

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

YOUTH WORK IN ENSURING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

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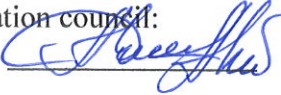
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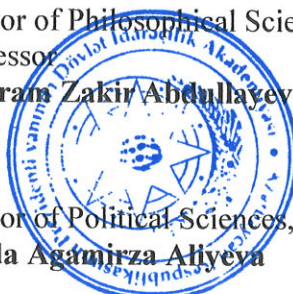
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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESEARCH

Relevance of the Topic and Degree of Its Study. The role of young people in ensuring sustainable development has already acquired strategic importance worldwide, as the creative potential, innovative thinking and adaptability of the younger generation are considered key resources for addressing the social, economic and environmental challenges of the future. Many countries increase their economic competitiveness and achieve such objectives as social justice and environmental sustainability by integrating the potential of young people into national strategies. Within the framework of the UN “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” the expansion of youth participation in decision-making, public oversight, innovation initiatives and volunteer activities is encouraged.¹ For example, developed countries support young people's participation in startup ecosystems, involve them in projects aimed at combating climate change, and adapt education policies to the new requirements of the labor market. This, in turn, demonstrates that sustainable development is possible not only through the management of existing resources, but also through enhancing the knowledge and skills of future generations.

In this context, for the Republic of Azerbaijan, work with young people is important for ensuring sustainable development both in terms of economic modernization and social transformation. The relatively high proportion of young people in the country's demographic structure necessitates a reassessment of their potential as a strategic resource. Objectives such as reducing dependence on oil, developing the non-oil sector, building a digital economy and expanding innovation-oriented production can be achieved only through the active participation of young professionals possessing contemporary knowledge and skills. In addition, youth activism and leadership in the social sphere contribute to ensuring balanced development in the regions, strengthening civil society and integrating national culture with contemporary trends. The participation of young people in environmental initiatives also makes

¹ UN. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: [Electronic resource] / URL: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

a significant contribution to the country's long-term environmental security and efforts to combat climate change.

In this regard, complementary priority areas within the political course pursued by President Ilham Aliyev. State programs adopted under his leadership aim both at the intellectual and professional development of young people and at socio-economic modernization consistent with the country's sustainable development goals. Various mechanisms, ranging from the “Year of Youth” initiatives and the Azerbaijan Youth Development Strategy to the establishment of youth centers in the regions and international education and exchange programs, integrate the potential of young people into national development plans. This policy combines the three main pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – with youth engagement, thereby strengthening both the country's internal stability and its international competitiveness.

Thus, based on the issues outlined above, the relevance of our research can be summarized point by point as follows:

- The demographic advantage of young people constitutes an important strategic resource for Azerbaijan. The knowledge, skills and creative potential of this group, which represents a sufficiently large proportion of the population, serve as a major driving force in sustainable development strategies. Their active participation plays an important role in ensuring the country's future socio-economic stability.

- Economic diversification and digital transformation can be accelerated only through the creativity and innovation capabilities of young professionals. The development of the startup ecosystem, expansion of the digital economy and introduction of technological innovations are realized through the active participation of young people.

- The leadership role of young people in social equality, civic engagement and regional development processes is of particular importance. Their initiative contributes to progressive changes in various areas of public life and strengthens civil society.

- The active participation of young people in initiatives aimed at combating climate change is essential for ensuring environmental

security. Their involvement in environmental projects, the application of “green” technologies and public awareness campaigns plays an important role in achieving the country's long-term sustainability goals.

At the same time, reports prepared by leading international organizations in the field of youth policy provide the context for current research on the topic. For example, the document published by UNESCO in 2023, “Because Youth Perspectives Matter: Toolbox for Youth Policy and Programming,” presents the methodological foundations for integrating young people's perspectives into policymaking processes². The OECD's “Youth Policy Toolkit,” published in 2024, provides a practical policy framework covering areas such as education, employment, social inclusion and participation in public life, and offers policymakers concrete approaches to organizing work with young people³. The UN document “Youth 2030 Progress Report 2024,” also published in the same year, evaluates the implementation of the UN Youth Strategy and emphasizes the role of young people in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, including the importance of involving them in decision-making processes⁴.

All of these factors make the scientific study of youth participation in ensuring sustainable development in our country particularly relevant. Nevertheless, the number of studies conducted on this topic in the Republic of Azerbaijan remains quite limited. Ensuring sustainable development and working with young people have generally been studied as two separate areas. U.Alakbarov is recognized for his more systematic research in the field of sustainable development. His 2006 work, “Sustainable Human Development,” provides a detailed explanation of the essence of this

² UNESCO "Because Youth Perspectives Matter: Toolbox for Youth Policy and Programming" – 2023: [Electronic resource] / URL: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000388010>

³ OECD Youth Policy Toolkit – 2024: [Electronic resource] / URL: <https://doi.org/10.1787/74b6f8f3-en>

⁴ UN Youth2030 Progress Report 2024 (UNDESA / UN Youth Office): [Electronic resource] / URL: <https://social.desa.un.org/sdn/youth2030-progress-report-2024>

concept, its main principles and prospects for future development⁵. In his textbook “Sustainable Human Development and the Foundations of Ecological Civilization,” published in 2013, the author addresses not only sustainable human development but also issues related to the formation, planning and management of ecological civilization, presenting the fundamental concepts and theoretical basis of this field as an interdisciplinary scientific area⁶. U.Alakbarov's book “Foundations of Sustainable Development and Management of Ecological Civilization,” published in 2017, emphasizes that, under conditions of modern civilization, a country's security and well-being can be ensured only through effective public administration, and the achievements of the Republic of Azerbaijan are presented as confirmation of this approach⁷. In his 2018 textbook “Foundations of Inclusive Development Management,” attention is drawn to the priority role of inclusive development – namely, a fair development model ensuring the well-being of the state and its citizens – in contemporary public policy, while international comparisons demonstrate that progress in this direction is often associated with the application of innovative technologies in governance⁸. The book “Improving Human Resources for Sustainable Development: The Azerbaijan Model,” published in the same year under the editorship of Alakbarov, notes the necessity for every country to pursue an appropriate policy for sustainable development in the context of global challenges⁹.

