

MEASURING CHILD AND YOUTH WELL-BEING FOR ENHANCING POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES: THE CASE OF LATVIA

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ABSTRACT

European Cohort Development Project is striving for the improvement of the quality of life for children and young people. To enhance a long-term improvement of children's and young people's well-being in European countries, it is necessary to carry out a longitudinal research which would (1) help to understand transitions in young peoples' lives, i.e. the step from education to the labour market; (2) enable researchers to identify patterns of change, i.e. the dynamics and the factors associated with children and young people being satisfied with their lives; (3) be used retrospectively to identify the circumstances and experiences in earlier life that impact a given outcome later; (4) be applied prospectively to make predictions about the outcomes of particular circumstances and experiences in life occurring at particular points in time. European Cohort Development project proposes activities to advance the understanding of a wider community and policy-makers about the nature and necessity of longitudinal research. To succeed in organizing work with policy-makers, different contemporary methods are employed. One of such methods is *Rapid Policy Network Mapping* (Bainbridge et al., 2011), which allows identifying the policy network the organizations are involved in and define their roles. Policy network Mapping is a lasting process which begins with determining the possible important network of the respective field, it continues with interviewing organization representatives involved in the network and drawing the bounds of the network, as well as defining the roles of organizations involved in the network (Influencer, Owner / Decision Maker, Influencer / Deliverer, Deliverer). When the main organizations involved in the network are established, work with most important policy makers begins.

In order to map policy networks and to develop a communication platform with which to influence decision makers in Latvia for political and financial support for *EuroCohort*, the policy network "Improving the Quality of Education" was chosen as the most important and widespread in the country. At the same time, this network is also the most problematic one because of permanent changes in

the education system at all levels of pre-school education institutions, basic and secondary schools, higher education establishments. The paper offered here describes the above mentioned *policy network mapping* process and its specific features.

Keywords: child and youth well-being, comparative longitudinal survey, H2020, policy network mapping, *EuroCohort*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary Europe, along with significant child well-being inequalities there also exists a desire of providing children with a better support. At present, there is no equivalent data source available to researchers to comparatively analyse the well-being of children as they grow up and therefore to develop policies to improve their well-being. Policies must be evidence based – therefore, there is a need for high quality data upon which to base an intervention. Comparative longitudinal surveys, able to observe processes and policy interventions in different national contexts, and the data, collected from birth, allow us to see how individuals change over time. Longitudinal surveys are used retrospectively to identify the circumstances and experiences in earlier life that impact a given outcome later; also they are applied prospectively to make predictions about the outcomes of particular circumstances and experiences in life occurring at particular points in time. Cohort surveys have long existed in national and sub-national contexts, but a Europe-wide survey on children and young people's well-being has not been carried out. The gap in knowledge will be filled in and the ability of policymakers in different countries and contexts to learn and share good practice for child development will be strengthened by the first Europe-wide survey, therefore "European Cohort Development" project supported by the European Union in the framework of Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation programme call "Development and long-term sustainability of new pan-European research Infrastructures" will have a fundamental impact on child well-being policies across the whole of Europe.

EUROPE WIDE COMPARATIVE LONGITUDINAL SURVEY ON CHILD AND YOUTH WELL-BEING

The European Cohort Development (ECDP) project brings much needed attention to the reality that policy makers do not have access to the type of data that is needed to address complex social problems which often have a negative impact on children and adolescents' well-being. It is a Design Study, the aim of which is to create the

specification and business case for a European Research Infrastructure that will provide, over the next twenty-five years, comparative longitudinal survey data on child and young adult well-being. The infrastructure developed by ECDP will subsequently coordinate the first Europe wide birth cohort survey, named *EuroCohort*. Guided by a child-centred approach, the survey will provide data for enhancing decision-making processes at European institutions to guarantee child and youth well-being. ECDP has been built on the seventh Framework project for research, technological development and demonstration titled “Measuring Youth Well-Being” (MYWeB), which, included under the topic “Towards a European longitudinal childhood and youth survey”, has provided the proof of concept for the development of a Europe wide longitudinal survey of child and youth well-being in regard to the following: desirability among stakeholder groups, technical do-ability in relation to questionnaire surveys of children; policy relevance in regard to the evidence needs for policy development in the area of children, families and education; policy benefits weighed against the infrastructural costs. The MYWeB project, launched in 2014 and completed in 2016, provided the first level ‘proof of concept’, which allowed us to proceed to this project representing the design phase and which strengthens the business case by providing realistic costs, detailing the policy gains and building political support, as well as finalising the survey design requirements.

