

Youth Partnership

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



INFORMATION TEMPLATE

ON

SOCIAL INCLUSION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

IN ARMENIA



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1. The socio-economic situation of young people

1.1 Please inform which groups of the young people are perceived as being socially excluded. What are the main factors for being socially excluded as a young person in your country?

In order to remove certain groups from the experience of social exclusion, it is first necessary to identify clearly the barriers, mechanisms and processes that currently block their pathways to social inclusion. In accordance with those factors it is already possible to separate the correspondent groups of young people in social exclusion or within the risk zone of the latter.

In the Republic of Armenia such factors are considered

- The impossibility or existing obstacles of being included in the labour market
- The impossibility or existing obstacles of being included in educational programs

Article 20 of RA law on “Employment of the population and social protection in case of unemployment”¹ identifies the groups uncompetitive in labour market and the additional warranties granted to those who have difficulties in job placement and are unable to compete equally in the labour market.

1. The following groups of those unemployed and seeking work who have difficulties in job placement and who are unable to compete equally in the labour market are entitled to social protection ensuring additional warranties.

1) The disabled

2) Those who have returned from confinement institutions and the institutions applying coercive actions (compulsory measures) of medical character and have applied to the national employment service within a year of their return

3) The children who reached the labour age and are without parental care and the individuals who belong to the group of children left without parental care in the case of being unemployed for at least six months uninterruptedly

4) Those registered in the national employment service within three years after getting demobilized from the compulsory term of military service in the case of being unemployed for at least six months uninterruptedly

6) Those unemployed for at least three years

¹ <http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=2420>

7) The refugees

8) Individuals registered in the office of drug-addicted persons who are in remission

9) Victims of trafficking

As for the inclusion in educational programs, according to the “Household’s integrated living conditions survey” carried out by the National Statistical Service of RA, in 2012 only 0.78% of young people (aged between 16 and 30) didn’t receive a secondary education.

1.2 Please provide the percentage representing the share of young people (18-24) who are at *risk of poverty* (and/or severely materially deprived and/or living in a household with very low work intensity).

Please compare it to the general population risk of poverty rate. What is the trend in your country – is the rate growing etc.?

Note: When available, please use the EUROSTAT data. If EUROSTAT data is not available, please refer to another indicator of youth poverty used in your country indicating the source.

In the Republic of Armenia Eurostat data is not available, and therefore the data extracted from the “Household’s integrated living conditions survey”² is used. For the greater representation of trends, the data of 2008-2012 will be submitted.

The social image of the Republic and the rate of poverty are determined based on the results of the “Household’s integrated living conditions survey” carried out each year by the National Statistical Service of RA. The latest official data refers to 2011. According to the RA law on “State benefits”, the families who have applied to the territorial authority of social services in the last 12 months have the right to be granted with family allowances. Their vulnerability score is higher than that of the marginal value identified by RA government for the year (As identified by the RA Government decree N 1-N dated 10 January 2013 for 2013 the marginal value of family vulnerability score is 30.00). In 2013 the number of families with young people aged 18-24 included in the list of family allowances was 22141, which involved 28777 young people.

Poverty lines and their changes in 2008-2011 for a single adult person per month

² <http://armstat.am/en/?nid=374>,
<http://www.armstat.am/en/?nid=81&pthead=pov&year=&submit=%D5%93%D5%B6%D5%BF%D6%80%D5%A5%D5%AC>

(Dram)

Poverty lines	2008	2009	2010	2011
Food or extreme poverty line	17644	17483	19126	21306
Lower poverty line	24388	25217	27410	29856
Upper poverty line	29903	30920	33517	36158

Source: 2008-2011. HILCS

1 Euro=560.02 Central Bank 28.10.2013.

The main poverty incidence in 2008-2011

(Percentage)

	2008			2010			2011					
	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Extremely poor	Very poor	Poor	Percentage of the poor in the current population	Depth of poverty	Severity of poverty
Urban settlements	1.9	13.0	27.6	4.1	21.1	35.7	4.6	21.3	35.2	64.8	8.4	2.7
Yerevan	1.1	8.1	20.1	2.2	14.3	27.1	2.7	14.5	27.5	34.0	5.8	1.7
Other cities	2.8	18.2	35.8	6.1	28.9	45.4	6.6	28.7	43.6	30.8	11.2	3.8
Rural settlements	1.2	11.9	27.5	1.1	21.5	36.0	2.2	17.5	34.5	35.2	6.9	2.0
Total	1.6	12.6	27.6	3.0	21.3	35.8	3.7	19.9	35.0	100.0	7.9	2.4