Among studies relatively close to our research direction, U.Mehdiyev emphasizes that human capital is one of the main driving forces of sustainable development in the Republic of Azerbaijan and

⁵ Ələkbərov, U. Davamlı insan inkişafı / U.Ələkbərov. – Bakı: Təhsil, – 2006. – 88 s.

⁶ Ələkbərov, U. Davamlı insan inkişafı və ekoloji sivilizasiyanın əsasları / U.Ələkbərov. – Bakı: Təhsil, – 2013. – 222 s.

⁷ Ələkbərov, U. Davamlı inkişaf və ekoloji sivilizasiyasının idarə edilməsinin əsasları / U.Ələkbərov. – Bakı: Təhsil, – 2017. – 175 s.

⁸ Ələkbərov, U. İnküziv inkişafın idarə edilməsinin əsasları / U.Ələkbərov. – Bakı: Təhsil, – 2018. – 215 s.

⁹ Davamlı inkişaf nəminə kadr potensialının təkmilləşdirilməsi: Azərbaycan modeli / müəll. Ç.İsmayilov və b.; red. U.Ələkbərov. – Bakı: Elmin İnkişafı Fondu, – 2018. – 249 s.

analyses the role of education, healthcare and social protection systems in its formation. The author also substantiates the strategic importance of improving the quality indicators of human capital for long-term economic growth and social welfare¹⁰. M.Qubadov examines the country's inclusive development indicators on the basis of international comparative analysis and evaluates the effectiveness of existing socio-economic policies in ensuring equal opportunities. The findings indicate that institutional reforms, ensuring social justice and reducing interregional development disparities emerge as priority directions for strengthening inclusive development¹¹.

In other fields, A.Shahmarov¹² has studied the environmental aspects of sustainable development, while E.Ibrahimov¹³ has examined its financial aspects. H.Jafarli, in turn, has analyzed the macroeconomic problems of the sustainable development of the national economy¹⁴.

Research in the field of youth policy and youth work is more limited. For example, A.Goshali analyses the historical stages of development of the Azerbaijani youth movement and the role of young people in socio-political processes on the basis of factual materials¹⁵. R.Hajiyev examines the main directions of youth policy formed in the country during 1993–2003 and the influence of the Heydar Aliyev factor¹⁶. S.Guliyev interprets the problems of youth upbringing under conditions of globalization from pedagogical and

¹⁰ Mehdiyev, Ü. İnsan kapitalı Azərbaycan Respublikasının davamlı inkişafının faktoru kimi: / siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. avtoreferatı / – Bakı, 2022. – 26 s.

¹¹ Qubadov, M. Azərbaycan Respublikasının inklüziv inkişafı: müqayisəli təhlil: / siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2024. – 160 s.

¹² Şahmarov, Ə. Davamlı inkişaf kontekstində ekoloji təhlükəsizlik problemləri: / fəlsəfə elmləri doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2007. – 143 s.

¹³ İbrahimov, E. İqtisadiyyatın davamlı inkişafının maliyyə mənbələrindən səmərəli istifadənin konseptual əsasları: / iqtisad elmləri doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2022. – 274 s.

¹⁴ Cəfərlı, H. Milli iqtisadiyyatın davamlı inkişafının makroiqtisadi problemləri: / iqtisad elmləri doktoru dis. / – Bakı, 2022. – 349 s.

¹⁵ Qoşalı, Ə. Azərbaycan gənclər hərəkatı: məqalələr toplusu: [2 cildə] / Ə.Qoşalı.– Bakı: Turan Evi, – c. I. – 2010. – 152 s.

¹⁶ Hacıyev, R. Azərbaycan gəncliyinin himayədarı: Heydər Əliyevin gənclər siyasəti (1993-2003-cü illər) / R.Hacıyev. – Bakı: Aspoliqraf, – 2014. – 175 s.

social perspectives¹⁷. Ü.Kazım evaluates the changing priorities of youth policy in the contemporary period of globalization and their compatibility with international experience¹⁸. R.Mustafayeva analyses the main social, cultural and political factors influencing the upbringing of university students in the twenty-first century¹⁹.

Among foreign-language literature, the number of publications on sustainable development and youth work is quite large; therefore, our scope includes only studies that examine these two fields in an integrated manner. Within this framework, the book “Young People as Agents of Sustainable Society: Reclaiming the Future,” compiled by P.Honkatu and T.Rättilä, examines the role of young people as active actors in building a sustainable society and evaluates their capacity to influence social change from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Based on examples from different countries, the authors emphasize the potential of young people in promoting social justice, environmental responsibility and the development of future strategies²⁰. The book “Young People, Education, and Sustainable Development,” edited by P.B.Corcoran and P.M.Osano, analyses from multidimensional perspectives the role of the education system in enabling young people to understand and implement the principles of sustainable development. Drawing on international experience, the work presents practical approaches to young people's participation in environmental, social and economic transformation processes²¹.

Among Turkic-language literature, a study conducted by M.B.Demirci examines the approaches of Generation Z youth in Turkey

¹⁷ Quliyev, S. Qloballaşma və müasir gəncliyin tərbiyə problemləri / S.Quliyev. – Bakı: ADPU, – 2013. – 266 s.

¹⁸ Kazım, Ü. Qloballaşma dövründə gənclər siyasətinin aspektləri / Ü.Kazım. – Bakı, – 2015. – 141 s.

¹⁹ Mustafayeva, R. Gənclər siyasəti XXI əsrdə: Ali məktəb tələbələrinin tərbiyəsinin bəzi məsələləri / R.Mustafayeva. – Bakı: Apostroff, – 2016. – 316 s.

