Youth in South Eastern Europe


June 2002
YOUTH IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE


This report was published with support from UNICEF and the World Bank. The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or views of either UNICEF or the World Bank.

Report prepared by Dr. Hilary Homans.
Cover and layout design: Konstantin Petrovic
Printed in January 2003
Print run: 700
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Acknowledgements

This report was commissioned by the World Bank and UNICEF, and drafted by the conference rapporteur, Hilary Homans, under the supervision of Gloria La Cava, World Bank Senior Social Scientist for South Eastern Europe, and Leo Kenny, AIDS Advisor at the UNICEF Regional Office, CEE/CIS and the Baltics. Useful comments on the report were provided by Jane Gronow of UNICEF and Carine Clert, Social Development Specialist at the World Bank.

The success of the conference was due to the efforts of a wide variety of people and institutions. First, the organisers would like to thank all speakers and participants for their precious contributions, and Italy's Development Cooperation for its overall support to the conference. Special thanks also go the Italian Committee for UNICEF for its efforts to ensure the participation of Italian youth groups, and its outreach to a number of Italian and international media outlets; and to the Italian Consortium of Solidarity for managing the logistics. The conference organisers would also like to thank the World Bank Institute, the training and education arm of the World Bank, which co-financed this event along with UNICEF and the Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Unit of the World Bank's Europe and Central Asia Region. In addition, the Development Gateway, the World Bank's information technology program, donated the website for the conference. Due to the Gateway's efforts, conference materials are widely available at www.developmentgateway.org/node/233860.
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Given the successful partnership between the World Bank and UNICEF on youth and other development issues, including child protection, the two development institutions jointly organized and co-sponsored a conference on "Youth in South Eastern Europe," held in Rome from 29 to 31 May, 2002.

The conference built on previous global and regional work that used the rights-based approach to develop and strengthen youth policy in the countries of South Eastern Europe (SEE). Speakers and participants, one-third of whom were youth, explored different strategies and actions that have successfully contributed to the participation, empowerment, and inclusion of young people.

There has been growing recognition within the international community that youth issues cross both sectoral and geographic borders. Many sectoral issues affecting youth, particularly education, employment, and health, are so closely interrelated that comprehensive responses and policies are required. For example, a low level of education reduces employment opportunities and increases the likelihood of engaging in risky health behaviour. In addition, higher than average youth unemployment rates have marginalized and alienated youth from the economic development process; their massive migration has caused a tremendous loss in human capital and has sometimes taken dangerous forms, such as human trafficking; and conflict and displacement have reduced the access of an entire generation to basic services and opportunities.

Concern about the multiple needs of youth has guided the design of this conference, as well as the design of some new donor-funded projects, such as the World Bank-funded Macedonia Children and Youth Development Project. That project, implemented by the Agency of Youth and Sports in Macedonia, aims to increase social cohesion through the integration and empowerment of youth from different cultural backgrounds. This and similar projects recognize the interconnectedness of youth issues, and thus take a more holistic approach to enabling young citizens to become productive and fully enfranchised adults (UNICEF/MONEE, 2000:114).
The papers and case studies presented at the conference detailed specific actions taken by a wide range of actors, including governments, intergovernmental agencies, civil society, the World Bank, and United Nations agencies, to develop and implement sustainable youth policy. Presentations focused on ways to facilitate the creation of safe and supportive environments for youth, and increasing their skills and opportunities so they are able to realize their full potential, irrespective of ethnicity, gender, religion, social class, or disability. (see Annex 1, Conference Agenda.)

Objective of the conference

The overall objective of the conference was to reach a consensus among decisionmakers, donors, youth, civil society representatives, and the private sector on the essential elements of effective youth policies. Effective policies are defined as those that guide investments in youth in South Eastern European countries to ensure healthy behaviour and inter-ethnic cohesion in their communities, and enable youth to become agents of social change.

The participating countries were: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro and the UN-administered Province of Kosovo), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, and Romania. There were 117 registered participants to the consultation, including about 30 youth aged 15-24 years. Other participants represented local and international NGOs with a proven record of delivering youth services; ministerial and governmental officials responsible for youth policy; the private sector; foundations; academia; the European Commission/Union; the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); the Stability Pact; the Council of Europe; and the conference hosts (the Italian government, UNICEF, and the World Bank). See Annex 4 for a list of registered conference participants.

The Rome Conference was the first sub-regional conference to follow and begin to implement the recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children, held in New York in May 2002. A breakout session was devoted to feedback from the New York meeting and provided information on the United Nations Children's Forum. The two global priorities for children and youth to emerge from that forum were education and participation. Its key message was delivered by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan: "We are the children of the world, and despite our different backgrounds, we share a common reality. We are united by our struggle to make the world a better place for all. You call us the future, but we are also the present."1

Discussion paper

A discussion paper was prepared for the Rome conference by the conference rapporteur (Hilary Homans) with the aim of briefing conference participants about work to date, the principles underpinning the development of youth policy, types of youth policy, and the age groups and characteristics of young people covered by the policies.

The discussion paper was used as a tool for conducting pre-conference country preparatory meetings, and for identifying national priority considerations for inclusion in subsequent policy formulation and implementation. At the meetings, country delegations discussed and formulated responses to questions contained in the discussion paper. Those responses shaped the youth presentation at the Opening Session, and form a substantial part of this Conference Report.

1 Message by Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, to the UN Children's Forum.
Conference output

The Rome Conference aimed to create synergies among the key players, and to accelerate action by and for youth at the country and regional levels. As a youth representative said at the Opening Session, what is called for is "Youth policy development, but not without youth." Young people set the agenda for their own active participation at the conference, and called for youth participation in follow-up actions at the country level.

At the final session of the conference, participants identified priority areas of work, next steps, and proposed timetables for country-level implementation. These actions should all be within the context of agreed upon youth policy frameworks. They should be informed by the rights-based approach and ongoing work in youth policy; and should be based on key principles and lessons learned from the conference and from working with young people throughout the region.

It is expected that these youth policy frameworks will guide future actions in each country, such as the development (or strengthening) of national youth policies and national consultations on young people. The frameworks could contribute to new and existing specific plans of action to promote youth participation, empowerment, and inclusion to societies of South Eastern Europe. The development, implementation, and monitoring of country action plans should use existing networks, and build on the wealth of experience of different agencies and youth themselves within the region.

A Conference Statement (Annex 2) contains several challenges for government, civil society, and regional and international organizations, as well as for youth.

Key recommendations emerging from the conference

The conference focused on different options for youth empowerment policies and the need to adjust investments accordingly. This implies harmonizing preventive and protective policies, which are traditionally sector based, with new policies of empowerment.

The key recommendations emerging from the papers and discussions fall into three broad categories of empowerment: designing policies and programs that take an integrated approach to youth issues, making youth initiatives sustainable, and investing in youth.

Integrated policies and programmes

- Focus on inclusion and the multi-dimensional needs of youth, including rural youth.
- Accelerate the development of comprehensive rights-based youth policies, with youth fully participating in policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Improve access to non-formal education, which has more immediate impacts than does long-term reform of the formal education system.
- Improve access to new technologies.
- Increase employment opportunities for youth so they remain in their own country's labour market, thus reducing the brain drain and contributing to the economy.
- Improve young people's access to information and support the development of youth friendly services.
- Establish or strengthen mechanisms for youth policy development at all levels and in all relevant ministries.
Restructure the youth sector according to European standards, to facilitate the integration of youth into European institutions.

• Ensure that national youth policies are gender sensitive and that programmes contribute to the fight against human trafficking, focusing on both prevention and rehabilitation.

Sustainable youth initiatives
• Strengthen partnerships among government, civil society, and networks in the youth sector.
• Increase youth participation in all aspects of public life and support their right to play a significant role in identifying and shaping responses to their problems, in close cooperation with families, communities, and civil society.
• Go to scale with community-based best practice projects, in order to move away from excessive dependence on external NGOs and expertise, and promote the inclusion of youth from different marginalized groups in community development.
• Develop robust indicators and mechanisms for monitoring the development and implementation of youth policy.

Investment in youth
• Increase financial investment in youth in the region, while maintaining traditional social sector-based investments. In making investment decisions, the high costs of not investing in youth should be considered.
• Increase national research capacity so data are regularly available on the context of young people’s lives.

The conference report also captures the key issues discussed during the conference, refers to best practice case studies, and provides youth perspectives on the policy process. The report is organized into six sections: Introduction, Youth Policy, Youth Participation, Youth Empowerment, Social Exclusion and Its Effects on Youth, and Country Youth Policies in South Eastern Europe.

Electronic copies of the conference agenda, all presentations, the Conference Statement, the Conference Discussion Paper, the list of registered participants, and a number of background documents, can be found on the website

www.developmentgateway.org/node/233860
I. Introduction

"In its support of economic growth, poverty reduction, social inclusion, and participation, as well as the non-violent transition from war to peace, the World Bank has come to regard young women and men as social and economic assets and as potential agents for change, lasting peace, and security."

Rome Conference, Opening Remarks by Gloria La Cava, World Bank Senior Scientist for South Eastern Europe

Most countries, whether they are established democracies or are in transition, do not have a single coherent youth policy. Instead, a youth perspective is incorporated into other major policy areas. (UNICEF/MONEE 2000: 114) This was the case in Yugoslavia until the late 1980s which had active youth policies in several sectoral ministries. Youth representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia also had a voice that they completely lost during the transition years (1990s).

Within South Eastern Europe (SEE) it has been noted that there is a lack of a policy environment at national level for addressing issues of youth. According to the European Youth Forum (EYF), "Youth policy has practically ceased to exist in South Eastern Europe6 as a result of over a decade of conflict, weak youth organisations, and the absence or undeveloped capacity of civil society. (EYF, 2000) Some countries started to look again at the importance of youth policies in the late 1990s.

This recent interest in strengthening youth policy within Europe can be seen as a response to the collective failure of governments to guarantee and respect the rights and safety of young people within the region. The situation of children and youth in South Eastern Europe continues to be dominated by the impact of transition from a centralized economy to a market economy and the opening of countries to democratic systems and institutions. Child/youth poverty is unacceptably high in the region and presents a major obstacle to the fulfilment of children's rights. Social exclusion remains a sad reality for many - especially Roma and other minority groups, youth with disabilities and rural youth experience serious isolation.7 Health, education and unemployment were cited as priority areas and concerns were expressed about high levels of migration from transition countries as young people search elsewhere for a better quality of life.8 Many of these young people do not return to their country, resulting in a tremendous loss of human capital, or what is sometimes referred to as the "lost generation syndrome".9

In Western Europe, the work undertaken by the European Union (EU) and the production of an EU White Paper: A New Impetus for European Youth5 in November 2001 has been instrumental in raising national awareness of the issue. Variations between Member States, are described in relation to the comprehensiveness and adequacy of existing policies for young people in today's changing Europe.

6 Presentation by Karin Hulshof (Area Representative for Romania and Moldova, UNICEF) in the Opening Session.
7 39% of children and young people aged 9 to 17 years in SEE and 33% in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia thought they were likely to live in another country when they were an adult. (UNICEF/OSCE Young Voices, 2001)
8 Presentation by Gloria La Cava (Senior Social Scientist, Europe and Central Asia, the World Bank) in the Opening Session.
9 Commonly referred to as the EU White Paper on Youth Policy – this title is used hereafter in the Conference Report.
A tremendous amount of preparatory research and consultation went into the development of the White Paper on Youth Policy. In particular, the exhaustive research undertaken by IARD on comparing youth conditions, policies and youth workers within the 15 countries comprising the EU (IARD, 2001), and the broad ranging consultations involving young people and civil society (European Economic and Social Committee, 2001; Commission of the European Communities, 2001). Joao Vale de Almeida (Director of the Directorate for Citizenship and Youth in the European Commission) informed conference participants at the opening session that the consultation process preceding the adoption of the EU White Paper on Youth Policy was the largest ever undertaken by the EU as part of any policy development. As such, it provides a best practice example of new governance and a framework for other countries within Europe who are not yet part of the Union, but are interested in developing or strengthening their youth policies in accordance with EU policies. This is immediately important for the 13 EU accession candidate countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey), but also has relevance for those other countries wanting to join the EU in the future.

Among the pre-requisites for membership of the Union are stability and respect for international human rights. Reconstruction of countries ravaged by war through infrastructure is necessary, but not sufficient for lasting peace and prosperity in the region. Investments must be made in people and youth policy is about creating a solid foundation for tolerance, human and citizenship development. It is worth noting that young people in SEE are more pro-European than their elders. Europe offers an attractive social space for most young people and personally offers them better conditions for development (Ilisin and Radin, 2002).

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6 Instituto di Ricerca (Institute of Research), Milan, Italy
7 Croatia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have EU Stabilisation and Association Agreements (and are regarded as pre-accession countries). Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Former Republic of Yugoslavia are working towards similar agreements. Moldova is not yet part of the process.
8 Comments made by Joao Vale de Almeida (Director of the Directorate for Citizenship and Youth in the European Commission) at the Opening Session.
II. Youth Policy

**Who are the youth?**

The period of "youth" is officially defined by the UN as aged 15 to 24 years. In the past this age span was seen as an important transitional period between childhood and adulthood with the responsibilities of being a wage earner, being married and becoming a parent.

During the past decade, the effects of demographic, economic and social transitions, as well as civil unrest in SEE, have meant that the nature and period of "youth" has become elongated.

There are now fewer opportunities for young people to be fully engaged in the labour market. This, combined with increases in poverty, a higher age of marriage and, delayed parenthood, has resulted in a longer period of economic dependency on parents and departure from the familial home.

The background research for the EU White Paper on Youth found similar definitional problems and utilised what they refer to as a "traditional definition of youth, i.e., the period of life that goes from achievement of biological maturity to completion of the various stages of transition to adulthood" (IARD, 2001:37). This recognises the physiological differences between young people in terms of biological maturity and the social variations in terms of becoming economically and socially independent.

### The age group covered by youth policies in the countries of SEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Age Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>15-25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>14-30 years (sometimes up to 35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>15-25 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>15-29 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Republic of Yugoslavia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td>15-24 years (sometimes up to 30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Administered Province of Kosovo</td>
<td>15-24 years (sometimes 10 to 28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td>15-24 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>16-30 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>14-29 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 There are several UN definitions of the age groups affected: children (0-18 years); adolescents (10-19 years); youth (15-24 years); and young people (10-24 years). For the purpose of this paper, the term "youth" is used specifically.

10 "The specific situation in FR Yugoslavia calls for the flexible approach to "youth" -the upper threshold will be moved to 30 years of age (Republic of Serbia, 2002).

11 The National Plan of Action for Youth in Croatia has been designed to benefit young people aged 15 to 29 years (Republic of Croatia, 2002).

12 Data collected by conference delegates at the country preparatory meetings.
Whilst age is seen as the defining category for youth, many conference participants cautioned against viewing "youth" as a homogenous group. They have many different needs based on their educational level, gender, social, cultural, economic, religious and minority status, rural or urban residence, and level of physical ability. These variations need to be recognized and taken into account when developing policies to meet their needs.

**Priority issues for youth**

Specific data on the situation of youth within the region has been collected from various sources, including papers presented at the conference and the recent European Youth Forum Report Between challenges and opportunities: Young people in South East Europe, (EYF, 2002).

The following are the main issues affecting youth within the countries of South Eastern Europe:

- Participation in civil society - citizenship education
- Participation in the political process
- Conflict and instability
- Education
- Employment and employability - work and economy
- Environment
- Gender
- Health and well-being
- Media
- Non formal education
- Poverty
- Social exclusion
- Trafficking

Youth unemployment has been identified as a key issue which must be addressed in future youth policies. In most countries within the region youth unemployment is higher than that for adults and is particularly high amongst disadvantaged social groups and girls. In Macedonia the youth unemployed rate was estimated to be 70%.

Under the broad heading of health and well-being, it is important to make reference to the emerging issue of HIV/AIDS, which affects young people more than any other population group and unless unchecked, could devastate the first transition generation and undermine the future of these countries.

The Russian Federation continues to experience the fastest-growing epidemic in the world, with the number of new HIV infections rising steeply. (UNAIDS/WHO, 2001) After the Russian Federation and Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova has the third highest number of people infected with HIV within the broader region of Eastern Europe.

In SEE, rates of sexually transmitted infections and injecting drug use are on the rise, although still at considerably lower levels than elsewhere in the region. Drug trafficking, along with the economic and psychological aftermath of recent conflicts, are increasing the likelihood that HIV epidemics will emerge in this region. (UNAIDS/WHO, 2001)

This increase is anticipated whilst at the same time, young people are not fully informed about HIV and modes of protecting themselves against infection. Over 60% of young people in Moldova and 88% in Albania had not heard about AIDS, or have correct information about how HIV is transmitted (MICS, UNICEF, 2000). This does not bode well for the achievement of the global
target on HIV/AIDS. The target is to ensure that by 2005, at least 90% of youth have access to information, education and services necessary to develop the life skills required to reduce their vulnerability to HIV infection, and by 95% of youth by 2010. (UNGASS on HIV/AIDS, 2000)

In those countries where HIV is an emerging issue, it should be included as an integral part of the country youth policy along with other priority issues.

