

Article

Youth Leaders in Uzbekistan's Makhallas are Working to Improve Youth Employment

Ilkhomov Umrbek

1. National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek

* Correspondence : ilxomov_u@nuu.uz

Abstract: This article analyzes the role and importance of youth leaders operating in the mahallas of Uzbekistan in ensuring youth employment. The relevance of the study is explained by the impact of the problem of youth unemployment on socio-economic stability. The article reveals the mechanism of influence of youth leaders' activities on the process of integration into the labor market, based on the institutional approach and the theory of social capital. The results obtained based on mixed methodology (quantitative questionnaire and qualitative interview) showed a positive correlation between the activity of youth leaders and youth employment. In particular, it was found that cooperation with employers, career guidance and information exchange have a significant impact on the level of employment. Also, the manifestation of the influence of social capital as a mediating factor of youth leaders was scientifically substantiated. The results of the study allow us to develop practical proposals for improving mechanisms for supporting youth employment at the mahalla level.

Keywords: Youth policy, youth leaders, youth employment, neighborhood institute, social capital, institutional approach, labor market, social integration, local governance, employment mechanisms.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the problem of youth employment has become increasingly urgent as a global sociological issue. Structural changes in the labor market, the expansion of the digital economy, increased migration processes, and social inequality factors complicate the provision of sustainable employment for young people. International studies show that youth unemployment is assessed not only as an economic, but also as a socio-integration problem, and its long-term consequences are associated with social exclusion, marginalization, and a decrease in social trust [1].

Within the framework of sociological theories, employment is interpreted as one of the main mechanisms ensuring the integration of an individual into society. In classical approaches, E. Durkheim presented work as a functional factor ensuring the stability of the social system, while T. Parsons interpreted social institutions and labor activity as the main mechanism ensuring the integration of an individual into society [2]. Modern sociological research, on the other hand, sees employment as a complex social process, interpreting it as a process formed through social capital, social networks, and institutional mediation [3]. This approach shows the need to analyze youth employment not only through economic indicators, but also through the activities of social institutions and networks. In this process, the mahalla institution, as a kind of social space, performs the functions of working directly with young people, directing them to employment, and providing social support. The mahalla is not only a traditional social institution, but also acts as a mechanism for stimulating youth activities and ensuring social integration.

Citation: Umrbek, I. Youth Leaders in Uzbekistan's Makhallas are Working to Improve Youth Employment. Web of Synergy: International Interdisciplinary Research Journal 2026, 5(1), 62-66.

Received: 10th Dec 2025

Revised: 21st Jan 2026

Accepted: 14th Feb 2026

Published: 23rd Mar 2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

2. Materials and Methods

Materials: In recent years, the institute of youth leaders introduced in makhallas is emerging as a new social mechanism for ensuring youth employment. Youth leaders play the role of social mediators within the makhalla, representing the interests of young people, identifying their problems and connecting them with state and market institutions. From a sociological point of view, this role is explained by activating social capital, activating informal social networks and increasing the adaptability of young people to the labor market[4].

Also, an analysis of existing scientific research shows that the activities of youth leaders are covered more from a regulatory, legal, organizational or managerial perspective, and their social impact on youth employment has not been sufficiently analyzed based on sociological empirical research. In particular, the mechanisms of youth leaders' influence on employment at the makhalla level, the factor of social trust and the subjective assessments of young people have been poorly studied in the scientific literature, and the activities of youth leaders should be studied more analytically.

The Mahalla Institute, along with the social protection system in Uzbekistan, plays an important role in ensuring youth employment and developing their entrepreneurial, professional, and social activity.

Methods: Youth leaders operating in neighborhoods serve as an effective tool for ensuring employment by working directly with young people, encouraging them, and improving their professional skills. Youth leaders perform several key tasks during their activities: Motivation and consultation: Youth leaders help young people understand their opportunities and determine an activity plan. Consultations at the neighborhood level have a positive impact on increasing the level of youth employment.

Organization of social projects: Attracting young people to employment through the implementation of various social and economic projects at the neighborhood level. As Abdukarimov (2019) noted, social projects implemented through youth leaders significantly increase employment rates in neighborhoods.