The MYWeB project Consortium was a dynamic and functional team that demonstrated the appropriate experience, expertise and leadership to take forward the development of a European longitudinal survey of children’s well-being. It was being implemented by a consortium of 14 research institutions from 11 countries. The Consortium continues also in ECDP largely as before but strengthened by new strategic partners selected to facilitate the next steps in research infrastructure development. Consortium includes 16 partners from 13 EU countries, such as Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Spain, Greece, Hungary, Slovakia, Latvia, Portugal, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom. The Coordinator of the project is Manchester Metropolitan University.

BENEFITS OF LONGITUDINAL WELL-BEING SURVEYS

The birth cohort will provide comparative data collected systematically over time on subjective well-being defined by solid theoretical and conceptual grounds by taking into account the views of children and young people. Although objective indicator-based measures (household income, the proportion of children in education, educational attainment etc.) provide useful information on well-being, subjective measures draw on human perception such that the individual themselves decide what is crucial in assessing their lives. Objective and subjective indicators can complement each other. Thus, when used together, they measure well-being robustly by providing a rounded picture of the concept.

Through a better understanding of patterns and causation in children and youth well-being, longitudinal studies become a powerful tool for policy makers. The project is alerting policy-makers and funding bodies to the strategic and funding needs of the scientific community. The project contributes towards the achievement of sustainable development goals as it would offer a greater insight into topics such as poverty, health and well-being, and education, for example, the obtained data is crucial in exploring the enduring effects of living in poverty during childhood or long-term effects of bullying at school, and much more.

Knowledge exchange within and beyond the Consortium will contribute to European capacity building and strengthen cross-border links. Beyond providing high quality well-being data, this infrastructure will bring together a network of people, expertise, information, knowledge, content, methods, tools and technologies from countries across Europe. Longitudinal well-being surveys will:

- help to understand transitions in young peoples' lives, i.e. the step from education to the labour market;
- enable researchers to identify patterns of change, i.e. the dynamics and the factors associated with children and young people being satisfied with their lives.

In developing the infrastructure for *EuroCohort*, ECDP will contribute to the EU's 'three O' priorities (Open innovation, Open science, Open to the world), which will promote science without boundaries and will facilitate not just good science in and of itself, but will also provide a resource and evidence base from which policy makers are able to take informed decisions. A direct impact on young people and their environment will be made.

ENGAGING WITH POLICY MAKERS FOR ENHANCING POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

Among the main tasks of the project such as establishing the key concepts to be covered by *EuroCohort* and realistic costs for the survey, developing the legal, management, scientific, and operational infrastructure, determining *EuroCohort's* survey design and the requirements for a pilot survey a.o., the project is also aimed at building a broad network of key stakeholders across Europe and raising *EuroCohort's* profile. The project is the creation of an infrastructural platform with a commitment from key stakeholders across Europe and from which the next stages in finalising *EuroCohort* can be effected. Stakeholders will include national, European and international level policy-makers, funding bodies and academics who currently are or who might in the future be involved in implementing policies and programmes to measure child well-being. The specific objectives for building relationships and engaging with policy actors, policy and funding networks are as follows:

- 1) mapping the organisation and individual actors involved in relevant policy networks (both real and virtual) at the European Member State level, and mapping these policy networks, in particular those involved in the ESFRI roadmap;
- 2) engaging with policy makers and funding bodies by:
 - identifying the policy objectives, levers and future needs of actors involved in policy networks, drawing on insights gained through the Delphi study undertaken in MYWeb;
 - developing policy focused briefings on the uses and benefits of *EuroCohort*, drawing on the policy objectives, levers and future needs and relevant at the policy network level;
 - utilising interpersonal interaction (face to face and via email) with policy actors and national funding bodies to further evidence exchange around the uses and benefits of longitudinal surveys on children's and young people's well-being, and thereby inform decisions around *EuroCohort*.