The EU White Paper on Youth defines some priority areas for integrating a youth dimension into government policies (CEC, 2001: 19-21). They are:

- Education, lifelong learning and mobility
- Employment
- Social integration
- Youth against racism and xenophobia
- Autonomy for young people

Whilst the EU White Paper on Youth Policy provides the overall framework for the development of youth policy in all countries, Peter Lauritzen cautioned that the key priorities within the European Union are not the same as those in SEE. In the policy development process it is important not to overlook local priorities which include: conflict resolution, peace building and the promotion of tolerance; non-formal education, life-long learning and preparation of youth for a knowledge based economy; training in youth leaderships with professional recognition; and establishing a research base and policies.13

The European Youth Forum has also identified the priority components of their youth programme as the: promotion of youth participation; local capacity building; combating racism, intolerance and ethnic nationalism; promotion of proper legislation on youth and children; promotion of appropriate infrastructure and public funding for young people’s needs; and promotion of a healthy lifestyle. (EYF, 2000) Again this work can be built upon to develop more comprehensive and sustainable youth policy.

Why youth policies?

The consequence of this extended period of “youth” has meant that there is a lacuna in terms of policy and rights framework which meets the needs of these young people. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes the framework for addressing the rights of children aged up to 18 years and encompasses some of the concerns of young people. However, most legal instruments regard young people over 18 years as adults and do not make specific provision for them.

There is thus a pressing need for national youth policies to address this gap.

In the countries of SEE, there are estimated to be 9.3 million youth aged between 15 and 24 years comprising about 16% of the total population (UNICEF/MONEE, 2000). These numbers will decrease over the next decade, due to both falling fertility and outward migration, so these young people are particularly precious. The UNICEF/MONEE 2000 report states the number of 15-24 year olds will fall by one third in Central Europe over the next 20 years. While there are variations between individual countries, these young people are:

- More likely than adults to be unemployed
- More likely than their parents at a similar age to be living at home14
- More likely than their parents at a similar age to be in full time education or training
- Less likely than their parents at a similar age to be married
- Less likely than their parents at a similar age to have their first child

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13 Presentation by Peter Lauritzen (Head of Department, Education, Training, Research and Communication, Council of Europe) in Plenary 2 “The experience of the Stability Pact Working Group on Youth.”
14 The main reason for not leaving home, is not being able to leave home (IARD, 2001:12) which has resulted in a longer socio-economic period of dependence for young people (Republic of Croatia, 2002)
Research from EU countries shows that young people are becoming more tolerant and accepting on a range of indicators and are more concerned with the environment and quality of life than their parent’s generation. However, concern has been expressed about their political apathy demonstrated by low level of participation in local and national elections and lack of trust in political institutions.

"Youth participation in elections has been consistently low throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. This does not mean that they do not have opinions and, more importantly, solutions. Rather it shows their frustration at the ostensible lack of opportunities to voice their ideas. Equally, they continue to mistrust pre-electoral promises."


While youth may be alienated from traditional politics, this should not be interpreted as apathy on their part. The example of Otpor (the student resistance movement established at Belgrade University in October 1998) has been widely cited as contributing to the defeat of Slobodan Milosevic in the September 2000 presidential election. There are many other examples of youth involvement in social and political movements throughout the countries of SEE.

"Youth policy is by definition a horizontal policy where coherent and coordinated efforts across different policy and administrative sectors are ensured through integrated actions. At all levels youth policy co-ordinates measures to serve the interests of youth, and integrates young people to shape social, economic, political and cultural life. Young people are at the heart of youth policy, not as clients, but as actors and contributors to this dynamic process."

Overview of the policy environment

Recent initiatives undertaken by the World Bank, the EU, and the Council of Europe (CoE) have aimed to strengthen cooperation with SEE countries. The Stability Pact for SEE and the Working Table 1 on Democracy and Human Rights are helping to achieve stability and develop civil society in the region, as is the World Bank’s Social Development Initiative for South Eastern Europe (see box). This initiative supports pilot projects and social analyses that address inter-ethnic tensions and social cohesion issues, focusing on groups, such as youth, women, and local administrators, that can bring about social change. The initiative also encourages the adoption of policies that foster the participation of youth in civil society and the broader political process.

The World Bank Social Development Initiative (SDI) for SEE, funded by Italy’s Development Cooperation and the World Bank, has been instrumental in raising the profile of young people, for example in Macedonia. The Children and Youth Development Project (US $4 million over 5 years) aims to significantly increase social cohesion, through the integration of youth at risk from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Community based approaches to working with young people and institutional capacity building are the two main strategies being employed for youth empowerment. The pilot approaches being used in this project have the potential for expansion to other countries within the region.

CoE has also been involved in multi-lateral evaluation of national youth policies set up by the European Steering Committee for Inter-governmental Cooperation in the Youth Field of the COE. To date the youth policies of Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain and Sweden have been evaluated.

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15 Presentation by Tobias Flessenkemper (Deputy Political Development Coordinator, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE, Bosnia and Herzegovina) in Plenary 4 ‘Understanding the dimensions of youth policy’.
The Stability Pact for SEE, the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life and the work of the European Youth Forum (EYF), International Youth Foundation and the Open Society Institute have all been influential in shaping the policy environment within the region.

It is expected that a comprehensive programme for young people will be developed under the umbrella of the Stability Pact, in coordination and cooperation with the EU, the CoE, and other international organisations, and in partnership with non governmental organisations (NGOs) in the youth field. The EYF expects that this youth programme will create a policy of openness and mobility and contribute towards the strengthening of civil society.

Five fundamental principles underpin the EU vision of the modernization of European public action

- openness
- participation
- accountability
- effectiveness
- coherence

Youth is an area in which, above all else, these principles should apply. (European Commission White Paper on Youth, CEC, 2001:8). The work of the EU in developing a regional framework for youth policy has undoubtedly been influenced by other regional and international organisations.

Global initiatives and agreements

At a global level there are several key commitments, conference declarations, conventions and targets specifically directed at young people (see Rome Youth Conference website for key agreements, commitments and regional initiatives on young people). Undoubtedly the most relevant international convention is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) which has been ratified by all countries within the region and provides the ethical legal framework (or the rights based approach) for national work with children and youth.

Rights-based approach

The rights-based approach has as its foundation the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979). This approach implies the equality of each individual as a human being; the inherent dignity of each person; and rights to self-determination, peace, and security. Using a rights based approach means that we must:

- understand the reasons that prevent children from enjoying their rights;
- data must be disaggregated by gender, geographic origin, age and ethnicity to be able to compare disparities;
- examine whether national laws protect women and children;
- examine the allocation of resources to the promotion and protection of children/youth rights;
- determine whether policies and legislation are consistent with human rights principles and enable the full enjoyment of human rights;
- ensure participatory approaches and ensure that children and youth are central to the development process.16

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16 Presentation by Philip O'Brien (Regional Director for CEE/CIS and Baltics, UNICEF) to Plenary 1 'Implementing a rights based approach for youth policies in South Eastern Europe.'
A rights-based approach also recognises the responsibilities of individuals, parents, families, communities, teachers and service providers as well as the obligations of States. For example, CEDAW makes specific reference to the obligations of State Parties to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men (CEDAW, 1979).

The most recent example of the rights-based approach influencing the policy process is the call for a Children’s Convention and youth participation in shaping the proposed EU constitution. The upcoming Danish EU Presidency is planning Youth Agenda 2002 and inviting 1000 young people from 32 countries (including from countries in SEE) to Denmark for 2 weeks in June 2002, preceded by a 9 week web discussion, to draft a Convention for the Young People of Europe.

Thus the rights-based approach can be applied to the formulation of public policy for young people. It is clear that such policies should be constructed through dialogue between young people and adults and be based on the needs identified by the youth. Investment in youth policy is a precondition for the enjoyment of human rights.17

The most recent example of the rights-based approach to influencing the policy process is the call for a Children’s Convention and youth participation in shaping the proposed EU Youth Constitution.

**What is the rights-based approach?**

The rights-based approach provides new content to the global concept of citizenship and advocates that young people should be given the freedom to express themselves and become involved in decisions that affect their lives. It implies a new way of thinking, as well as the development of institutional mechanisms to protect the rights of children and adolescents.

The basic rights and obligations related to the promotion and protection of young people’s development are articulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), UN 1989, as well as the earlier Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979). There are overarching rights relating to non-discrimination and freedom of expression (Article 2), and the right to life, survival and development (Article 6). In addition, the CRC specifies rights of children and adolescents to: information and skills (Articles 17 and 29); education and health services (Articles 23, 24, 28, and 31); a safe and supportive environment (Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 16, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25, 27, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 and 38); participation (Articles 12, 13, 14, 15 and 23).

Four **principal objectives** underpin the rights-based approach to working with children and youth:

1. **Participation** in the **decisions** that affect their lives.
2. **Access** to basic services and opportunities for development.
3. **Friendly, protective and safe** surroundings in which to live.
4. Full **development** of their **abilities and talents**.

This text has been taken from Adolescents in Latin America and the Caribbean: Policy Guidelines (UNICEF/ROLAC, 2001) and Programming for Adolescent Health and Development (WHO 1999).

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17 Presentation by Philip O’Brien (Regional Director for CEE/CIS and Baltics, UNICEF) to Plenary 1 ‘Implementing a rights based approach for youth policies in South Eastern Europe.’
Types of youth policy

Public policies for young people can be divided into two broad categories: (1) empowerment policies, and (2) prevention and protection policies.\(^\text{19}\)

**Empowerment** policies focus on the full development of the capacity of all young people. They allow measures to be adopted before problems arise, and concentrate on realising the rights of young people through authentic participation. Empowerment policies view youth as a human resource, an investment, or social capital. Such policies and measures tend to fall under the domain of social development.

**Preventive and protective** policies are designed to serve young people in difficult or at-risk situations. The focus is on the restoration of rights which have been violated and leads to compensatory action and protective measures. These policies may tend to view youth as a problem, as being in danger and in need of protection against threats to their development (IARD, 2001). Sectoral policies in health, education, and social protection tend to fall in the category of protective policies.

Empowerment and protective policies must go hand in hand and reinforce each other to enable young people to realise their full potential. This is particularly the case in the SEE context, with its high levels of civil and ethnic conflict, poverty, youth unemployment, sexual trafficking of children and young people.

Empowerment involves seeing young people as a resource, not a problem. As expressed at the recent UN General Assembly Special Session on Children: “Young people are not the sources of problems—they are the resources that are needed to solve them. They are not expenses, but rather investments: not just young people, but citizens of the world, present as well as the future.”\(^\text{20}\) In many SEE countries, youth are regarded primarily as a problem, and none of the countries regards them primarily as a human resource, though several countries say this is their aim.

### Youth regarded as a human resource, or as a problem in the countries of SEE\(^\text{21}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Republic of Yugoslavia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td>More a problem, or &quot;potential problem&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Administered Province of Kosovo</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Both</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{19}\) Adapted from UNICEF/ROLAC, 2001.
\(^{20}\) Paraphrase of the Message from the Children’s Forum, delivered to the UNGASS on Children by child delegates Gabriela Azurdy Arieta and Audrey Chetnut on 8 May 2002, and contained in the presentation by Rasa Sekuovic (Save the Children, SEE/FRY) in the Breakout Session 1.1 ‘Implications of the UNGASS on Children on youth development in South Eastern Europe’.
\(^{21}\) Data collected by conference delegates at country preparatory meetings.
Empowerment and Protective Youth Policies in the SEE Countries

- Only FYR of Macedonia and Romania have empowerment policies. Other countries are in the process of developing such a policy, or still need to develop one.

- Most countries have some elements of youth protective policies, which cover especially vulnerable young people such as ethnic minorities and socially disadvantaged groups, children and adolescents at risk, orphans, youth with disabilities, children and youth in institutions, abused children, IDPs, refugees, and juvenile delinquents. However, in most countries the enforcement of protective policies is weak.\(^{22}\)

The substantial research which formed the basis for development of the EU White Paper on Youth provides a typology of the extent to which youth policy is a major policy area and is accorded high national priority (IARD, 2001:63). This typology was developed using two simple indicators, one relating to the state level, the other to the administrative level.

**State governmental level**
- Is there a specialised ministry of youth with responsibly for an explicit youth policy?
- Is youth policy primarily allocated to one sectoral ministry and a junior minister with youth as his/her responsibility been appointed?
- Is youth policy recognised as a separate policy area that is shared among a few ministries?
- Is youth policy coordinated among several ministries?
- Is youth policy uncoordinated among ministries?

**State administrative level**
Are there one or more specialised directorates on youth whose responsibility it is to:
- Implement youth oriented legislation?
- Supervise or monitor youth services, youth institutions or authorities at lower levels?
- Allocate funds for youth work or youth programmes?
- Coordinate and consult actors within the youth field?

The responses to these questions led to the classification of countries as follows:

- Countries with a specialized youth ministry and a youth directorate (or similar administrative structure)
- Countries where youth policy is allocated to one ministry and where youth matters are handled by a youth directorate
- Countries where youth policies are coordinated among several ministries, but where there is no youth directorate (or similar administrative structure)
- Countries without a youth directorate (or similar administrative structure) and in which youth policies are not coordinated among different ministries.

It must be noted that the ways in which youth policies are coordinated in different countries are heavily influenced by the constitution of the country, the administrative system and the division of labour and of power between different levels of government and administration. (IARD, 2001:73)

\(^{22}\) Data collected by conference delegates at country preparatory meetings.
Youth policy development cannot be seen in isolation from other government political and administrative structures and the form that the policy takes will be related to the historical, as well as the current context. Similarly, the existence of specialised youth legislation in a country “is not necessarily an indicator of how high youth policy and youth work are on the list of political priorities, but rather the result of specific historical traditions, administrative procedures and structures of public authorities.” (IARD, 2001:77)

The other distinction in types of youth policy is the extent to which they are centralised, or decentralised and community based. There are many arguments against the centralisation of youth policy at regional and national level. However, enhanced cooperation at the regional and sub-regional level can improve the impact and coherence of national policies (CEC 2001:14).

Centralised Youth Policies in the SEE Countries

- In all SEE countries where youth policies exist, except for FYR Macedonia, they are centralised at the state level.
- Where they exist, community-based youth policies are still very limited and fragmented.

Key principles underpinning the development of youth policy

The EU White Paper on Youth suggests a new framework for European cooperation with two main aspects: applying the open method of coordination24 in the specific field of youth; and taking better account of the “youth” dimension in other policy initiatives (EU White Paper on Youth, CEC, 2001:5). It is anticipated that the framework will help to create a common vision and more effective collaborative regional work through common objectives developed in consultation with young people.

An analysis of the global and regional commitments and policy frameworks demonstrates a clear consensus on the principles underpinning the development of youth policy at the country level.

There is general agreement that youth policy needs to be informed by knowledge about the context of young people’s lives. Various tools have been used by regional agencies to assess this information: UNICEF Young voices opinion survey (UNICEF, 2001), Eurobarometer (EU research to gauge public opinion within the EU on wide ranging issues including youth and political participation), UNICEF/MONEE reports on Young people in changing societies, (UNICEF, 2000) and A decade of transition (UNICEF, 2001).

There is also need for information to be easily available at country level on the needs and aspirations of young people, as well as the main issues that affect their daily lives.

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23 Data collected by conference delegates at country preparatory meetings.
24 The open method of coordination, adapted to the specific policy field of youth, defines priority themes, lays down common objectives and guidelines, provides for follow-up mechanisms and includes arrangements for consulting young people.
Principles

Country youth policies should be:

- Accorded commitment from the highest political level, including a Ministry of Youth that provides adequate levels of resources to municipalities*
- Based on wide ranging consultation, especially involving youth
- Aimed at fostering the active participation of young people in policy and decision making processes at the national and local levels
- Community based, non-discriminatory, and gender sensitive
- Designed to promote inter-generation communication and family relationships
- Designed to promote equal opportunities
- Respectful of cultural and religious diversity
- Based on research (evidence) and identified best practices in youth policy formulation
- Integrated, coherent, cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary, and mainstreamed into the work of all relevant ministries and departments
- Guided by a long-term strategic vision and implemented through long-term instruments
- Supported by legislation consistent with the policy
- Measurable by time-bound goals and indicators for national evaluation.


* The new Macedonian Local Self-Government Law passed in 2002 devolves responsibility for spending on youth to municipalities.

Youth involvement in social development activities needs to be encouraged, especially those that strengthen civil society and foster social integration and cohesiveness.


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Rome Conference, Plenary 1 remarks by Philip O’Brien, Regional Director for UNICEF, CEE/CIS and the Baltics25

25 Implementing a rights based approach for youth policies in South Eastern Europe.
III. Participation

Children and adolescents have the right to express their views freely and they have the right to have their views taken into account. (Article 12, CRC, 1989) However, "Most countries still have a long way to go in making these rights a reality and UNICEF has increasingly sought to enable children’s voices to be heard."

The recent (May 2002) UN General Assembly Special Session on Children has again reinforced the call for young peoples’ voices to be heard and their right to participation. Principle 9 of the outcome document A World Fit for Us states: "Listen to children and ensure their participation. Children and adolescents are resourceful citizens capable of helping to build a better future for all. We must respect their right to express themselves and to participate in all matters affecting them, in accordance with their age and maturity."

