Young People in Eastern Europe and Central Asia:
From Policy to Action
May 21-24, 2007 - Rome
“Young people have been major agents of positive social and political change in the ECA region. There is a need for integrated youth policies that address their employment and citizenship opportunities and most importantly a need to translate these into action.”

Adapted from the ECA Youth Conference Statement
The global challenges of our time – fighting poverty, climate change, combating terrorism and pandemics – need a far broader dimension than our narrow national confines. Alone, we are doomed to irrelevance. Together, we can address and overcome the challenges ahead... The message I would like to send out to the young people of the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia is a message of concern and solidarity. The Italian government wishes to stand by their side as we build up a more just and participatory Europe, underpinned by the shared common values of democracy and freedom, with young people leading the way.

H.E. ROMANO PRODI
PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, ITALY

As a region, Europe and Central Asia is well placed to invest in its youth. Overall education levels are higher in the region than in many parts of the world, young people are coming of age at a time when the range of economic opportunities is widening, and economic revival is following the adjustments of transition. The youth agenda is developing to meet emerging needs and conditions in this diverse region, and young people’s participation in the definition of that agenda will be a cornerstone of the World Bank’s efforts in supporting social and economic development in these countries.

SHIGEO KATSU
VICE-PRESIDENT, EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION
THE WORLD BANK
FOREWORD

Today 1.5 billion people worldwide – 1.3 billion in developing and transition countries – are aged 12-24, the most ever. Addressing issues important to youth will affect economic development, growth and social development in these countries well into the future. In Eastern Europe and Central Asia, whatever the relative size of youth populations, young people are a valuable resource that needs to be tapped. ECA missed opportunities could be extremely costly to remedy.

Young people's participation in the labor force has fallen following transition. And although enrollment in secondary education is on the increase, secondary school completion is still far from the norm. Too many young people are out of school and out of work. The region faces the very real risk that this could act as a brake on growth leading to increasing poverty at home, migration or even local conflict.

Despite often having helped to trigger social and political change in the transition countries, young people for the most part have subsequently been excluded from decision making and the political priorities of the new order, and are increasingly disillusioned with the citizenship opportunities offered in their countries.

The World Bank has learned from young stakeholders in the region and elsewhere the importance of listening to youth to ensure the relevance and sustainability of projects and programs. This conference – a joint initiative of the World Bank and the Cooperation and Development Department of Italy’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs – was an important opportunity to improve dialogue between young people and policy makers in ECA and to discover joint solutions to common problems.

SHIGEO KATSU
VICE-PRESIDENT, EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION
THE WORLD BANK
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This conference brought together over 230 representatives of youth organizations, government officials, NGOs, the private sector and international organizations. Participants included youth delegations from all 29 countries of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Region and Kosovo. Without the participation of the many dedicated youth representatives who came to share their insights, recommendations and vision for the region over three days of discussion, the conference – and these proceedings - would have been unable to serve as a true platform for dialogue.

The conference was co-sponsored by the World Bank and the Development Cooperation Office of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a fruitful partnership that is part of a larger combined effort to direct investments towards youth development, particularly in South Eastern Europe. The International Labour Organization was also a key partner in the planning and realization of the conference.

The participation of high-level representatives of international organizations such as the European Commission, the European Youth Forum, the Council of Europe, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Open Society Institute (OSI), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) ensured that the discussions that are reported in these proceedings were indeed a dialogue between policy makers, youth advocates and stakeholders.

The telecommunications company Nokia was also a partner in the conference, providing the financing for the 2007 Innovation Grants Competition “Connecting Youth to Work and Citizenship Opportunities.” The World Bank is also grateful for the generous hospitality of the Municipality of Rome, and for the sponsorship of certain events at the conference by corporations such as UNICREDIT Group and Microsoft. A special thank you is owed to the team of Valueurope, led by Marina di Pietro, for their support to the organization, communication and coordination of the whole event. Many other organizations and dedicated individuals have contributed to the realization of this conference. Though too numerous to mention individually, their contribution to the success of the event is gratefully acknowledged.

This report was prepared by Zeynep Ozbil and Alexandra Habershon under the supervision of Gloria La Cava.
# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALMP</td>
<td>Active Labor Market Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>BiH</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<td>CoE</td>
<td>Council of Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS-CCA</td>
<td>Caucasus and Central Asian states of the former Soviet Union (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIS-Eur</td>
<td>European states of the former Soviet Union (Belarus, Moldova, Russia and the Ukraine)</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
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<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>CYBF</td>
<td>Canadian Youth Business Foundation</td>
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<td>DCECI</td>
<td>Development Cooperation and Economic Cooperation Instrument, EU</td>
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<td>EBRD</td>
<td>European Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<td>EAC</td>
<td>Education for active citizenship</td>
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<td>ECA</td>
<td>Europe and Central Asia Region, World Bank</td>
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<td>ENP</td>
<td>European Neighborhood Policy</td>
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<td>ENPI</td>
<td>European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument, EU</td>
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<td>EPL</td>
<td>employment protection legislation</td>
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<td>ESI</td>
<td>European Stability Initiative</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-NMS</td>
<td>European Union New Member States (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuanian, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia)</td>
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<td>FSU</td>
<td>Former Soviet Union</td>
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<td>FYRM</td>
<td>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>gross domestic product</td>
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<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome</td>
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<td>ICG</td>
<td>International Crisis Group</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<td>IADB</td>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Persons</td>
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<td>IFI</td>
<td>International Finance Institution</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>KILM</td>
<td>Key Indicators of the Labor Market</td>
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<td>MFI</td>
<td>Microfinance Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>MONEE</td>
<td>Monitoring the human impact of socio-economic change in CEE/CIS and the Baltics (UNICEF)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>non-governmental organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>OSI</td>
<td>Open Society Institute</td>
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<td>OSI-NDP</td>
<td>Open Society Institute - Network Debate Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>PT</td>
<td>peace and tolerance (programs)</td>
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R&D    research and development
RF     Russian Federation
SAP    Stabilization and Association Process
SEE    South Eastern Europe (for the purposes of this report, Albania, Bosnia &
       Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey)
TTY    Telephone Typewriter / Teletype
UN     United Nations
UNDP   United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
VTE    vocational and technical education
WDR    World Development Report
WHO    World Health Organization
WOSM   World Organization of the Scout Movement
YBI    Youth Business International
YEN    Youth Employment Network
YMCA   Young Men Christian Association
CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The conference “Young People in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: From Policy to Action,” held in Rome from May 21-24, 2007, provided the first ECA-wide forum to discuss the implications of the 2007 World Development Report Development and the Next Generation for the ECA Region. The World Bank dedicated its 2007 WDR to youth to bring to the attention of global policy makers the existing evidence of the urgent need to invest in young people. This conference focused on two policy domains articulated in the WDR, young people’s transition to employment and transition to active citizenship. The objective of the Conference was to identify concrete lines of action in the policy areas that affect these transitions, which are today especially problematic for young people in ECA.