²⁰ Honkatu, P. Young people as agents of sustainable society: Reclaiming the future / P.Honkatu, T.Rättilä. – London: Routledge, – 2024. – 258 p.

²¹ Corcoran, P.B. Young people, education, and sustainable development: Exploring principles, perspectives, and praxis / P.B.Corcoran, P.M. Osano. – Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publishers, – 2009. – 416 p.

to the concept of sustainability and their everyday consumption behavior in this context. Based on empirical findings, the author analyses the relationship between the level of environmental awareness among young people and sustainable consumption practices²².

An analysis of the existing literature demonstrates that the topics of youth work and sustainable development are, in most cases, studied independently of one another.

Research Object and Subject. The object of the research is the field of youth work in the process of sustainable development in the Republic of Azerbaijan. The subject of the research, in turn, comprises the mechanisms of directing the potential of young people towards sustainable development goals, the institutional approach, and the directions for improving this field from the perspective of sustainable development objectives.

Aim and Objectives of the Research. The aim of the research is to substantiate the role of youth work in ensuring sustainable development in the Republic of Azerbaijan at the theoretical and institutional levels, analyze the existing situation, and identify directions for its improvement. To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been set:

- To study contemporary approaches to the concept of sustainable development;
- To examine the theoretical and methodological foundations of organizing youth work, as well as the place and role of youth organizations and the youth movement in a sustainably developing society;
- To analyze strategies in the field of youth work and legislative frameworks governing youth work on the basis of international experience;
- To study the national legislation governing youth work using the example of the Republic of Azerbaijan;

²² Demirci, M.B. Türkiye'deki gençlerin sürdürülebilirlik algısı ve sürdürülebilir tüketim pratikleri: Z kuşağı üzerine bir araştırma / M.B.Demirci. – İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi, – 2023. – 101 s.

- To evaluate the main directions of state policy in organizing youth work in the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as the activities of youth organizations;
- To review the current state of volunteering activities in youth work;
- To investigate the mechanisms for ensuring sustainability in the management of the youth movement in our country, as well as mechanisms for improving youth work through the application of contemporary innovations in science, education and culture;
- To analyze the existing prospects for sustainable activity in the field of youth work in Azerbaijan.

Research Methods. Within the methodological framework of the research, an extensive document analysis was conducted at the initial stage, and strategic documents, conventions and recommendations adopted by the UN and other international organizations concerning youth policy were examined systematically. At the same time, youth policy models of various countries, including those in Europe, North America, Asia and the CIS region, were comparatively analyzed, and similarities and differences among their institutional mechanisms, program, approaches, legislative frameworks and governance structures were identified. This comparative analysis made it possible to determine the potential for adapting successful practices and policy instruments applied at the global level to the socio-political realities of Azerbaijan.

The observation method made it possible to obtain empirical data by directly monitoring the actual working mechanisms, behavioral patterns and practical applications of institutions operating in the field of youth work during the research process. It also enabled the identification of details of day-to-day activities not reflected in official documents and facilitated an objective assessment of the actual condition of institutional processes. The systematic analysis method, in turn, made it possible to examine the relationships among existing legislation, institutional structures and implemented programs in the field of youth work as an integrated system.

The research conducted at the national level was carried out on the basis of normative-legal and institutional analysis.

Main Provisions Submitted for Defense. The following provisions are submitted for defense as a result of the research:

- The concept of sustainable development and the field of youth work are not separate but mutually interdependent areas. The integration of young people into environmental, social and economic sustainability goals is a necessary condition for ensuring sustainable development, and studying these two areas in a synthesized manner provides a clearer analytical framework than existing fragmented approaches.

- International models of youth policy are not uniform. A comparison of the experiences of Northern Europe, Western Europe and the United States demonstrates that, in order to achieve sustainable development goals, an institutional approach adapted to the national context, rather than a universal model, is effective, and this finding provides a basis for model selection for Azerbaijan.

- Although the legal and institutional framework in the field of youth work in Azerbaijan, which has developed since 1991, is consistent in nature, it requires improvement in terms of systematic alignment with sustainable development goals. A comparative analysis of national legislation against international standards reveals both areas of compliance and existing gaps.

- The post-conflict period (the stage following 2020) has created qualitatively new conditions for the field of youth work in Azerbaijan, and adapting youth policy to the realities of this period is one of the principal directions for improving youth work in ensuring sustainable development.

Scientific Novelty of the Research. The research contains the following scientific novelties:

- For the first time, sustainable development and youth policy have been analyzed in a synthesized manner; the theoretical and methodological links between the concept of sustainable development and youth work have been systematically elaborated, and the conceptual foundations for integrating young people into environmental, social and economic sustainability goals have been identified.

- Youth policy has been examined for the first time in the context of the post-conflict period (the stage following 2020), and

new analyses have been proposed taking into account the characteristics of this period.

– The national legislation and state programs of the Republic of Azerbaijan have been compared with international standards and advanced international experience, and the similarities and differences have been scientifically substantiated.

Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research. The theoretical significance of the research lies in the fact that the interrelationship between the concept of sustainable development and youth policy has been systematically elaborated for the first time, and a theoretical and methodological basis for integrating these two fields has been developed. The study presents a conceptual framework explaining the integration of young people into environmental, social and economic sustainability goals, while national and international approaches have been comparatively analyzed and a new theoretical perspective has been added to the existing scholarly discourse.

The practical significance of the research is that its findings can be applied by state bodies, youth organizations and NGOs in developing youth work strategies aligned with sustainable development goals. The recommendations put forward in the study provide practical guidance for adapting youth policy to the realities of the post-conflict period, increasing the effectiveness of youth organizations and governance mechanisms, expanding volunteering activities, and making more effective use of international experience in this field.

