



Empowering through Freedom, Justice and Sincerity

YEP Project

Annual Report

March 2014 – February 2015

1. SUMMARY

This annual report is happy to announce that a research on the needs of 1,000+ youth has been completed and the research findings have been published. This publication is available from Mary Ward Loreto for any readers who have not already received a copy.

Youth in Albania are facing a wide range of challenges and especially regarding the youth situated in the most remote areas of Albania. Mary Ward Loreto Foundation, through the work of the YEP project, desires to respond to the spoken and most important needs of youth. This is why the first year of this project was focused on the realisation of a needs assessment of 1,000 youth in Albania. Through the questionnaires and the focus groups, made all over Albania, we heard the voice of youth, we have built an Action Plan based on the findings of this research and this included the interviews with key stakeholders, religious organisations and the statutory bodies. Their views have also been taken into consideration as the action plan was written. By realizing the study, we have built the network with future partners for the implementation of this project. An advisory board has been established which includes representation from all of these groups. Before publishing the study, three meetings were made with the group leaders to evaluate the research and to look at its findings, recommendations and conclusions. The study was successfully publicized and Mary Ward Loreto Foundation organized a conference to present the research's findings and to launch the YEP Project. Youth and stakeholders participated in the event and gave their contribution by proposing the actions to be taken by YEP.

The YEP Action Plan is clear. We will continue the work in three areas (Puka, North Albania; Lushnja, South Albania; and Tirana's suburb, the capital city situated in Central Albania). There will be three focus groups of 15 young people aged from 18 years old to 25 years old in each area. Mary Ward Loreto will provide human development activities and will undertake economic empowerment initiatives with these young people and in collaboration with local partners. The programme will include vocational trainings, work experiences and tool kits. The aim is that all 45 young people will be employed by the end of this first year of YEP Project's implementation.

Also in this plan of action there will be offered trainings in 10 other areas with 300 young people. These trainings have been chosen according to the priority topics named by the young people in the YEP research, namely: Self-Awareness, Conflict Resolution and Anti Human Trafficking.

2. BACKGROUND ON THE ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

Young people have the potential for mature human development and can be the key agents in social, economic and technological progress in the country. The way current policies address their challenges, needs and potential, affects their social, economic and potential possibilities for future generations. The reality of Albanian young people nowadays is challenging our society. After the country was opened to the world and inner transformation was underway moving towards a society based on a market economy, young people were faced with new social and health issues and threats. In Albania, as in other countries, they form a social group with manifold potential influence in the actual and future development of the country. In Albania, young people live generally in a society gripped by a political, economic and psycho-cultural crisis, which is a deep, prolonged and a multi-sided one. The aspirations of young people is to build their future based on the same life standards as their peers. Compared to developed European countries, the young people of Albania are offered limited opportunities and a

challenging reality. Young people represent the largest group of skilled labour, be it in rural or urban areas. The average age of the population in Albania is 34 years.

Nevertheless, their skills and energy do not necessarily guarantee them appropriate employment because there are limited employment opportunities available. Employment of young people is a very complex issue which deserves special attention. In Albania, there is not enough statistical data to show the real situation about inclusion or exclusion of young people from the labour market. The few data available show that two in every three young Albanians are unemployed. According to ILO statistics, the official unemployment in Albania is 20-21%. Young people, equally as the major part of the Albanian society, are affected by the unemployment phenomenon. Especially challenging is the employment situation and opportunities for young people living in rural areas.

Unemployment statistics are also reaching the highest peaks in developed countries and in Eastern Europe. At the end of 2009, there were 81 million unemployed young people between 15 and 24 years. According to official records of ILO the labour market was favourable up to 2007. Up to 2007, unemployment was continuously decreasing in most of the regions. Ten years ago, with the beginning of the global economic crisis, the number of unemployed young persons increased by an annual average of 200 thousand people.