Rationale

Young people's transition to work and the exercise of active citizenship are attracting greater attention by policy makers and youth stakeholders at a time when the European integration process requires a harmonization of youth development efforts with established European youth policy principles and practices, and an evolving dialogue on these issues among the wider European community and the countries of Central Asia.

Transition to work refers to the transition of young people to working life from formal secondary or tertiary education, non-formal education or vocational training. The OECD highlights that the school-to-work transition is “concerned not only with education policies, but with employment and labor policies, and welfare and social policies, as well as with the interaction between these policy domains.”¹ Successful transitions are crucial to the social and economic well-being of young women and men. Failed transitions, increasingly common in the ECA region, are marked by increased school dropout rates, youth unemployment, underemployment, marginalization, dissatisfaction, violence, migration, and trafficking in human beings.

According to the WDR Development and the Next Generation “active citizenship emphasizes how individuals should hold public officials accountable for their actions, demand justice for themselves and others, tolerate people who are ethnically or religiously different…” Young people's transition to citizenship is shaped by a wide range of actors and institutions - the family, peer groups, civil society organizations (from youth groups to the media, social movements, and religious institutions), the private sector, the state, international organizations - all of which influence youth through their rules, norms, activities and policies.

Failed transition to citizenship can result in a disenfranchised generation or, at worst, in crime and societal violence, ethnic intolerance and marginalization of youth from different ethnic and religious communities like, for example, the young Roma and the young Muslim population. Juvenile justice is another issue facing youth in the region. Throughout the ECA Region, juvenile crime rates are higher than general crime rates. In addition, juvenile crime has been linked to the highest rates of incarceration of young people in the world in many ECA countries.

In this context, youth-friendly public policies and investments should be a very high priority in ECA countries, along with much-needed partnerships with the non-governmental and private sectors. The state is among the most important institutions affecting young people’s full and successful transition and defines the very institutional and legal frameworks that enable young people’s participation in society.

The Conference drew on developments in youth policy over recent years and marked a progression from previous events: From the first Rome Conference on Youth in South Eastern Europe: Policy for Participation, Empowerment and Social Inclusion, in 2002, whose objective was to discuss effective youth policies to guide the realization of young people as agents of social change, healthy behaviors and inter-ethnic cohesion in the region. Subsequently, the World Bank organized two global conferences on Youth, Peace and Development, respectively in Paris in 2003 and Sarajevo in 2004, in which over 100 young people and representatives of the major international youth organizations participated and discussed ways to more effectively include young people as partners in the development process.

Structure of the Conference

A Background Discussion Paper was prepared to provide a framework for discussion at the Conference (see Annex 5). The paper draws attention to the importance of successful transitions for young people’s social and economic well-being, and illustrates some of the conditions and challenges young people in ECA face in their transition to the labor market and to active citizenship. It provides a current inventory of active labor market policies, and suggests avenues for supporting second chances for young people who have become vulnerable as a result of difficult circumstances or poor choices, such as through restorative justice. It shows that in spite of economic growth, conditions for youth in employment have not improved much in the region and many young people experience growing disillusionment with the citizenship opportunities offered in their countries.

Over the three days of the Conference, thematic discussions addressed young people’s transition to employment and active citizenship at the regional level, followed by a day of country/sub-regional discussions to focus dialogue more closely on country-specific contexts. These discussions took the form of Plenary Sessions, including Open Floor Discussions, and numerous Break-Out Sessions that examined specific policy areas and lines of action in greater detail. Summaries of all these sessions are provided here, as well as summaries of the keynote speeches. The Conference Statement, which was drafted by a team of conference participants representing youth organizations, government delegations and international agencies, draws out the key policy
messages of these discussions and outlines commitments expressed at the Conference for moving from policy to action in investing in young people’s transition to employment and active citizenship in the ECA Region.

In addition to providing a venue for dialogue and discussion, the Conference also offered participants the opportunity to explore youth perspectives on development issues through other media. An exhibit at the San Michele Complex titled “Inbetweeness – the Balkans: Metaphors for Change” featuring the work of 23 emerging young artists from the region, examined issues of transition and transformation, both individually and collectively, like nomadism, mobility, marginalization, uncertainty, cultural diversity and displacement (see Annex 4). The Conference also hosted the 2007 Innovation Grants Competition: Connecting Youth to Work and Citizenship Opportunities, sponsored by NOKIA and the Children and Youth Unit at the World Bank; a competition that funds innovative youth initiatives in the region. Details of the competition and the grant recipients are included in Annex 3.

This report of the conference proceedings illustrates the way in which the World Bank is beginning to invest in youth policies in a multi-dimensional way, in addition to specific sectoral projects in health, education and infrastructure. By highlighting positive trends, and successful lessons for investment, and by proposing new avenues for discussion with new information, it is hoped that this publication will further energize the debate about youth development, and contribute to the move from policy to action in the ECA Region.

GLORIA LA CAVA
ECA Youth Coordinator, The World Bank
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Conference Proceedings ................................................................. 1

### DAY 1. Challenges for Investing in Youth in ECA .......................... 1

**A Dialogue on Youth Employment, Employability and Labor Markets..**

- Open Floor for Discussion .................................................................................. 11

**Break-Out Sessions on Youth Transition to Employment** ................................ 13
  - Formal Education and Job Skills for Employment Opportunities ................ 13
  - Non-Formal Education and Youth Employability ................................ 16
  - Second Chance Programs to (Re)integrate Disadvantaged Youth into the Labor Market ................................................................. 18
  - Financing for Youth Entrepreneurship .................................................. 19
  - The Role of the Private Sector in Promoting Youth Employment ........ 21
  - Youth Employment Policy and Action Plans ........................................ 22

### DAY 2. Exercising Active Youth Citizenship ...................................... 25

- Open Floor for Discussion .................................................................................. 30