Approbation and Application. The main findings of the research are reflected in 12 scientific works of the author, including 8 scientific articles and 4 conference proceedings. These works have been published in Azerbaijani, Turkish and English in reputable scientific publications both in Azerbaijan (“Public Administration: Theory and Practice,” “Geostrategy,” “Civilization,” “Man and the Biosphere (MaB - UNESCO)”) and abroad (“Baltic Journal of Legal and Social Sciences,” Baltic International Academy). The findings of the research were also presented in the form of reports at republican scientific-practical conferences held at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and

Western Caspian University, as well as at the “AHI EVRAN 5. INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH” international congress held in the United Arab Emirates (Dubai).

Name of the Organization Where the Dissertation Was Carried Out. The work was performed at the Department of “Sustainable Development” of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Total Length of the Dissertation in Characters, Indicating the Separate Volumes of Its Structural Sections. The dissertation consists of an introduction, four chapters comprising 12 sections, a conclusion, and a list of references. The introduction spans 9 pages (16,946 characters); Chapter I, 34 pages (65,741 characters); Chapter II, 33 pages (60,137 characters); Chapter III, 24 pages (47,786 characters); Chapter IV, 31 pages (63,580 characters); and the conclusion, 6 pages (12,278 characters). The total volume of the dissertation (excluding the title page, table of contents, figures, tables, graphs, and list of references) is 266,468 characters.

THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH

In the “**Introduction**” section of the research, the relevance of the dissertation topic is substantiated, the object and subject of the research, as well as its aim and objectives, are defined, the scientific novelty and theoretical and practical significance of the research are established, the provisions submitted for defense are presented, and the structure and scope of the work are briefly outlined.

The first chapter of the research, consisting of three paragraphs, is entitled “**Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Organizing Work with Youth in Ensuring Sustainable Development.**” The first paragraph of this chapter covers “*Contemporary Approaches to the Concept of Sustainable Development.*” It provides a multidimensional analysis of the transformation process that the concept of sustainable development has undergone in the modern period and substantiates that this concept is no longer limited solely to the environmental dimension. Contemporary approaches demonstrate that sustainability is closely

associated not only with the protection of natural resources, but also with ensuring social equality, establishing stable and balanced economic systems, and developing mechanisms for coordinated cooperation at the global level. In this context, technological innovations, digitalization processes, the principles of the circular economy, and inclusive development models serve as key instruments that create conditions for the more systematic and functional implementation of sustainable development. At the same time, combating climate change and transitioning to renewable energy resources, particularly the initiatives put forward within the framework of the Paris Climate Agreement, have become one of the priority directions of the global agenda. Alongside this, the active involvement of the younger generation in these processes not only ensures the social reproduction of the idea of sustainability but also stimulates the emergence of innovative and alternative solutions. On the other hand, the application of sustainable finance mechanisms and ESG criteria contributes to aligning economic activities with the principles of social and environmental responsibility and establishes a new normative framework within the global financial architecture. The analysis conducted demonstrates that sustainable development is no longer confined to the level of international discourse; rather, its effectiveness is directly linked to the adaptation of local governance structures, the optimization of policy instruments, and the strengthening of institutional mechanisms.

The second paragraph of the chapter addresses the ***“Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Organizing Work with Youth.”*** Here, the author demonstrates that the theoretical and methodological framework of work with youth serves as a strategic mechanism shaping the long-term development priorities of society, while the position of young people within social, economic, and political systems is directly related to their guidance and opportunities for development. While theoretical approaches provide a conceptual basis related to socialization and personality formation, methodological approaches establish a system of tools that ensures the practical application and measurement of this knowledge. Modern youth policy, pursued by states and international institutions,

aims not only to enhance the competencies of young people but also to foster their development as active citizens, and the effectiveness of this policy depends on its adaptation to actual socio-economic conditions and individual needs.

Within the framework of the United Nations, the evaluation of youth policy is carried out comprehensively on the basis of assessing the conformity of national policies with international standards, systematically analyzing implemented activities, and applying a comparative approach across countries. This policy is not limited to a single field; rather, it is structured as an integrated and multi-level framework encompassing various sectors such as education, healthcare, economic development, the environment, science, and technology. At the same time, clarity of the legal framework, the availability of continuous monitoring mechanisms, and the provision of a high-quality data base are among the key conditions determining the effectiveness of this policy; otherwise, it becomes difficult to assess the actual impact of youth policy and implement it in a coordinated manner.

The third paragraph, entitled ***“The Place and Role of Youth Organizations and the Youth Movement in a Developing Sustainable Society,”*** notes that youth organizations in Azerbaijan serve as an important institutional mechanism contributing to the social, professional, and civic development of young people and stimulating their initiative and public participation. These institutions play a significant role in the country’s social and political life both in terms of preserving national values and representing young people at the international level and developing their leadership skills. Heydar Aliyev’s political course played a decisive role in the institutional formation of the Azerbaijani youth movement, while the adopted state programs and legal framework ensured the social integration of young people, the protection of their rights, and the expansion of opportunities for their development. His approach established a consistent policy line that encouraged the formation of young people on the basis of national and cultural values and their participation in public administration. During the period of Ilham Aliyev, this policy line was further systematized and continued through state programs,

strategies, and institutional mechanisms by expanding opportunities for young people in education, employment, and socio-political participation. The “**ASAN Volunteers**” program and various youth forums serve as important platforms that increase young people’s public participation and develop their practical skills and sense of civic responsibility. These initiatives provide young people with opportunities to gain experience, build networks, and represent the country both locally and internationally.