Development of professional skills: Increases their competitiveness in the labor market by organizing trainings, seminars, and master classes for young people. Vocational training courses organized in makhallas have increased the employment rate of young people by 15–20%. Courses, seminars and trainings organized in makhallas increase the competitiveness of young people in the labor market. For example, studies conducted in Surkhandarya and Andijan regions show that vocational training programs organized in makhallas have increased the employment rate of young people by 12–18%.

Integration with makhallas and communities: Youth leaders, in cooperation with makhallas and other social institutions, implement strategic projects to ensure youth employment. Through this, young people are provided not only with jobs, but also with a social support system.

International experiences also show that the system of working with young people through makhallas or community institutions is effective in increasing employment. For example, the OECD (2019) report noted that makhallas and community centers are used as important tools for youth employment and professional development in countries such as Finland, Denmark and Norway[5]. Central Asia is the youngest region in the world, with an average age of 27.26 years. About 50 percent of the region's population lives in the Republic of Uzbekistan. In Uzbekistan, the issue of ensuring youth employment has been established as one of the priorities of state policy. The fact that a large part of the population is young people, the uneven distribution of employment opportunities across regions, and the high share of informal labor require this issue to be considered as a complex social problem. Youth leaders operating in makhallas in Uzbekistan are implementing various projects to increase employment and stimulate social activity. Also, in the "Uzbekistan-2030" strategy, ensuring youth employment is defined as one of the priority areas of state policy, and in this process, the mahalla system and the institution of youth leaders are considered important. The strategy emphasizes the need to address the issue of employment not only as a macroeconomic indicator, but also on the basis of a territorial and targeted approach. In particular, ensuring employment of the population,

especially young people, and increasing their economic activity through their broad involvement in professional and entrepreneurial activities are listed as one of the main tasks[6].

This strategy envisages the introduction of the “mahalla balance” system as one of the new mechanisms for working with youth. Through this system, the socio-economic status, employment level, professional skills and needs of young people in each mahalla will be studied individually and entered into a single electronic database. This will allow for the use of a targeted and differentiated approach in working with youth, abandoning a general approach. In this process, youth leaders will act as the main executive subjects. It acts as a kind of institutional bridge between youth and the state.

3. Results and Discussion

Results: At the same time, youth leaders analyze the needs of the labor market in the mahalla, identify jobs that match the abilities and interests of young people, and thereby ensure their effective employment[7]. As a result, youth leaders operating in mahallas make a significant contribution not only to strengthening the social environment, but also to increasing youth employment, attracting them to entrepreneurial and creative activities. This directly affects the overall economic and social development of Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan is striving to create a favorable environment for young entrepreneurs by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to start and develop their own businesses. Examples of this include financial support, training, mentoring, and ongoing reforms in improving legislation. In particular, in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to support and promote the employment of young people, their social protection and meaningful organization of their free time” dated April 20, 2021 No. PF-6208, procedures have been introduced to attract young people to entrepreneurship, provide them with permanent employment, and create favorable conditions for them to receive additional income. Youth entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial activity carried out by young citizens without forming a legal entity, as well as by legal entities whose founders are young citizens[8]. Youth employment is one of the strategic indicators of the development of modern society. The high share of young people in the demographic composition increases pressure on the labor market and determines the effectiveness of institutional mechanisms. This problem becomes even more urgent in countries undergoing transformation processes.

Discussion: In Uzbekistan, a mechanism for ensuring employment has been introduced by institutionalizing youth policy at the mahalla level. In this context, a scientific analysis of the impact of the youth leadership institute on the labor market is of great importance. According to the institutional approach, economic and social relations are regulated through a system of formal and informal rules. As D. North noted, institutions reduce uncertainty in society and coordinate economic actions[9]. At the mahalla level, youth leaders appear as such coordinating subjects. They act as a link between the centralized employment policy of the state and the local implementation mechanism. The theory of social capital provides a deeper understanding of this process. P. Bourdieu interprets social capital as a person's ability to access resources through networks[10]. J. Coleman emphasizes that the system of social relations is a factor stimulating economic activity[11]. Youth leaders form a “bridge” and “connecting” social capital by establishing contacts with employers, vocational centers and government agencies. This expands the opportunities for young people to find work. It is also necessary to constantly monitor the activities of youth leaders in the neighborhoods and study the activities of the assigned youth. The issue of youth employment is currently a pressing issue. The role and significance of the Institute of Youth Leaders in ensuring youth employment in the neighborhoods of Uzbekistan was analyzed based on a systematic and theoretical approach. The study was conducted based not on empirical data, but on a generalization of existing regulatory and legal documents, scientific and