Within UNICEF there is recognition of participation as both a human right and as an end in itself. The more a young person participates meaningfully, the more they develop confidence, competencies and aspirations which lead to more meaningful participation, improved development and increased control over their life.

Participation of young people in all spheres of public life is one of the key objectives of both the Council of Europe and the World Bank SEE Region. Within the World Bank, participation is regarded as a key strategy towards the empowerment of youth. By encouraging, promoting and supporting the participation of youth in public life one brings to the fore not only the problems of young people, but also problems that threaten all, such as unemployment and discrimination. Through their participation, a broader and more effective coalition across generations is built to tackle current challenges and those that lie ahead.

All youth policies should be based on the full participation of young people in policy design, implementation, and evaluation, and thus empower youth to be actively involved in the policies which fundamentally affect their lives.

The European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life outlines the ways in which young people can participate in public life, and urges authorities to provide the necessary conditions for integrating youth into public life and promoting their participation in shaping present and future of the society.

The charter has been launched in several European countries and in some of them it became the basis for respective legislation. Partners for the promotion of the charter are more than 200 youth groups linked together through the services of the recently created NGO Youth Information Agency (Omladinska Informativna Agencija).

Prerequisites for youth participation

In order to encourage youth participation young people need access to information and mechanisms for their voices to be heard. These mechanisms include conducting research, opinion polls and stakeholder analysis.

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26 Presentation by Elena Urue (GfK Group) in Breakout Session 1.2 ‘Young voices: An opinion survey of children and young people in Europe and Central Asia.’
28 Presentation by Christine Norton (Senior Adviser, Adolescent Development and Participation, UNICEF) in Plenary 3 ‘Participation is the key to adolescent development’.
29 For more on empowerment as a development issue, see Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: ‘A Sourcebook, World Bank 2002.’
The inability to access information, whether on health issues or labour market opportunities, is a form of disenfranchisement which should be taken seriously. Without access to information young people cannot make informed choices. Thus a key component of youth participation is the availability of appropriate user-friendly information. As part of the preparation for UNGASS, materials were "translated" into a child/youth friendly language.

The extent of youth participation can also be gauged by the extent to which their views are taken into account in public decision making. One example of assessing such participation is the European youth participation project, Euronet. This is a European coalition of networks and organisations which campaign to defend the rights and interests of children in the European Union. The project argued for children to have a real role in the European Union - to get children's opinions and to share them. Young people were trained in research methods and report writing. They interviewed a range of socially excluded children and young people in England. Teams in four other countries conducted similar research in their respective countries.

The research found that: young people thought that their rights were not respected at school; citizenship education did not include reference to children's rights; more support was needed for young people with disabilities; alternatives to formal schooling were necessary; and greater measures were required for the protection of young children against violence.

Another method of listening to the voices of young people is to conduct an opinion poll. The Young Voices Survey of Children and Youth in Europe and Central Asia was the largest opinion poll (15,200 personal interviews) conducted with children and young people in 35 countries from December 2000 to February 2001. The aim of the survey was to promote the participation of children and young people by giving them the opportunity to express themselves freely.

The major challenges facing children and young people identified and constitute a "wake up" call: violence and discrimination, anxiety about unemployment and economic conditions, strong wish to emigrate from countries in transition, lack of information about rights, about drugs, HIV/AIDS and sexual relationships, better quality education, leisure and cultural opportunities, distrust of State authorities, lack of faith in voting as a means of improving things, lack of opportunities to voice their opinions and to participate in decisions affecting their lives. These are all challenges of particular concern to young people which cannot be ignored.

The Eurobarometer EU public opinion analysis of young people within the 15 countries of the EU formed the basis for EU White Paper on Youth Policy. It was found that young people in the EU can cope well with the technology of the 21st century, but they need encouragement to participate in public life and policy making.

In order to involve key partners in project design, the World Bank conducts stakeholder analyses, and consultations with young people. For example, in the Macedonia Children and Youth Development Project, a baseline study of youth needs and priorities was undertaken. Changes will be monitored over time and the preparation of Macedonian Youth Strategy will be done in consultation with youth.

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30 Presentation by Annette Dixon (Human Development Director, World Bank) in Plenary 1 'Towards a World Bank vision for youth policies.'
31 Presentation by Rasa Sekulovic (Save the Children Fund, SEE/FRY) in Breakout Session 1.1 'Implications of the UNGASS on Children on youth development in South Eastern Europe'.
32 Presentation by John Errington and James Anderson (Save the Children Fund, UK) in Breakout Session 1.2 'Euronet - Agenda 2000 for children and young people in Europe'.
33 Presentation by Elena Urue (GfK Group) in Breakout Session 1.2 'Young voices: An opinion survey of children and young people in Europe and Central Asia.'
34 Presentation by Uma Murthy (European Commission, Public Opinion Analysis and Eurobarometer) in Breakout Session 1.2 'Eurobarometer and youth attitudes.'
35 Discussion in Breakout Session 1.3 on youth participation in designing, implementing and monitoring youth policies and projects.
Principles of participation

Daniele Luccini outlined some key principles of participation, which need to be respected when working with youth.36

- Children/youth must understand what the project or process is about, what it is for and their role in it.
- Power relations and decision making processes should be transparent.
- Involve children/youth at an early stage.
- All children/youth should be treated with equal respect regardless of age, gender, abilities, religion etc.
- Ground rules should be established with all children/youth at the beginning.
- Participation should be voluntary and children should be allowed to leave at any stage.
- Children are entitled to respect for their views and experiences.

Lessons learned

Christine Norton summarised the key lessons learned using participatory approaches throughout the world.37

- There is a need to institutionalise a new style of work characterised by dialogue and respect
- Participation requires work with authorities, families, communities and civil society to build a culture of rights.
- Young people can be bold and creative civic innovators.
- Citizenship is an integral part of a socially inclusive developmental model.
- Communities with the greatest and most diverse citizenship participation tend to be more resilient and strong.
- Participation in the rights approach to policy increases accountability and transparency of the state and non-state actors.

Examples of youth participation

The Special Session on Children was cited as a good international example of youth participation. The preparatory work for the SSC spanned two years and consultations with children and youth were held at national, sub-regional and regional level:

- Berlin conference on Children in Europe and Central Asia (governmental consultation),
- Budapest Youth consultation (resulting in the Budapest message to Berlin), and
- Civil Society Organisations (CSO) consultation in Bucharest.

Young people found the opportunity to participate in the Children’s Forum at the Special Session a very worthwhile experience. They learned that there needs to be a sharing of power between adults and youth. Whilst they welcomed the high profile attention given to issues of children and youth for the six day duration of the conference and Children’s Forum, they felt that this attention needs to be maintained throughout the year, so it is not seen as a one-off activity.38

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36 Presentation by Daniele Luccini (NGO Alisei, Pidida) in Breakout Session 1.1 ‘Promoting youth participation to the implementation of the SSC goals and strategies’.
37 Presentation by Christine Norton (Senior Adviser, Adolescent Development and Participation, UNICEF) in Plenary 3 ‘Participation is the key to adolescent development’.
38 Presentation by Sandra Milena Sega (Italy) in Breakout Session 1.1 ‘Promoting youth participation to the implementation of SSC goals and strategies.’
In Romania, Save the Children promotes the rights of the child as stated in the CRC. To achieve this they have developed participatory programmes for children and young people such as:
- Children’s Coordination Group comprised of two children in every school and care institution;
- Children’s Rights contest to assess knowledge gained on children’s rights throughout the year;
- Children’s right to opinion and creativity - 200 children participate in a camp for 10 days;
- Children’s Thoughts and Voices magazine provides children with the opportunity to express their thought and ideas concerning their rights;
- Children’s Rights week conducted every year during the first week of June involving over 5000 children and young people;
- Children’s Forum offers children the opportunity to dialogue with authorities and government representatives on children’s rights;
- representation of children and young people in national and international meetings;
- a volunteer centre was established in 2000 to provide young people with the opportunity to develop their own programmes. More than 2000 young people in Bucharest and 15 branches are involved in these centres and trained in leadership, fundraising, project management and communication skills.39

Youth councils

The Local Youth and Children Councils of Moldova operate on the model of adult councils so that children and young people can have the opportunity to express their opinions and participate actively at every level of local and regional life. There are 44 Local Youth and Children Councils involving 543 councillors democratically elected by 30,000 young voters who also benefit from the council activities. The council is included in Youth Planet, the European network of children and youth councils and parliaments, and produces a newsletter Architects of Democracy. (UNICEF Moldova, 2002)

In Slovenia 15 local Youth Councils have been established and 10 municipalities have specified funds for youth projects. The impetus for the establishment of the Youth Councils was the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life. The Charter was translated into Slovenian and this resulted in legislation being passed to facilitate the establishment of local Youth Councils. Municipal seminars were conducted to identify the needs of young people and to involve them in decision-making processes. This has led to better cooperation between young people and the local administration.40

Croatia is also planning to establish a law on Youth Councils and to establish Youth Councils as part of the National Action Plan on Youth.41 In Bosnia and Herzegovina no national law on Youth Councils exist, although local Youth Councils are beginning to emerge. In Macedonia, young people participate in the Macedonian Scout Association. In this setting, non-formal education is promoted amongst 2,500 members.42

Youth parliaments

In the Former Republic of Yugoslavia/Montenegro young people participate in the democratic decision-making process through Youth Parliaments in schools. In the centrally located town of Niksic, a pilot project on Youth Parliaments targets four secondary schools encompassing a total of 4,000 students. There are 12 elected representatives in each of the four schools. The representatives form the youth parliaments and are recognised as a human resource. They have regular meetings with the local mayor to discuss what changes need to be made in order to make the town more youth friendly. The creation of the Youth Parliament has had an overall beneficial impact on the situation of youth. Some of the outcomes are: a better school environment with decreased rates of truancy; the development of life skills with less tobacco and drug use and fewer school fights; and an increase in self confidence amongst youth.43

39 Presentation by Traian David (Coordinator, Salvati Copii, Romania) in Breakout Session 1.2 ‘Experience of young people and participation in South Eastern Europe.’
40 Presentation by Anita Stefini in Breakout Session.
41 Presentation by Dejana Bouillet (State Institute for the Protection of the Family, Motherhood and Youth, Croatia) in Breakout Session 1.3 ‘Croatia Youth Strategy.’
42 Presentation by Julijana Simonovska in Breakout Session 1.3 ‘Macedonia Scout Association.’
43 Presentation by Natascha Paddison (UNICEF Podgorica) and Dragana Varezic (NGO Fortuna) in Breakout Session 1.3 ‘FRY/Montenegro: Youth Parliament.’
In Moldova there is an elected Children's Parliament that includes representation of institutionalised children and members of the elected youth councils which work in collaboration with the country’s 18 local administrative authorities to involve young people in the decision-making process.

**Extent of youth participation in SEE**

In the 1980s a number of youth movements and actions emerged and young people were invited to take an active part in redefining existing perceptions of society (EYF, 2002:12). In both Bulgaria and Romania young people played an active role in toppling the communist regimes and shaping their countries’ future. Youth can still be mobilised, but they have lost the enthusiasm they had during the early years of the transition. According to EYF, this is due to several reasons. The devastating effects of war, a lack of tradition of voluntary engagement, government neglect of youth issues and a disappointment with the overall situation in the region have created distrust of the political system and traditional methods of political activism.

The conference agreed that youth should be involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of National Youth Policies and Plans of Action. However, further work needs to be undertaken to ensure that they are actively involved in this process. Active youth involvement is a crucial component of the social, economic and cultural development of every country. Yet there is a “participation gap” in Bulgaria with growing scepticism and mistrust among young people. They feel their voice is not being heard, their needs are not taken into account and their readiness to contribute to making their country a better place is unexploited. This communication gap among youth is across generations and with politicians. 44

**Youth participation the design of youth policies in the countries of SEE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Participation Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Youth Parliament represents the voice of youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>Yes 70 representatives of youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Republic of Yugoslavia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia and Montenegro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Administered Province of Kosovo</td>
<td>Mitrovica No, in Prishtina youth projects influenced the design of youth policy in general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
<td>Yes but sporadic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Young people are more likely to participate in the implementation of youth policies, than in their design. 46

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44 Presentation by Christina Popivanova (UN Social Development Unit, Bulgaria) in Plenary 3 'Mobilising young people: UN supported initiative in Bulgaria'.
45 Data collected by conference delegates at country preparatory meetings.
46 Data collected by conference delegates at country preparatory meetings.

Youth participation in public decision-making was seen as low. The main channel for such participation was voting at elections, but very few youth exercise this right. In Bosnia and Herzegovina only one third of young people vote and less than 3% of young people are members of legislative institutions. In Bulgaria, more than 50% of young Bulgarians are seriously considering not voting at the forthcoming political elections.\(^{47}\) In Albania, less than 1% of young people believe that politics will have a positive impact on their future. SEE is thus characterised by a low level of youth participation in local and national elections and lack of trust in political institutions.

Almost all political parties in the Balkans have youth branches, but only a minority of young people participate in politics as members of a political party. In Bosnia and Herzegovina only 8% of young people surveyed were members of a political party (UNDP, 2000).

According to the Youth Public Opinion Barometer in Romania in 2000, 83% of young people think that an individual has little or no influence on the important decisions in the country, (Ministry of Sport and Youth of Romania, 2001).

Participation in formal associations is considered a key activity in establishing a general level of social integration in terms of democratic citizenship (IARD, 2001:14-18). Concern about the lack of young people's participation in the democratic process is thus seen to have implications for future governance and stability within the region.

Several programmes have recently been established to help young people to develop skills to participate in public decision making. One such programme is Debates in Bulgaria in which young people simulate parliamentary and municipal council sessions. Additionally, programmes of youth organisations affiliated to various political parties are being carried out. In FRY (Montenegro and the UN Administered Province of Kosovo) civic education classes in secondary schools aim to develop young people's skills in decision making. Participation in Youth Councils and Youth Parliaments also provide important opportunities for developing these skills.

A lack of tradition of voluntary work, lack of a government strategy for NGOs, financial problems and insufficient experience and technology are some of the reasons for the limited success of youth NGO activities. Also there is a low level of youth participation in youth NGO activities. For instance, in Romania there were 600 youth organisations in 1994 but only 2 to 3% of voting young people were members (UNICEF/MONEE, 2000). Some voluntary activities attract more attention than others, for example in Bulgaria, young Bulgarians consider environment, social welfare and health to be the most useful areas of voluntary activity.

"If the youth organisations are not popular among young people, how do they know about the true problems of the young generation?" and "Do they really represent young people's interests?" (Kovacheva, 2000b).\(^{48}\)

\(^{47}\) Data collected at country preparatory meetings and presentation by Christina Popivanova (UN Social Development Unit, Bulgaria) in Plenary 3 'Mobilising young people: UN supported initiative in Bulgaria'.

\(^{48}\) Kovacheva, S. Keys to youth participation in Eastern Europe, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France. 2000b
The conference discussed how to improve youth participation. One strategy that was proposed was to conduct information campaigns which recognise that youth are not a homogenous group.

**Standards for participation**

The European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Municipal and Regional Life provides standards for youth participation that could serve in formulating objectives for "youth-proofing". According to the OSCE, these could also serve as basis for decision-making of international donors such as the World Bank.\(^4^9\) In some European countries the Charter has already provided the basis for legislation on matters concerning youth.

There is regional consensus that youth policies are fundamental to the full participation of youth in all aspects of civic, cultural, economic, social and political life. A pre-requisite for this full participation is the **empowerment** of young people to realise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of their respective countries and to play an active role as global citizens. All youth policies should be based on the full participation of young people in policy design, implementation and evaluation and thus empower youth to be active and included in policies which fundamentally affect their lives.\(^5^0\) Article 12 of the CRC is the main challenge we face in implementing rights based youth policies - this calls for children to be consulted about their own perception of their situation and their right to play a significant role in identifying and shaping the response to their problems, in close cooperation with families, communities and civil society.\(^5^1\)

\(^{49}\) Presentation by Tobias Flessenkemper (Deputy Political Development Coordinator, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE, Bosnia and Herzegovina) in Plenary 4 ‘Understanding the dimensions of youth policy’.

\(^{50}\) Within the World Bank, empowerment is viewed as a social development issue involving learning and innovation. Within this approach youth are seen as agents for social change and promoters of peace and security.

\(^{51}\) Presentation by Philip O’Brien (Regional Director for CEE/CIS and Baltics, UNICEF) to Plenary 1 ‘Implementing a rights based approach for youth policies in South Eastern Europe.’
IV. Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of young people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives.

Adapted from Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook, World Bank, 2002

In keeping with this definition, youth empowerment can be seen as the process by which young people fully develop their personal resources to maximise their life chances and opportunities. Given the current state of the formal educational system in most SEE countries and the slow pace of educational reform, particularly with regard to methods of teaching and content of curricula, the investment in non-formal education is a desirable option which can bring significant short-term impacts to complement on-going efforts in improving the quality of formal education.52

The conference explored three particular areas where non-formal education contributes to youth empowerment: life skills; livelihood skills, including technology-based and entrepreneurial skills; and peer education. The conference also discussed empowerment options using the media.