Closely linked to Objective 1) is the policy-mapping exercise in the countries where partners are located. As policy makers engage in policy decisions, they pursue shared interests, exchange resources

and build interpersonal relationships through policy networks, which are sets of relatively stable, non-hierarchical and interdependent relationships (Borzel 1997) between policy actors, both organisations and individuals, government and non-government, who share interests and exchange resources (Bainbridge et al. 2011). Policy networks are formal institutional and informal linkages between interdependent policy actors, where policy emerges from or is influenced by interactions between these policy actors (Rhodes 2007, Lewis 2011, Marsh 2011). Although the policy networks can operate at different levels (international, European, national, sub-national and local), the aim of this paper is to focus on the national network as being the one to likely have the influence and resource to support *EuroCohort*. According to Schneider, policy network analysis is a valuable analytical tool to support the identification and description of the relations between actors, and to understand 'structural relationships, interdependencies and dynamics between actors in politics and policy making' (Schneider 1988).

Policy mapping was done by using a qualitative approach, designed to identify types of actors involved, types of ties (unilateral or reciprocal contacts between actors), governance level, and types of goals pursued (loosely based on the Rapid Policy Network Mapping method outlined by Bainbridge et al. (2011)). It was developed to allow non-specialists to quickly establish an understanding of the policy context within which they are working and to create a useful 'working tool'. The method adopted an 'egocentric approach', where an 'ego' is a policy actor or instrument linked to other relevant policy actors and instruments in a policy community and where the 'centrality' of the instrument or actor is a function of its importance within that network (ibid.). Out of such sectors as education, health, social care, youth work, childcare or welfare benefits relevant to *EuroCohort*, the policy-network for improving the quality of education was identified of crucial importance in Latvia. Policy reports, policy statements and organisation websites of key organisations building a network were reviewed and semi-structured interviews were carried out. The outputs for the policy network were mapped as a narrative summary, an actor map, a policy map, an influence and support matrix.

POLICY NETWORK “IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION” IN LATVIA: THE MAIN FINDINGS

In order to map policy networks and to develop communication platform with which to influence decision makers in Latvia for political and financial support for *EuroCohort*, the policy network “Improving the Quality of Education” was chosen as the most important and widespread in the country. At the same time, this network is also the most problematic one because of permanent changes in the education system at all levels of pre-school education institutions, basic and secondary schools, higher education establishments.

Bainbridge et al. (2011) in the policy network mapping propose such levels of organizations (actors): international, European, national, ‘devolved’ and local / subnational. At creating the network “Improving the Quality of Education” mapping in Latvia, we decided to search for organizations at three levels, which is essential for achieving project goals and stems from the administrative-territorial division of Latvia.

ACTOR MAP

Different actors as defined by Bainbridge et al. (2011) include

- Influencer

An organization, entity or individual which is legally, morally or practically required, invited or obliged to be involved in the official policy development process. It is assumed that Influencers can affect the outcome of the policy process using legitimate means based on their opinions and views.

- Owner / Decision Maker

An organization, entity or individual which has the authority to make a decision which can affect the policy outcome as concerns intellectual or practical components or which owns all, or component parts, of the policy development process within a specified boundary. The majority of these actors are responsible and accountable for the successful delivery of intellectual and/or practical objectives which may include reporting, data, legislation etc.

- Influencer / Deliverer

An organisation, entity or individual which is legally, morally or practically required, invited or obliged to be involved in the official policy development process. They can affect the outcome of the

policy process using legitimate channels based on their opinions and views and are also engaged in delivering an action, process, or report which facilitates the interpretation, transposition and/or implementation of the policy.

○ Deliverer

An organization, entity or individual which is legally, morally or practically required, invited or obliged to be involved in the official policy development process. They can affect the outcome of the policy process based on their delivery of actions, processes or reporting which facilitate the interpretation, transposition and/or implementation of the policy. They cannot, in principle, affect the outcome of the policy process based on their opinions and views.

Figure 1 presents the list of the most important organizations at all levels mentioned by the respondents. The network also includes other organizations (indicated in the policy documents), but they were not mentioned by the respondents.

In Latvia, the most influential and widespread organizations are the national ones, in its turn voluntary and private organizations are less common and less influential. The respondents indicate that voluntary and private sector should be developed in Latvia.

POLICY MAP

The vertical columns in Figure 2 delineate the level at which the policy-network exists: European, National, and Local Government. The rows represent policy areas by topic or sector, which are indicative. The figure presents the European-level instruments referred to by the respondents, however, these are not the most important political documents that regulate the field of children's and young people's well-being in Latvia. The figure shows only those documents which are important for the network "Improving the Quality of Education" activities, as indicated by the respondents involved in the network.

We retained all the proposed policy areas as strategically important, however, in the youth policy implemented today in Latvia the focus is on education and social care. The respondents note that other areas do not receive due attention and their development needs to be promoted. The proposed policy areas are mentioned in the general strategic policy documents, e.g. "Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030", "The National Development Plan 2014–2020", "The National Reform Programme for the Implementation of the EU2020 Strategy" etc.