**Break-Out Sessions on Exercising Active Citizenship** ............................... 33
  - Schools and Active Youth Citizenship .................................................. 33
  - Citizenship Development and Non-Formal Education Systems .......... 35
  - National Youth Policy Development with Youth Participation .......... 36
  - Local Youth Policies Development: EU Charter on Youth Participation in Local and Municipal Life ................................................................. 37
  - Promoting Social Inclusion and Cohesion: Youth Media and Youth Engagement in Accessible IT ................................................................. 39
  - Development of Inclusive Policies for Youth from Ethnic and Religious Minorities.. 40
  - Development of Policies Pertaining to Youth with Disabilities ........ 42
  - Youth-Centered Peace and Tolerance Programs ................................. 44
  - Youth and Justice .................................................................................. 45
  - Youth Migrants, Integration and Citizenship ......................................... 47
  - Art and Culture as a Tool for Youth Development ............................... 48

### DAY 3. Investing in Youth at the Country Level: Options and Challenges .. 50

- A Conversation on Investing in Youth at the Country Level.................... 50

**Break-Out Sessions: Sub-Regional Discussions on Youth Employment and Active Citizenship** ................................................................. 52

- Group 1. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, The Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia ................................................................. 53
Group 2. Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Macedonia, Romania and Turkey .......... 53
Group 3. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro ...... 54
Group 4. Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine .......... 55
Group 5. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russian Federation, Tajikistan,
Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan ........................................................................ 56

Open Dialogue between Youth and the World Bank ........................................ 56

A Global Perspective on Youth Policy and Initiatives ....................................... 59
Joy Phumaphi, World Bank Vice President for Human Development ................ 59

Revisiting the Conference Objectives: Implications for Investing in Youth
Development in ECA ................................................................................. 62
Marta Dassu, Advisor to Italy’s Minister of Foreign Affairs .............................. 62

Conference Statement .............................................................................. 64

Annex 1: Conference Agenda ..................................................................... 68

Annex 2: Summary of Keynote Speeches ......................................................... 74
H.E. Romano Prodi, President of the Council of Ministers, Italy ....................... 74
H.E. Gazmend Oketa, Deputy Prime Minister, Albania .................................... 76
José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director, Employment Sector,
International Labor Organization .................................................................. 78
Famiano Crucianelli, Undersecretary, Relations with Europe, the Caucasus and
CIS countries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy ......................................... 81
Pierre Mairesse, Director of Youth Sports and Citizenship Department DG
Education and Culture, European Commission ............................................. 83
Bettina Schwarzmayer, President of the European Youth Forum ....................... 85
Fizuli Alekberov, Minister of Labor and Social Protection, Azerbaijan ............... 91
Giovanna Melandri, Minister for Sport and Youth, Italy .................................. 93
Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture & Heritage
and Youth & Sport, Council of Europe ......................................................... 95
Eduardo Missoni, Secretary General, World Organization of the Scout Movement .. 97
Tatiana Margolina, Human Rights Commissioner, Perm Region, Russian Federation .... 100

ANNEX 3: 2007 ECA Youth Innovation Grants Competition .......................... 102
Grant Recipients .......................................................................................... 102

ANNEX 4: In-Betweeness Exhibit. The Balkans: Metaphor of Change .............. 106
Conference Proceedings

Day 1. Challenges for Investing in Youth in ECA

The first Plenary Session of the Conference explored the challenges for investing in youth in the ECA region. In spite of very different demographic profiles and levels of economic development, should countries consider the worrying levels of youth unemployment and idleness (rate of out of school/out of work youth), which are common to most countries in ECA, as the determining factor in prioritizing youth investments? If so, what type of investments would be desirable to address these issues? What would be the optimal modalities to adequately address young people’s multi-dimensional needs? These questions were addressed by the opening session, and over the course of two days of thematic discussions on youth employment and citizenship in the ECA region, and a day of sub-regional and country discussions.

Keynote speakers for the opening session were Gloria La Cava, World Bank ECA Youth Coordinator (whose remarks are included as the Conference Objectives for this report); Pierre Mairesse, Director of Youth Sports and Citizenship Department, DG Education and Culture of the European Commission; Paola Viero, Senior Expert, Children and Youth Policies, Development Cooperation, Italy; and Bettina Schwarzmayr, President of the European Youth Forum. The following is a summary of their remarks.

“Structured dialogue with young people is a condition for the success of the European Youth Policy. It goes beyond consultation to two-way dialogue in decision making.”

PIERRE MAIRESSE,  
DIRECTOR, YOUTH SPORTS AND CITIZENSHIP DEPARTMENT  
DG EDUCATION AND CULTURE, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PIERRE MAIRESSE provided an outline of the activities of the European Union in youth policy development. Youth issues, he explained, such as education, employment and culture, have only come to the top of the EU political agenda in the last decade. Since the EU’s inception fifty years ago in Rome, development priorities have tended to focus elsewhere - on steel, coal and agriculture, for example. Demographic changes, globalization, immigration, and a change in the youth paradigm, leading to longer and more uncertain youth transitions, have contributed to this new priority in European politics. The Lisbon Agreement of 2000, he added, is the first instrument to provide the EU with a concerted youth policy. The policy has three pillars: (i) active citizenship; (ii) social and professional inclusion; and (iii) structured dialogue with youth. Structured dialogue, he added, is a condition for the success of the European Youth Policy. In 2005, a new dimension was added to the Lisbon strategy, called the European Youth Pact, designed to strengthen youth incorporation in the labor market in the 27 member states. This
is an area of youth policy, he added, where improvements still need to be made.

The European Union benefits from a high degree of organization among youth members. All EU countries have a National Youth Council, and at the EU-wide level, there is the European Youth Council. This is a tremendous asset, he added, since it provides a structured consultation mechanism. Additionally, the European Youth in Action Program provides opportunities for young people to develop their active citizenship skills. It is open to young people from the European Union and its neighbor countries, and supports exchange programs, organizes training and supports youth workers. The priority for this program, Mr. Mairesse explained, is undoubtedly to support the European integration of the Western Balkans, but it is also open to other countries in Eastern and Southern Europe and the Caucasus as well.

The EU has been developing its youth policy framework for a relatively short time – during the past decade-, and it sees five key challenges ahead:

- Child poverty. Although the EU is considered a wealthy region, one in five children grow up in poverty.
- Health. Nutrition and physical activity, and tobacco, alcohol and drug use are issues that need to be tackled as a prerequisite for young people's healthy transition to adulthood.
- Education. One in four young people in the EU leaves school without adequate qualifications. School dropout rates are too high.
- Employment. Seven million jobs were created in the last four years, in part as an outcome of the Lisbon Strategy, but youth employment is developing slowly and almost 20 percent of active young people are without a job.
- Active citizenship. This is a policy area that began to take shape in 2001 with a White Paper on young people's civil participation.