The second chapter of the research is entitled “**Governance Mechanisms for Organizing Work with Youth in Ensuring Sustainable Development.**” This chapter also consists of three paragraphs, and its first paragraph analyzes “*Strategies in the Field of Work with Youth: International Experience.*” The results of the research presented here demonstrate that although the implementation of youth policy in different countries is based on different institutional and ideological models, the main objective common to all of them is to ensure the integration of young people into social, economic, and political systems. In the European context, particularly within the framework of the Council of Europe and the European Union, the approaches developed on the basis of human rights and the principles of democratic participation are aimed at expanding young people’s civic engagement; in this context, the activities of specialized monitoring institutions for measuring the effectiveness of youth policy in Luxembourg, Belgium, and Germany are particularly noteworthy. At the same time, Scandinavian countries such as Finland and Sweden strengthen young people’s educational and employment opportunities through systematic programs based on the social welfare and equality model, while Norway further develops this approach through inclusive social policy. Although youth policy in federal states such as the United States and Russia is implemented through centralized institutions, certain institutional challenges remain in these countries in terms of expanding youth civic participation, while in Türkiye, although the national policy framework adopted since 2013 covers a broad range of areas, problems such as coordination and institutional gaps at the implementation level, including the absence of a national

youth council, are observed. This comparative picture demonstrates to Azerbaijan that a strong legal framework, intersectoral integration, and cooperation between the state and civil society are of decisive importance for effective youth policy; the comprehensive approach of the European Union and the social welfare models of Scandinavian countries provide examples that can be applied in terms of ensuring equal opportunities for young people and strengthening education and vocational training, while the expansion of non-formal education mechanisms and the establishment of specialized research structures for monitoring and evaluation emerge as strategic directions for Azerbaijan.

The second paragraph defines ***“International Legislative Frameworks in the Field of Work with Youth.”*** Here, the author demonstrates that international normative frameworks in the field of work with youth are systematic and mutually complementary in nature and serve as one of the key mechanisms determining the direction of states’ youth policies. In particular, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child serves as a fundamental legal basis for protecting the rights of young people and ensuring their development in the fields of education, health, and social well-being, while the initiatives and labor standards adopted by the International Labor Organization in the 1990s provide important normative guidelines for protecting young people’s labor rights, creating safe and fair working conditions, and expanding vocational training opportunities. Alongside this, the policy frameworks developed by the Council of Europe since the 2000s have encouraged the implementation of extensive programs in the areas of youth social integration, expanding educational opportunities, and combating social exclusion, while the UN Youth Strategy (2018-2030) encompasses a comprehensive system of measures aimed at ensuring young people’s social, economic, and political participation at the global level and has strengthened their integration into sustainable development processes. Alongside these international approaches, educational exchanges, scholarship programs, and vocational training initiatives implemented within the framework of the European Union’s youth policy provide practical mechanisms that stimulate the

development of young people's knowledge and skills. Consequently, all of the aforementioned international legal and institutional frameworks have directly influenced Azerbaijan's youth policy, creating the basis for the formation of a more systematic, inclusive, and competitive policy model in national legislation aimed at expanding young people's social protection, educational and employment opportunities, as well as ensuring their active participation in various spheres of society.

The third paragraph, entitled ***“Local Legislation in the Field of Work with Youth: The Case of the Republic of Azerbaijan,”*** emphasizes that the youth component has been systematically integrated into Azerbaijan's socio-economic development strategies, and this area has been identified as a particular priority within the framework of the **“Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the Future”** and **“Azerbaijan 2030: National Priorities for Socio-Economic Development”** documents. These strategic documents aim to actively involve young people in the country's overall development process through multifaceted programs and initiatives that ensure the realization of their social, economic, and intellectual potential. In this context, the **State Programs on Youth Development (2005-2009, 2011-2015, 2017-2021)** are particularly noteworthy, as they served to expand opportunities for young people to study abroad, enhance their professional skills, and develop them as competitive specialists. At the same time, such areas as ensuring youth employment, encouraging entrepreneurial activity, increasing access to innovative technologies, and fostering young people in the spirit of patriotism also constitute priority areas of state policy. Complementing this overall framework, the **“Youth Development Strategy” (2015-2025)** aligned youth policy with the state's long-term development objectives and established a unified conceptual model, defining specific objectives aimed at increasing young people's socio-economic participation, strengthening civic engagement, and equipping them with modern skills. Within the framework of the Strategy, measures such as improving education and employment services, expanding career support mechanisms, promoting the social integration of young people with disabilities, and increasing

opportunities for international cooperation were brought to the forefront, thereby targeting the enhancement of young people's competitiveness at the global level and ensuring their active participation in various fields.

On the other hand, the formation of the legal and institutional framework in the field of work with youth in the Republic of Azerbaijan reflects the state's systematic approach to this area, and this process is based on a broad normative framework established by the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Law "On Youth Policy," as well as presidential decrees and orders. These documents have specifically defined young people's rights to education, employment, and social protection and ensured the establishment of relevant state institutions and mechanisms for their implementation. In particular, the initial legislative stage covering the period from 1991 to 2002 and the normative acts adopted in the subsequent period demonstrate the application of a more modern and systematic approach aimed at increasing the role of young people in state-building and involving them in entrepreneurial activities and international projects. Within this framework, the Youth Foundation and other state programs have created practical opportunities for developing young people's potential and integrating them into socio-economic processes.

The third chapter of the research is entitled **"Analysis of the Current State of the Organization of Work with Youth in the Republic of Azerbaijan."** This chapter also consists of three paragraphs. The first paragraph is entitled ***"The Main Directions of State Policy in the Field of Organizing Work with Youth."*** Here, the author presents the overall content of the state policy implemented in the Republic of Azerbaijan in the field of organizing work with youth and demonstrates that this field has evolved from being a collection of individual initiatives into a systematic governance model supported by a normative and legal framework, institutional mechanisms, and long-term strategic documents; particularly, this model, which began to take shape from the mid-1990s onward, was gradually expanded and deepened in subsequent periods through state programs, legislative amendments, the establishment of funds