	European	National Government	Local Government
Influencer	<p>European Parliament</p> <p>European Council</p> <p>Council of Europe</p> <p>European Commission</p> <p>Education, Youth, Culture & Sport Council</p> <p>World Bank</p> <p>Vision and Strategy around the Baltic Sea</p> <p>Foreign Investors' Council in Latvia (FICIL) (<i>Voluntary or third sector</i>)</p>	<p>Cabinet of Ministers (<i>National government</i>)</p> <p>National Development Council (<i>National government</i>)</p> <p>Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees (<i>Voluntary or third sector</i>)</p> <p>The National Youth Council of Latvia (<i>National government</i>)</p> <p>Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia (<i>National government</i>)</p>	<p>City Councils (e.g. Daugavpils City Council) (<i>Local / regional government</i>)</p>
Owner / Decision maker		<p>Saeima (Parliament) (<i>National government</i>)</p> <p>Ministry of Education and Science (<i>National government</i>)</p> <p>Ministry of Environmental protection and Regional Development (<i>National government</i>)</p>	<p>Planning Regions (e.g. Latgale Planning Region) (<i>Local / regional government</i>)</p> <p>City Education Departments (e.g. Daugavpils City Education Department) (<i>Local / regional government</i>)</p>
Influencer / Deliverer			<p>City Youth Departments (Daugavpils City Youth Department) (<i>Local / regional government</i>)</p>
Deliverer		<p>State Education Development Agency (<i>National government</i>)</p>	<p>Educational institutions (pre-school educational institutions, schools, high schools) (<i>National / local / regional government or private sectors</i>)</p>

Figure 1: Policy actors in Latvia

	European	National Government	Local Government
Health	<p>Europe 2020 Strategy</p> <p>EU Sustainable Development Strategy</p> <p>EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region</p> <p>EU Youth Strategy</p> <p>The Convention on the Rights of the Child</p> <p>Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 20 November 2008 on the health and well-being of young people</p>	<p>The conceptual document – Model for Long-term Growth of Latvia: Human Being in the First Place Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030</p> <p>The National Development Plan 2014–2020</p> <p>The National Reform Programme for the Implementation of the EU2020 Strategy</p> <p>Latvia’s Stability programme for 2017–2020</p> <p>The Youth Law</p> <p>The Youth Policy Guidelines 2009–2018 (long-term document)</p> <p>The Youth Policy Guidelines 2015–2020 (mid-term document)</p> <p>Youth Policy Implementation Plan 2016–2020</p> <p>The National Youth Policy Programme</p> <p>Healthcare Financing Law</p> <p>Medical Treatment Law</p> <p>Health Care Organization and Financing Procedure</p> <p>Public Health Policy Guidelines 2014–2020</p>	<p>Regional programmes (e.g. Latgale programme)</p> <p>Regional strategies (e.g. Latgale strategy 2030)</p> <p>Regional programmes, e.g. Latgale Planning Region Social Services Development Programme 2010–2017)</p>
Social Care	<p>Europe 2020 strategy</p> <p>EU Sustainable Development Strategy</p> <p>EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region</p> <p>EU Youth Strategy</p>	<p>The conceptual document – Model for Long-term Growth of Latvia: Human Being in the First Place Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030</p> <p>The National Development Plan 2014–2020</p> <p>The National Reform Programme for the Implementation of the EU2020 Strategy</p>	<p>Regional programmes (e.g. Latgale programme)</p> <p>Regional strategies (e.g. Latgale strategy 2030)</p>