Life skills

Life skills are defined as abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills include communication skills; decision-making skills; leadership skills; critical and creative thinking; skills for coping with emotions, stress, and conflict; and values clarifications skills. Life skills promote responsible citizenship and life-long learning. Life skills education, as part of a comprehensive multi-strategy approach, has been found to increase the capacity of young people to make healthy behavioural choices. (UNICEF, 2001)

The majority of current life skills education takes place in a formal school setting, yet there are successful programmes throughout the world which demonstrate that teaching life skills and livelihood skills in informal settings is possible. The main aim within the SEE countries, many of which are implementing long-term education reforms, is to ensure that all young people have access to quality education where they can learn life skills, among a range of other topics. However, informal settings (non-formal education) can offer critical entry points to young people who are not enrolled in school. They can provide valuable education opportunities that are complementary to schools-based education and are part of a comprehensive strategy to equip all young people with the skills they need. (UNICEF, 2001)

Livelihood skills

Livelihood skills are those skills which prepare young people to obtain and keep satisfying work opportunities. They include job searching skills, interviewing skills, leadership skills, entrepreneurial skills, as well as specific marketable skills appropriate to the local economy.

52 Comments by Gloria La Cava, discussant at Plenary Session II, “Youth Empowerment in Conflict-Affected Areas.”
Livelihood skills education is increasingly recognised as an important requirement for better preparation of young people in securing employment. (UNICEF, 2001)

An example of life skills education in non-formal settings was provided by the Proni Centre of Social Education in Croatia. They started the project in 1997 which consists of: a two-year university course in a non-formal setting and a Certificate of youth leader (not recognised by the government). The training is interactive and uses participatory educational methods. It also provides a safe environment for youth through seven youth clubs.

The Open Society Institute (OSI) in conjunction with the Mott Foundation, UNICEF, and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) have established three Community Centres in each of seven provinces/countries in the region: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro and the UN Administered Province of Kosovo), and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Community Centres were established in small rural communities to meet the cultural, education, recreational, social and environmental needs of youth aged 15 to 25 years. The project promotes community education and life long learning in non-formal settings and has become a job-creating programme. The major constraints are accreditation and the legal status of the centres.

Entrepreneurial skills

Youth entrepreneurship has been promoted as a response to persistently high youth employment. Such schemes are seen as a means to release the pressure on the labour market and to give rise to new clusters of economic activity and thereby to assist in recovering economic growth. There has been a shift towards service industry, small-scale production and more precarious forms of labour (short-term contracts with no medical benefits). However, youth entrepreneurship should not been seen as a panacea for high youth unemployment - it needs to be considered in the context of the economic realities of individual countries. Policies and programmes should be suitable to local conditions and for youth entrepreneurship to be successful, young people require special skills and knowledge to operate a business on a daily basis. They also need to be aware of the potential benefits and the possible risks. Examples of lessons learned from youth entrepreneurship programmes are shown in the Text Box.

Lessons learned from different countries promoting youth entrepreneurship:

- Youth entrepreneurship should not be seen as a magic cure of youth unemployment.
- Youth entrepreneurship policies and programmes should complement broader youth employment strategies and policies.
- Only a small proportion of young adults could become real entrepreneurs.
- The age and, consequently, life and work experience do matter. Youth entrepreneurship programmes and schemes tailored to the specific characteristics of each age category of youth (teenagers and/or young adults) have proved to be more effective.
- Gender matters. Young mothers should be provided with childcare facilities so as to get the same opportunities to access training in entrepreneurial skills.

Many countries have made special effort to integrate marginalised and disadvantaged youth groups into mainstream economic activities through targeted youth
entrepreneurship programmes and schemes. There are some common approaches and practices to these programmes throughout Europe: promoting and introducing the self-employment option; training in necessary skills for self-employment; mentor support; access to finance; access to work space; business expansion support; and access to support networks. (O’Higgins, 2001) The most successful programmes were preceded by thorough research of the target group and applied an integrated approach.

The "business incubator" approach has been developed in Northern America and has proved to be effective in matching the local supply of skills with demand and also providing young people with the skills for self-employment.

Creating opportunities for youth - an example was given from Sweden where young people are encouraged to 'Live your dream'. Sweden has a sound universal youth policy with a National Board of Youth Affairs. However, some young people remain disadvantaged and have difficulty entering the labour market. As Jan Elofsson said:

"My grandfather inherited his job from his father…
my father got a job…
I have to create a job."

Thus youth enterprise, entrepreneurship and self-employment have become to be seen as a "career option." Communicare was established to address this issue and to give young people entrepreneurial skills, so they learn how to create their own job. This involves creating "CAN DO" attitudes and enabling young people to actively participate.

Youth entrepreneurship is not only about establishing a business; it is also about an attitude to learning, self and society. Youth are thus seen as a human resource, not as a problem. Communicare works with youth in schools and promotes confidence in them through showing them that they have skills and resources and they can achieve their aims. They have donated computers to schools so that all young people are able to access them. Eriksson change their computers every six months and gave their six-month-old models to Communicare and young people were responsible for assembling them in the schools. To date, 2,500 young entrepreneurs have been established in Sweden and now Communicare is starting to work in Romania and hope that their model can be extended elsewhere.

In Hungary, support is being provided to assist youth entrepreneurs through finance and mentoring programmes. The main objectives of EletPALYA (Shell LiveWIRE Hungary) are to promote awareness of the importance of "enterprise" among young people (aged 18 to 32 years) and to assist those interested in starting up their business to make the right decision. This is achieved through an enquiry service consisting of business-related materials, free business advice and assistance in preparing a business plan. They also provide start up awards and loans to young businesses that cannot access funds from any other source.

The Italian Consortium of Solidarity (ICS) described how poverty is increasing amongst Serbian youth in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

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58 Presentation by Jan Elofsson and Peter Landmark (Communicare, Sweden) in Breakout Session 2.3 'Creating opportunities for youth - a youthful approach to creativity and entrepreneurship.'
59 Presentation by Tibor Miklos (The Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum, Shell Millennium Foundation Programme, Hungary) in Breakout Session 2.7 'Livewire/Eletpalya Alapitvany - Assisting youth entrepreneurs through finance and mentoring programmes.'
60 Presentation by Paola Pagliani (Area Coordinator ICS) in Breakout Session 2.3 'Income generation programme for Serbian youth.'
The most vulnerable young people are Roma youth, young people with disabilities, young women and youth in rural areas. The general unemployment rate is 32%, but 47% of registered unemployed are young people and it is estimated that 64% of all unemployed are young people. The situation for internally displaced people (IDP) is particularly acute as they lost all their contacts and they are experiencing particular difficulties in obtaining employment. Young women are affected more severely by youth unemployment than young men.

In order to redress this situation, there is a need to improve the overall quality of education in schools so that young people leave school with more marketable skills. They need to “learn by doing”. There also needs to be better linkages between school and work. ICS has been working with vulnerable Serbian youth to develop their skills as entrepreneurs and to provide start-up capital. Microcredit schemes have proved to be more successful than grants. The largest microcredit intervention has been funded by UNHCR and is targeted to the refugee population.

It is important to involve young people as active promoters and actors of microcredit schemes, not just as beneficiaries. Young people proved to be more receptive to new methodologies and technologies than older people and this enthusiasm needs to be built upon to provide them with sustainable economic opportunities and thereby contribute to arresting the brain drain.

A consortium of Choros Foundation, Consorzio Etimos and Banca Etica has also been involved in developing microcredit and social banking schemes in SEE. They have worked specifically to develop youth and women entrepreneurs in order to promote self-sufficient families and have promoted micro enterprises as a tool for conflict prevention. Youth and women have been provided with training and skills to attain medium/long term self-sufficiency.

Banca Etica operates in contexts and environments where there are no financial structures and where traditional banks do not invest in local enterprise because it is too risky. The type of activities Banca Etica engages in are usually characterised by: a mixed approach with public and private partnerships; a flexible approach adapted in each country according to different economic, social and cultural needs; and sustainability of the programme which is sought through a system that promotes training, assistance, a network of business promoters and provides loans instead of grants. Banca Etica is involved in innovative programmes in the Balkans, for example, social cooperatives (which employ up to 30% staff who are disadvantaged, have some form of disability or suffer from post traumatic stress) and promotes a network of producers for agricultural certified products.

Another successful example of working with vulnerable young people in SEE comes from Albania where orphans are delivering mail as part of the Youth Albania Parcel Service (YAPS). YAPS was founded by UNICEF and several companies struggling to do business in Albania. YAPS places UNICEF in a brokering role between private enterprise, public sector and civil society in addressing the underlying causes of poverty. Thus bringing young disadvantaged and disabled youth into full participation in society. After just six months YAPS was running at break even point.

61 Presentation by Francesco Bicciato (Banca Etica, Italy) in Breakout Session 2.7 ‘Microcredit and social banking in SEE: Specific strategies supporting youth microenterprise.’
62 Financial Times article about YAPS, 15 April 2002.
Another programme addressed at alleviating youth poverty came from Brazil and involved the use of information technology. The Committee for Democracy in Information Technology (CDI) in Brazil has partnered with Microsoft to increase poor people’s access to computers and information technology. There are examples of schools for street children and adults who live in the streets. Through these schools they have become involved in computer maintenance, illiteracy programmes have been developed and people taught computer skills. It was found that poor people’s lives could be improved through their use of information technology, and society in general benefited.63

World Links uses technology as a vehicle to promote academic achievement, global economy skills and entrepreneurial capacity. Youth are prepared to effectively enter the global economy based on knowledge, information and technology. This is done through expanding educational opportunities and outcomes for youth and through building bridges between leaders and the entrepreneurs of tomorrow. Electronic learning (e-learning) and wireless communication are used as methods of increasing young peoples’ knowledge and skills. New technology is integrated into the school curriculum and schools are being seen as community learning centres. A competition is held for young business people for the best business plan developed.64

The private sector is often seen as a means to increase young peoples’ participation in the labour market. The case study from Macedonia showed that whilst there are 33,000 private sector enterprises these are highly fragmented, lack management skills and fresh capital and provide insufficient opportunities for employment creation.65 The government has experienced difficulties in establishing an adequate normative setting and providing incentives for promotion of business.

In order to address the acute problem of youth "brain drain" (6,413 youth emigrated from Macedonia to the West in 1999), the private sector has established a range of support programmes for young people. These include contributing to the high school curriculum, training in management skills and technology transfer, provision of scholarships, factory visits, school and university career days, and programmes of employment creation and the development of small businesses.

While these private sector initiatives are a step in the right direction, it must be noted that the private sector alone cannot take responsibility for youth employment programmes. There is a need for public-private partnerships and to engage young people in these partnerships as well as in the formulation of policies and strategies.

The main reason for the private sector becoming involved in youth entrepreneurship programmes is to bring a more secure future, and a healthier, more skilful and entrepreneurial labour force.66

"Youth employment does not only involve access to goods and resources, but it also gives young people a sense of dignity and self-worth."67
A final word of caution was expressed about being over-optimistic about youth entrepreneurship. One speaker suggested that it might be a "fairy tale" with only a very small number of young people benefiting from the schemes. We therefore need much better statistics on how many youth businesses have succeeded and the reasons for their success.

As Larissa Kapitsa’s paper concludes:

Entrepreneurship should not be the only career option open to youth. If countries in transition want to be competitive on both European and global markets, the majority of young people should be educated in the best possible way.

Peer education

From the examples described so far it is clear that youth have a tremendous need for information, motivation and skills which will help them use the information acquired for positive behaviour change. Peer education (by youth for youth) can be an effective way of providing youth with information, motivation and life skills especially in relation to sensitive issues (such as, sexuality and substance use). ‘Hard to reach groups’ (street children, young sex workers, injecting drug users) may be more accessible through the use of peer educators who share the same background. Clearly the training of peer educators themselves requires a focus on life skills training to ensure that the educators can transfer the acquired skills to their peers. (UNICEF, 2001)

Peer education (PE) should include elements of both participation and empowerment. Experience from using peer education as part of HIV/AIDS prevention in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia over the past six years found that for PE programmes to be successful:

- Youth peer educators should develop every step of the process themselves.
- Information provided should be sensitive to the specific needs of youth and differences between groups of young people.
- Behaviour change is a slow process and thus messages need to be consistent, regularly reinforced and support provided to enable young people to make positive behaviour change.

The benefits of a PE approach is that it is owned and accepted by youth, is culturally appropriate and community-based, and it is economical because the participating youth are volunteers. However, there is a need to keep retraining peer educators and to focus on the long-term behavioural change process, and networking on national, regional and international levels is essential.
Media

The media can be an important means to provide information, empower young people and reduce discrimination through the promotion of positive images.

In 2000, UNICEF commissioned a study by Intermedia in 27 countries in Europe on young people’s perceptions of the media. This study provided information as the basis for the Young People’s Media Network (YPMN) which is a network for Europe and Central Asia. The study found that young people are more hopeful than adults, but less optimistic for the future.

Young people have access to a great variety of media sources (television, radio, printed press, and foreign programmes through cable and satellite). They are heavy media consumers and television is the main source of information. Television is the number 1 past time for young people and many watch four hours a day. They also listen to the radio and increasingly have access to Internet and the worldwide web. Internet users tend to be better off and live in urban areas; more young men use the Internet than young women, and young people are more likely than adults to use the Internet.

In the absence of information about health and sexuality as part of the school curricula, young people are increasingly turning to the Internet to find information on health and it has been noted that this has led to behaviour change. Whilst young people watch large amounts of television there are very few educational programmes - what is widely available is sex and violence and the promotion of negative values such as intolerance and greed. The Intermedia study found that overall there are various positive influences of the media on youth: they have a greater understanding of the world they live in; increased communication and access to ideas; and the promotion of social participation and tolerance. However, there were also negative influences: distortion of reality; manipulation for political or commercial ends; creation of harmful stereotypes; promotion of intolerance and apathy.

YPMN is a partnership initiative which attempts to involve youth more actively in the media and to portray more positive images of young people by young people themselves. YPMN is still in the process of development. It has three goals, to: 1) respond to the needs of children and young people; 2) promote the rights of children and young people; and 3) promote open society in the best interest of children and young people. The general concept is a network of youth directed media projects.

The Oslo Challenge is a statement of how the mass media can prioritise and support the work of realising the rights of children. A copy of this challenge can be found on the conference website.

Traditional images of young people are either as delinquents or pop stars. When youth present their own images - they are much closer to the reality of their everyday lives. The right of young people to be involved in portraying and disseminating information about themselves is enshrined in the CRC (Articles 12, 13 and 17). As part of the network young people are pushing for strengthening a democratic and independent media. They use the network to communicate with peers, share personal and professional experiences, learn and use new technologies and ways of doing things, overcome isolation and to develop new models of cooperation.

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72 Presentation by Susan Gigli (Intermedia, Washington) in Breakout Session 2.1 'Young people and the media.'
73 Presentation by B. Keith Fulton (Vice President, AOL Time Warner Foundation, USA) Plenary ‘Youth empowerment and the five promises.’
74 Presentation by Dale Rutstein (Communication Officer, UNICEF) in Breakout Session 2.1 'Young Peoples’ Media Network.'
YPMN is designed to show broadcasters and other media gatekeepers that pro-social young media can garner a reasonable market share (this assumption comes from Intermedia research and the experience of TROC in Albania). There is a demand from young people for media that is entertaining, but also for political news. An example of such a project was described and a TV programme by young reporters in Albania shown.75

The young TV reporters of Albania are part of the YPMN and illustrate what ‘youth directed media projects’ can achieve. The programme called TROC (which loosely translated means Say It Like It Is) was developed by UNICEF and the Albanian National TV (TVSH) to encourage meaningful participation by youth in the media. TROC has news bureaux in 11 cities in Albania; each bureau has an adult facilitator. Over 100 youth journalists work as volunteers. They produce an hour of youth news every week. This programme is aired by the Albanian State broadcast service, twice a week. To date they have produced 53 shows and a total of 300 stories with a weekly audience of 50,000.

TROC stories focus on the lives of young people - both their joys and their challenges. There are also investigative pieces that look at the conditions for young people in schools and other public facilities. The point was made that young reporters are naturally good at doing television because they grew up watching television. Also, young reporters have access to perspectives and locations that adult reporters cannot; this means that they produce different television news than adults. The young reporters have informally adopted the slogan of the Global Movement for Children “Changing the world with children and young people.”

75 Presentation by ingrid Xhaja (Albania reporters from troc weekly TV programme) in Breakout Session 2.1 ‘Young reporters of Albania’.
V. Social exclusion and its effects on youth

The Council of Europe Report on Human Dignity and Social Exclusion has singled out social exclusion as one of the main threats to democracy, human rights, human dignity and stability. (CoE, 1998).

In SEE, youth exclusion is particularly evident in their lack of access to labour market opportunities. In Macedonia, for example, youth unemployment is estimated by UNICEF to be approximately 70 percent—a factor that increases the likelihood of conflict. According to the Conflict Analysis Framework developed by the World Bank Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit, high youth unemployment is one the eight most important risk factors for violent conflict indicators, together with other factors such as militarisation and ethnic dominance.

