

РОЗДІЛ «Публічне управління та адміністрування»

UDC 005.74:351.8433

[https://doi.org/10.52058/3041-1793-2025-11\(16\)-1022-1029](https://doi.org/10.52058/3041-1793-2025-11(16)-1022-1029)

Abramova Iryna Oleksandrivna Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor, Lutsk National Technical University, Lutsk, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1241-0520>

Babenko Anastasiia Petrivna Student of the Second (Master`s) Level of Higher Education Educational programme “Public Management and Administration of Youth Policy” Lutsk National Technical University, <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2781-3120>

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF YOUTH CENTERS AS A COMPONENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL YOUTH INFRASTRUCTURE

Abstract. The development of youth infrastructure is a priority area of state social and humanitarian policy, as it ensures social cohesion, democratic activity and vitality of young people. Youth centres are key institutional elements of this infrastructure, performing functions such as developing competencies, integrating young people into public life, and supporting local initiatives. However, traditional management models are often focused on short-term solutions, which limit their effectiveness and ability to respond to modern challenges.

The purpose of the article is to study the processes of strategic management of youth centres as a component of regional youth infrastructure, to analyse international and national practices, and to identify key principles and management tools that ensure the systematicity, efficiency, and sustainability of the centres` activities.

The study revealed that strategic management of youth centres encompasses long-term planning, resource optimisation, staff competency development, and efficiency control mechanisms. International initiatives of the Council of Europe, notably the Kyiv Programme and the European Platform of Youth Centres, establish standards of quality and cooperation that can be adapted at the national and regional levels. National examples of the United Kingdom and Ireland demonstrate the practical implementation of these principles through the integration of centres into



regional strategies and partnership networks. The use of methodological tools, such as the Youth Work Toolkit, contributes to the standardisation of processes and enhances the transparency of management practices.

Further research should focus on systematising strategic management models, adapting international practices to local conditions, developing methodological recommendations for enhancing the institutional capacity of centres, and assessing their impact on the socio-economic development of regions. Particular attention should be paid to mechanisms for involving young people in management processes and the integration of youth centres into European quality standards.

Keywords: youth centres, strategic management, regional infrastructure, youth policy, European standards, systemic approach, efficiency, development of competencies.

Абрамова Ірина Олександрівна кандидат економічних наук, доцент кафедри менеджменту, Луцький національний технічний університет, м. Луцьк, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1241-0520>

Бабенко Анастасія Петрівна здобувачка другого (магістерського) рівня вищої освіти ОП «Публічне управління та адміністрування молодіжної політики» Луцький національний технічний університет, м. Луцьк <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2781-3120>

УПРАВЛІННЯ МОЛОДІЖНИМИ ЦЕНТРАМИ ЯК СКЛАДОВА РОЗВИТКУ РЕГІОНАЛЬНОЇ МОЛОДІЖНОЇ ІНФРАСТРУКТУРИ

Анотація. Розвиток молодіжної інфраструктури є пріоритетним напрямом державної соціальної та гуманітарної політики, оскільки забезпечує соціальну згуртованість, демократичну активність та життєстійкість молоді. Молодіжні центри виступають ключовими інституційними елементами цієї інфраструктури, виконуючи функції розвитку компетентностей, інтеграції молоді у громадське життя та підтримки локальних ініціатив. Проте традиційні моделі управління часто орієнтовані на короткострокові рішення, що обмежує їхню ефективність і здатність реагувати на сучасні виклики.

Метою статті є дослідження процесів стратегічного управління молодіжними центрами як складової регіональної молодіжної інфраструктури, аналіз міжнародних та національних практик, визначення ключових принципів та інструментів управління, що забезпечують системність, ефективність та сталість діяльності центрів.

Дослідження показало, що стратегічне управління молодіжними центрами включає довгострокове планування, оптимізацію ресурсів, розвиток компетентностей персоналу та механізми контролю ефективності. Міжнародні ініціативи Ради Європи, зокрема Київська Програма та Європейська

платформа молодіжних центрів, визначають стандарти якості та співпраці, які можуть бути адаптовані на національному та регіональному рівнях. Національні приклади Великої Британії та Ірландії демонструють практичну реалізацію цих принципів через інтеграцію центрів у регіональні стратегії та партнерські мережі. Використання методичних інструментів, таких як Youth Work Toolkit, сприяє стандартизації процесів та підвищенню прозорості управлінських практик.