	European	National Government	Local Government
	<p>The Convention on the Rights of the Child</p> <p>European Social Charter</p> <p>Directive 2011/92/EU, Directive 2013/33/EU, Directive 2011/93/EU, of the European Parliament and of the Council</p> <p>Council Directive 2003/109/EC Regulation (EC) No 883/2004, No 988/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council</p>	<p>Latvia's Stability programme for 2017–2020</p> <p>The Youth Law</p> <p>The Youth Policy Guidelines 2009–2018 (long-term document)</p> <p>The Youth Policy Guidelines 2015–2020 (mid-term document)</p> <p>Youth Policy Implementation Plan 2016–2020</p> <p>The National Youth Policy Programme</p> <p>Protection of the Rights of the Child Law</p> <p>Law On Social Services and Social Assistance</p> <p>Social Services Development Guidelines in Latvia 2014–2020</p> <p>Inclusive Employment Guidelines 2015–2020 Improvement of Career Development Support System</p>	<p>Regional programmes (e.g. Latgale Planning Region Social Services Development Programme 2010–2017)</p>
Education	<p>Europe 2020 Strategy</p> <p>EU Sustainable Development Strategy</p> <p>EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region</p> <p>EU Youth Strategy</p> <p>The Convention on the Rights of the Child</p> <p>EU Work Plan for Youth 2016–2018</p>	<p>The conceptual document – Model for Long-term Growth of Latvia: Human Being in the First Place Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030</p> <p>The National Development Plan 2014–2020</p> <p>The National Reform Programme for the Implementation of the EU2020 Strategy</p> <p>Latvia's Stability programme for 2017–2020</p> <p>The Youth Law</p> <p>The Youth Policy Guidelines 2009–2018 (long-term document)</p>	<p>Regional programmes (e.g. Latgale Programme)</p> <p>Regional strategies (e.g. Latgale Strategy 2030)</p> <p>City policies, rules and regulations related to education development (e.g. Development Conception of General education institution network for 2013–2017)</p>

	European	National Government	Local Government
	Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010–2018) The World Bank Group Education Sector Strategy 2020	The Youth Policy Guidelines 2015–2020 (mid-term document) Youth Policy Implementation Plan 2016–2020 The National Youth Policy Programme Guidelines for the Development of Education for 2014–2020 Guidelines for the Development of Science, Technology and Innovation for 2014–2020 The National Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Institutions of Higher Education of Latvia for 2013–2020	
Family	Europe 2020 Strategy EU Sustainable Development Strategy EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region EU Youth Strategy The Convention on the Rights of the Child	The conceptual document – Model for Long-term Growth of Latvia: Human Being in the First Place Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 The National Development Plan 2014–2020 The National Reform Programme for the Implementation of the EU2020 Strategy Latvia's Stability programme for 2017–2020 The Youth Law The Youth Policy Guidelines 2009–2018 (longterm document) The Youth Policy Guidelines 2015–2020 (mid-term document) Youth Policy Implementation Plan 2016–2020	Regional programmes (e.g. Latgale programme) Regional strategies (e.g. Latgale strategy 2030)

	European	National Government	Local Government
		The National Youth Policy Programme State Family Policy Guidelines for 2011–2017	
Benefits	Europe 2020 Strategy EU Sustainable Development Strategy EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region EU Youth Strategy The Convention on the Rights of the Child Regulation (EC) No 883/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council	The conceptual document – Model for Long-term Growth of Latvia: Human Being in the First Place Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030 The National Development Plan 2014–2020 The National Reform Programme for the Implementation of the EU2020 Strategy Latvia’s Stability programme for 2017–2020 The Youth Law The Youth Policy Guidelines 2009–2018 (long-term document) The Youth Policy Guidelines 2015–2020 (mid-term document) Youth Policy Implementation Plan 2016–2020 The National Youth Policy Programme Law On Social Services and Social Assistance Social Services Development Guidelines in Latvia 2014–2020 Inclusive Employment Guidelines 2015–2020	Regional programmes (e.g. Latgale Programme) Regional strategies (e.g. Latgale Strategy 2030) Local government documents (e.g. Daugavpils City Municipality’s Social Benefits)

Figure 2. Policy instruments in Latvia

INFLUENCE AND SUPPORT MATRIX

While interviewing the policy actors it was important to assess their relative influence and level of support for *EuroCohort*, however this element of the mapping process will be developed further as we embark on sustained engagement with the policy network over the coming year. Currently Figure 3 is incomplete due to the on-going interviewing and policy mapping process. The higher the level of responsibility and impact, the more difficult is it to establish contacts with the representative. In 2019, sustainable contact opportunities will be established with the responsible organizations.

On the whole, at analysing the information obtained when creating policy network mapping and summed up in the above mentioned three figures, we have to maintain that European actors and policies are to be treated mainly as Influencers. At the European level, the most influential actor or Influencer is the World Bank. The respondents indicate that the reports by the World Bank form the basis for changes in national and regional policies in the educational system. Other European level organizations mentioned in Figure 1 also play an important role as Influencers. The key policy actor at the national government level is the Ministry of Education (Influencer / Deliverer), the key policy actors at the local government level are the city councils and their education departments (Influencer / Deliverer). At the final stage of the policy distribution, education institutions – pre-school education institutions, schools and higher education institutions (public, private and voluntary sectors) – function as Deliverers. Representatives of all above mentioned key policy actors at the national and local levels were interviewed during the policy mapping process and informed on the content of MYWeb, ECDP and *EuroCohort*. Although the network “Improving the Quality of Education” works at many levels, it can be defined mainly as a national network. It is influenced by the European organizations but the key decisions are made by national level organizations like the Ministry of Education, the Ministry Cabinet and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development.