UNHCR estimates that at least 1.7 million people (6% of the population) are still displaced in the countries which formerly were Yugoslavia. Millions remain without access to property or a stable livelihood. Others face obstacles in accessing full participation in education and public services and maximising individual economic opportunities. (World Bank, 2000, Chapter 5) In addition to the problems faced by refugees and IDPs in obtaining employment, young people are also vulnerable.

Youth are excluded from access to land and productive assets, from secondary school, they experience difficulty in obtaining housing, employment and participating in decision making. Above all, young people ranked their exclusion from information as the top priority. However, “youth” are not a homogeneous group - they have different needs and aspirations based on their ethnicity, minority and socio-economic status, experience of conflict and violence, gender, and enforced migration through human trafficking.

The Roma are perhaps the most visible minority in the SEE region. They tend to be the first to become unemployed, have a lower level of health with high malnutrition rates and poor access to health care, illiteracy levels are high and a significant number of school aged children never attend school and therefore remain excluded from gaining education and advancing skill levels.

Social cohesion within and among SEE countries is threatened by wide differences in living standards, some worsening social indicators and increasing poverty. Poverty exacerbates the process of exclusion and vulnerability. This combined with the legacy of conflict encourages youth to engage in risky behaviours. Kovacheva argues that the upheavals within the region during the 1990s have resulted in the emergence of drug sub cultures, religious sects, and xenophobic gangs which were largely unknown in the past in SEE. (Kovacheva, 2000a)

76 Presentation by Carine Clert (World Bank) in Breakout Session 2.2 ‘Why gender matters for inclusive youth policies in SEE.’
Poverty

In Bulgaria and Romania, poverty has risen from marginal levels at the outset of the transition to significant levels at the end of the 1990s. In all countries of the region, rural poverty is worse than urban, low educational levels of the household head are strongly correlated with poverty, and large families and families with unemployed household heads have among the highest poverty rates. In all SEE countries, the Roma stand out as very poor and persistently poor.

The negative effects of poverty are compounded by social exclusion, which is often imposed on young people traumatised by war, civil strife, rape and other violence, or continually disadvantaged by social and economic disparities. Thus, the goal of social inclusion defined by the World Bank as “the removal of barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse populations to assets and development opportunities” seems out of reach to the increasing number of people living poverty. In the SEE countries, the number of people living in extreme poverty doubled between 1990 to 2000. Certain countries and population groups (for example, the Roma) have been most adversely affected (see Text Box).

Poverty in SEE rose markedly in the 1990s, with chronic poverty an emerging concern. Even in countries with robust growth there is a growing group of the chronically poor. Recent poverty assessments by the World Bank highlight striking levels of poverty among the Roma. In Bulgaria in 1997 more than 84% of the Roma lived below the poverty line, more than double the national poverty rate of 36%.

Moldova, one of the countries hardest-hit by the 1998 crisis and today one of the poorest in Europe, experienced a dramatic worsening of poverty. The percentage of people living below the national poverty line increased from 35% in May 1997 to 46% in the fourth quarter of 1998. Inequality also increased sharply in the last decade.

(World Bank report on progress towards International Development Goals, 2002)
Social exclusion and its effects on youth

Working with the poor, disadvantaged youth, and youth with disabilities

Strategies to alleviate youth poverty in Brazil have already been described under the section on Youth Empowerment. In Albania, the social exclusion of young orphans has been addressed by involving them in a social business scheme (see Text Box).

Tackling youth social exclusion through social business: the case of YAPS

The radical nature and rapid pace of change in former communist countries has unleashed both positive and negative pressures, particularly in the fields of economic growth and social development. The early promise of liberalization has evaded the most vulnerable young people. An eroding safety net and an under resourced public sector has left them even more exposed to vulnerability and the condition of “multiple social disadvantage” that leads to social exclusion.

Young people from institutional care, the Roma minority and those with disability make up at least 5% of the youth population in the transition countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states. In Albania, the rapid emergence of rural to urban migration has produced another under class. In the context of globalization, many transition countries, including Albania, have been poorly placed to harness the benefits of an emerging free market for their most vulnerable youth, and have thus fallen short of fulfilling their commitment to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A “social business” approach for challenging some of the root causes of social exclusion and poverty has been adopted in Albania. This involves empowering excluded youth with training, employment and the opportunity to contribute to social well-being. This has been achieved through a youth mail and parcel delivery service which brings disadvantaged and disabled youth into full participation in society.

While by no means a panacea for the multiple social disadvantage that so often characterizes social exclusion, the social business model described offers an innovative approach to transforming passive welfare recipients in active citizens. This is done by engaging a range of non-traditional social actors such as the private sector, finance ministries and others into a dynamic coalition for the protection, development and participation of youth. As such, social business has been adopted by the Albanian government as a key strategic approach for reducing social exclusion in its Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS).
Other examples of youth entrepreneurship have been specifically targeted at disadvantaged and socially excluded groups. Youth with disabilities are a very special marginalised group and their needs should be addressed in a comprehensive manner. In some countries of SEE their number has increased as a result of armed conflicts. In North America, the New Freedom Initiative was launched in 2001 specifically to address the needs of people with disabilities. It assists them to: increase their access to assistive and universally designed technologies; expand their educational opportunities; become integrated into the workforce; have access to transport; and to become fully integrated into community life. These activities are realised through a "DO IT" programme which provides youth with disabilities with the skills and competencies to pursue careers, and act as ambassadors and mentors for other young people with disabilities.78

Previous reference was made to the benefits of using peer education approaches when working with 'hard to reach' youth. An example was provided of HIV/AIDS prevention work with street children in Romania. It is estimated that 2,500 children and young people live of the streets in Romania. They are at risk of violence, drug use, sexual exploitation and exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS. Peer educators (trained street children) are mobilised to provide education and counselling on STIs and HIV, facilitate access of the street children to medical and social services, and to distribute hygiene materials.79

Peace building and conflict resolution

Peace and stability in the SEE region remains fragile and insecure. Security factors have produced significant obstacles to economic and political development. (EYF, 2002) Young people were protected under communism, but during the period of transition they have become one of the most vulnerable groups in society.

For young people in SEE, the 1990's were a period of wars, risks and disappointments. For instance during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1996, over two million people became internally displaced or were refugees and over 200,000 people were killed. The after-effects of the war continue with 500,000 people (100,000 children) still displaced and 200,000 refugees abroad. As a result of the war there has been a changed demographic situation, the economy has been destroyed, people are homeless, and distrust, racial and ethnic hatred persists.

The need for peace building and conflict resolution is thus critical. The process of peace building is a continuous process and peace cannot be seen to have been achieved once the war is over. For example, there remains a tendency in some areas to continue with separate education and curricula for different ethnic groups (for example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina there are three different educational curricula with three different histories and "truths").80

In some countries in SEE, youth are regarded as a bridge to peace and stability for the future. Investment in young people therefore is seen as a sound investment for the future and stability within the region. This stability is essential for the further integration into the European Union and reflects shared values and aspirations of young people for the future.

78 Presentation by Larissa Kapitsa (Director, Coordinating Unit for Operational Activities, UN Economic Commission for Europe, Geneva) in Breakout Session 2.3 'UN Economic Commission for Europe policies on youth employment and entrepreneurship.'
79 Presentation by Monica Dan and Alexandru Miscotean (Project Coordinator and Peer Educator, ARAS, Romania) in Breakout Session 2.6 'Peer AIDS prevention intervention for children of the streets.'
80 Presentation by Jan Zlatan Kulencovic (Programme Manager, Youth Information Agency in BiH) in Plenary 2 'The role of youth in conflict prevention - Experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina.'
Attempts to create social cohesion

"Peace is not just an absence of violence, but the presence of tolerance and justice."

This definition has been developed by the Centre for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution in Macedonia as a result of working with different models of peace education with ethnically mixed groups of young people in school (the Appreciating Differences programme) and out-of-school (Education for Peace). Following an assessment of both programmes an optimal model for peace education was defined:

- The approach should be based on interactive teaching.
- Cooperation should be learnt through actual experience of working with others.
- Discussion should provoke participants to use creative and critical thinking to come to conclusions by themselves.
- Peace education should be implemented to diverse groups of participants.
- Fostering cooperation and interdependence is an important component of peace education.
- Carefully selected and trained educators are essential to successful peace education programmes.

A model of local community peace building over a period of ten years in Croatia was also described. As with programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, the emphasis on peace building was through "neutral" activities. The primary emphasis was to support the healing process following the war and the secondary focus was to stop the spread of violence against people from different ethnic groups in local communities. The basic values underpinning the community peace building approach are: reconciliation, non-violence, empowerment and sustainability.

Several different approaches were used:

- 17 displaced teachers were supported to recover from the trauma of the war and learnt new skills on non-violent education. They in turn used these new skills to work with traumatised populations of displaced children.
- Writing letters to former neighbours and follow up meetings with 1300 people at the Meeting House in Mohacs.
- Visits to Baranja and Eastern Slovenia.
- School of informatics in Sodolovci to learn new skills and decrease prejudice and fear of other citizens.
- Listening programme to identify the needs and potential resource of each community.
- Peace teams organised village cleaning, visits to the elderly and poor, youth meetings, summer camps etc in places of high-risk interethnic confrontations.
- Education of volunteers for peace building and community development. The volunteers are trained in non-violence, dealing with conflict, cooperation with local authorities, team building, making presentations, and the development of joint projects.

The Centre for Peace remains active in ten communities in Eastern Croatia with over 100 members working together on peace building and community development.

The Youth Centre Lighthouse in Northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina was created in 1996 to provide direct assistance for young people in need and to create and environment of tolerance and understanding. The centre focuses on five main activities: creative, educational, sports, psychosocial and entertainment. Activities were free of charge and
provided youth with the opportunity to meet in groups of different ethnic and religious background. These activities were first implemented at a time when nationalist parties were in power and the atmosphere of intolerance; ethnic and religious distrust was at its peak.

Lighthouse has reached more than 2,500 young people and has embarked upon a training programme of peer educators and volunteers so that even more can be reached. Information materials for returnees have been produced and visits made to the areas where young returned. Exchange visits have taken place and an Association of Youth Centres from north western Bosnia established.

Other examples of conflict prevention involving youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina were described as falling into two main types: those led by international agencies, or adults from NGOs in which youth were the passive participants; and those led by youth for youth where the programme was developed through active participation in the decision making process and management of activities. The aim of the youth conflict prevention programmes was to overcome prejudice among youth of different ethnicities through working together and participating in projects and activities focused on non-political issues such as, music, ecology, drama, art, media, computers.

For example:
- School of Peace study camp for Youth, 120 youth from six ex-Yugoslav republics and 43 cities.
- SEE Youth Network volunteer exchange programme to another country (intercultural learning in practice).
- ECO Bus Tour, 50 youth travelled to six countries (3,200 kilometres) over 14 days and organised ecological activities. This resulted in confidence building.
- UNV confidence building programme - 18 community workshops and summer camps.
- Campaign for Conscientious Objection - designed and implemented by youth and involving 20 youth NGOs.
- Soros Debate Programme involves youth in television debates and stimulates participation and critical thinking.

The main lesson learned was that even in a negative environment youth could initiate and sustain activities in conflict prevention.

The background to the ethnic conflict in Macedonia was the inability of the Macedonian society to ensure equal participation and access of all citizens to services, opportunities and information. Persistent inequalities between rural and urban areas (with people living in remote areas being most disadvantaged), differences in socio-economic status, ethnicity and prejudice, age, traditions and religion have all contributed. The Macedonian Children and Youth Development Project (CYDP) is supporting activities in an environment free of ethnic bias, where youth learn to trust each other despite their origins, simply by working and accomplishing results through mutual work. The project aims to significantly increase social cohesion, through the integration of youth at risk from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Community based approaches to working with young people and institutional capacity building are the two main strategies being employed for youth empowerment.

The Babylon Youth Centres were first established in Macedonia by ECHO and the European Union in June 1999 under a post conflict grant. In this phase eight centres operated, an additional 15 centres were established the following year with UNICEF and World Bank support.

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84 Presentation by Jan Zlatan Kulenovic (Programme Manager, Youth Information Agency in BiH) in Plenary 2 'The role of youth in conflict prevention - Experience of Bosnia and Herzegovina'.
85 Presentation by Blasko Smilevski (World Bank Youth Project Coordinator, FRY Macedonia) in Plenary 2 'Government responses to youth empowerment: The case of Macedonia.'
86 Presentation by Olga Jovanova and Betim Leshi (Youth Representatives, Babylon Youth Centres, Macedonia) in Breakout Session 2.6 'Babylon Youth Centres, Macedonia'
These centres are playing an important role in developing the skills (computer, social and life skills) of youth in non-formal education, whilst at the same time promoting social cohesion. The youth learn that “No one is the expert on everything, but everyone is an expert in something.”

Kosovo is gradually recovering from the devastation of conflict and years of neglect, but inter-ethnic intolerance and violence still persist in many areas. Co-existence between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs remains dependent on the presence of almost 40,000 NATO peacekeeping troops (KFOR). But gradually the atmosphere is improving. The participation of Kosovo Serbs in the recent Kosovo elections gives cause for optimism. Efforts made by agencies such as UNICEF to build trust at the community level around key issues such as health, education and involvement of young people, offer an excellent strategy for promoting peaceful co-existence.87

87 Presentation by Patrick Fruchet and Dren Rexha (UNICEF, Kosovo) in Breakout Session 2.8 'Kids on the Net, Kosovo.'
Social exclusion and its effects on youth

Case study: “Kids on the Net’ Functional Peace Building though the use of Internet Technology

The “Kids on the Net’ (KOTN) project, designed by UNICEF Kosovo in conjunction with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) office in Kosovo, seeks to engender increased inter-ethnic tolerance through functional peace-building. By functional peace-building, we mean the creation of conditions where communities cooperate because they perceive it to be in their own best interest to do so and in so doing come to rely on the benefits of cooperation.

UNICEF Kosovo has worked with youth groups in 15 mostly rural locations to create a multi-ethnic cooperative network. This network gives all member groups access to the Internet and to vocational training related to technical aspects of the Internet and computers, and business management training related to running an Internet café. UNICEF and other donors have provided the groups with computers and Internet access equipment. The Internet access equipment has been deployed in such a way that the youth groups must cooperate across ethnic lines in order for any one group to have access to the Internet. This is done on the basis what we call a Hub and Spoke system.

There are four Hub locations in the KOTN cooperative network. At each of these locations computers are hooked up to the Internet using a Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) satellite dish. The signal received from the satellite is also fed out to other youth groups in other villages using wireless microwave relay equipment; these are the Spoke locations. At both the Hub and Spoke locations, the youth groups manage Internet Cafés that sell access to users.

The key to the project is that the Hub managed by the Kosovo Serb youth group provides Internet access for Kosovo Albanian youth groups and shares the cost of Internet access with them, and the Hub managed by the Kosovo Albanian youth group does the same with Kosovo Serb groups. Two further Hub locations are themselves mixed (one is Albanian-Roma and the other is the first youth center in post-conflict Kosovo with both Albanian and Serb members), they operate with the same Hub and Spoke cooperative approach. As each Hub and Spoke cluster needs the revenue coming in from Internet users from all locations to pay for the Internet access, this leads to functional inter-ethnic cooperation.

The KOTN cooperative network is held together by the common desire for Internet access and by the good offices of the international organisations working to facilitate increased direct contacts between the groups, and paying the Internet access bills until the network becomes self-sustaining. The future expectation is that the linkages between the groups will become more than virtual; members of the various groups, while working on how to continue to pay for Internet access once donor support is withdrawn, will come to know one another and thus gain tolerance and respect for each other.

Why gender matters for inclusive youth policies

The impact of transition and conflict on youth has not been gender neutral and gender matters for more inclusive and effective youth policies and programmes. Gender analysis draws attention to at least four key areas relevant for youth policy in SEE. First the revival of traditional patriarchal family structures has contributed to reduce the status of girls and young women in society. Second, barriers to assets have affected young women in a disproportionate manner, with reduced State support to childcare and an increase in discriminatory and abusive practices by employers. Throughout SEE women’s social rights have been eroded and young, rural and disabled women are the most severely affected.


data:image/png;base64,iVBORw0KGgoAAAANSUhEUgAAAEAAAAAgCAYAAAB聘用AAdAAAAElFTkSuQmCC
Unwanted and early pregnancies continue to disadvantage girls and the increase in single headed (often female headed) households are of increasing concern. Barriers to leisure activities also emerge, as free time activities for youth are not always gender-friendly, with some countries offering sports competitions mainly for boys. This is not to say that specific problems experienced by boys should be ignored. In fact, a third important lesson of gender analysis is that young women and men experience vulnerability in different ways (see Text Box) Women and girls are vulnerable to discrimination and sexual abuse and violence are on the increase. Boys and men tend to have higher suicide rates, abuse alcohol more and are more involved in conflict.