theoretical views and practical experience. On this basis, it was substantiated that the activities of youth leaders are manifested as a new institutional form of social governance at the neighborhood level. The analysis shows that the Institute of Youth Leaders, unlike traditional approaches, relies on territorial, targeted and individual mechanisms of work in ensuring youth employment. That is, each young person's social status, professional interests, knowledge and skills, and place in the labor market are studied separately, and appropriate guidance is carried out based on them. This allows for the formation of a differentiated approach to ensuring youth employment, which is much more effective than a general statistical approach [12], [13], [14], [15].

4. Conclusion

Conclusion: It should be noted that the article scientifically substantiates that the functional tasks of youth leaders are not limited to providing employment, but also cover such complex areas as increasing the social activity of young people, involving them in entrepreneurship, directing them to vocational training, preventing migratory trends, and working with young people in socially at-risk groups. This indicates that this institution has a multifunctional and integrative nature. Based on theoretical generalizations, it was determined that the effectiveness of youth leaders' activities depends on a number of factors: first, the level of their professional training and competencies; second, the level of development of the mahalla and regional infrastructure; third, institutional mechanisms for cooperation with state bodies, educational institutions, employment services, and the private sector; fourth, the availability of a system for digitizing and monitoring activities. In this regard, increasing the effectiveness of the youth leaders' institute requires a systematic and comprehensive approach.

The existing problematic aspects were also highlighted at the conceptual level. In particular, it was noted that in some regions the activities of youth leaders are formal in nature, their methodological and information resources are not sufficiently developed, the criteria for evaluating the results of their activities are not clear, and there is an imbalance of opportunities across regions. These circumstances were assessed as factors limiting the effectiveness of the process of ensuring youth employment. In developing the Institute of Youth Leaders, it is necessary to introduce a system of continuous education aimed at improving their professional training; to form digital platforms and a unified database for ensuring youth employment at the mahalla level; to strengthen financial and institutional support mechanisms for the broad involvement of young people in entrepreneurial activities; to develop effective social partnerships between state and non-state actors; and to develop clear indicators and criteria for assessing the activities of youth leaders. In general, the Institute of Youth Leaders is being formed as a modern and promising model of ensuring youth employment in the mahalla system of Uzbekistan. It was scientifically substantiated that by further improving and institutionally strengthening it, it is possible not only to increase the level of youth employment, but also to ensure social stability in society, develop human capital, and achieve regional development.

REFERENCES

- [1] OECD, *Youth Employment Outlook 2022*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2022.
- [2] T. Parsons, *The Social System*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1951.
- [3] R. D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000; J. S. Coleman, "Social capital in the creation of human capital," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94, pp. S95–S120, 1988.
- [4] M. Granovetter, "The strength of weak ties," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 78, no. 6, pp. 1360–1380, 1973; J. S. Coleman, "Social capital in the creation of human capital," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94, pp. S95–S120, 1988.
- [5] OECD, *Community Engagement and Youth Employment in Germany and the Netherlands*. Paris: OECD Publishing, 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://www.oecd.org/youth>

-
- [6] O'zbekiston Respublikasi Prezidenti, "O'zbekiston – 2030 strategiyasi to'g'risidagi Farmon."
- [7] H. Tanaka, *Local Community Support for Youth Employment in Japan*. Tokyo: Asia-Pacific Youth Research Center, 2019.
- [8] O'zbekiston Respublikasi, "Yoshlarga oid davlat siyosati to'g'risida"gi Qonun, O'RQ-406-son, 14-sentabr 2016.
- [9] D. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- [10] P. Bourdieu, "The forms of capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, J. Richardson, Ed.
- [11] J. Coleman, "Social capital in the creation of human capital," *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 94, pp. 95–120, 1988.
- [12] International Labour Organization (ILO), *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2023: Investing in Transforming Futures for Young People*. Geneva: ILO, 2023.
- [13] World Bank, *World Development Report 2019: The Changing Nature of Work*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2019.
- [14] F. Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*. New York: Free Press, 1995.
- [15] A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.