

Institutional Formation of Youth Policy in Uzbekistan During the Transition Period and The Development of Social Protection Mechanisms (1991-1994)

 Toshpulatov Mamadali

PhD Student, Navoi State University, Uzbekistan

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Submission Date: 31 January 2026

Accepted Date: 02 March 2026

Published Date: 21 March 2026

VOLUME: Vol.06 Issue03

Page No. 52-56

DOI: - <https://doi.org/10.37547/social-fsshj-06-03-03>

ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the renewal of youth policy in Uzbekistan in terms of both content and form during the initial stage of independence, the establishment of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan, its tasks in the transition period, and the process through which practical mechanisms aimed at the social protection of young people were formed. The study examines the institutionalization of youth policy through the resolutions, action programs, plenum and congress decisions adopted in 1991-1994, as well as measures to support students socially, increase stipends, and establish foundations and councils. It also reveals the interrelationship among spiritual-educational, economic, organizational, and international dimensions of youth work under the conditions of the transition period. As a result, the article demonstrates that youth policy in Uzbekistan was not merely a renaming of the former Komsomol system, but rather developed into an independent institution closely connected with social protection, civic activity, and state-building [1], [2].

Keywords: - Youth policy, Youth Union of Uzbekistan, social protection, transition period, Action Program, student policy, youth organizations, institutional development, independence.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important tasks facing Uzbekistan in the early years of independence was the formulation of a national model of social renewal based on the rejection of the former ideological system. Within this process, the youth question acquired particular political and social significance. Young people constituted not only a demographically substantial segment of the population, but also one of the most active social pillars in the construction of a new state and society. For this reason, during 1991-1994 it

became a historical necessity to move youth policy beyond communist organizational frameworks and transform it into an independent system corresponding to national interests and social needs [1], [3].

The resolution adopted by the Extraordinary 25th Congress of the Leninist Communist Youth League of Uzbekistan on 4 October 1991 became a political expression of this historical necessity. In that resolution, a transition period was officially declared in the organization's activity, and its

principal tasks were linked to resolving the vital and social problems of young people, mobilizing them for creative labor in their homeland, involving them in democratic processes, and creating conditions for the realization of diverse views and initiatives [1]. This marked a fundamentally new conceptual turn that differed in principle from the previous ideological approach.

The purpose of this article is to provide a historical analysis of the institutional formation of youth policy in Uzbekistan and the development of social protection mechanisms between 1991 and 1994. Particular attention is paid to three major dimensions: first, the programmatic foundations of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan during the transition period; second, the emergence of practical measures for the social protection of youth; and third, the completion of the transition period and the stabilization of the new institution by 1994.

METHODS

The study was conducted on the basis of historicism, systematic analysis, comparative-analytical approaches, and institutional methodology. The resolutions of congresses, Action Programs, decisions of central plenums, official reports in the press, state measures related to social protection, and political speeches covering the period 1991–1994 were examined in their interconnection [1], [4]. The sequence of events was analyzed from the perspective of the internal evolution of youth policy, and attention was devoted not only to the factual content of individual documents and decisions, but also to their institutional significance.

In addition, the concept of an “institutional turn” was employed as a methodological framework for the analysis of youth policy. According to this approach, the establishment of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan should be interpreted not as a simple renaming, but as a transformation of goals, governance, social functions, and the entire system of state-public relations [2], [5].

RESULTS

Formation of the Programmatic Foundations of the Transition Period. The transition period declared at the October 1991 congress became the point of departure for the process of redefining the

substance of youth policy. The resolution stipulated that the organization should become a union of mutual assistance in addressing the vital and social problems of youth, involve young people in labor and democratic reforms, and build relations with state bodies and various socio-political structures on the basis of trust and independence [1]. Through this, the organization attempted to distance itself from its former ideologically dependent character.

This shift found even clearer expression in the Action Program. The inclusion of projects such as Social Service for Youth, Compassion, Care for Schoolchildren and Students, and Youth of the Aral Sea Region demonstrated that youth policy was beginning to move toward a socially oriented model [2]. The protection of the civic, political, social, cultural, and legal interests of young men and women was defined as the core purpose of the organization’s activity [3]. Thus, from the very first phase of the transition period, youth policy began to move away from ideological mobilization and toward a system of practical social service.

Practical Mechanisms for Supporting Youth. In late 1991 and early 1992, a number of practical initiatives emerged to support young people. In cooperation with the Ulugh Beg Foundation for the Support of Youth, technical equipment was provided to students of arts schools, incentive allowances were allocated, and sponsorship contracts were concluded for talented young individuals [4], [5]. These measures contributed to broadening the material foundations of youth policy. On the one hand, they strengthened cooperation between state and public institutions; on the other, they demonstrated the emergence of patronage and multi-source financing elements within youth policy.