Mr. Mairesse concluded that it is time to invest in a coordinated approach to these challenges, and also emphasized the importance of investing early in youth. He noted the Background Paper's reference to “second chances” for disadvantaged or at-risk youth, and warned that first chances must not be neglected either.

“Migration affects younger generations both directly and indirectly. They are directly affected when they become victims of the serious forms of exploitation linked to illegal migration, among which trafficking is certainly the most serious. They are indirectly affected when forced to grow up without a parental figure.”

PAOLA VIERO
Senior Expert, Children and Youth Policies, Development Cooperation, Italy
PAOLA VIERO outlined the work of the Italian Development Cooperation in youth development. The Italian Cooperation's commitment, she explained, is based on the deep conviction that the best conditions for sustainable, peaceful and democratic development are created through programs and initiatives that enable young people to become active participants in their personal growth, as well as participants and promoters of social, cultural and economic growth within their own country. She highlighted the longstanding cooperation between Italy and the World Bank, which has been consistent with these objectives. In the post-war scenario of the Balkans, she explained, the Bank has been a key player in the difficult post-conflict tasks of rebuilding the economy, social reconciliation, and strengthening and consolidating institutions. For its part, the Italian Cooperation has supported interventions that involve youth as direct beneficiaries and as protagonists of change, while responding to the increasing need for a decentralized approach to cooperation.

On that front, she noted interventions in Bosnia Herzegovina, Albania and Serbia that have been supported by the Emilia-Romagna, Marche, Puglia and Friuli Venezia Giulia regions of Italy. These interventions have been aimed at social protection of vulnerable minors – among which are the disabled and the victims of the armed conflict that swept across these countries. These interventions have included specific components aimed at reinforcing self-esteem and participation through inclusive educational systems and the promotion of educational and training initiatives in the fields of culture, art and sport as well as initiatives contributing to the development of social entrepreneurship. This approach, she added, strengthens inter-ethnic dialogue while at the same time creating new and potential job opportunities for young people.

The transition from adolescence to adulthood is particularly difficult since it is the period when young people can fall prey to risky behaviors, drugs, trafficking, crime and terrorism. It is also a time when young people seek mobility in search of opportunities. Youth emigration– often occurring illegally– results in a hemorrhage of essential human resources from the country of origin. In this regard, the Italian Cooperation is working on initiatives with the IOM in Moldova, where the focus is on prevention and on repairing the damage caused by large-scale emigration – especially towards Russia and Italy – of large numbers of young women looking for household jobs or work in childcare and assistance to the elderly. Closely related to this phenomenon are the serious social repercussions of children being abandoned at an early age and the consequent break up of families. The program also deals with the human trafficking of young women and of unaccompanied minors destined to become part of the ever-increasing prostitution market. The situation in Moldova, she added, is emblematic of these challenges.

“School dropout is still often seen as the individual student’s failure, not as a failure of the system or of the policies that support it.”

BETTINA SCHWARZMAYR
PRESIDENT, EUROPEAN YOUTH FORUM
Bettina Schwarzmayr began her remarks with an anecdotal tale of disaffected youth, missed opportunities and untapped talent, modeled on the characters from the Simpsons television show. The Simpson family model, she explained, is one that can easily be used to illustrate the pitfalls that face an average family with low income, living in a small town, in isolated circumstances in the ECA region. Like the fictional Simpsons, the young members of this family present a range of interests and abilities, such as the under-achieving, unmotivated Bart, and the high-achieving but under-stimulated Lisa. If they live in the ECA region, however, their outlook is bleak.

Statistics for the ECA region show that for a rural family such as the Simpsons, both children are likely to end up in serial phases of unemployment, with precarious contracts, and neither will reach higher education. Neither will live up to his or her full potential. Children from disadvantaged circumstances in ECA, she explained, are more likely to leave school early. This category includes a vast range of circumstances: students with inadequate high school preparation; students who are recipients of welfare or vocational rehabilitation program benefits; students from remote and rural areas; students for whom the language of instruction is a second language; who have a cultural heritage or lifestyle choice that is not sufficiently or accurately represented in traditional curricula; women taking courses in subjects traditionally perceived as male; students with disabilities; people with caring responsibilities, especially teenage parents and single parents; and so on. Dropout in all these cases is still often seen as the student’s individual failure, rather than a failure of the system. But many students who are the first in their family to reach upper secondary or tertiary level education complain, for instance, of poor quality or a lack of guidance staff, and of career services not being aware of their needs. Youth organizations, she added, can play an important role in bridging these critical gaps.

The policies of the EU Lisbon Strategy and the European Neighborhood Partnership are very relevant to the challenges across the ECA region, she suggested. They focus on knowledge societies, on internal markets, on business climates, labor markets and environmental sustainability. These are all areas of high relevance to young people. If we are looking for a common policy approach for the diverse countries of the ECA region, then this is a good place to start. We are told that for economic development to be effective we need to be competitive; that there have to be winners and losers. But the European Youth Forum believes that what is needed for a truly knowledge-based society is the involvement of all stakeholders, and that means inclusive policies for youth access to education; the recognition of non-formal education to enhance young people’s access to labor markets; opportunities for innovation and learning by doing; regulating internship opportunities and enforcing decent working conditions – in other words, she added, making coffee for a department for two months does not equip someone with meaningful on-the-job skills.

Putting into practice the principle of lifelong learning, she affirmed, is going to require the adoption of flexible policies in education and structural changes to permit multiple entrance and exit points, along with the recognition of prior learning and experience. If these steps are not taken, young people, like the Lisas and Bart Simpsons of the ECA region are very likely to follow the paths of early parenthood, insecure or no employment, and be at high risk for contracting
HIV and AIDS, as well as other negative outcomes. But if Bart is provided an opportunity to channel his sense of adventure and his taste for experiential learning, and these experiences are recognized by the formal system, he might then have a chance of achieving a more positive outcome. And if Lisa is able to become involved with an organization or in activities that reflect her talents and interests, and is rewarded for her curiosity, she could have a bright future indeed.

The European Youth Forum doesn’t believe that for economies to be competitive there have to be winners and losers. We believe that what is needed for a truly knowledge-based society – a goal of the Lisbon Strategy that applies equally to ECA as to the EU- is the involvement of all stakeholders.

Bettina Schwarzmayr
President, European Youth Forum

A Dialogue on Youth Employment, Employability and Labor Markets

A Plenary Session on youth employment, employability and labor markets examined the significance of high youth unemployment in specific ECA countries vis-à-vis economic growth throughout the region. Discussion explored to what extent youth unemployment is a function of broader labor market issues or whether there are specific age-based labor market disadvantages young people are facing. This Plenary Session and, more specifically, the subsequent Break-Out sessions, discussed (i) what measures have been most successful in facilitating young people’s transition from school to work, and (ii) what are the most effective labor market policies to address youth unemployment, including second chance programs for vulnerable youth.