Source: 2008-2011 HILCS

Poverty incidence by sex and age groups in 2008-2011

(Percentage)

Sex and age groups	2008		2011	
	Extremely poor	Poor	Extremely poor	Poor
Sex				
Female	1.7	27.3	3.7	34.5
Male	1.6	27.8	3.7	35.5
Age				
Children 0-5	1.9	32.0	4.4	45.3
6-9	1.8	30.3	4.7	42.2
10-14	1.5	29.7	4.5	39.1
15-17	2.3	32.4	4.7	40.1
18-19	0.7	26.1	5.3	33.7
20-24	1.3	26.0	3.4	33.6

25-29	2.1	27.0	3.7	37.1
30-34	1.1	25.7	4.1	38.8
35-39	1.9	27.6	4.5	36.2
40-44	1.9	29.3	3.8	34.8
45-49	1.9	25.7	3.0	30.3
50-54	1.2	22.2	3.2	29.5
55-59	0.7	21.7	3.4	32.5
60-64	1.3	24.8	1.6	27.5
65+	2.0	29.5	2.8	30.8
Total	1.6	27.5	3.7	35.0

Source : 2008-2011 HILCS

According to the “Concept of State Youth Policy” in the Republic of Armenia young people are defined as persons aged between 16 and 30. Yet, if we study the submitted charter (18-24 year), then:

- 1% of the youth are extremely poor (in 2008) and 4.35% (in 2011). In addition, if in 2008 this incidence was lower than the average one of the total population (1.6%), in 2011 it is already higher than the latter (3.7%). This is particularly obvious among 18-19 year old young people (5.3%).
- 26.05% of the youth are poor (in 2008) and 33.65% (in 2011). There is again a noticeable increase here, which, however comprehends no age differences.

As of 1st September of 2013, the number of jobseekers was 67.7 thousand (of which 48.5 thousand were female jobseekers and 7.5 thousand 16-24 years old young people. The number of unemployed is equal to the 83.5% of that of jobseekers or 56.5 thousand people. The share of 16-24 years old young people among unemployed is 10.0% or 5.7 thousand people. 5798 of them are seeking a job for the first time (457 among which have recently demobilized from the compulsory term military service). 1.9 thousand of unemployed young people are graduates (595 – higher education, 555 - specialized secondary education, 94 - primary (vocational) and 698- general secondary)

1.3 Has an impact of the current financial crisis on young people been observed in your country?

In the Republic of Armenia no research, as such, has been undertaken in order to be able to reveal the possible impacts of the financial crisis. There is, however, a possibility to get an idea of the adjacent impact of the financial crisis based on analysis of the results of other researches.

Armenia's first National Report on youth was implemented in 2006, the second one in 2011³. The comparison of these reports allows us to observe existing trends.

A research "Analysis of the employment situation of youth in Armenia" and a report "Armenia's preliminary labour market study emphasizing youth employment issues" ⁴ have, in addition, been carried out in order to assess existing problems and challenges of the youth employment in Armenia and to submit a proposal package on encouragement of a stable employment of young people.

This impact is described in detail in the report "Armenian youth and development of ethno-socio-cultural system in Armenia" ⁵.

In the 2000's a high rate of economic growth was observed and the unemployment rate was decreasing in Armenia. This was due to the reconstruction process of the Armenian economy in the new niche of the world system, in connection with which new job opportunities were turning up. During the period of economic growth the number of people leaving Armenia was simultaneously falling, thus in 2004-2006 even a positive migration balance was fixed. Nonetheless, the decade of high rate economic growth didn't entail a qualitative increase of unemployment rate, as far as the new branches in the economy were not able to mobilize the "odd" labour force generated as a result of the elimination of labour intensive industries. The global crisis of 2008 had a huge impact on the Armenian economy: a 14.1% GDP decline compared with the previous year was stated in 2009. And regardless of the nominal GDP growth in 2010-2011, negative trends came in both unemployment rate and particularly in the annual balance of people arriving in Armenia and leaving it. If we turn the unemployment into an absolute value, than basing on the NSS data we can state that in 2010 there were 278.000 unemployed people in Armenia among which 117.200 were young people aged between 15 and 29.