Подальші дослідження повинні зосередитися на систематизації моделей стратегічного управління, адаптації міжнародних практик до локальних умов, розвитку методичних рекомендацій для підвищення інституційної спроможності центрів та оцінки їхнього впливу на соціально-економічний розвиток регіонів. Особливу увагу слід приділити механізмам залучення молоді до управлінських процесів та інтеграції молодіжних центрів у європейські стандарти якості.

Ключові слова: молодіжні центри, стратегічне управління, регіональна інфраструктура, молодіжна політика, європейські стандарти, системний підхід, ефективність, розвиток компетентностей.

Problem Statement. The development of adequate regional youth infrastructure is a key element of state social and humanitarian policy. Youth centres, as the institutional basis of this infrastructure, act as catalysts for democratic development, social cohesion and the formation of youth resilience, which is of particular importance in the context of modern crises and challenges [1]. In fact, the investment case for youth in Ukraine directly indicates the need for systematic support for youth initiatives as a guarantee of a “bright future” [10].

However, to ensure maximum efficiency and compliance with the rapidly changing needs of youth, the activities of the centres require a transition from reactive, fragmented management to proactive, strategically oriented management. Strategic management of youth centres encompasses the processes of long-term planning, resource organisation, staff motivation, and control, aimed at achieving the goals of regional infrastructure development, integration into the European space, and ensuring the sustainability of services [3]. Thus, the problem lies in the need to develop and adapt sound theoretical and methodological foundations for the strategic management of youth centres. These foundations should enhance the institutional capacity of centres as a key component of regional youth infrastructure, ensuring their operation in accordance with European standards and global best practices. Without a clear strategic vision and an effective implementation mechanism, youth centres risk losing their relevance, sustainability and resource support, which makes the study of strategic management processes critically crucial for sustainable regional development.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Analysis of current scientific, political and practical publications indicates a global and European trend towards



integrating youth policy into the highest strategic priorities. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) emphasises the need to place youth “at the centre” of government actions, having developed a comprehensive toolkit for this purpose [7; 8]. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), in its Strategic Plan for 2022–2025 and in the case study for Ukraine, focuses on investments in youth, which involves a systematic and strategic approach to working with the target group [9; 10].

At the European level, the Council of Europe has identified the priority of revitalising youth centres and youth work, which is particularly reflected in the Kyiv Program “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine” [1]. This decision directly indicates the importance of the infrastructure component for democratic transformations. Furthermore, the establishment of the European Platform for Youth Centres [2] confirms the institutionalisation of the issue of quality, cooperation and standardisation of the work of centres at the international level. Progress in this area is regularly assessed by the European Commission in the framework of the reports on the EU Youth Strategy [3].

National and local institutions are actively adapting these global priorities through their own strategic plans. The UK National Youth Agency has defined a Strategy for Youth Work for the years 2024-2029 [4], focusing on the quality and professionalisation of services. The National Youth Council of Ireland has a detailed Strategic Plan [5], which is complemented by examples of local integration, such as the Strategic Plan of the Local Creative Youth Partnership in Cork [6]. Such examples demonstrate the vertical integration of strategic management from national to regional and local levels. In addition, the availability of practical guides, such as the “Youth Work Toolkit” [11], suggests the development of a practical toolkit for enhancing the effectiveness of youth centres.

Thus, modern research clearly traces the global trend towards strategic planning in the youth sector. However, most of the works focus either on general state policies [7; 9] or on broad youth work, while the issue of a specific, focused mechanism for strategic management of youth centres themselves as integral elements of regional infrastructure and their integration into regional development plans based on modern management models remains a subject for additional scientific substantiation and systematisation.

This article aims to examine the strategic management processes of youth centres as a component of regional youth infrastructure development and to identify practical approaches to their functioning in accordance with European standards. The research aims to identify key elements of strategic management that ensure the integration of youth centres into national and regional development strategies, enhance the quality of youth services, and establish a sustainable model for operating centres in modern conditions.