The plenary session was chaired by H.E. Gazmend Oketa, Deputy Prime Minister of Albania, with remarks by Fizuli Alekberov, Minister of Labor and Social Protection of Azerbaijan, José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director of the Employment Sector at the International Labour Organization, and Mamta Murthi, ECA Education Sector Manager, the World Bank. The session was moderated by Piero di Pasquale, Deputy Director of RAI International.

“The Albanian Government recognizes that young people, who make up 60 percent of its population, are the symbol, the capacity and the resource for the country’s comprehensive development, and for successfully facing the challenges of European integration.”

Gazmend Oketa
Deputy Prime Minister, Albania

Gazmend Oketa addressed the diverse range of nationalities present at the conference, and stressed that although youth employment challenges and solutions inevitably vary for each
country, the objective is the same: to move from policy to action in enabling young people’s transition to employment. The challenges in Albania are shaped by the fact that it is a young country: with an average age of 28, young people make up 60 percent of the population. They are both the symbol and the chief resource of Albania’s social and economic development, and of its continued transition to democratic standards in meeting the challenges of European integration.

The Albanian Government, he stated, is meeting these challenges with a comprehensive approach to youth policy in education, health, and active labor market policies. Equipping young people with the skills required by today’s labor market, he explained, is a priority reflected in a 2006 education strategy that embraces the concept of lifelong learning. The goal is to increase participation in professional education from 20 to 40 percent by 2009. The partnership of business representatives and employers will be needed to ensure these newly trained graduates gain experience in the current labor market: many employers, he explained still fail to appreciate that today’s students are their future employees. Some of the new directions the Albanian Government is working on, he added, include promoting internship programs, providing training and facilitating start-up capital for young people to develop new businesses, providing vocational training for youth with disabilities, and priority measures to integrate youth from rural areas in vocational training and the labor market. Further, involving youth in policy development can help stimulate regional co-operation among young people, and empower alienated or vulnerable groups. These steps are a fundamental part of Albania’s approach to the challenges of integration, and improving cooperation by sharing experiences and strategies at this conference, he concluded, will help shape solutions to meet the different needs of each of the countries participating.

“Employment alone is not a guarantee or a protection against poverty. The creation of stable jobs for young people, with higher wages and social protections, is the foundation on which the future of our society will be built.”

FIZULI ALEKBEROV
MINISTER OF LABOR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION, AZERBAIJAN

FIZULI ALEKBEROV highlighted the importance of integrating young people into the economic life of the country. One of the priorities in Azerbaijan, he stated, is to improve standards of living, and for young people this means not only fulfilling their right to work, but other objectives related to social justice and social protection as well. Azerbaijan has experienced a hectic pace of economic growth due to developments in oil and other industries. In the last five years, 535,000 new jobs have been created,
and growth in employment has reduced the poverty rate from 46.7 percent in 2002, to 20 percent in 2006. He highlighted the twofold increase in employment in the private sector over the last decade, and the decline in unemployment during this period from 17.2 to 7.7 percent. But he emphasized that job creation and increased employment are not enough: employment is not a guarantee or a protection against poverty. The conditions need to be established, he explained, for stable micro-economic development over the long term, and that means stable jobs for young people today, accompanied by higher wages and social protections. Azerbaijan recognizes that, in addition to appropriate active labor market policies, reforms to the education system are critical to boosting youth employment. Mr. Alekberov explained that enhancing the professional skills of young people through vocational training is a central plank of these reforms. As is creating opportunities for young people to study abroad and find jobs on their return. Transitional economies face many common challenges in integrating young people into economic life, he concluded. Working together in the region, and in collaboration with international organizations, will help them attain even greater achievements in the development of effective youth policy.

“It is a profound irony and a threat to future growth and living standards that in a region with an aging population and rising dependency, precisely the segment of the workforce that is most vital for future prosperity encounters disproportionate difficulties in joining the labor market.”

JOSE MANUEL SALAZAR-XIRINACHS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EMPLOYMENT SECTOR, ILO

JOSE MANUEL SALAZAR-XIRINACHS welcomed the attention given by the Conference to the young people’s transitions to employment and to active citizenship, highlighting the fact that these are mutually reinforcing phases of life that are critical to unleashing the potential of young people, and creating the “entrepreneur citizens of tomorrow” in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. How easily and effectively young people are able to make these transitions, he explained, depends on how well young people are prepared for the labor market, as well as on how well prepared the labor market is to receive and incorporate them. Youth unemployment rates across the region are on average twice those of adults, and in some countries twice or more than the average unemployment rates for the EU fifteen countries. In non-EU, Central and Eastern European, and CIS countries there are nearly six million unemployed young men and women. They have the second highest youth unemployment rate in the world with almost 20 percent of young people unemployed.

The unemployment rate alone, he clarified, is of course not an accurate indicator of labor market problems. In the region, thousands of young people work long hours for low pay in precarious conditions or even no contracts, with limited job security and no voice. Thousands others are so discouraged or excluded that they are not in school, employment, or training. Youth activity rates are in fact declining, he warned, particularly for young women, who present activity rates as low as 35 percent.
Through the concept of “decent work,” the ILO has emphasized the importance of work that means more than just earning a living. Decent work means productive work that generates adequate income, in which rights are protected, and which is accompanied by adequate social safety nets. The ILO’s approach to youth employment is framed within the ILO’s Global Employment Agenda. It is based on the principle that productive employment for young people can only be achieved by combining an integrated strategy for growth and job creation with targeted interventions to help young people overcome the specific barriers they face in entering and remaining in the labor market.

“It can be said that education makes a person trainable, training makes a person employable, and attitude and continuous learning keep the person employed: Education, skills and lifelong learning are at the center of all innovative and high productivity economies.”

José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs
Executive Director, Employment Sector, ILO

The objective of ensuring a strategy for “getting growth right” in terms of employment creation, he said, requires explicit efforts to strengthen the link between growth and jobs. In the region, the disconnection between growth and jobs – or jobless growth – is widening income inequalities and fueling social tensions in parts of the region, he stated. Increasing the demand for labor, while increasing the employability of young women and men, requires a combined approach of macro-economic as well as structural and sectoral policies. It would be important, for instance, to ensure that the policy environment for the more employment intensive sectors of the economy is not unfavorable to their growth.

