>Youth as one of the peer actors and an equal partner</p> <p>In this version of CSYP the relations are bilateral. The youth sector would share "information and competences, objectives and goals, and also results" with each one of the other relevant sectors (Motamed-Afshari 2014).</p> <p>This "intersectoral co-operation" implies "recognised relationships formed to take short or long-term actions that are effective, efficient or sustainable" (ibid.).</p> <p>This would mean that the collaboration would be fragmented in pairs, and much potential for conjoint solutions could be wasted. A possible solution would be the creation of an "interministerial working group as a part of the structure to develop a national youth policy" (Denstad 2009).</p> 	<p>Each pair of issues is tackled one at a time</p> 	<p>A system that works independently of the issue placed in the centre.</p>

	 <p>The rule is that there is no rule One size does not fit all</p> <p>The placement within sectors of each issue that, for different reasons, concerns youth is difficult to establish. Some might be disputed across sectors while others might be (unfairly) left for the youth sector to deal with. This also varies across countries.</p> <p>This is one of the reasons why although all youth issues are cross-cutting by nature, each one implies a different:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presence or relevance in each country; • urgency in each country or region; • power relation with other governmental sectors; • dependency on the work with and by non-governmental organisations (NGOs); • set of associations for prevention, intervention or sustainability; • partnership possibilities and constraints. <p>This definition would imply a de-standardisation of youth policies at a national level, which might be looked at, from a European perspective, as a negative thing. However, doing so ensures that the following is taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organisational structure of each country; • priorities of each country; • complexity of each cross-cutting issue; • variety of combinations of barriers to social inclusion experienced at an individual level; • respect for the main principle mentioned above, that youth policy is by nature (and must be in practice) cross-sectoral. 	<p>Multipled for each cross-cutting issue. Each cross-cutting issue could demand a different approach and strategy (co-ordination, collaboration, etc.).</p>
	<p>Cross-cutting issues</p> <p>“Back to basics”</p> <p>Process with flexible roles</p>	