Initiatives under the Youth Organizations Committee complemented this direction. The allocation of funds raised through charity evenings to orphanages, the establishment of contacts with foreign youth organizations, and the financing of youth trips to Germany indicate that the social and international dimensions of youth work were mutually reinforcing [6]. It can therefore be argued that, even during the transition period itself, multi-dimensional mechanisms began to emerge that connected the domestic and external arenas of youth policy.

Organizational Restructuring and the Establishment of Independent Symbolism. In December 1991, decisions were adopted to change the names of youth publications, introduce membership cards of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan in place of old Komsomol cards, approve the organization's emblem, and reduce the size of its administrative apparatus [7]. These measures were not merely organizational innovations; they also contributed to the formation of the new organization's independent symbolic and institutional identity. In particular, against the background of financial difficulties, the reduction of the administrative apparatus and the revision of the budget demonstrated that the youth organization was moving away from the old administrative model toward an economically accountable structure.

At the same time, the introduction of scholarships for gifted schoolchildren and university students and the establishment of awards for young scholars by the Ulugh Beg Foundation institutionalized the spiritual-educational dimension of support [8]. In this way, the notion of "support" within youth policy came to encompass not only material assistance, but also the encouragement of intellectual and creative potential.

The Student Campus Events and the Intensification of Social Protection Policy. The events that occurred in the Student Campus in January 1992 became a real test of youth policy. What initially began as protest based on economic demands gradually took on political overtones, and the possibility emerged that young people could fall under the influence of various self-interested forces [9]. This episode demonstrated that work with youth could not be ensured through ideological control, but rather required mechanisms of social protection, dialogue, and trust.

Following these events, the establishment of a republican commission, the launch of an information service, the reception of citizens' appeals, and the creation of a special fund designed to protect student interests showed that the state was capable of responding promptly to youth-related problems [10], [11]. The social assistance fund for students, established with the participation of the Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan, the People's Democratic Party, the

Youth Union, and the Ministry of Labor, testified to the development of youth policy on the basis of a multi-actor model [11].

Stipends, Benefits, and the System of Social Protection for Youth. Beginning in 1992, measures aimed at the social protection of youth assumed a more systematic character. The preservation of additional payments for subsidized meals, the practice of the state covering 50 percent of lunch costs, and the gradual increase of stipends linked youth policy directly to the mechanism of social protection [12]. Decisions adopted in September and October 1992, as well as in January 1993, which raised stipends for students and pupils several times, demonstrated the central place of the youth question in the state's broader social policy [13], [14].

At the same time, youth policy did not become merely an instrument for easing protest sentiments. Through seminars and councils, youth funds were established at district and city levels, and their resources were directed toward supporting young families, low-income youth, and young people with disabilities [15]. As a result, social protection ceased to be simply a set of central decisions and began to develop into a form of local institutional practice.

1993: Summarizing the Transition Period and Defining New Priorities. At the Sixth Plenum held on 6 January 1993, the first results of the transition period were discussed. It was noted that public attitudes toward the youth organization had become more positive and that a Republican Council for Youth Affairs had been established. At the same time, criticism was expressed that the essence of the transition period had not been equally understood at all levels, and that some organizations had failed to defend youth rights and interests effectively in practice [16]. This demonstrated that institutional renewal depended not only on decisions adopted at the center, but also on implementation and initiative at the local level.

New priorities were also introduced into youth policy at this stage. Under the conditions of the market economy, the organization advanced tasks such as the socio-economic protection of youth, the improvement of living and leisure conditions for students, the development of self-governance in schools, and the expansion of international

relations [16]. At the same time, data indicating that nearly half of the population consisted of people under the age of eighteen once again confirmed that youth policy constituted a demographic pillar of state development [17].

International Relations and the Shift toward a Development-Oriented Model. In 1992-1993, the international dimension of youth policy also became considerably more active. The holding of the International Conference of Young Compatriots, initiatives aimed at strengthening ties with young compatriots abroad, the signing of a memorandum with youth organizations in Pakistan, and the establishment of cooperation with the Arthur Association of France were vivid manifestations of this process [18]. These developments indicate that the Youth Union of Uzbekistan was beginning to move beyond internal social protection and enter the sphere of youth diplomacy and international exchange of experience.

At the same time, policies aimed at sending gifted youth abroad for education and professional training, introducing admission systems based on testing, and preparing young specialists for modern economic conditions demonstrated a shift from a model centered on “protection” to one oriented toward “development” [17], [18]. At this stage, youth policy became a bridge between social assistance and кадровая policy, that is, the policy of preparing and nurturing future cadres.

The 26th Congress and the Completion of the Transition Period. The 26th Congress held on 5 April 1994 inaugurated a new stage in the history of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan. At the congress, a decision was adopted declaring the transition period, first announced in 1991, complete. At the same time, amendments were introduced to the Action Program and Regulations, the system of control commissions was improved, and the issue of admitting the Union of Children and Adolescents into the structure of the Youth Union was considered [18]. Thus, the transition period of 1991–1994 was not merely a temporary collection of political measures, but a phase that produced a durable organizational and legal system.

