

PROJECT YOUMIG

MULTI-LEVEL OVERVIEW

The project YOUMIG is dedicated to understanding the processes and effects linked to youth migration in general, and in particular at the level of local communities. Its research activities first covered a wider scope, creating a *conceptual framework* – a theoretical and analytical overview of youth migration – concentrating on the specific features of the 15-34 age group, such as online communication, self-realization values, attitudes towards mobility, well-being, family formation, education, labour, and so forth. This serves to evaluate the challenges of measuring and managing youth migration. The main findings were shared with all partners at knowledge-sharing and brainstorming sessions to create focused and mutual learning interactions on the transnational trends and impacts of youth migration.

Next, local partners took stock of the root causes and local processes of youth migration, analysing their effects on the local community, defining the local evidence base, and preparing themselves for the pilot phase. As a first step, available local datasets, data gaps and data needs were identified. The knowledge of local experts, practitioners and relevant institutions, was then brought together. Enriched by better data and stakeholders' know-how, local partners *analysed the status quo*, using quantitative and qualitative methods. A special emphasis was put on screening local services' responses to the in- and outward migration of young people. Finally, the identified administrative, management and capacity gaps were put into the language of numbers for strategic planning and improvement.

IMPROVED MEASURING

Another special focus of YOUMIG was on data collection issues concerning the causes and consequences of youth migration, in support of better governance at all levels. Local administrations, both in sending and receiving countries, need clear, accurate and transnationally-adopted data for measuring youth migration and its impacts on local development. Project YOUMIG therefore enhances the common knowledge base in the Danube Region by evaluating available indicators and defining new and consistent indicators to track changes in youth migration patterns by assessing their socio-demographic and economic impacts in a way that responds to governance needs.

First, the suitability of existing demographic, labour market, education and wellbeing indicators on youth migration was ascertained, then their developmental effects evaluated.

Partners defined the priority areas where evidence-based policymaking needed new or more accurate indicators. Based on that, partners created improved and transnationally-harmonised indicators to measure the developmental balance of youth migration (as gain or loss in human, social and financial capital) and track governance-related challenges. Local partners also tested the accuracy and effectiveness of the improved indicators on local data.

IMPROVED LOCAL SERVICES

Local governments are facing increasing challenges arising from the inward, outward and return migration of youth - however, in most cases they lack the capacities and tools to cope with such challenges. YOUMIG also aims to elaborate and test new tools to manage the impacts of youth migration, contributing to improved local capacities.

First, a collection of existing and tested good practices and actions linked to youth migration in sending and receiving communities was elaborated. While planning their own *pilot actions* contributing to better services, local partners could choose from the collection, or design new interventions. Second, all actions were properly tailored to the local context, and the implementation of the pilot actions was supported by stakeholder involvement and peer-review study visits by other partners. Third, each partner evaluated their pilot by paying special attention to aspects of sustainability and transferability.

In addition, each local partner tested a *one-stop-shop* unit based on a common methodology. The pilot unit within each local government acts as a hub for all youth migration related services (e.g. integration of immigrants, keeping contact with emigrants). It carves out the organisational channels within the local governance structures for effective planning and policymaking on youth migration, while providing a source of valuable information for young migrants.

STRATEGIES AND COOPERATION

Concluding the project, the final, core outputs were delivered: the evidence-based local youth migration strategies, and the multi-level governance and transnational cooperation schemes. Wider cooperation frameworks were created and tested on two levels. Firstly, multi-level governance cooperation structures were built between national statistical offices, research institutes and local governments; then policy recommendations were formulated to foster and deepen cooperation between these actors. Secondly, transferable transnational cooperation schemes between sending and receiving communities (linked by existing migratory processes) were described and win-win solutions were explored. Local governments channelled the acquired knowledge into a *local strategy* on better managing the impacts of youth migration. The strategy is accompanied by a *Data Toolkit* to support local governments in analysing local level data, based on the improved indicators, and enable them within and beyond the YOUMIG partnership to measure and trace local processes independently.