Targeted interventions to smooth the transition of young people into employment should span both labor demand and supply. On the demand side, he explained, a key challenge for governments is to create an enabling environment in which the private sector can achieve its potential and play a vital role in generating new investment and employment. Youth entrepreneurship can boost economic growth and jobs for youth, although programs in this area remain limited in most ECA countries. On the supply-side, education and training are the foundation of future employability of young people, he said. Other interventions to strengthen skills development and employability include working closely with the private sector to provide skills that are in demand in the marketplace, promoting apprenticeships and internships in private companies, and developing training not only on technical but also core work skills.
Mr. Salazar-Xirinachs concluded by stressing the importance of partnerships in meeting the youth employment challenge: partnerships at the national and regional level, between ministries, regional governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations, youth organizations, and other civil society groups. Public/private partnerships, he added, are also proving to be a powerful complement to governmental and intergovernmental action in this area.

“Measuring the quality of education is something few countries do successfully. And in addition to measuring and improving the quality of education, steps are needed to reach out to those who are out of school.”

**MAMTA MURTHI** focused her remarks on providing a bridge between the plenary session and the Break-Out discussions to follow. She described the conceptual framework of the 2007 World Development Report (WDR) and emphasized its role as a research and policy direction tool, rather than a prescriptive manual. There is an enormous variation in the ECA region, she explained, in terms of the conditions that affect young people’s transition to employment, and the WDR provides a menu of options rather than a detailed set of recommendations for each country. Some countries, for example, have achieved 100 percent enrollment of 15 year-olds in school, whereas elsewhere it is below 50 percent.

While country conditions vary, the labor market challenge across ECA is attributable to a number of common factors. These factors determine the level of preparation of young people – based on their attendance at school, and the quality and relevance of the education they receive; the extent to which the economy is generating jobs; and the ease with which young people are able to find employment, and to incorporate themselves within the labor market. While these factors are inter-related, they may not necessarily be correlated. There are examples of countries, for instance, where job growth is increasing but young people continue to be excluded from the labor market. An integrated approach to policy development is required to ensure that growth is inclusive of young people. In this context, while it may be a controversial issue, she added, employment protection is a question that needs to be addressed. Evidence shows that employment protection gets in the way of generating jobs. While protecting labor is important, she explained, it also has the unintended effect of deterring new job creation and keeping young people out of the workforce. Societies need to examine and determine what kinds and what extent of employment protection policies they want to maintain.

Ms. Murthi referred to the three “lenses” the WDR applies to the various policy areas that affect young people’s transitions, and which can be applied equally to the transition to employment, to citizenship, and the other transitions addressed in the WDR. These three lenses, she explained, which encourage an integrated approach to policy development, are opportunity, capability and second chances.
Opportunity in the context of youth employment refers to the opportunities for young people to acquire the skills required by the labor market. Ms. Murthi stressed the importance of quality at every level of education, from primary education onwards, to vocational or university education. She emphasized the need for greater flexibility in education, including the recognition of skills acquired in non-formal education, and the establishment of credit transfer systems in university programs, providing support to young people who are out of school due to economic necessity, or who are excluded from school or the labor market because of child care needs or other family responsibilities.

Capability refers to the degree to which young people are able to make decisions about the options affecting their transition to employment. This means young people need to have the right information, and an understanding of the consequences of their choices, so as to make the best possible decisions. To make informed decisions, young people need information about the value of staying in school, about the value of choosing particular courses, about where and what kinds of jobs are available, about work and study travel opportunities, and so on. Having this information available to them can have a huge impact on long-term outcomes for young people. Many young people make choices by experimenting with jobs and studies, so opportunities like practical training are also essential.

Second chances - which are no more and no less important than first chances - are designed to reach out to young people who have fallen behind to help them re-enter the mainstream. There is evidence from other regions that remedial education programs can help those who are still in school but have fallen behind. Equivalency programs are particularly relevant for those who are out of school. And in this area the private sector and NGOs play a very important role, which should be encouraged as a stepping-stone to help young people re-enter the school system. Job search assistance can be also be an important tool for young people who may have been out of work for some time.

She concluded by reminding participants that the cost of implementing steps such as these is not as great as is sometimes imagined. The ECA region, after all, has very high levels of school enrolment. Many of the steps proposed in the WDR, she added, can be adopted with resources from inside the system. What is needed is social capital and a combination of resources with enough political will to overcome resistance to change.
OPEN FLOOR FOR DISCUSSION

Employment is central to any youth policy in ECA countries, at both regional and national levels. Investments in youth bring returns to society, the economy as well as to young people themselves. Promoting youth employment, it was agreed, is a key element in reducing poverty and promoting long-run growth as well as helping young people realize their aspirations through the development of their talents.

“Youth employment policy needs to be flexible and continually adapting to reflect changes in the economy and the labor market. Employers can help by providing information about modern labor market needs and changes.”

VLADIMIR CUROVIC, CONFERENCE DISCUSSANT
ASSOCIATION OF EMPLOYERS OF MONTENEGRO

There is a need to combine preventive measures and remedial measures. Preventive measures, principally concerning the reform and development of education and training systems, need to be combined with remedial measures, mainly involving active labor market policies. This is closely related also to the need to combine general interventions aimed at all young people with specific measures for marginalized young people who face additional obstacles in effecting a smooth school-to-work transition.

Action needs to address the quantity and quality of the demand for youth labor as well as the quality of the supply. Often the emergence of large-scale youth unemployment is the consequence of insufficient economic growth. Creating a conducive environment for investment and growth both supports and is supported by improvements in the skills of young people entering the labor market.

“The ill of all ills, or the mother of all problems, is not unemployment, it is not the education system, not corruption, or trafficking, or organized crime. It is apathy about taking action to address these ills.”

ERION VELJAJ, CONFERENCE DISCUSSANT
MJAFT, ALBANIA

There is a need to emphasize the quality as well as the quantity of opportunities available to young people in the labor market. The development of substantial informal sectors in many ECA countries which involve young people disproportionately, working with few benefits or protections has meant that many young people risk remaining stuck in low quality insecure employment with little or no prospects for the realization of their potential.
“Addressing the issues of youth and unemployment requires a multi-sectoral, multi-pronged strategy. These challenges cannot be addressed through labor market or education reforms alone. Government, and institutions like the World Bank need to apply a youth lens across a variety of sectors.”