Women and girls are more exposed to human trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation. Finally, conflict affects women and men differently and this needs to be taken into account in post conflict reconstruction and conflict prevention. As a result of the war in Macedonia for instance, the youth generation was the most victimised – the armies were comprised of 80% young men (some willing, some not, and some conscripts). In Croatia, domestic violence against women is on the increase as a result of changing gender roles during the war. The Centre for Women War Victims in Croatia was established in 1992 to support women survivors of war and other forms of violence. The Centre aims to empower women and girls through education, individual and group work, to improve their physical and psychological well-being, to deal with trauma and to take an active role in society.

It is important to see young women not only as victims, but also as powerful agents of change. Women are playing an important and increasingly role in peace building and this needs to be fully recognised and valued.

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For young women:
- dangerous forms of emigration e.g. trafficking
- exposure to prostitution
- Exposure to domestic and community violence
- young mothers: health and social risks

For young men:
- involvement in violent and/or illegal activities
- Sense of worthlessness and shame for failure to perform as providers
- high suicide rates
- Higher consumption of drugs and alcoholic drinks

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90 Presentation by Carine Clerf (World Bank) in Breakout Session 2.2 ‘Why gender matters for inclusive youth policies in SEE.’
91 Presentation by Djurdjica Kolarec (Centre for Women War Victims, Rosa, Croatia) in Breakout Session 2.2 ‘Improvement of young women’s economic and social position in Croatia through education and counselling.’
92 Presentation by Edmond Ademi (Transeuropeans/Macedonia) in Breakout Session 2.2 ‘Youth and social integration in post conflict societies.’
The main challenges for policy and practice are:

- Youth strategies and youth-friendly sectoral policies will have greater impact on women and men if they are gender sensitive.
- Youth agencies/committees need to be provided with awareness raising and capacity building in gender analysis.
- Youth relevant data must be disaggregated by gender and intra-household analysis of gender relations encouraged.
- Alliances can be built to promote and finance gender-friendly youth programmes.
- Partnership between youth associations and NGOs working on gender issues must be encouraged, as it provides promising results, as demonstrated in preventing human trafficking.

**Trafficking in human beings**

There is a need to establish links between the disadvantaged situation of girls and young women and their exposure to human trafficking circles. Many young women and girls are desperate to leave their countries due to lack of opportunities for a better life. Yet at the same time they lack information on the real situation they will find in their country of destination. Some are attracted by advertisements of a better future if they leave, but end up in the most appalling situations of sexual slavery and prostitution.

In Moldova for instance, trafficking in women began in the early 1990’s as a result of economic and social crises. According to official data, about 200,000 people (70% of whom are women and girls) travel across Europe in search of work. Most of the women and girls who are trafficked come from poor families and about half of them are minors (below 18 years of age). Every year approximately 5000 girls are transported to Russia to provide sexual services. In order to stop trafficking in women and girls it is necessary to address the social, economic and political causes of trafficking. In Moldova, collaboration between the Youth Division of the State Department of Youth and Sport and NGOs working for the prevention of trafficking has proved to be extremely important. NGOs are providing information to girls and young women about the dangers of trafficking, a Hot Line service to potential and actual victims of trafficking. They are also working to revise legislation, advocating for the enforcement of existing legislation. Rehabilitation services for the victims of trafficking are woefully inadequate and as a result many of the young women risk being trafficked again.93

Regional networks such as the Transnational AIDS/STI Prevention Amongst Migrant Prostitutes in Europe Project (TAMPEP) play an important role in research and active intervention reaching more than 40 nationalities of migrant and trafficked persons from Central and Eastern Europe, South East Asia, Africa and Latin America. TAMPEP is based in 13 EU and nine Central and Eastern European countries and provides counselling, medical, legal, psychological and social support, temporary housing, liaison with NGOs in the country of origin for support on their return and assistance in deportation centres and for law suits, reintegration and rehabilitation programmes. TAMPEP focuses on the empowerment and well-being of trafficked women through a human rights approach.94

High unemployment rates as an effect of the aftermath of the war in Yugoslavia has increased the sexual trafficking of women and girls. Before the war, Yugoslavia used to receive girls for prostitution and sexual slavery, but not they were being exported for this purpose. Trafficking awareness raising campaigns have been conducted through the television. However, the problem is increasing especially amongst young girls (from the age of nine upward).95

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93 Presentation by Liliana Palihovici (State Department of Youth and Sport, Moldova) and Jana Costachi (Project Leader on Women’s Trafficking Prevention, Women in Law Career, Moldova) in Breakout Session 2.5 ‘Moldova: The value of linking youth strategies and the fight against human trafficking.’
94 Presentation by Licia Brusa (TAMPEP International Foundation) in Breakout Session 2.5 ‘Community-based experience in Western Europe in support of trafficked women.’
95 Presentation by Sandra Ljubinkovic (ASTRA, FRY/Serbia) in Breakout Session 2.5 ‘Sexual exploitation of children and youth from South Eastern Europe: Young people as advocates of child rights.’
Challenges:
There is clearly a need for national youth policies and programmes to recognise and contribute to the fight against trafficking, focusing on prevention (disseminating information and generating job and social opportunities for young women) and rehabilitation (generating real alternatives for returned trafficked women and sensitising communities to void their stigmatisation). Anti-trafficking policies and programmes must take into account the age differences among trafficked youth, including the specific issues and policy implications of trafficked minors. The most effective strategies for addressing human trafficking and monitoring progress will be based on broad alliances between key relevant partners, including governments, NGOs, communities, media, regional and international bodies.\textsuperscript{96}

\textsuperscript{96} Session 2.5 rapporteurs report by Nera Komaric and Carine Clert.
VI. Country youth policies in SEE

The entire South Eastern Europe region lacks a policy environment for addressing youth issues. According to the European Youth Forum, “Youth policy has practically ceased to exist in South Eastern Europe,” as a result of more than a decade of conflict, weak youth organisations, and the absence or undeveloped capacity of civil society (EYF, 2000). Some countries began in the 1990s to look again at the importance of some type of youth policy, especially within the framework of the Working Group on Youth within the Stability Pact for SEE, and many have established action plans.

The following sections of the report indicate that in spite of these efforts, fiscal and budgetary resources for youth investments have not yet been established or are insufficient. Other elements of youth policy also require further attention; i.e., data gathering for the purpose of assessing the impacts of youth policies.

The status of youth policies in South Eastern Europe

The UNICEF/World Bank conference in Rome was well timed, as few of the countries in SEE have yet realised a comprehensive country youth policy. Chapter IX of the Government of Bulgaria policy programme for 1997 to 2001 was devoted to the “Youth of Bulgaria”. Under the provisions of this chapter, government youth policy was to be based on the principles of protecting the interests of Bulgarian young people in accordance with the provisions of international agreements.

The lack of improvement of the lives of youth in Bulgaria resulted in the drawing up of a Youth Charter and Action Plan (April 2001). The Youth Charter was a response to the: limited opportunity of young people to participate in the public sphere; high level of youth unemployment; limited extent of youth-friendly services; and low level of voting intentions among young people.97 (Antonio Vigilante, UNDP Resident Representative)

The new government in Bulgaria has stated that a long-term policy on youth is among the government’s key priorities. Young people are undoubtedly in need of a strategy that is both comprehensive and broad, and capable of mapping out their future development prospects. A common government policy on youth issues needs to be formulated after the priorities, objectives, and interests of the youth have been analysed. The commitment expressed by the Prime Minister Mr. Simeon Sax-Koburg Gota of Bulgaria on May 17th, 2002 in front of the Bulgarian parliament is the National Programme on youth will be adopted by the end of the current 2002.98 Four priority areas for youth have been identified within the national programme: health, education, employment and civic participation.99

Romania has developed a Youth National Action Plan (Y-NAP), which was launched in Parliament in June 2001. Both Bulgaria and Romania are EU Accession candidate countries and the development of youth policy in Romania is seen explicitly as part of the broader context of the process of adherence to European structures. (Romania Y-NAP, 2001:40)

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97 According to national statistics, 34 per cent of Bulgaria’s unemployed are young people. Emigration among the young is also a major issue, with official data showing that 200,000 young Bulgarians left the country between 1992 and 2000. A recent UN survey found that more than half of young Bulgarians are seriously considering not voting in upcoming elections.
98 Data collected by conference delegates at country preparatory meetings.
99 Presentation by Christina Popivanova (UN Social Development Unit, Bulgaria) in Plenary 3 ‘Mobilising young people: UN supported initiative in Bulgaria’.
The goal of Y-NAP development is “to get closer to the EU countries standards regarding social and economical participation of youth, as well as the implementation of specific measures for fighting against marginalisation and social exclusion.” (Romania Y-NAP, 2001:40)

The Y-NAP in Romania is a tool for implementing government policy to create conditions for developing the innovative abilities of young people, through increasing their participation in economical life, and promoting training to facilitate the transition of young people from the education system to the labour market. (Romania Y-NAP, 2001).

The Government of Romania is clear about the need for youth policies to specifically connect Government policies to the major, specific needs/problems of the younger generation, in “order to achieve a lasting social, economical and cultural development...better capitalisation of one of the most important resources: youth.” (Romania Y-NAP, 2001:40).

Youth in Romania are expecting answers to their requests for support and it is hoped to channel the creative energy of young people into the policy implementation process after the conference.100

In January 2002, the Ministry of Education and Sports in FRY/Serbia published their Priorities, Tools and Proposals for Constructing National Youth Strategy and Policy. This document recognises the need for a consensus based youth policy and work is underway to develop this.

The Republic of Croatia is in the process of developing a National Program of Action for Youth and has produced a summary of the basic goals and guidelines (April 2002). A draft Youth Strategy has been produced and went public on 29th May (the first day of the youth conference in Rome). After a period of public consultation this policy will go to Parliament for adoption in June 2002. There is need for changes in legislation in line with the proposed strategy, especially to make legislation more responsive to the needs and priorities of youth. Six youth NGOs and 25 youth representatives were involved in the development of the draft Youth Strategy.101

In other countries, youth policy is less well developed. For instance, in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia “There is still no national vision on youth nor national action plan, and young people are at risk of falling through this policy gap” (UNICEF, 2002). The Federal Secretariat for Sports and Youth is cognisant of the urgent need to develop a comprehensive youth policy for a number of reasons. 47% of all unemployed people in Fry/Serbia are under 30 years of age; more than 20% of young people are in irregular employment and not protected by the Law on Labour; more than half of young people want to leave Yugoslavia and many are doing so; Yugoslavia has the highest number of youth who smoke in Europe; alcoholism is high; Yugoslavia has the second highest number of registered cases of HIV in SEE; and access to reproductive health care is limited.102 As a result the government is building the capacity of the youth sector, providing finance to youth programmes, developing a National Action Plan for the youth of Serbia and Montenegro, and providing support to Youth Councils and Youth Parliaments.

100 Presentation by Mario Ruse (Secretary of State for Youth, Romania) in Plenary 1 "Youth Action Strategy for Romania.”
101 Presentation by Dejana Bouillet (Assistant Director, State Institution of Family Motherhood and Youth, Croatia) in Breakout Session 1.3 Croatia Youth Strategy.
102 Presentation by Karlo Boras (Federal Secretariat for Sports and Youth, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) in Breakout Session 1.1 "Yougслав Youth Policy in the context of commitments undertaken at the SSC - further steps.”
A law on youth was passed in 1999 in Moldova. In Macedonia, the Agency for Youth and Sports is preparing a National Plan of Action for Youth. In addition, the National Commission on Children’s Rights in Macedonia has prepared a Children’s Act, under which the entire body of legislation relating to children (up to 18) and children’s rights is compiled, and necessary actions proposed to fill the gaps.103

In Albania, a youth policy was developed by Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sports. However, young people were not involved in the process and do not consider the policy to be universal or to cover all their needs.104

**Gender-friendly youth policies**

The impact of youth friendly policies will remain limited if they are not gender-friendly. This calls for gender training so that all involved are able to assess the gender sensitivity of policies. The challenges are for national policy frameworks to be gender sensitive and for labour policies to include child care so young women can actively participate in the labour market. Youth Committees need to be more gender sensitive and alliances made with Ministry of Women’s Affairs. Stronger partnerships need to be formed between youth associations and NGOs working with women and girls. Trafficking should be prevented through the creation of better opportunities for women and girls. Policymakers need to recognise that gender relations change throughout the life cycle. Data need to be disaggregated by gender and age.105

**Research base for youth policies**

The design of effective youth policies depends not only on the involvement of youth, NGOs, and government, but also on available data covering all aspects of the lives of young people. Youth research is valuable because it can influence policy and strategy, provide the basis for future youth work in the country, and establish a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of youth policy. This approach has been used to develop the national Youth Action Plan in FRY/Serbia.

Data collection can also be used for assessing the implementation of youth policy. There has been very little work done to date on establishing robust monitoring indicators, which are needed to assess the level and extent of youth participation in the policy arena, as well as in the broader political process. In particular, most countries have no data on the age group 15 to 24 years. This means there is an absence of baseline data against which to monitor any chances which may occur as a result of the implementation of youth policy. It is therefore important that data on youth be routinely disaggregated from data on the general population. This is especially relevant for girls and young women, and for marginalised groups such as ethnic minorities and young people with disabilities (UNICEF, 2002).

Specific indicators could follow the model developed for the Macedonia Children and Youth Development Project, which disaggregates data on youth by age, gender, ethnic group, employment, education level, community coverage of youth activities, and geographical area (World Bank, 2002).

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103 Data collected by conference delegates at country preparatory meetings.
104 Data collected by conference delegates at country preparatory meetings.
105 Presentation by Carine Clert (World Bank) in Breakout Session 2.2 ‘Why gender matters for inclusive youth policies in SEE.’
Data also need to be developed based on identified areas for priority action. For example, how many young people (women and men) have correct information about key areas which affect their lives? How many have skills to be able to protect themselves from factors which affect their health and well-being? How many are living in poverty? are unemployed? and so on. Targets to achieve change in these areas will need to realistic and time bound. There is also a need for data on the level of funds committed to the specific activities described in the action plan.

**Essential Elements for Youth Policy Development**

The European Steering Committee for Intergovernmental co-operation in Youth Field (CDEJ) of the Council Europe, has identified some basic elements for constructing public policy-making in the youth field:

1. Government body responsible for youth affairs
2. Government policy in the youth sector
3. Parliamentary Committee on Youth
4. Constitutional and legislative provisions relating to youth affairs
5. Laws dealing specifically with young people
6. Associative life of young people
7. International co-operation in the youth field
8. Criteria established for the recognition and funding of youth associations, initiatives etc

If we look at the countries of South Eastern Europe, we will find that some of the elements exist in most of the countries, though many of them are not entirely functional. The European Youth Forum has developed some generic indicators for assessing the adequacy of youth policy (see below), but a more rigorous process of setting targets and indicators and how to measure them needs to ensue.

1. Non-formal education. There needs to be recognition of the important role of non-formal education in the life-long learning process for young people. Data on access to and the quality of non-formal education need to be collected.

2. Youth training policy. The presence of a youth training policy is an important element, as is the number of people trained as trainers in the youth sector.

3. Youth legislation. The presence of youth legislation that corresponds to the other dimensions of the youth policy. Such legislation should acknowledge the involvement of young people and youth NGOs in policy decision-making, and make the legislative framework for an efficient government administration to work with youth issues.

4. Youth budget. The presence of adequate fiscal resources for investing in youth and for promoting the development of youth NGOs and activities.

5. Youth information policy. The presence of a youth information strategy which informs young people about the different opportunities available to them, and provides information on what the government is doing in the youth field.

6. Multi-level policy. Indicators need to be developed to measure the extent to which the youth policy is being implemented not only at the national level, but also at all levels of government administration.

7. Youth research. The presence of youth research conducted by national research institutes, in order to develop data and knowledge of the situation of young people, to

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106 Presentation by Tobias Flessenkemper (Deputy Political Development Coordinator, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE, Bosnia and Herzegovina) in Plenary 4 ‘Understanding the dimensions of youth policy’.
assess which policy measures work and those that do not, to measure how effective youth NGOs are in promoting youth participation.

8. Participation. Indicators on the extent to which youth are involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of youth policy.

9. Inter-ministerial co-operation. The presence of a cross-sectoral approach to youth policy development, with joint responsibility and joint co-operation between a range of ministries (such youth, sport, education, culture, defence, health, transport, labour, agriculture). An indicator for this could be the presence on an inter-governmental committee working on the development, implementation and monitoring of a youth policy.

10. Innovation. Indicators on how the youth policy stimulates young people to be creative and innovative.

11. Youth advisory bodies. The presence of consultative committees between youth groups, NGOs and the government at national and at all levels of government administration.

At the conference, several country delegations shared the elements they proposed for assessing the youth policy process.

It was generally agreed that there is need for greater clarity on expected policy outcomes. Results based accountability is a new concept and we need to see the results of youth policy and share information in understandable terms. We also need “to learn how to produce outcomes that are meaningful, needed, visible and most importantly, under the control of young people.”

During the conference, each country delegation prepared a youth action plan; the plans are attached as Annex 3.

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107 Adapted from paper by Peter Lauritzen of the Council of Europe and Finn Denstad, Head of Department, European Youth Forum.

108 FRY/Serbia and Montenegro suggested: (a) the number of youth included in the process of youth policy development; (b) access to information on the process of youth policy development; and (c) visibility in the media of the process and the participation of youth.