It is evident that in case of the current economy structure the produce of such a number of jobs is not realistic, that is to say the unemployment issue especially within the youth in Armenia is impossible to be faced without introducing qualitative structural changes in economy. This might be deemed as the major negative impact of the financial crisis.

2. Policy measures for young people at risk of social exclusion

³ http://www.erit.am/pdf_fayler/book_zekujc.pdf

⁴ http://employment.am/up/attach/attach_arm5.zip

⁵ http://www.erit.am/pdf_fayler/erit_zrujc_CD.pdf

2.1. Social subsistence/ protection and health cover for young people living in poverty

The social protection could be divided into two main directions:

- Labour and financial
- Healthcare

In the framework of the enacted law, the “State Employment Service” Agency (SESA) initiates programs mobilizing young people, in particular

- Vocational training courses for unemployed
- Vocational training, rehabilitation of job skills of the disabled young jobseekers
- Vocational training of jobseekers owning agricultural lands
- Compensation paid to the unemployed for the material expenses in connection with work and to disabled jobseekers
- Financial support to the unemployed for state registration of entrepreneurial activities and to disabled jobseekers
- Partial salary compensation to the employers in case they employ individuals uncompetitive in the labour market
- Organization of internships of unemployed who have profession but no work experience and disabled jobseekers within the employer
- Job adjustment of disabled jobseekers within the employer

The programs are realized by SESA regional and local offices, situated in Yerevan and in regional centers and former administrative territorial regions. In the RA draft law on “Employment” which has already been approved by RA Government and is expected to be discussed in National Assembly.

There is compulsory medical insurance system in Armenia per se, nevertheless individuals in social need and within the exclusion zone are provided with free medical care.

2.2. Measures to meeting the medical Care needs of Young people at risk of social exclusion

The social support of healthcare (i.e. that of young people) is carried out according to the Government decree⁶ on “State-granted free medical care and service”.

There are socially insecure and special groups provided with state-granted free medical care and service which could include young people as well;

- Beneficiaries with a vulnerability score that is equal to or higher than 30.00 included in the poverty (family) benefits system
- Disabled of 1st, 2nd and 3rd groups
- Disabled children (up to 18 years old)
- Children of single-parent families (up to 18 years old)
- Children left without parental care (up to 18 years old) and individuals considered as children left without parental care (18-23 years old)
- Children of multiple children families (families with 4 or more children up to 18 years old)
- Family members of military servants who died during RA defence as well as the performance of their official duties
- People undergoing supplementary medical examination on virtue of the leave of a competent medical and social examination authority
- Children of families comprising disabled (up to 18 years old)
- Military servants and their family members
- The rescue servants and their family members
- People placed in orphanages and retirement houses
- Up to 18 years old children under the supervision of dispensary
- Women of reproductive age during the pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum period (As defined by the Ministry of Health of RA)
- Victims of trafficking

2.3. Measures to re-engage the young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)

The RA legislation sets up no certain definition of the group of young people not in education, employment or trainings (NEET) which is the reason for the lack of relevant policy or/and programs. However, there are a certain number of programs for unemployed young people, as well as special training programs submitted under question 1.1. The State Statistics Service

⁶ www.moh.am/OrengGorcox/318-Ն.doc

outlines a group of young people that have no job, for instance, and are not included in any educational and training programs (despite having previously received a proper education), i.e. people operating their compulsory term military service.

The results are as follows

16-30 years old NEET young people in 2012⁷					
	Total thousand people	By residence		By age groups	
		urban	rural	16-24	25-30
Total	314.3	208.4	105.9	191.9	122.4
Male	189.6	123.4	66.2	101.8	87.8
Female	124.7	85.1	39.6	90.1	34.7

	Total Thousand people	By educational level					
		Higher postgraduate	Specialized secondary	Primary (vocational)	General secondary	Secondary	Elementary, incomplete elementary
Total	314.3	64.4	60.7	8.1	157.5	21.1	2.6
Male	189.6	43.0	46.6	4.0	87.0	7.9	1.1
Female	124.7	21.3	14.1	4.2	70.5	13.1	1.5

Yet, at this moment 39.9% of Armenian youth are neither employed nor included in any educational or training program, among which prevail the ones with general secondary education (157.2 thousand young people). As mentioned, a number of programs are being organized for this group of young people by both the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