and centers, as well as international integration channels, and as a result, a certain degree of institutional stability has been ensured in terms of the social protection of young people, educational opportunities, employment prospects, and the level of public participation; nevertheless, empirical indicators and existing structural problems demonstrate that the effectiveness of this policy should be measured not merely by the existence of established institutions, but by their results-oriented and inclusive functioning, and in this context, the main directions of youth policy, namely strengthening moral, ethical, and patriotic education, identifying and supporting talented young people, expanding social protection and inclusiveness, increasing employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for young people, developing health and sports infrastructure, supporting young families, strengthening the activities of youth organizations, expanding international cooperation, and applying digital opportunities, should be accompanied not only at the conceptual level but also by concrete implementation mechanisms, measurable indicators, and a continuous monitoring system; otherwise, problems such as the high level of unemployment, the mismatch between vocational qualifications and labor market requirements, the widespread prevalence of informal employment, and the exclusion of certain vulnerable groups from policy measures, particularly among young people, will continue to weaken the actual impact of this policy, and therefore, at the current stage, the main issue is related less to the adoption of new programs than to the qualitative transformation of the existing policy, namely strengthening coordination, developing data-driven decision-making mechanisms, and applying the principle of social justice in a more systematic manner.

The second paragraph is entitled ***“Evaluation of the Activities of Youth Organizations in the Field of Work with Youth.”*** It is stated here that organizations operating in the field of work with youth in Azerbaijan, such as the IRELI Public Union, ASAN Volunteers, Bir Volunteer, DOST Volunteers, SME Volunteers, Reform Volunteers, the YAP Youth Union, ATGTI, and NAYORA, constitute one of the main pillars in the practical implementation of

youth policy through their functional specialization, thematic areas, and institutional capacities. Through these organizations, young people acquire leadership skills, engage in volunteer activities, participate in innovative initiatives, and become more closely involved in socio-political processes; for example, while IRELI operates in the areas of technological development, environmental awareness, and leadership, ASAN Volunteers contributes to public services through its extensive volunteer network, Bir Volunteer ensures the involvement of students in social and regional projects, DOST Volunteers strengthens participation in the field of social services, SME Volunteers promote business and entrepreneurial experience, while Reform Volunteers operate in the fields of economic analysis and innovation. At the same time, ATGTI contributes to increasing public engagement within the higher education environment, the YAP Youth Union serves to expand the political participation of young people, while NAYORA brings together the activities of these diverse organizations within the framework of international standards and coordination mechanisms. Overall, these organizations translate the strategic directions defined by the state into practical implementation, strengthening the individual development and social responsibility of young people as well as their integration into the labor market, while simultaneously filling gaps that arise in areas such as the regions, non-formal education, and international relations, thereby forming a flexible and multi-level institutional system that expands the implementation capacity of youth policy.

The third paragraph discusses ***“An Overview of the Current State of Volunteer Activities in Work with Youth.”*** The author provides a general overview of the current state of volunteer activities in the field of work with youth in Azerbaijan, noting that in recent years this area has evolved from being merely a collection of socially beneficial initiatives into one of the important institutional, normative, and practical pillars of state youth policy; volunteering is no longer merely an act of individual goodwill, but also performs the function of a systematic social school that develops young people’s social responsibility, civic awareness, leadership, teamwork,

organizational discipline, and public participation skills through real-life experience. In particular, the legal framework established by the Law “On Volunteer Activity,” the large-scale organizational experience developed during international events, the declaration of 2020 as the “Year of Volunteers,” the flexible operation of volunteer structures during the pandemic period, and the further formalization of this field at the subsequent stage through electronic platforms, certification mechanisms, festivals, and state programs demonstrate that the volunteer movement in Azerbaijan has developed not spontaneously, but increasingly according to a model that is coordinated and strategically oriented. The main advantage of this model is that the relationship established among state institutions, legally recognized volunteer organizations, and digital governance tools has transformed volunteering into an area of activity that is measurable, recognized, and socially reputable; as a result, young people have gained opportunities to participate in diverse areas ranging from public services to international events and from social campaigns to awareness-raising initiatives, which has had a significant impact on both their individual development and social integration. At the same time, the analysis also demonstrates that more balanced geographical distribution across the regions, stronger support for local initiatives, the establishment of long-term motivation mechanisms, clearer determination of the legal and social guarantees of volunteers, keeping activities free from formalism, and further strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems remain important for the future development of volunteer activities. In this regard, the volunteer movement in Azerbaijan has already moved beyond the initial stages of formation and mass participation and now faces the need to transition to a qualitatively new stage, namely a development model that is more inclusive, more sustainable, more professional, and more equitable across regions; ensuring this transition successfully will create conditions for volunteering to become firmly established not merely as a supporting element of state events, but as a long-term national institution that strengthens young people’s civic agency, social solidarity, and the self-governance potential of society.

The final, fourth chapter of the research concerns **“Directions and Prospects for Improving Work with Youth in the Context of Sustainable Development in the Republic of Azerbaijan.”** The first paragraph of this chapter is entitled ***“Ensuring Sustainability in the Management of the Youth Movement.”*** The analysis conducted demonstrates that Azerbaijani youth have recently evolved from passive participants into active shapers of sustainable development processes at both the national and international levels, and have begun to emerge as actors possessing intellectual and organizational potential that is not limited to social projects but can also influence the socio-political agenda. The institutional framework established by the state forms the basis of this transformation, within which the Presidential Administration, the Milli Majlis, the Youth Foundation, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and nearly 300 operating non-governmental organizations ensure the systematic and coordinated implementation of youth policy. In parallel, participation in platforms such as the “Young Climate Envoys” program, initiatives related to the SDGs and the Finance Academy, the ICESCO Technology Competition, the ECO Youth Forum, and the ECOSOC Youth Forum strengthens the integration of young people into the global development agenda and expands their opportunities for representation at the international level. At the same time, the activity demonstrated during the Patriotic War and in the information sphere, the institutional expansion of the volunteer movement, the establishment of the “Young Ambassadors” institution, and initiatives such as the National Model United Nations demonstrate that young people have developed in terms of both patriotic as well as diplomatic and communication skills. Consequently, the youth movement in Azerbaijan is no longer merely a collection of ideological or social initiatives, but has evolved into a complex system of functional and strategic importance in the implementation of sustainable development goals at both the local and global levels.