Materials and methods. The study used a comprehensive analytical approach that combines content analysis, comparative and systemic methods to assess the

effectiveness of strategic management of youth centres as a component of regional youth infrastructure. The primary sources were official documents of international and national organizations, in particular the Council of Europe (Kyiv Programme, European Platform for Youth Centres) [1; 2], the European Commission (EU Youth Report 2019-2021) [3], the OECD (Youth Policy Toolkit; Youth at the centre of government action) [7; 8], UNICEF (Strategic Plan 2022-2025; Case for youth in Ukraine) [9; 10], as well as the national strategic plans of the United Kingdom and Ireland [4; 5; 6]. Content analysis was employed to identify key principles of strategic management and criteria for the effectiveness of youth centres. A comparative study was used to identify best practices at the national and international levels, and a systems approach was employed to assess the integration of centres into regional strategies and the youth service network. This methodological approach enabled the synthesis of theoretical and methodological principles, as well as practical tools of strategic management, providing a comprehensive assessment and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of youth centres [1; 3; 4; 7; 10; 11].

Presentation of the primary material. Strategic management of youth centres is considered a critically important element of the development of regional youth infrastructure, as it ensures the systematicity, efficiency and sustainability of the centres` activities in accordance with modern social and European standards [1; 3; 7]. Youth centres, as key institutions of regional infrastructure, perform functions that include providing social support, developing youth competencies, integrating youth into local and national programs, and contributing to the formation of civic activity and democratic culture [10].

In the context of globalisation processes, social transformations, and crises, traditional models of youth centre management, which focus on short-term solutions and reactive approaches, are insufficient. Strategic management of youth centres involves the integration of long-term planning, resource optimisation, staff motivation, and a control system, which enables ensuring the sustainable development of centres and their compliance with the needs of young people [3; 7; 8].

At the international level, the Council of Europe has outlined priorities related to the revitalisation of youth centres and their integration into democratic governance processes through the Kyiv Programme “Youth for Democracy in Ukraine” [1] and the creation of the European Platform of Youth Centres [2]. These initiatives shape standards of quality, cooperation and institutionalisation of youth work, ensuring the translation of international practices into national and regional strategies [3; 11].

The European Commission, in its reports on the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, emphasises the need for a systemic approach to planning and implementing youth policy, which includes the development of structured models of youth centre management, integration into local service networks and assessment of performance [3]. Strategic management involves not only administrative and financial aspects,



but also the development of staff competencies, mechanisms for involving young people in decision-making and increasing social interaction in the community [7; 8; 10].

At the national level, examples from the UK and Ireland demonstrate how strategic plans and local initiatives contribute to the development of youth infrastructure. The National Youth Agency Strategy for 2024–2029 [4] emphasises the professionalisation of services and improving the quality of work of centres, while the NYCI Strategic Plan 2023-2027 [5] and the local plan in Cork [6] demonstrate the practical implementation of these principles through the integration of centres into regional programs and partnership networks.

Modern research also emphasises the importance of using practical tools and manuals, such as the Youth Work Toolkit [11], which enable the standardisation of activities, implementation of best practices, and monitoring of effectiveness. The use of such methodological resources ensures consistency, increases transparency of management processes and contributes to the achievement of strategic goals for the development of youth infrastructure [7; 8; 10].

Thus, the strategic management of youth centres is a complex multi-level process that combines theoretical foundations, practical tools and international standards. It involves: determining the priorities and objectives of the centres' activities, planning resources and personnel, assessing the effectiveness of functioning and integration into regional strategies. The practical implementation of strategic management contributes to the development of a sustainable youth infrastructure, enhances social cohesion, encourages young people to participate actively in public life, and integrates the regional system into the European and global context.

The analysis of the literature and practical cases reveals that strategic management of youth centres is a crucial tool for ensuring the sustainability, efficiency, and relevance of services for youth, as well as for integrating national and regional policies into European global standards. At the same time, there is a need for further scientific systematisation of management models and adaptation of international practices to local conditions, which opens up prospects for new research in this area.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. The analysis of modern scientific sources, strategic documents, and international practices reveals that the strategic management of youth centres is a key factor in the effective development of regional youth infrastructure. It ensures the systematic functioning of centres, integration into regional strategies, improves the quality of youth services and contributes to the formation of social cohesion [1; 3; 7; 10]. International initiatives of the Council of Europe, notably the Kyiv Program and the European Platform of Youth Centres [1; 2], as well as recommendations from the European Commission [3], establish standards that can be adapted at the national and regional levels to enhance management efficiency.