On the other hand, internal migration, informality of the labour market, the lack of adequate policies to promote youth employment and the discrepancy between education and the labour market, creates an unfavourable situation for the employment of young people. There are various factors explaining this situation, of which the most important is the economic one. There are many other factors directly related to the labour market, such as qualification, flow of information, willingness to work, education, tradition and other factors of a social and physiological nature in certain communities.

Confrontation with new models of psychological-cultural development, with unexpected changes in social behaviour, with high unemployment, criminality and crisis of values, forms some of the issues that affect the vulnerability of young people. In the framework of these new social processes and phenomenon, the number of young unemployed people was constantly increasing. This proved to be a real challenge facing a variety of systems such as governmental bodies, business community, civil society, international institutions, local community and young people themselves.

On the other hand, the massive migration from rural to urban areas, especially from north-east to central and coastal areas of the country, and from remote zones and small towns to big cities, led to an emergence of new sharp economic and social problems. Migrant people face issues of unemployment, integration to an urban life style, living and housing hardship and property conflicts. Young people who face the hardship of integration into urban life are prone to criminality and delinquent behaviour. Furthermore the drastic demographic movements have broken down the traditional networks of family, tribal and community support and protection, limiting the opportunities of youth and their families to access quality social services and increasing the risk of social and economic exclusion.

3. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND PROCESSES

The Research, "The Needs and Issues of Youth in Albania" was conducted in the field by the YEP Coordinator with the assistance of two volunteers. The YEP coordinator was assisted and mentored by an academic in social research, Marina Ndrilo Ph. D, who is the author of this document. Mary Ward Loreto invited Marina Ndrilo to work ad hoc on their behalf for the benefit of conducting this research in a professional manner. The focus groups were realized with the help of two volunteer students from

the Social Science Faculty who contributed their time for two months. One of the two volunteers is now a staff member of Mary Ward Loreto and works for the Mary Ward Women Project.

The YEP coordinator participated in all of the internal trainings and staff meetings of the Mary Ward Loreto Foundation.

The YEP coordinator also participated in a three day training on: “Managing the Project’s Circle” and in different workshops and conferences made by third parties such as:

- National Conference “The role of Civil Society Organizations in developing Social Entrepreneurship in Albania”, organized by TASC Albania Office in collaboration with DG ENLARGMENT, EU delegation in Albania and Albanian Forum of Social Enterprises in the framework of the P2P programme
- YSB (Yunus Social Business) Albania. “Social Business Week” and “YSB Pitch Day”
- “Workshop of Best Practices” organized by ACA (Albanian Community Assist).
- XVI General Assambly “Youth Leadership Succession: Past and Future” organized by WAY (World Assembly of Youth).
- “The orange day in the Presidency of the Albanian Parliament”, organized by UNDP and UN WOMEN.

The YEP Coordinator has participated in the MWL Foundation Staff Retreat which took place in July 2014.

4. NETWORKING

The Need Assessment made by Mary Ward Loreto Foundation through the work of YEP is the fruit of a wide collaboration and networking.

We collaborated with:

18 Parishes 7 NGO-s and 8 Instruction institutions as it is shown on the table below:

Parishes	NGO-s	Instruction Institutions
Parish of Berat	Different and Equal	2 High schools in Tirana
Parish of Kucova	Peace Corps (Perondi and Gjirokaster).	The Faculty of Social Science, Tirana
Parish of Burrel	World Vision (Lezha and Durres)	1 public school in Bilisht
Parish of Derven	“Epoka e Re” Fier	1 College in Korça
Parish of Dushaj	Youth Council Vlora	1 Nursery Faculty in Elbasan
Parish of Kallmet	American Corner Vlora	1 public school in Burrel
Parish of Hot i Ri	Qendra e Keshillimit dhe Sherbimeve Psikologjike, Shkoder	1 Vocational School in Fier
Don Bosco Centre Shkodra		
Parish of Puka		
And 9 other parishes in Tirana		

Also for the realization of the interviews the YEP coordinator met 25 key persons who work and serve in key sectors. These interviews served to create an overview of the services and the institutions who can potentially contribute to effecting systematic change in the field of youth and their realised needs.