The second paragraph of Chapter IV discusses ***“Mechanisms for improving work with youth through the application of modern innovations in the fields of science, education, and culture.”*** Thus, the analysis shows that the improvement of work with youth through the

application of modern innovations in science, education, and culture in Azerbaijan is no longer just a collection of separate initiatives, but has evolved into a unified strategic line combining the state's goals of human capital development, digital transformation, social inclusivity, and national-cultural sustainability. In recent years, important steps have been taken financially, institutionally, and technologically to realize the potential of young people, who account for 22.6% of the population – approximately 2.3 million people. Measures such as the reconstruction or major renovation of over 70% of schools, the construction of hundreds of schools for internally displaced children, the implementation of the "State Program for the Development of Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities in 2018–2024", the reduction of the poverty level to 5%, and the employment strategy covering 2019–2030 have significantly strengthened the social base of youth work. In this context, the allocation of 4,390,064,757 AZN to the education sector for 2025 –including 423,701,848 AZN directed toward preschool education, of which 415,864,236 AZN is provided directly to the Ministry of Science and Education – clearly demonstrates that the state prioritizes a development model built on knowledge, skills, and equal opportunities starting from an early age.

At the same time, as noted by Malahat İbrahimgizi, the fact that more than 30 percent of decisions related to the SDGs are directly connected with young people demonstrates the public significance of the decisions adopted in this area, while the Young Scientists and Specialists Council operating under ANAS, innovation summer camps, and the “Law on Science” adopted in 2019 contribute to young researchers becoming more visible and supported actors in scientific activity; within the framework of the State Program on Education Abroad for 2022–2028, the fact that 1,252 Azerbaijani students have already obtained the right to study at 151 prestigious higher education institutions located in 21 countries of the world demonstrates that Azerbaijan is encouraging young people to engage in global academic competition not randomly, but in a planned and selective manner. In the field of innovative education, the “STEAM Azerbaijan” project holds a special place: this model, implemented since 2019, already covers 21 STEAM

centers, 398 schools, and 252,711 students, while more than 3,000 students are involved in the practical and creative application of knowledge by participating in programs such as “ArtLab,” “CodeLab,” “Mechatronics,” “Drone Technologies,” and “Programmable Systems”; the extension of this model to the fourth-grade level from 2024 onward, as well as the establishment of STEAM centers in Nakhichevan and the liberated territories, demonstrates its orientation toward the broader geographical and age-based dissemination of innovation. Although the integration of artificial intelligence into education and science is still at an early stage, as emphasized by Minister of Science and Education Emin Amrullayev, the proper application of this technology opens up important opportunities for the formation of future skills; the provision of access to platforms such as “Scopus AI” by the State Agency for Science and Higher Education and the organization of training sessions for young scientists in this area are concrete indicators of Azerbaijan’s efforts to adapt its scientific sphere to the global digital academic environment.

At the same time, SABAH groups, vocationally oriented classes, scholarship and olympiad mechanisms, as well as the need for cybersecurity awareness demonstrate that at the contemporary stage, work with youth means not only providing education but also transforming young people into safe, analytical, and adaptive actors in the digital world. This approach also continues in the field of culture: the “Culture and Creative Industries Forum,” “Presidential Award for Youth,” “Sustainable Development School,” the “Khari bulbul” Festival in Shusha, national music and creative industry projects demonstrate that young people are being shaped not merely as consumers but also as bearers, producers, and diplomatic representatives of culture; in particular, the establishment of 20 new startups and the provision of services to more than 50 residents as a result of the activities of the Center for the Development of Cultural and Creative Industries in areas such as Music, “Gametech,” “Cultech,” and “Ai4Art” demonstrate that the creative economy is no longer an abstract idea but a development trajectory producing measurable results. Against the background of examples from

UNESCO's experience in Vietnam, where training, mentoring, and grant support were provided to more than 10,000 young people and the enterprises of eight young leaders were financed, it appears that Azerbaijan is also seeking to establish closer links between creative industries, digital culture, and the innovative initiatives of young people by drawing on international experience.

Against this background, it can be concluded that the mechanisms for improving work with youth in Azerbaijan through science, education, and culture are already based on three main pillars: first, state investment and the normative framework; second, technological and innovative educational tools; and third, institutional platforms that ensure the synthesis of national and cultural identity with the creative economy; however, for the long-term effectiveness of this model, it is important to ensure that opportunities for international academic exchange are not restricted, to maintain a more delicate balance between the security considerations surrounding programs such as Erasmus+ and global academic openness, to expand equal opportunities across regions, and to bring young people to the forefront not merely as program participants but also as authors of ideas and actors in decision-making, because only in this way will Azerbaijani youth not remain merely bearers of human capital, but will also become a strategic social force shaping the direction of science, the economy, public administration, and cultural diplomacy.

The final paragraph of the chapter, as well as of the research, focuses on ***“Current Prospects for Sustainable Activities in the Field of Work with Youth”*** and demonstrates that the prospects for sustainable development in the field of work with youth in our country have been systematically strengthened through strong political will, consistently adopted state programs and strategic documents, a broad institutional framework, international cooperation mechanisms, and the application of innovative approaches. Thus, in the policy of President Ilham Aliyev, the formation of young people as a generation that is both committed to national values and open to digital transformation and innovations, achieving success in the fields of startups and technology and

enhancing its international competitiveness, is presented as a key priority. The alignment of the Youth Development Strategy of Azerbaijan covering the years 2015–2025 with the Sustainable Development Goals was aimed at developing the potential of young people in diverse areas such as education, employment, social protection, and gender equality, as well as strengthening human capital; at the same time, initiatives such as Model United Nations, SDG Young Ambassadors, ASAN Volunteers, the Idea Bank, and the Personnel Bank have strengthened institutional trust in state–youth relations by expanding young people’s social responsibility, professional skills, and participation in decision-making processes.