109 Presentation by Nico van Oudenhoven (International Child Development Initiatives, Netherlands) in Plenary 1 ‘Netherlands and Nordic experiences in youth policy.’
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Annexes

Annex 1  Conference Agenda
Annex 2  Conference Statement
Annex 3  Country Action Plans
Annex 4  List of Registered Conference Participants
ANNEX 1

Conference agenda

Youth in South Eastern Europe: Policy for Participation, Empowerment and Social Inclusion

May 29-31, 2002; Rome-Italy

A joint initiative of The World Bank’s Europe and Central Asia Region Social Development Group and UNICEF Area Offices for South Eastern Europe

Conference Date and Location: May 29-31, 2002
Villa Piccolomini
Via Aurelia Antica, 164 - 00165, Rome – Italy
Tel. (+3906) 6371228 / 6380357 / 6380024 / 6380076
http://www.centrodionysia.org

Sponsors: UNICEF and The World Bank

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  ext. 125; Fax: (+ 387 33) 642 970.

Information on the web:
- UNICEF: http://www.unicef.org

TUESDAY, May 28, 2002

14:00 – 17:00 Preparatory Meeting of Youth Delegates and Rapporteur
Rehearsal of Youth Delegates' Presentation

16:00 – 17:00 Preparatory Meeting of Facilitators and Rapporteur

18:00 – 18:45 Meeting of the Steering Committee
DAY 1 – WEDNESDAY, May 29, 2002

8:30 - 9:00
REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS

9:00 – 10:30
OFFICIAL OPENING

Co-Chairs: Karin Hulshof, Area Representative for Romania and Moldova, UNICEF and Gloria La Cava, Senior Social Scientist, Europe and Central Asia, The World Bank

• Welcome Speech and Conference Objectives by Co-chairs

• Sen. Grazia Sestini, Undersecretary of State for Social Affairs and Family Policies, Italy

• Key Issues for Youth SEE
Presentation by delegations of youth representatives from SEE

• EU White Paper on Youth Policy
Joao Vale de Almeida, Director, Directorate for Citizenship and Youth, European Commission

10:30 - 11:00
COFFEE BREAK

11:00 – 12:45
PLENARY I

Chair: Alexandre Marc, Sector Manager, Social Development Group, Europe and Central Asia, The World Bank

PUBLIC POLICIES ON THE SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF YOUTH

Presentations:

• Towards a World Bank Vision for Youth Policies
Annette Dixon, Human Development Director, Europe and Central Asia Region, The World Bank

• Implementing a Rights Based Approach for Youth Policies in South Eastern Europe
Philip O’Brien, Regional Director for CEE/CIS and Baltics, UNICEF Geneva

• Netherlands and Nordic experiences in Youth Policy
Nico van Oudenhoven, International Child Development Initiatives, Netherlands, and

• Youth Action Strategy for Romania
Mario Ruse, State Secretary of Youth, Ministry of Youth, Romania
Q&A / Discussion by participants

**Discussant:** Peter Lauritzen, Head of Department Education, Training, Research and Communication Directorate of Youth and Sport, Directorate General IV, Council of Europe

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12:45 – 14:00  **LUNCH**

14:00 – 15:30  **BREAK-OUT SESSIONS**

**Break-out session 1.1**

UN General Assembly Special Session on Children, and its Implications for South Eastern Europe

Objectives:
- To provide information on the Children’s Forum and the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (SSC)
- To encourage participants to implement the goals and strategies adopted at the Children's Forum and at the SSC

**Presentations:**

- Yuri Oksamitniy, Regional Policy Advisor, CEE/CIS Regional Office UNICEF
- Rasa Sekulovic, Save the Children Fund, SEE/FRY
- Participants of the Children’s Forum and the SSC from SEE and Italy – Sandra Milena Sega
- **Promoting Youth Participation to the Implementation of the SSC Goals and Strategies**
  Daniele Luccini, NGO ALISEI, PIDIDA’ NGO Consortium Representative, Italy
- **Yugoslav Youth Policy in the Context of Commitment Undertaken at the SSC- Future Steps**
  Karlo Boras, Assistant Federal Secretary, Federal Secretariat for Sports and Youth, FRY

**Facilitator:** Steven Allen, Special Representative for the Balkans, UNICEF

**Rapporteur:** Tania Goldner, Health and Nutrition Project Coordinator, UNICEF
Break-out session 1.2

Listening to the Voices of the Young People. This session will focus on strengthening young people's rights to information, to express their views and their participation in decision-making, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and as a means of contributing to democratic societies.

Presentations:

• Agenda 2000 for Children and Young people in Europe
  John Errington, Save the Children Fund, UK

• UNICEF / OSCE/ODIHR’s YOUNG VOICES, Opinion Survey of Children and Young People in 35 Countries of Europe and Central Asia
  Elena Urue, International Ad hoc Research Executive, GfK Marktforschung, Germany

• Eurobarometer and Youth Attitudes
  Uma Moorthy, European Commission Public Opinion Analysis and Eurobarometer, Brussels, Belgium

• Experience of Young People and Participation in SEE
  Traian David, Coordinator, Salvati Copiii (Save the Children), Romania

Facilitator: Roberto Laurenti, Representative, UNICEF Albania
Rapporteur: Jeremy Hartley, Area Communication Officer, Balkans Area Office, UNICEF

Break-out session 1.3

Youth Participation in Designing, Implementing and Monitoring Youth Policies and Projects. To discuss and assess strategic approaches to effective participation of youth in decision making regarding the development of youth projects and policy. It will focus on participation at the local/community level. Discussions will include a case study of young people's participation at the national political levels through a youth parliament.

Presentations:

• Macedonian Scout Association
  Julijana Simonovska, Macedonia

• Croatia Youth Strategy
  Dejana Bouillet, Assistant Director, State Institute for Protection of Family, Motherhood and Youth, Croatia

• FRY/Montenegro: Youth Parliament
  Natascha Paddison, Head of the Sub-Office, UNICEF Podgorica, and Dragana Varezic, NGO Fortuna
**Co-Facilitator:** Finn Denstad, Head of Department, Youth Work Development, European Youth Forum and/or Anita Stefín, Member, European Youth Forum Bureau

**Rapporteur:** Yulia Krieger, Program Officer, Policy Development and Advocacy, UNICEF BiH

**15:30 - 16:00**

**COFFEE BREAK**

**16:00 – 17:30 PLENARY II**

**Chair:** Steven Allen, Special Representative for the Balkans Area Office, UNICEF

**YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN CONFLICT AFFECTED AREAS: CONFLICT PREVENTION AND INTER-ETHNIC COHESION**

**Feedback to Plenary from Break-out Sessions 1.1 – 1.3**

**Presentations:**

- **The Experience of the Stability Pact Working Group on Youth**
  Peter Lauritzen, Head of Department Education, Training, Research and Communication Directorate of Youth and Sport, Directorate General IV Council of Europe

- **The Role of Youth in Conflict Prevention - Experience of Bosnia-Herzegovina**
  Jan Zlatan Kulenovic, Program Manager, and Jelena Kuzmanovic, Info-Service Coordinator, Youth Information Agency in BiH (Omladinska Informativna Agencija BiH), Bosnia & Herzegovina

- **Government Responses to Youth Empowerment: The Case of Macedonia**
  Blasko Smilevski, World Bank Youth Project Coordinator, Agency of Youth and Sports, FYR Macedonia

**Q & A / Discussion by participants**

**Discussant:** Gloria La Cava, Senior Social Scientist, Europe and Central Asia, The World Bank

**17:30 – 18:30**

**Meeting of Facilitators and Rapporteur**

**18:30 – 20:00**

**VIDEOS/ DOCUMENTARIES PRESENTATION AT VILLA PICCOLOMINI, WITH PARTICIPATION OF ITALIAN YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES**
DAY 2 – THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2002

8:30 - 10:00 PLENARY III
Chair: Karin Hulshof, Area Representative for Romania and Moldova, UNICEF

Summary of the main points of Day 1
• SEE Youth Representatives
• Conference Rapporteur

YOUNG PEOPLE AS EDUCATORS, ADVOCATES AND ACTIVISTS

Presentations:
• Participation is Key to Adolescent Development

• Youth as Peer Educators in FRY/Serbia and SEE
  Momir Pantelic, Yugoslav Association Against HIV/AIDS (JAZAS), FRY

• Mobilising Young People: UN Supported National Initiative in Bulgaria
  Christina Popivanova, UNICEF- Supported Youth Focal Point, UN Social Development Unit, Bulgaria, and
  Boral Shen, Youth Delegate, Bulgaria

Q&A / Discussion by participants

Discussant: Leo Kenny, Regional Advisor, YPHD & P for CEE/ CIS and Baltics, UNICEF Regional Office, Geneva

10:00 – 10:30 COFFEE BREAK

10:30 – 11:00 Youth Empowerment and The Five Promises
B. Keith Fulton, Vice President, AOL Time Warner Foundation, USA

11:00 – 12:15 BREAK-OUT SESSIONS
Break-out session 2.1

Young People and the Media. This session will examine the relationship of media to young people’s rights and improve understanding of young people’s relationship to media through selected case studies.

Presentations:

• Young People and Media in CEE/CIS (Intermedia Study), and Young People’s Media Network Initiative in SEE
  Dale Rutstein, Communication Officer, UNICEF

• Young Reporters of Albania
  Kela Quinami and Ingrid Xhaja, Albanian Reporters from the “Troc” Weekly TV Program, Albania

Facilitator: Jeremy Hartley, Area Communication Officer, UNICEF Balkans Area Office
Rapporteur: Patrick Fruchet, Communication Officer, UNICEF Kosovo

Break-out session 2.2

Young Women and Young Men: Why Gender Matters? This session will focus on ways in which youth policies can be more effective and inclusive by addressing the specific needs and interests of both young women and young men. Program approaches, social policy implications and post-conflict challenges will be discussed.

Presentations:

• Why Gender Matters for Inclusive Youth Policies in SEE
  Carine Clert, Social Development Specialist, The World Bank

• Improvement of Young Women’s Economic and Social Position in Croatia through Education and Counselling
  Djurdjica Kolarec, Centre for Women Rosa, Croatia

• Youth, Gender and Inclusion: Challenges for Post-Conflict Societies
  Edmond Ademi, Transeuropeenens/Macedonia, FYR Macedonia

Facilitators: Yulia Krieger, Programme Officer, Policy Development and Advocacy, UNICEF BiH
Rapporteur: Blasko Smilevski, World Bank Youth Project Coordinator, Agency of Youth and Sports, FYR Macedonia
Break-out session 2.3

Experiences in Youth Empowerment, Social Entrepreneurship and Income Generation I. This session will discuss different experiences addressing the social exclusion of youth in SEE by strengthening their economic empowerment, with instruments such as training, employment creation and micro-credit. In particular, the session will discuss the potential of "social business", as an innovative approach to transform passive welfare recipients into active citizens and to create a new generation of young entrepreneurs who can serve as a force for change and stability.

Presentations:

• UN Economic Commission for Europe Policies on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship
  Larissa Kapitsa, UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE)

• Creating Opportunities for Youth – a Youthful Approach to Creativity and Entrepreneurship
  Peter Landmark, Communicare, Sweden

• Income Generation Program for Serbian Youth
  Paola Pagliani, Area Coordinator ICS Nis/FRY

Facilitator: Marie-Helene Bricknell, World Bank Resident Representative, Macedonia
Rapporteur: Marcos Mendiburu, World Bank Institute, The World Bank

Break-out session 2.4

Community Based Approaches to Non-Violence and Peace Building. The session will analyse different experiences in peace building with and for SEE youth, involving both direct awareness raising on war to peace transition, and indirect methods of confidence building. Lessons will be drawn from the formal education system and/or out-of-school settings.

• Local Community as a Place for Building Peace
  Branka Kaselj, Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights, Osijek, Croatia

• Peace Education: In-school and out-of-school experiences
  Violeta Petrovska –Beska, Institute of Psychology, University of Skopje, FYR Macedonia

• Integration of Youth in north-western Bosnia
  Lejla Bajramovic, President of Local Youth Council, Zenica, and Todor Skakic, Youth Centre “Lighthouse”, Priedor, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Facilitator: Maria Amelina, Social Development Specialist, The World Bank
Rapporteur: Elena Misik, UNICEF FYR-Macedonia
12:15 – 12:45 Feedback to Plenary from Break-out Sessions 2.1-2.4

12:45 – 14:00 LUNCH

14:00 - 15:30 BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

Break-out session 2.5

Linking Youth Development and the Fight Against Human Trafficking. This session will (i) locate the root causes of the problem of human trafficking in the broader perspective of the lack of opportunities for youth; and (ii) examine responses to trafficking from government and civil society.

Presentations:

• Moldova: The Value of Linking Youth Strategies and the Fight Against Human Trafficking
  Liliana Palihovici, Head, Youth Division, State Department of Youth and Sport, and
  Jana Costachi, Project Leader on Women’s Trafficking Prevention, Head, Women in Law Career

• Community Based Experience in Western Europe in Support of Trafficked Women
  Licia Brussa, TAMPEP International Foundation, Europe

• Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth from South Eastern Europe: Young People as Advocates of Child Rights
  Sandra Ljubinkovic, ASTRA, FRY/Serbia

Co-Facilitators: Nino Zganec, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Croatia, and
Yulia Krieger, Program Officer, Policy Development and Advocacy, UNICEF BiH, and

Rapporteur: Carine Clert, Social Development Specialist, The World Bank

Break-out session 2.6

The role of community-based non formal settings (youth centres, sports clubs, information technology access points, etc) for life skills education. This session will focus on the role of non-formal settings in the development and implementation of life skills programs for young people. It will also examine the constraints to their participation in life skills education.

• Babylon Youth Centres, Macedonia
  Olga Jovanova and Betim Leshi, Youth Representatives
• **Best Practices in Youth Services in South Eastern European Countries**  
Csaba Lorinczi, Advisor in Community Education, Open Society Institute, Budapest

• **Training in Youth Leadership and Development**  
Sanja Spanja, PRONI, Osijek, Croatia

• **Peer AIDS Prevention Intervention for Children of the Streets**  
Monica Dan, Project Coordinator  
Alexandru Miscotean, Peer Educator  
ARAS, Romania

**Facilitator:** Diane Widdus, Project Officer, UNICEF Regional Office, Geneva  
**Rapporteur:** Tania Goldner, Health and Nutrition Project Coordinator, UNICEF

**Break-out session 2.7**

**Experiences in Youth Empowerment, Social Entrepreneurship and Income Generation II.** This session will continue discussing different experiences addressing the social exclusion of youth in SEE by strengthening their economic empowerment, with instruments such as training, employment creation and microcredit. In particular, the session will discuss the potential of ethical banking and other social business initiatives for youth.

**Presentations:**

• **Microcredit and Social banking in South Eastern Europe: Specific Strategies Supporting Youth Microenterprise**  
Francesco Bicciato, Banca Etica, Italy

• **Livewire/Eletpalya Alapitvany- Assisting Youth Entrepreneurs through finance and mentoring programs**  
Tibor Miklos, Director  
The Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum; Shell-Millennium Foundation Programme, Hungary

• **Private Sector Experience from Macedonia**  
Marie-Helene Bricknell, World Bank Resident Representative, Macedonia

**Facilitator:** Carlos Elbirt, World Bank Resident Representative, Moldova  
**Rapporteur:** Elena Galliano, World Bank
Break-out session 2.8

Youth Empowerment Through Information Technology
The session will explore community-based approaches to improve the access to IT for young people in low income communities, thereby providing them with more income-generating and employment opportunities. The session will explore the applicability of the international lessons learned for youth in SEE countries.