2.4. Measures to ensure access to decent housing for young people at risk of social exclusion

Within the framework of providing young people in the risk zone of social exclusion with decent household conditions, the “Service Centre of Social Housing Fund” SNCO carries out the program of providing with housing special groups in need of housing, i.e. orphanage graduates. At

⁷ Household's Integrated Living Conditions Survey, 2012.

present 59 families benefit from the social housing fund, 20 of which are young families (18-30 years old). The state program "Affordable housing for young people" is realized by the RA government⁸. In the framework of the program, banks and credit organization are providing mortgage loans for obtaining apartments to young people who benefit from state's financial assistance for repayment of those loans. The state's financial assistance is reflected in partial subsidies, whether direct or indirect, of the interest. On the whole, the state support young families in about 4 percentage points. As of the 1st of January 2013, 1011 families acquired apartments in the framework of the program, 50% out of which are in RA regions. Simultaneously, with the help of the NGO "YSU Graduates Union", and under the sponsorship of RA president, the project "Construction of apartments for young specialists" is being held. Within that project, about 1400 families purchased apartments for 50% of the market price.

2.5. Measures addressing the social integration of young people with disabilities

A series of programs for the young disabled is implemented by the Government, providing their social inclusion in the society. Particularly,

- Provides young people with hearing disabilities with European hearing-aids within the framework of the program "Providing the disabled with wheelchairs and hearing-aids"
- Provides the young disabled with other prosthetic and orthopaedic rehabilitating items. Furthermore, people with sight disabilities get Braille books and copybooks within the program "Speaking books"
- Young people with sight disabilities are included in the program of teaching with "Arev" (Sun) system, and provided with computer equipment

The RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is the co-sponsor of the NGO "Prkutyun" (Salvation), the primary objective of which is to provide day care and inclusion in the society for children with mental disabilities. Services of rehabilitation, training and consultations for disabled jobseekers are carried out by an SNCO under the same ministry, called "Gyumri Centre for Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled persons".

The inclusion of young people with disabilities is a mandatory requirement for the application in the on-line granting system cragrer.am, launched by the RA Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. In order to resolve the main problems of people with disabilities and especially to integrate them into society on the virtue of RA decree N 408-N dated 15 April 2010, the SNCO "Professional Orientation and Work Rehabilitation Center for People with disabilities" was

⁸ https://www.e-gov.am/u_files/file/decrees/kar/2010/01/10_0098.pdf

established. Its main objective is to contribute to the disabled individuals' vocational orientation development, work rehabilitation for facing the current labour market requirements, providing equal opportunities in labour market and full inclusion (integration).

2.6. The contribution of youth work (and youth centres) to social inclusion of young people

In this regard, it is noteworthy that the “Youth Professional Orientation Centre” SNCO (hereinafter referred to as the Centre) was founded in 2007. One of its main objectives is to lead school students to the labour market, while identifying their individual peculiarities and preferences, and to foster the establishment of competitive labour markets and the first entry to the labour market.

The main goal of the professional orientation of young people is to equip an individual with the main capacities of career development which includes permanent development as a student or learner, worker and citizen. The Centre provides teenagers and young people consulting services on professional orientation and, to this purpose, elaborates the work methodology with the stakeholders, work toolkits, organizes and runs individual and team works, and holds public events. In addition to working directly with stakeholders, the specialists of the Centre provide correspondent services for the teenagers' parents, employers and specialists working with schoolchildren and young people. The consultation has been provided on the issues of labour law, employment legislation and professional orientation.

About 12% of disabled individuals included in the program kept on working with the same employer after the end of the program. Regarding the programme of financial support to the unemployed, the number of individuals included in the program is steadily rising which is partly due to the professional consulting and teaching.

Active work is being done at regional level by the “Pan-Armenian Youth Foundation” through its regional youth centres.

3. Research on social inclusion

3.1. Is there any national report/ national survey investigating the social exclusion of young people in your country, including issues of discrimination?

The RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has prepared the “Social Inclusion Report” approved on virtue of RA Government Protocol decree N 45 dated 8 November 2012⁹.

⁹ https://www.e-gov.am/u_files/file/decrees/arc_voroshum/2012/11/MAR45-9.pdf
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In the report the RA legislation is summarized on the issues of providing employment for uncompetitive groups (hereinafter referred as social excluded) in the labour market, inclusion of uncompetitive groups in state employment programs, existing major problems and the reforms aimed at the encouragement of employment of those groups.