All above mentioned institutions at the national and regional government levels, which act as Influencer or Owner / Decision maker, have their key policy instruments which are largely legally binding for the Deliverers. All documents approved in the state and in the region – laws, strategies, guidelines etc. – are absolutely legally binding for the public sectors education institutions. The private and voluntary sectors have more freedom to comply with policy documents but the basic requirements are binding on every educational organization in Latvia.

	Active opponent	Passive opponent	Ambivalent	Passive supporter	Active supporter
Influence	High		Representative of Ministry of Education and Science		
	Medium			Representative of Latgale Planning Region	Leader of Latvian Trade Union of Education and Science Employees
	Low			Representative of Daugavpils City Council	Representative of the National Youth Council of Latvia Representative of Daugavpils City Youth Department Representative of School Sector

Figure 3: Influence and support matrix

In the selected policy network, national-level documents are the most important; in some cases local-level documents are also significant. Documents at European level exist to a greater extent only at the official level, they are used less for introducing concrete actions, but they are referred to as an important normative which needs to be respected, the most commonly mentioned are: "Europe 2020 strategy", "EU Sustainable Development Strategy", "EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region", "EU Youth Strategy".

Most of the national policy instruments listed in Figure 2 below are of a general nature. These are the most important Latvian policy documents which constitute the strategy for the further development of the state, e.g. "Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia until 2030", "The National Development Plan 2014–2020", the most important youth policy document is "The Youth Law". Policies of the specific areas (health, social care, benefits etc.) are less developed – the highest number of youth policy normative and strategic documents in Latvia is in the education area, the most important for them is "Guidelines for the Development of Education for 2014–2020".

Regional policies are dependent on and linked to the policies developed and approved at the national level; references to national policies are always featured in regional policy documents. The most important regional level instruments are Regional programmes (e.g. "Latgale Programme") and Regional strategies (e.g. "Latgale Strategy 2030"), as well as the city administrations which have the right to develop their policies in a particular area e.g. "The Development Conception of the General Education Institution Network for 2013–2017", "Daugavpils City Municipality's Social Benefits" etc.

The interviewed respondents generally acknowledge that at the socio-political level in Latvia, there is a lack of awareness of the priority role of children and youth policy for the further development of the country: this social group in Latvia is not regarded as the most important human resource. No studies have been provided to make it possible to understand what changes are taking place in the youth population in Latvia, what the level of youth well-being is. Youth policy should be based, first and foremost, on the analysis of social conditions of children and young people. But there is no exact data on this subject.

The network is concentrated in more organizations, which mainly are public organizations, e.g. schools, professional schools, higher education organizations. In Latvia there are only a few private pre-school education institutions and schools, but a relatively high number of private higher education institutions. This network exists

mainly at the national and regional levels but is coordinated at the national level, it is concentrated in many organizations which are mainly public, frequently private or voluntary organizations. Thinking about the three dimensions of stability, insularity and resource dependence this network is as a tightly integrated policy community.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the relationships and dependencies in the development and implementation of educational policy and understanding the structure of policy network “Improving the Quality of Education” activities are essential to the effective management of the children’s and young people’s well-being. Therefore, Rapid Policy network mapping method is to be considered an effective way for starting work with policy makers and convincing them about the necessity to support further longitudinal research in Latvia and Europe. By continuing work with politicians i.e. by organizing face-to-face interviews, telephone conversations, skype sessions, briefings, small group meetings, discussions, etc., it is possible to obtain additional information about how the networks function and about the specific features of producing political documents important for the field of children’s and young people’s well-being. In the course of work, this additional information is fixed in figures and is later analysed. Rapid Policy network mapping method allows determining the importance of the role of different organisations involved in the network, and also tell which organizations are responsible for producing and accepting political documents and which organizations can influence policy-makers’ opinion. Thus, Rapid Policy network mapping creates the basis and provides the opportunity for influencing policy makers to adopt decisions to support further longitudinal research in the field of children’s and young people’s well-being.

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