Presentations:

• Alleviating Youth Poverty: High Tech Development Solutions
  Rodrigo Baggio, Director, Committee for Democracy in Information Technology (CDI), Brazil

• Improving Education and Employment Opportunities Through the Use of the Internet
  Wayne Farmer, Director of Development, The World Links Program
  (joint program of the World Bank Institute and The World Links Organization), and
  Jerry Dovalis, Executive Vice President, The Case Foundation, USA

• Kids on the Net, Kosovo
  Patrick Fruchet, Communication Officer and Dren Rexha, Project Assistant UNICEF Kosovo

Facilitator: B. Keith Fulton, Vice President, AOL Time Warner Foundation
Rapporteur: Dale Rutstein, Communication Officer, UNICEF Albania

15:30 – 16:00 COFFEE BREAK

16:00 – 17:30 WORKING SESSION/ PLENARY IV

Chair: Gloria La Cava, Senior Social Scientist, Europe and Central Asia, The World Bank

Feedback to Plenary from Break-out Sessions 2.5-2.8

• Understanding of Dimensions of Youth Policy
  Tobias Flessenkemper, Deputy Political Development Coordinator, Mission to OSCE, Bosnia and Herzegovina

• Introduction of Draft Conference Statement
  Jeremy Hartley, Area Communication Officer, Balkans Area Office, UNICEF

17:30 – 18:15 Meeting of Facilitators
DAY 3 – FRIDAY, MAY 31, 2002

WORKING SESSION/PLENARY V

Co-chairs: Steven Allen, UNICEF Special Representative for the Balkans, and Gloria La Cava, Senior Social Scientist, Europe and Central Asia, The World Bank

9:00 – 9:30
Summary of the main points of Day 2
• SEE Youth Representatives
• Conference Rapporteur

9:30 – 11:30
COUNTRY LEVEL BREAK-OUT SESSION
Development of Country Action Plans by country delegations

10:30 – 11:00
COFFEE BREAK

WORKING SESSION/PLENARY V (continued)
Co-chairs: Gloria La Cava, The World Bank, and Steven Allen, UNICEF

11:00 – 12:00
Country Feedback on Action Plans

12:00 – 12:30
ADOPTION OF CONFERENCE STATEMENT
Steven Allen, UNICEF Special Representative for the Balkans, and Gloria La Cava, Senior Social Scientist, Europe and Central Asia, The World Bank

12:30 – 13:00
CLOSING REMARKS
• Closing comments by Youth Delegate
• Cons. Mainardo Benardelli
Head of the European Department of the Territorial Office for SEE and Mediterranean Countries Directorate General for Development Cooperation, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

13:00 – 13:30
Press Briefing arranged by Italian National Committee for UNICEF

13:00 – 14:00
CLOSING LUNCH

14:30 – 17:00
Guided tour to archaeological sites in Rome
Hosted by the City of Rome
ANNEX 2

Conference statement

Youth in South Eastern Europe: The Rome Conference on Policy for Participation, Empowerment, and Social Inclusion

A Joint Initiative of The World Bank’s Europe and Central Asia Region Social Development Group and UNICEF Area Offices for South Eastern Europe

29-31 May, Rome, Italy

Promoting the full development of the capacity of youth and responding to their needs is a sound investment and imperative for future stability. Empowerment and social inclusion of young people cannot be achieved if young people are traumatised by the affects of war and civil strife, and violence. Nor can they be achieved unless measures are undertaken to address gender, social and economic disparities, and to embrace the tools of the 21st century.

The three-day conference in Rome was convened by UNICEF and the World Bank to reach consensus on the essential elements for effective youth policies to address the needs of youth in the countries of South Eastern Europe. The participating countries were Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro and the UN Administered Province of Kosovo), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova and Romania. The policies should guide investments in youth in the region to ensure the realisation of their fullest potential as agents of social change, including healthy behaviour and inter-ethnic cohesion in their respective communities.

The conference provided a forum for: meaningful dialogue between government, international actors, youth and civil society and the media, to raise the overall awareness of the importance of investing in youth; discussion, dissemination and exchange of successful youth development experiences in South Eastern Europe and elsewhere that support young people to prevent and reduce their marginalisation and reduce their exposure to abuse (substance, sexual, violence etc.), unemployment and conflict; and strengthening networks and building upon recommendations, frameworks and programmes developed by a range of regional and international actors.

Participants to the consultation were youth aged 15-24 years, local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with a proven record of delivering services for youth, ministerial and governmental officials responsible for youth policy, representatives from the private sector, foundations, academia, the European Commission, Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Council of Europe, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, United Nations agencies and the representatives of the conference hosts (the Government of Italy, UNICEF and the World Bank). Lessons were learnt from examples...
within different countries and governments were urged to explore their applicability in their own countries.

Youth unemployment is particularly marked in the region with rates of up to two thirds in some countries. It was noted with concern the large number of young people who want to leave their country, and the significant number who have already left and do not want to return. This emigration often takes dangerous forms: many girls and young women are trafficked. Measures need to be put in place to stop the brain drain, to create opportunities for youth through full employment, improved quality and access to education and increased political stability. Youth who have left their country need to be attracted back to contribute to the future stability and sustainability of their country, but the conditions need to be right for this to happen. Effective youth policies were seen as the means to promote youth as a human resource through the realisation of their full potential, and their involvement and commitment to civic processes.

The conference noted that Romania has already developed a National Youth Action Plan and that other countries are working on the development of such plans. Participants committed themselves to further develop and strengthen youth policy at different levels within the system. National Youth Policies with National Action Plans and comprehensive strategies including specific areas (youth employment, education, non formal education, health, environment, leisure and sports activities, culture, media, youth with special needs, minorities, juvenile delinquents and any priority areas determined at country level, such as, conflict prevention, youth returnees and internally displaced persons) need to be developed and strengthened. The needs and interests of both young women and men should be addressed.

The conference emphasised the importance of participation and empowerment of youth in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating policies, programmes and projects - “for youth, by youth” in collaboration with parents, NGOs, governments and international organisations. For this to be effective, youth need to have access to information and opportunities to build skills to ensure their full participation.

Primary mechanisms for youth policy development, implementation and evaluation at the national and local level need to be put in place, where they do not already exist. These would include youth offices in executive government (Ministries, departments, and sectors), youth bodies in legislative government (Commission, Working Group, Council or Board) involving NGO representatives and others. It is also necessary to establish and stimulate the structuring of the youth sector according to European standards and their later integration into European institutions (for example, National Youth Councils). Partnership between government and civil society through Youth Steering or Advisory Boards should be part of the youth policy development process. Similar mechanisms should be in place at regional and local level. Establishing and building youth networks were recognised as an important mechanism for ensuring sustainability.

Participants noted the absence of indicators for measuring progress in youth policy development and implementation and called for actions to address this.

Building on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the United Nations International Year of Youth, the United Nations World Youth Forum, the United Nations World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, and the commitments of the United Nations General Assembly Special Sessions on Youth (1985, 1995), HIV/AIDS (2000) and Children (2002), by all the countries in this region, the conference encouraged governments to increase the participation of youth in the policy making process and to promote social inclusion through democratic citizenship. This calls for the empowerment
of young people to realise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of their respective countries through developing their capacities, increasing their access to services and opportunities and ensuing that they can live and learn in safe and supportive environments.

Youth are often seen as the healthiest of all age groups, but recent surveys reveal a generation whose health is under threat. The evidence indicates that the main health threats to young people are declining levels of sexual and reproductive health (high levels of sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancy), increasing substance use (in particular alcohol, injecting drug use and tobacco) and increasing rates of HIV/AIDS, which affects young people more than any other population group and unless unchecked, could devastate the first transition generation and undermine the future of these countries. Youth are not fully informed about HIV and modes of protecting themselves against infection and about two thirds of young people in most countries had not heard about AIDS, and did not have correct information about how HIV is transmitted. Young people therefore require better access to information and youth friendly services.

Acknowledging the existing good practices in the region, many of which were presented at the conference, the participants urgently call upon governments to command greater efforts to strengthen and develop comprehensive rights-based youth policies throughout the region, with appropriate strategies and designated enhanced resources to address the rights and needs of youth within their countries. This requires national organisations and research institutes to be involved in the systematic collection of data on youth (by age group and gender) and working in a collaborative way with young people, civil society and international agencies to identify criteria for assessing the adequacy of youth policies for promoting stability and sustainable services and opportunities for youth. It also calls for capacity building of key players at national level in youth policy development. Collaboration and coordination between international organisations, in conjunction with local stakeholders (governments and civil society), are critical.

The conference urges the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe Working Group on Young People meeting in September in Kotor to take cognisance of this statement in its deliberations.

The co-organisers of the conference (World Bank and UNICEF) look forward to working with countries in the region on youth policy development. Youth at the consultation presented a challenge to participants and their respective governments:

"Youth policy development, but not without youth."
ANNEX 3

Youth action plans drafted by country delegations

ALBANIA

PRIORITIES
1. Youth employment
2. Health
3. Education
4. Leisure
5. Youth returnees
6. Juvenile delinquents
7. Youth in rural areas

NEXT STEPS
Full participation of youth in preparation of policy
Collaboration with NGOs and international organisation
Youth involvement in preparation of the Law on Youth

TIME FRAME
2 to 3 years - it requires Parliament to approve new legislation

INDICATORS
Existence of structure on youth policy and children rights with youth representatives, youth NGOs, Ministry of Culture Sports and Youth
Evidence of municipal collaboration in youth policy process
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

PRIORITIES

1. Ensure participation of youth in any form of policy making
2. Full implementation of human rights in health, education, leisure time
3. Unemployment must be a priority within the youth policy
4. Reform and modernisation of educational system
5. IDPs and refugees
6. Creation of sound infrastructure to influence government and legislative system for youth

NEXT STEPS

1. Analyse where we are now in development of youth policy
2. Identify what mechanisms already exist for legislation
3. Undertake research into youth needs and priorities
4. Create a positive environment to support youth policy development
5. Develop capacity of government and civil society in youth policy development
6. Create primary mechanisms for youth policy development
7. Develop National Action Plan

TIME FRAME

2002
- Conduct research,
- Identify existing primary mechanisms and establish mechanisms where needed
- Develop structure for the youth sector
- Start process of integration of youth policy into EU

mid 2003
- Develop National Action Plan
- Involvement of youth in political process
- Animate youth to take action themselves
- Improve education system

INDICATORS

- Apply CoE indicators to country context
- Mechanisms in place of youth policy development at all levels
- Evidence of coordinated activities
BULGARIA

The Bulgarian government fully recognises the need for the development and adoption of a universal youth policy in the country. A policy that is holistic, which puts people at the centre in the development and implementation of the policy. The Bulgarian Prime Minister has expressed the commitment of the government for the adoption of a universal National Youth Strategy and Programme by the end of 2002.

PRIORITIES

1. Educational policy
2. Health promotion policy for young people
3. Information policy
4. Participation of young people in political and municipal/community life
5. Policy which stimulates the mobility of young people and contacts with the rest of the world
6. Sound youth employment policy
7. Social and cultural integration of young people in Bulgaria

NEXT STEPS and TIME FRAME

1. The adoption of the National Programme for the Protection of Children in Bulgaria in January 2002 has provided the government with priority actions. The first is the development of the National Youth Strategy - deadline end of 2002. An Inter-ministerial Working Group on the design of the national strategy has been established.
2. Deadline for the first draft of the strategy - end October 2002
3. Deadline for the second draft of the strategy - end December 2002

INDICATORS

Health % of young people with STIs
   Teenage pregnancy rate
   Presence of youth friendly health services (YFHS) developed on the basis of sound legislation
   Number of young people having access to YFHS

Education
   School drop out rate
   Number of young people without secondary education

Employment
   Legislative measures in place to stimulate youth employment
   % of unemployed young people

Participation
   Number of youth centres, youth forums, youth networks and number of young people participating in them
CROATIA

The draft of the National Programme for Youth is now out for public consultation.

PRIORITIES

1. Formal and non-formal education (including the development of computer skills)
2. Employment and entrepreneurship
3. Social policy for youth in rural areas, those affected by war, with disabilities, Roma, victims of violence and sexual trafficking
4. Health protection and reproductive health
5. Active participation of youth in society
6. Creation of civil society and voluntary work
7. Youth culture and free time
8. Mobility, information and counselling

NEXT STEPS

May to June 2002     Public discussion of National Programme for Youth
June 2002           Youth mobilisation campaign
                    Media campaign to inform and involve youth in public discussion
                    Information dissemination in high schools, cyber cafes, libraries
                    and
July                Government endorsement of National Programme for Youth
September         Parliament adoption of National Programme for Youth
2003-2008         Implementation of the National Programme for Youth
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

FRY/Montenegro

Educational reform commenced three years ago at pre-school, primary and secondary levels. Book for Changes is the basic reform document, but transparent, well structured youth policies are not apparent in it. Also youth participation was lacking in the design of the document. There is need to develop comprehensive youth policies within Montenegro.

A round table consultation was convened as part of the conference delegation country preparatory meeting when the conference document Discussion Paper was discussed and responses formulated. This was attended by six governmental representatives, five NGO representatives, and UNICEF staff in Podgorica.

PRIORITIES

1. Reform of legislation relating to young people
2. Civic education/education on human rights
3. Social exclusion
4. Participation in political processes
5. Education of youth
6. Employment of youth
7. Gender issues
8. Role of the media

NEXT STEPS

1. Debrief the round table and share experiences of expectations of the Rome conference.
2. Inform Minister of Education - report
3. Send information to the media

TIME FRAME

One month

INDICATORS

- Round table feedback
- Understanding and feedback from MOE
- Media presentation
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA

UN Administered Province of Kosovo

PRIORITIES

1. Development and promotion of young people
2. Employment
3. Prevention and promotion of health (health promotion, peer education)
4. Returnees
5. Gender
6. Youth participation

NEXT STEPS AND TIME FRAME

1. Establishment of Youth Policy Working Group composed of central government, municipal authorities and representatives of the youth network - to be completed by the end 2002
2. Research and collection of data relevant youth policy development - 2002 to 2003
3. Consolidation of youth and civil society initiatives and actions (on going)

INDICATORS

- Number of stakeholders involved in youth policy development
- Proxy indicators of youth participation to be determined
MACEDONIA

PRIORITIES

1. Socio-economic situation
   • Job opportunities
   • Employment skills

2. Education
   • Full access to secondary education
   • Revise curricula, especially vocational
   • Participation of - Teachers
     - Students
     - Parents

3. Health
   • Free and accessible for all
   • Information and sex education

4. Leisure/free time
   • Facilities

5. Programmes - training and developing organising skills

NEXT STEPS

1. Policy developed free of politics and divisions, (party, ethnic, social)
2. Multilevel policy at national, local and community level
3. Cohesive policy which is specific and binding
4. Intersectoral collaboration
5. Respect for and acceptance of young people as partners

INDICATORS

- National consensus reached
- Awareness raising
- Draft proposals (s) in place
- Wide consultation (capacity building)

TIME FRAME

4 months for national consensus
6 months for awareness raising
6 months developing draft proposals
4 months for capacity building and consultation
Hope to complete process in 10 to 12 months

KEY ELEMENTS UNDERPINNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH POLICY

National capacity building; international experience available; civil service reform undertaken
MOLDOVA

PRIORITIES

1. Improve access to quality education
2. Create job opportunities through loans and microcredit schemes and provide information on employment opportunities
3. Increase access to quality and confidential youth health services
4. Develop young people’s access to new information technologies
5. Create free time/leisure centres
6. Create consultative process and mechanisms for canvassing young people’s opinions, needs and information demands

NEXT STEPS

1. Initiate consultative process
2. Develop National Youth Policy and National Action Programme identifying actions that need to be taken and financed by government and donors
3. Establish an alliance/network between government, NGOs and youth representatives

INDICATORS

- Number of services for young people
- Data obtained from national youth opinion polls
- Annual reports of action

Prerequisite: "Power and passion is needed to realise the steps outlined."
ROMANIA

1. PRIORITIES

Romania has elaborated a National Action Plan, initiated by the Youth and Sports Ministry in collaboration with youth NGOs and other institutions.

The methodology used for the elaboration process included context analysis (research, statistics, existing experiences from inside and abroad etc.). With inter-sectoral cooperation long term aims and objectives were established.

The priority areas for youth policies 2001-2004 are:

1. participation under economical, civic and political, cultural and educational aspects;
2. risk and vulnerable groups;
3. encouragement and stimulation of youth creativity;
4. European mobility promotion;
5. improvement of institutional framework and adjustment of youth policy.

NEXT STEPS to be taken in order to develop and operationalise youth policy are:

1. increased youth participation in monitoring and adjustment;
2. ensure wider participation of NGOs active in the field of youth work;
3. extend real involvement of other ministries that should assume specific responsibilities as part of the National Plan of Action;
4. development of regional consultation regarding youth policies;
5. ensure needed financial support for implementation including both national and international sources; In order for this step to be taken forward in the best possible conditions there is a need for the international agencies to adjust their financial mechanisms to national needs;
6. reach increased political willingness and commitment;
7. annual diagnosis – research on youth problematic and expectations.

8. TIME FRAME for implementation:

   - quarterly consultation meetings with Youth NGOs;
   - increased network of NGOs participating in the process by the end of 2002;
   - steps referring to increased political will and commitment and to extension of involvement of other ministries are a permanent effort;
   - annual diagnosis;
   - continuous fundraising efforts.
9. INDICATORS

In order to measure and evaluate progress towards the proposed objectives, two categories of indicators will be used:

a. Process indicators:
   - number of ministries involved;
   - number of NGOs involved;
   - number of youth consultations that were organised;
   - level of financial support reached for youth policy implementation.

b. Impact indicators:
   - level of youth participation;
   - improvement of situation of risk and vulnerable groups;
   - change in risk factors frequency and impact;
   - improvement of youth legal framework.
## ANNEX 4

### List of registered conference participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Delegation</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Albania</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Mr. Dritan Germa</td>
<td>Advisor, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Ms. Anxhela Paparizo</td>
<td>Director of Culture and Education Department, Municipality of Tirana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Ms. Kela Qinami</td>
<td>Producer, Children's Department of Albanian National TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Ms. Ingrid Xhaja (YP)</td>
<td>Young Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ms. Erinda Bezhani (YP)</td>
<td>Youth Parliamentarian (Secondary school student)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Ms. Osi Gojani (YP)</td>
<td>Social Worker, ICMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Mr. Dale Rutstein</td>
<td>Communication Officer, UNICEF Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Mr. Roberto Laurenti</td>
<td>Representative, UNICEF Albania</td>
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<td><strong>Bosnia and Herzegovina</strong></td>
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