3.2. Is there any longitudinal research focused on the cumulative nature of disadvantage (taking place across generations of the same family).

Such a report has not yet been carried out in the Republic of Armenia.

3.3. Apart from national reports and surveys, are you aware of other research that is valuable for understanding the situation of young people (esp. those with fewer opportunities) in the current crisis?

D. Kazaryan “National Youth Aspirations Report” RA Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, UNDP Armenian office, 2012, - 200 pages¹⁰.

“Study of labour market in rural communities”. “Bascon Audit” CJSC commissioned by the RA Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2007¹¹.

Study of RA Labor Market. America CJSC¹².

An analysis of public opinion research about employment of persons with disabilities, “Improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities through the employment» (LIFE) program Yerevan 2012¹³.

4. Examples of policy responses and practices

4.1. What are the relevant initiatives/projects at regional/ national level promoting the social inclusion of young people?

As of 1st September 2013, the following programs have been implemented:

Within the framework of the program “Partial salary compensation to the employers in case they employ individuals uncompetitive in labour market”, 162 jobseekers (among which 38 are young people) have been recruited since the beginning of the year.

¹⁰ http://www.erit.am/pdf_fayler/Bnakaranashinutyun/HH%20eritasardneri%20dzgtumner.pdf

¹¹ http://employment.am/up/attach/attach_arm4.zip

¹² http://employment.am/up/attach/attach_arm2.zip

¹³ <http://life-disability.am/Docs/Public%20Opinion%20Survey%20Report%20Arm.pdf>

Within the program “Financial support to the unemployed for state registration of entrepreneurial activities and to disabled jobseekers” 76 individuals (among which 11 are young people) have been involved.

In the framework of the program “Vocational training courses” 871 jobseekers (385 of whom are young people), have been included in educational courses of most required professions in the labour market (693 unemployed, 123 owners of agricultural lands and 51 disabled jobseekers and 4 individuals who had been granted partial retirement, long service pensions and pensions under privileged conditions).

Within the framework of the program “Compensation paid to the unemployed for the material expenses in connection with work mission to some other place and to disabled jobseekers” 13 unemployed (2 of whom are young people) have been recruited in some other places.

135 unemployed have been included in the program “Organization of internships of unemployed who have profession but no work experience and disabled jobseekers within the employer”.

Within the framework of the program “Job adjustment of disabled jobseekers within the employer”, 28 jobs have been adjusted. 16 of the individuals included in the program are young people.

The State Employment Service Agency has organized 8 job fairs in cities Abovyan, Gyumri, Vanadzor, Dilidjan, Yerevan, Djermuk, Aparan and Artashat, attended by 241 employers, about 9250 jobseekers, and during which 1294 current and 500 anticipated vacancies were submitted by the employers: 491 jobseekers have been provided with job.

The Youth Events Holding Centre has achieved to organize two job fairs – in cities Idjevan and Vanadzor, which, apart from bringing together unemployed young people with potential employers, offered three-day trainings with young people on issues such as orientation in labour market and development of efficiency skills.

For the moment, no programs of social inclusion of the youth are being implemented, as long as the negotiations with the representatives of the World Bank on the issue of launching the youth employment program are in process.

4.2. Have young people and civil society organizations been given political and financial support to be involved in the policy making process on social inclusion?

The highest instance of co-management elaborating the state youth policy (i.e. social policy) is the National Youth Policy Council under the RA prime minister which elaborates and submits to approval to various authorities the five-year strategy of youth policy, as well as program proposals. The Council is set up on 50/50 principle and the non-state sector is presented by NGO representatives (6 member), representatives of student administration bodies of higher educational institutions (3 members), international and local experts, youth work researchers (3 members) and representatives of regional youth organizations (3 members).

Unfortunately, at local level youth participation rate is too low. Initiated by the RA Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs in 2013 and now at the stage of being set up, are youth councils under RA region governors. They are similarly expected to function on the principle of co-management. That is to say that young people in regions will have equal opportunities to develop the strategy of youth policy in collaboration with local authorities.

At international level the RA Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs is financially supporting the participation of Armenian young people in international conferences and forums, contributing to this more than five thousand travel grants each year.

4.3. Have youth organisations and other civil society organisations been involved in the development of the policies related to social inclusion of young people

They are included in both national and international levels. The mechanisms of inclusions are presented under previous questions.