National examples, such as the National Youth Agency Strategy 2024-2029 [4] and the NYCI Strategic Plan 2023-2027 [5], demonstrate the practical implementation

of strategic management principles, and local initiatives, such as the Cork Strategic Plan [6], show the possibilities of integrating youth centres into partnership networks and regional programmes. The use of tools such as the Youth Work Toolkit [11] allows standardising management processes, assessing performance and implementing best practices. Prospects for further research include the systematisation of strategic management models, the adaptation of international practices to local conditions, and the development of methodological recommendations for enhancing the institutional capacity of centres and evaluating their impact on regional socio-economic development. Particularly relevant are the studies on mechanisms for involving young people in management processes, assessing the effectiveness of resource provision, and integrating centres into the European space, which will enable the formation of a sustainable, innovative, and adaptive system of youth infrastructure.

Thus, strategic management of youth centres is not only a tool for improving the quality of services, but also a mechanism for implementing social policy at the regional level, which opens up new horizons for scientific research and practical implementation of European standards in the national context.

References:

1. Council of Europe. Kyiv Programme. (2021). *Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Revitalizing youth centres and youth work*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/kyiv/youth-for-democracy-in-ukraine>
2. Council of Europe. Youth Department. (2021). *European Platform for Youth Centres*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/european-platform-for-youth-centres1>
3. European Commission. (2021). *EU Youth Report 2019–2021: First assessment / EU Youth Strategy progress*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://youth.europa.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/1_EN_ACT_part1_v3.pdf
4. National Youth Agency (UK). (2024). *Our strategy for youth work 2024-2029*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from <https://nya.org.uk/our-strategy/>
5. National Youth Council Ireland. (2023). *NYCI Strategic Plan 2023–2027*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from <https://www.youth.ie/documents/nyci-strategic-plan-2023-2027/>
6. NYCI Strategic Plan local: Cork. (2024). *Local Creative Youth Partnership Strategic Plan 2024–28*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://www.corketb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CLCYP-Strategic-Plan-2024-28_LR-4.pdf
7. OECD. (2022). *Youth at the centre of government action*. OECD Publishing. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/06/youth-at-the-centre-of-government-action_7385c830/bcc2dd08-en.pdf
8. OECD. (2024). *OECD Youth Policy Toolkit*. OECD Publishing. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/11/oecd-youth-policy-toolkit_3de4a9f0.html
9. UNICEF. (2021). *UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025 / UNICEF and You: strategic materials*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from <https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/UNICEF-strategic-plan-2022-2025-publication-EN.pdf>
10. UNICEF. (2024). *Case for youth in Ukraine: A brighter future — An investment*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/media/47246/file/Youth%20Investment%20Case_EN.pdf



11. European Students` Network / Youth Work Networks. (2022). *Youth Work Toolkit*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://www.esn.org/sites/default/files/news/youth_work_toolkit.pdf

Література:

1. Council of Europe. Kyiv Programme. (2021). *Youth for Democracy in Ukraine: Revitalizing youth centres and youth work*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/kyiv/youth-for-democracy-in-ukraine>

2. Council of Europe. Youth Department. (2021). *European Platform for Youth Centres*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/european-platform-for-youth-centres1>

3. European Commission. (2021). *EU Youth Report 2019–2021: First assessment / EU Youth Strategy progress*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://youth.europa.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/1_EN_ACT_part1_v3.pdf

4. National Youth Agency (UK). (2024). *Our strategy for youth work 2024-2029*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from <https://nya.org.uk/our-strategy/>

5. National Youth Council Ireland. (2023). *NYCI Strategic Plan 2023–2027*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from <https://www.youth.ie/documents/nyci-strategic-plan-2023-2027/>

6. NYCI Strategic Plan local: Cork. (2024). *Local Creative Youth Partnership Strategic Plan 2024–28*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://www.corketb.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/CLCYP-Strategic-Plan-2024-28_LR-4.pdf

7. OECD. (2022). *Youth at the centre of government action*. OECD Publishing. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2022/06/youth-at-the-centre-of-government-action_7385c830/bcc2dd08-en.pdf

8. OECD. (2024). *OECD Youth Policy Toolkit*. OECD Publishing. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/11/oecd-youth-policy-toolkit_3de4a9f0.html

9. UNICEF. (2021). *UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025 / UNICEF and You: strategic materials*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from <https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/UNICEF-strategic-plan-2022-2025-publication-EN.pdf>

10. UNICEF. (2024). *Case for youth in Ukraine: A brighter future — An investment*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/media/47246/file/Youth%20Investment%20Case_EN.pdf

11. European Students` Network / Youth Work Networks. (2022). *Youth Work Toolkit*. Retrieved October 30, 2025, from https://www.esn.org/sites/default/files/news/youth_work_toolkit.pdf