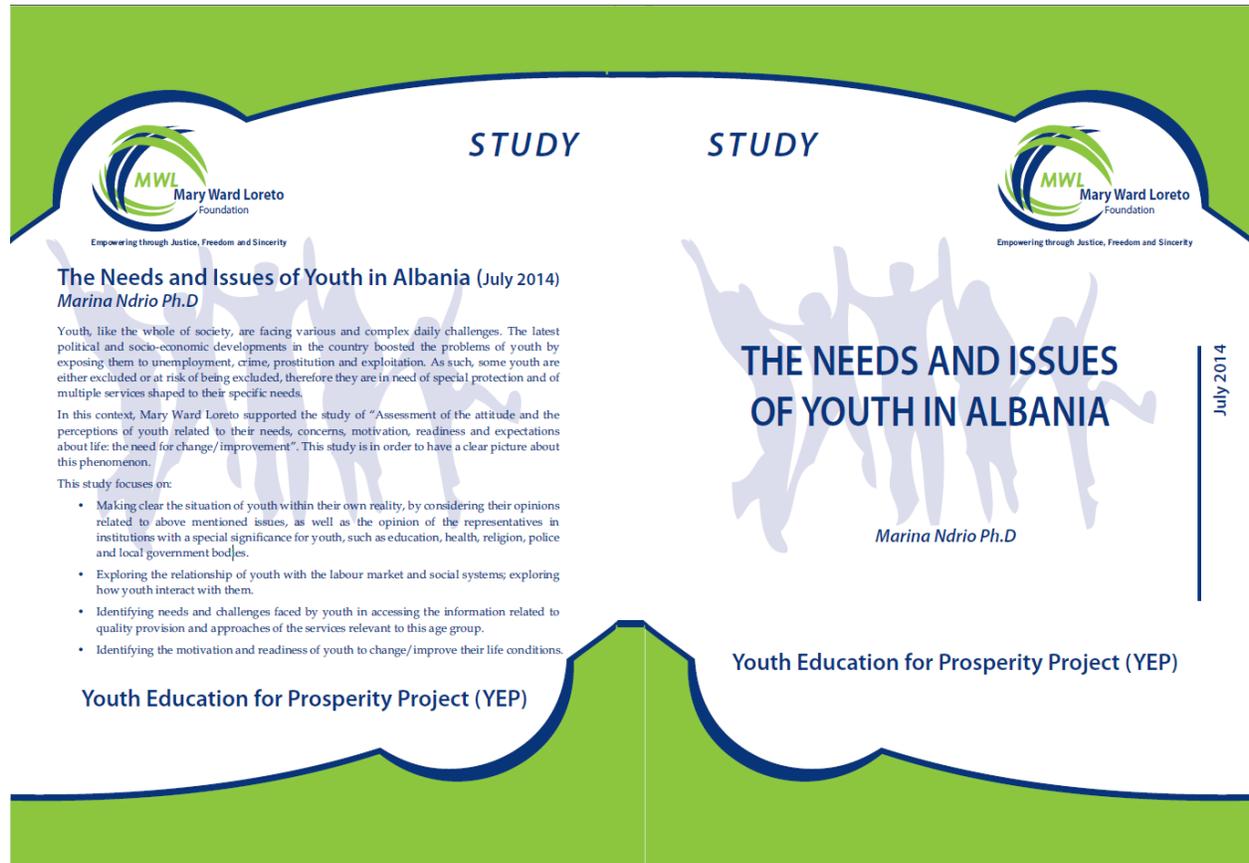
The table below shows the number and the position of the people who were interviewed:

Key person's profession	Teacher	Public Health Worker	Police	Religious representatives	Local Government Representatives	NGO Social Worker	Employment Office Worker
Nr.	5	5	4	5	3	1	2

We aim to strengthen and enlarge our network. This will happen with the contribution of the YEP Advisory Board. One of the Board members is the Head of the National Service for Youth, which is an institution dependent on the Ministry of Welfare and Youth. Through her we hope to continue an essential collaboration with the Ministry of Welfare and Youth. We will also be included in the development of all youth development strategy taking place in Albania.