**MANINDER GILL**

_ECA Social Development Sector Manager, The World Bank_

--Young people are not a homogeneous group-- The opportunities offered to young people by the transition to the market have not been equally shared. In particular, some young people face additional difficulties in accessing productive employment. Such marginalized groups vary by country and context but include members of ethnic minorities, rural youth, the disabled, students for whom the language of instruction is not their first language, school dropouts and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

Senior Chairman Paolucci and Vice-President Katsu discussing the role of IT in youth empowerment during a luncheon hosted by Microsoft
Break-Out Sessions on Youth Transition to Employment
Summary Reports

Formal education and job skills for employment opportunities

This session addressed what is known about changing job skills needed for the labor market, and the implications for education systems. More specifically, it addressed: What skills are needed in the labor market? What are the experiences of youth entering the labor market and getting good jobs? How well prepared are youth? What are the gaps? How closely connected are education and training institutions to the labor market needs? What do employers need that they are not getting and what changes or reforms would most improve the employment situation for youth?

Speakers: Prof. Niall O’Higgins, University of Salerno
Dr. Alessandro Spaventa, Head of Research, Leonardo Business Consulting
Dr. Daniel O’Hare, President Emeritus, Dublin City University
Coordinator: Maureen Mclaughlin, Lead Education Specialist, ECA Region, World Bank

Skills needed in the labor market are changing in significant ways.

The transition from planned to market economies in the CIS and Baltic states brought rapid changes in the structure of industry, followed by a profound and rapid shift in job skills that has affected countries throughout the ECA region. Education systems have been slow to adapt to these changing skills requirements. The consequences can be seen in a correlation between lower levels of education and skills, and higher levels of youth unemployment and joblessness in many parts of the region.

The quality and relevance of education are paramount. The globalization of labor markets has highlighted the importance of quality education to facilitate youth transition to employment. More particularly, it has brought attention to the need that educational systems be relevant to the requirements of evolving labor markets. What are these evolving requirements? As a consequence of the globalization of labor markets, the change in job skills over the past 30 years in the U.S.A., for example, has been characterized by a shift away from routine manual and cognitive tasks towards more complex communication and expertise-based tasks. This shift is occurring in labor markets in countries around the world and is likely to continue.

There are discernible trends in ECA as well. A recent study of labor markets in Turkey has shown a mismatch between the skills employers are seeking and skills that many students have when they leave higher education². The skills now in demand include social and communication skills, a foreign language (especially English), computer skills, and practical experience. In general terms the skills that tend to be identified as crucial for the globalized 21st century labor market are entrepreneurial skills, science, engineering and technology, math, marketing, ICT, soft skills, and a foreign language.

A key consideration in policy-making for education in ECA will be the identification of emerging trends in the skills required by labor markets. The creation of an Expert Group on Future Skill Needs in Ireland, for example, was a key factor in the country’s ability to target educational reform for successful economic growth (see case study in Box 1).

- Improving learning outcomes for youth is more than a matter of ensuring high educational attainment levels.

Secondary education attainment levels are low in many parts of the region – and well below the target of 85 percent set out in the 2000 Lisbon Agreement – especially outside the new EU member states. Improving learning outcomes will require more flexible, decentralized education systems with the mechanisms to adjust to changing labor market conditions. Improving educational attainment and learning outcomes for young people will depend on improving both the quality and the relevance of what is taught and how, and on more flexible, decentralized education systems with the mechanisms to adjust to changing labor market conditions. New skills, such as communication, reasoning and expert thinking, are more difficult to teach and will require new ways of teaching as well as new evaluation mechanisms to measure learning outcomes.

Box 1. Case Study: Ireland. How educational reform successfully supported youth transition to work.

The success of the Irish system to maintain extremely high rates of economic growth, transforming it from the poorest country in the EU to the richest (per capita) over a period of twenty years is due in no small part to the reform of its education system. The educational elements of its success include:

- Major Educational reform including:
  - The development of a National Qualifications framework, national curricula and national assessment;
  - The development of traditional higher education courses;
  - Increased attention to mathematics and science in secondary curricula, and to other crucial skills (entrepreneurial, science, engineering and technology, marketing, ICT, soft skills and foreign language.)
  - Creation of new secondary school programs, including applied and vocational certificates
- Tripartite structures involving employers and workers’ organizations involved in the reform of education;
- Creation of Expert Group on Future Skill Needs;
- Willingness of higher education institutions to engage with business, and establishment of formal links to business in all higher educational institutions

Improved outcomes for youth and national economy:

- More confident young people – best and brightest went into industry;
- Investment in education and skills – contributed to 20 percent of growth in output, generating more opportunities for youth;
- Many well-educated who left the country returned bringing valuable experience and skills back to Ireland.

Source: Dr. Daniel O’Hare, President Emeritus, Dublin City University
Promoting high quality secondary education to ensure all students have the necessary skills will require fundamental reform. Measures could include:

- Blurring the distinctions between secondary and vocational or technical education to ensure all students have a strong foundation;
- Introducing vocational and technical education and training at later stages;
- Establishing high quality tertiary education institutions to provide technical education and training;
- Establishing a National Qualifications Framework to recognize skills, record them formally and enable their portability;
- Sharing the costs of vocational education and training with the participation of government, private firms and individuals.

Improving learning outcomes for all young people will also require that educational systems prioritize at-risk groups. The needs of at-risk groups, such as the Roma populations, will need to be addressed to improve their educational opportunities and outcomes.

- Creating and enabling formal links between educational systems and businesses is a vital step in facilitating young people’s transition to employment.

Current conditions in parts of the region were discussed during the session. These included the recent study on higher education and the labor market in Turkey, which showed very few linkages between universities and the private sector: the private sector has little awareness of the educational system and higher education is unaware of the needs of private firms³. In Bosnia and Herzegovina a total disconnect was reported between education and the labor market, with both operating poorly in meeting the needs of young people. In Albania, it was reported that the education system places excessive emphasis on theoretical learning, and that firms are reluctant to incorporate young people or collaborate with youth. Unable to enter the private sector, young people prefer the security of government jobs rather than the informal sector. Based on experiences elsewhere, however, these circumstances are likely to change as more and better private sector opportunities become available. But it was emphasized that facilitating the entry of young people into the private sector will require more than internship opportunities.

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³ IBID
Non-formal education and youth employability

According to the UNESCO definition, non-formal education is organized educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve an identifiable learning group with identifiable learning objectives. In recent years, employers have increasingly been looking for people who have not only acquired academic qualifications but can also demonstrate that they have a wider range of practical skills than those taught in formal education. These ‘soft skills’ cannot easily be ‘taught’ in formal education settings because they are learned through ‘hands-on’ practical experience and thus are much more effectively gained in non-formal environments. The objective of this session was to present examples of several successful non-formal education program that contribute to increased youth employability, which can be used to draft recommendations for youth programming in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Speakers: Noel Selegzi, Program Director, Open Society Institute
Mihajlo Atanackovic, WOSM
Coordinator: Arturo Romboli, WOSM

- Non-formal education programs provide young people with soft skills that are not provided by formal educational institutions, but are needed in the labor markets.