By the beginning of 1994, the organization united more than 18,000 primary units and over 2.2 million members, demonstrating that it had preserved its broad social base [18]. At the same

time, shortcomings remained, including the adoption of certain excessive local “regulations” in some regions and the incomplete establishment of a unified organizational standard. The 26th Congress was intended precisely to overcome this fragmentation and to consolidate a centralized yet independent institution with clearly defined purposes and tasks.

DISCUSSION

The developments of 1991-1994 show that youth policy in Uzbekistan moved from the former Komsomol model toward a fundamentally new institution. The first major feature of this transformation is that the youth question moved beyond the framework of ideological education and political mobilization and became linked to real needs such as social protection, legal interests, employment, education, and international cooperation. The second feature is that youth policy became increasingly integrated with the state’s broader social policy: stipends, benefits, funds, and councils provide vivid examples of this process [12], [13], [14].

At the same time, this process was not free of internal contradictions. Uneven understanding of the meaning of the transition period across different levels, weak initiative in certain regions, and discrepancies between laws and decisions on the one hand and their implementation mechanisms on the other revealed the vulnerable sides of youth policy as well [16]. The Student Campus events in particular demonstrated to both state and public organizations the necessity of ensuring that social protection measures were backed by prompt and effective mechanisms [9], [10].

Overall, the experience of 1991-1994 brought to light three core pillars of the institutionalization of youth policy in Uzbekistan: programmatic renewal, the expansion of social protection mechanisms, and the strengthening of international and spiritual-educational dimensions. It was precisely this triad that shaped the basic architecture of youth policy in the subsequent period.

CONCLUSION

The years 1991-1994 constituted a decisive stage in the history of youth policy in Uzbekistan. During

FRONTLINE JOURNALS

this period, the old Komsomol system was abandoned and a new institution took shape in the form of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan. It created a new political and practical model aimed at protecting youth interests, providing social assistance, supporting students, encouraging talent, and transforming young people into active participants in state development [1], [2], [18].

This historical experience demonstrates that the success of youth policy depends not merely on organizational form, but on the existence of a legal foundation, financial resources, practical mechanisms, territorial implementation, and an institution capable of winning the trust of young people. In this sense, the transformations that took place in 1991–1994 should be regarded as a foundational period in the historical genesis of youth policy in Uzbekistan.

REFERENCES

1. Resolution of the Extraordinary 25th Congress of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan. *Yosh Leninchi*, October 12, 1991, no. 158 (14833), p. 1.
2. Action Program of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan. *Yosh Leninchi*, October 23, 1991, no. 164 (14839), p. 2.
3. UzMA, Fund M-168, Inventory 1, Storage Unit 10, fol. 1.
4. Akbarov, H. "A Gift to Young Talents." *Yosh Leninchi*, October 25, 1991, no. 165 (14840), p. 1.
5. Akbarov, H. "A 100,000-Soum Contract." *Yosh Leninchi*, November 9, 1991, no. 173 (13848), p. 1.
6. Qurbonniyozova, M. "We Rely on You, Youth." *Yosh Leninchi*, November 9, 1991, no. 173 (13848), p. 1.
7. At the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan. *Yosh Leninchi*, December 24, 1991, no. 198 (13873), p. 1.
8. Jumaboev, R. "The Beneficial Work of Ulugh Beg." *Yosh Leninchi*, December 27, 1991, no. 199 (13874), p. 1.
9. Levin, L., and Fenyutin, S. "We Will Continue Our Work Consistently." *Xalq so'zi*, January 22, 1992, no. 16 (267), p. 1.
10. "A Republican Commission Has Been Established." *Xalq so'zi*, January 18, 1992, no. 14 (265), p. 1.
11. "For Students." *Xalq so'zi*, January 25, 1992, no. 19 (270), p. 1.
12. "On the Path of Protecting the Interests of the Population." *Xalq so'zi*, April 3, 1992, no. 64 (315), p. 1.
13. "On Increasing Benefits, Stipends, and the Salaries of Employees of Budget-Funded Organizations from 1 September 1992." *Xalq so'zi*, August 26, 1992, no. 165 (416), p. 1.
14. "On Increasing Benefits, Stipends, and the Salaries of Employees of Budget-Funded Organizations from 1 October 1992." *Xalq so'zi*, October 9, 1992, no. 197 (448), p. 1.
15. "Constant Attention to Youth Problems." *Xalq so'zi*, April 15, 1992, no. 72 (323), p. 1.
16. Resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan. Turkiston, January 7, 1993, no. 3 (14031), p. 1.
17. Karimov, I.A. *May a Free and Prosperous Homeland Remain After Us*. Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1996, vol. 2, pp. 25-26, 51.
18. Resolution of the 26th Congress of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan "On Further Strengthening the Importance of the Youth Union of Uzbekistan in Consolidating the Independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Supporting the Reforms Being Carried Out in Our Society." Turkiston, April 27, 1994, no. 32 (14193), p. 2.