5. THE RESEARCH

The Research of the 1,000 + youth in Albania was conducted at the highest professional level and the results will be informing our plan of action in to the future. Below is an illustration of the contents of this research.



The Needs and Issues of Youth in Albania (July 2014) Marina Ndrino Ph.D

Youth, like the whole of society, are facing various and complex daily challenges. The latest political and socio-economic developments in the country boosted the problems of youth by exposing them to unemployment, crime, prostitution and exploitation. As such, some youth are either excluded or at risk of being excluded, therefore they are in need of special protection and of multiple services shaped to their specific needs.

In this context, Mary Ward Loreto supported the study of "Assessment of the attitude and the perceptions of youth related to their needs, concerns, motivation, readiness and expectations about life: the need for change/improvement". This study is in order to have a clear picture about this phenomenon.

This study focuses on:

- Making clear the situation of youth within their own reality, by considering their opinions related to above mentioned issues, as well as the opinion of the representatives in institutions with a special significance for youth, such as education, health, religion, police and local government bodies.
- Exploring the relationship of youth with the labour market and social systems; exploring how youth interact with them.
- Identifying needs and challenges faced by youth in accessing the information related to quality provision and approaches of the services relevant to this age group.
- Identifying the motivation and readiness of youth to change/improve their life conditions.

THE NEEDS AND ISSUES OF YOUTH IN ALBANIA

Marina Ndrino Ph.D

July 2014

Youth Education for Prosperity Project (YEP)

Youth Education for Prosperity Project (YEP)

YEP RESEARCH

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6. CHALLENGES

YEP is a new project working with young people who are facing many challenges. We should consider the challenges as opportunities to achieve growth, rather than obstacles which make our steps slower and less safe.

Even though we have made an evaluation of the youth needs through the research, the implementation of the plan of action will show us whether we can achieve our aims and objectives effectively from year to year. This is why we should be open to improving and changing our strategies while we are implementing them.

Another challenge is to obtain the expected result of having 3x15 young people employed or self-employed at the end of this year. This is going to be challenging because the achievement of this result is dependent on the different actors and many other factors. We do, however, believe we can succeed. Employment is one of the most sensitive issues effecting youth.

7. MEASURED RESULTS

- A Research has been made and publicised. +1000 young people filled in the questionnaires, 15 focus groups were made and 25 interviews were effected with key persons.
- 33 institutions collaborated in the realization of the research.
- 3 meetings with the collaborators and group leaders took place in three different places (Tirana, Shkodra and Vlora), to evaluate the findings and the recommendations of the Research, before printing it.
- A pilot activity with 19 young people was made in collaboration with ICITAP and the Sisters of Mother Teresa
- A Conference for launching the YEP project was realized with +160 persons present at the conference.
- An Action plan has been built
- An Advisory Board is selected and has met once during this reporting period.
- 3 areas for the 3 focus groups of 15 young people are selected.
- 10 areas where trainings will be conducted have been selected.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This year was used as a pilot stage whereby we focused on finding and understanding the needs of youth in Albania. We think that walking together with them we can build a path which will lead to their prosperity.

If this pilot stage is successful, we will use this methodology by expanding our work with other groups not just in the three areas, but even in the other 10 areas where we have applied to conduct the Training Programme. Alternatively we will improve our strategies from the lessons learned and from the recommendations made by the youth during the implementation.

The YEP Research showed us the importance of having a Needs Assessment before starting the implementation of a project, especially if it is a youth project.

The network can be stronger and wider by having an advisory board for the project. The Advisory Board members can make the links with their own networks involving many more actors in the development of this work..