While the Baku Global Youth Policy Forum, diaspora events, and participation in international platforms have strengthened the global standing of young people, regional stability and peace initiatives have opened up new development opportunities in the fields of cross-border cooperation, innovation, tourism, green energy, and culture; at the same time, the involvement of young people from the regions in these processes, their participation in socio-economic revitalization within the framework of the “Great Return” program following the liberation of Karabakh, inclusive education and employment mechanisms, gender equality initiatives, and support measures targeting vulnerable groups constitute key conditions ensuring the parallel realization of the social, economic, and environmental components of sustainable development. In this context, it can be projected that over the coming decade, approaches to work with youth will move away from a single-category model toward individualized models, meaning that young people will be considered as differentiated groups based on their areas of interest, skill levels, social backgrounds, and regional characteristics, and will be supported through targeted programs accordingly; this process will require more active and purposeful participation not only from state institutions but also from the private sector and non-governmental organizations. In particular, within the framework of cooperation with technology companies, the transition of young people into the labor market could be facilitated through micro-skills-type training programs, social innovation laboratories, and rapidly deployable pilot projects at the

regional level; in parallel, decision-making mechanisms will expand beyond forum and model parliament formats through digital consensus platforms and electronic voting tools, which will increase both transparency and the real opportunities for young people to exert influence; as a result, the field of work with youth in Azerbaijan will move away from a static program-based approach toward a more flexible, adaptive, and individualized ecosystem model, and this transformation will further strengthen the role of young people as both a leading force and a strategic guarantor of the country's long-term socio-economic development.

The “**Conclusion**” of the research demonstrates that youth policy in Azerbaijan has undergone a consistent process of institutionalization since the period of independence and has achieved significant development in terms of its legal framework, state programs, and financial mechanisms. International comparative analysis shows that effective youth policy is based on the integration of environmental, social, and economic dimensions, specialized monitoring mechanisms, and strong state–civil society cooperation. Azerbaijan has made progress in moving closer to these standards; however, the existence of unemployment among young people at a certain level, the predominance of the informal sector, and the concentration of volunteer activities mainly in Baku continue to remain major structural problems. Therefore, the author puts forward three main recommendations: strengthening the institutional and financial capacity of regional youth centers, developing targeted sub-programs covering vulnerable categories, and establishing an independent monitoring mechanism to measure the effectiveness of youth policy.

The main content and provisions of the dissertation are reflected in the following articles and conference abstracts published in Azerbaijan and abroad:

1. Azərbaycan Respublikasının gənclər strategiyasının formalaşmasında Heydər Əliyevin rolu // Heydər Əliyev Azərbaycanda gənclər siyasətinin banisidir: Respublika elmi-praktik konfransının materialları. – Bakı: Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti yanında Dövlət İdarəçilik Akademiyası, – 5 dekabr, – 2023, – s.154-155.

2. Gənclər siyasətinin reallaşdırılmasında səmərəliliyin empirik qiymətləndirilməsi meyarları // – Bakı: Dövlət idarəçiliyi: nəzəriyyə və təcrübə, – 2024. №4 (88). – s.207-216.
3. Azərbaycan Respublikasında davamlı inkişafın təmin edilməsində gənclər təşkilatlarının rolu // “Azərbaycan Respublikasında davamlı inkişafın formalaşmasında Heydər Əliyevin rolu” mövzusunda Doktorant və gənc tədqiqatçıların Respublika elmi-praktiki konfransının materialları, – Bakı, – 2 may – 2024, – s.61-63.
4. Gənclərlə işin təşkili: nəzəri və metodoloji yanaşmaların əsasları // – Bakı: Geostrategiya, – 2025. №01(85), yanvar-fevral, – s.43-48.
5. Ümummilli lider Heydər Əliyevin gənclər siyasətinin formalaşması və inkişaf istiqamətləri // “Ümummilli lider Heydər Əliyev Azərbaycan Respublikasının konstitusiyasının müəllifi kimi” mövzusunda Doktorant və gənc tədqiqatçıların Respublika elmi-praktiki konfransının materialları, – Bakı, – c. I, – 8 may, – 2025, – s.172-174.
6. Gənclər hərəkətinin idarə edilməsində davamlılığın təmin olunması problemi // “Qlobal çağırışlar və perspektivlər” mövzusunda Respublika elmi-praktik konfransının materialları. – Bakı: Qərbi Kaspi Universiteti, – 14 may, – 2025, – s.231-232.
7. Azərbaycan'da gençlik çalışmaları alanında devlet politikasının ana yönleri // AHI EVRAN 5th International Congress on Scientific Research. – Dubai, UAE, – 16-18 may, – 2025, – s.1053-1064.
8. Gənclərlə iş üzrə beynəlxalq normativ tənzimləmələr və standartlar // – Bakı: Bakı Avrasiya Universiteti, Sivilizasiya, – 2025. № 2, Cild 14(63), – s.30-38.
9. Legal foundations of youth policy in Azerbaijan: normative framework and strategic priorities // Baltic Journal of Legal and Social Sciences. – 2025. №2, – s.166-172.
10. Davamlı inkişaf kontekstində gənclərin yeri: subyektivlik və iştirakçılıq // – Bakı: Dövlət idarəçiliyi: nəzəriyyə və təcrübə, – 2025. №2 (90). – s. 217-226.

11. Davamlı inkişafın sosial ölçüsü – cəmiyyətin dayanıqlılığının təminatı // “Azərbaycanın iqtisadi inkişafında innovativ idarəetmə və rəqəmsal texnologiyaların rolu” mövzusunda Respublika elmi-praktik konfransının materialları. – Bakı: Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti yanında Dövlət İdarəçilik Akademiyası, – I h, – 19 noyabr, – 2025, – s.179-183.



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