Box 2. Good Practice Example of Non-Formal Education: Open Society Institute’s Network Debate Program

Created in 1995 at a time of nearly universal school enrollment in Eastern and Central Europe, the Network Debate Program (NDP) was designed to complement the Open Society Institute’s (OSI) formal education programs operating in the region to prepare a new generation of leaders. The NDP today operates in over 40 countries and targets youth age between 13 and 30.

The program was designed to provide safe and fun out-of-school activities that would encourage youth to discuss controversial issues affecting their lives and communities. Increasing youth employability was a welcome, though originally unintended, consequence which now plays a central role in the program’s overall mission. While its core activity remains providing support to independent local debate programs, the NDP is increasingly pursuing a strategy of diversifying its program initiatives to broaden the opportunities for youth to gain the skills needed to compete in the job market. The NDP program:

- Creates school and community based youth debate clubs
- Reaches youth who have either been excluded from or dropped out of the formal education system
- Serves marginalized populations as well as vulnerable and unemployed youth
- Supplements classroom teaching and models best practices in places where formal education reform remains an ongoing process
- Complements well-functioning education systems
- Equips learners with skills and competencies (such as communication, advocacy, leadership) needed to succeed in a knowledge economy, enhancing their employability
- Teaches learners to act autonomously, learn interactively and to work in heterogeneous groups with tolerance for the opinions of others
- Inspires lifelong learning

Source: Noel Selegzi, NDP Program Director, Open Society Institute.

Non-formal education programs have the flexibility to allow young people to set their own objectives in the educational process, thereby promoting greater responsibility in their participants. These programs complement the education a young person receives from formal education and from families, enhancing the employability of young people (See Box 2). One area non-formal education programs have been successful is through their use of ICT in training and, in particular, of open source technologies, allowing many young people to have access to technology without having to pay for software. Youth friendly centers, managed by young people themselves without the involvement or supervision of government or other organizations provide venues for non-formal education programs, where young people themselves develop their learning agendas.

**· Non-Formal Education uses a variety of settings and approaches that can be adapted to local contexts.**

The session highlighted a variety of different approaches that can be taken to non-formal education programs. These can include: Community Youth Work which focuses on making young people more active in society and committed to furthering their well being and that of their community. Service programs such as building infrastructure, improving literacy rates, or protecting the environment, whether paid or unpaid, allow young people to gain knowledge and skills that will facilitate their transition to employment. The World Scout Movement’s MOBA Project in South Eastern Europe (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia Montenegro) is an example of community work that mobilized youth through volunteerism to make an impact in their communities. The concept behind the project was based on a local practice, MOBA, - a tradition whereby neighboring farmers, especially young men and women, club together to help each other at times when extra hands are urgently needed. Social Work can equip young people in residential homes with strategies for dealing with complex situations. Animation uses theatre and acting as a means of self-actualisation with community groups, children and people with learning needs. Youth organizations create a friendly environment in which young people have the opportunity to devise, explore and understand issues, their implications building a set of personal skills appropriate to their community and their beliefs.

**· To be effective, non-formal education programs need to be formally recognized by Governments and international institutions.**

Achieving that formal recognition would be very much facilitated by rigorous impact evaluations of non-formal education. The session underscored the fact that very few impact assessments have been carried out to measure the effectiveness of programs. It was proposed that impact assessments should involve all relevant stakeholders, and should evaluate the entire educational process, and not just specific projects.
Second chance programs to (re)integrate disadvantaged youth into the labor market

There are two main groups of barriers to employment faced by youth: a) education and training barriers (e.g. poor core workplace skills or occupational training not linked to labor market demand); and b) labor market barriers that relate to other types of disadvantages (e.g. poor job search skills, lack of work experience, poor access to credit, discrimination, disability, insufficient social skills). Remedial or second chance programs are labor market programs targeted for youth who have left school before completing it or receiving professional education/training, or who are at risk to leave school and have multiple barriers to employment. They can play an effective role in smoothing the transition of youth to the world of work. The objective of this session was to present several successful second chance programs that could serve as models for youth programs in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Speakers: Gordon Betcherman, Lead Economist (ECSHD), The World Bank
Alena Zieglerova, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Czech Republic
Coordinator: Ellen Hansen, Senior Employment Services Expert, ILO

· What prompts the creation of second chance programs?

Although most second chance programs are government sponsored, funding sources are becoming more diverse. NGOs play a critical role in raising awareness of social rights and advocating for these programs. Though programs are not typically triggered by particular events, there is evidence that increased awareness and visibility of social rights goes hand in hand with program development. There is evidence of significant attention, in particular, to programs to integrate Roma youth in Central Europe in particular.

· What activities and achievements make programs models of good practice?

The current trend is away from training-only programs. Programs that offer a comprehensive package of career advice and information, job search assistance, access to employment programs and/or entrepreneurship opportunities tend to be more successful than programs that offer training alone. Forging partnerships and using the strengths of different organizations to build more comprehensive programs is a key strategy. The MOST Program in the Czech Republic, for example, was presented as a good practice example of bridging opportunities to create better outcomes for young people.

· Have the impact of second chance programs been assessed?

There have been a limited number of impact assessments of these programs. Of the 300 youth employment programs evaluated in a recent World Bank study\(^5\), only 25 percent involved rigorous control group based evaluations, and only 10 percent included data on cost effectiveness. As a general rule, the success of Active Labor Market Programs (ALMPs) depends on the overall

economic situation - ALMPs don’t create jobs where jobs don’t exist. But there is a need to better examine all the criteria that determine the success of second chance programs. Measuring the impacts of second chance programs should not only be defined by labor market outcomes alone, but also in terms of the participants’ acquisition of skills such as the ability to make mature decisions about working life. Although cost-effectiveness was not common among the evaluated programs, this does not necessarily mean that they should be abandoned.

Financing for youth entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed as a valuable additional strategy for creating jobs and improving the livelihoods and economic independence of young people. A lack of other viable employment options forces millions of young people into the informal economy where, as "working poor" they are not earning enough to work their way out of poverty. These disadvantaged young entrepreneurs face significant barriers to transforming their enterprises into wealth-generating, employment-creating businesses, including social prejudices against self-employment, restrictive bureaucracy, and difficulties in accessing business support services. Arguably, however, access to sufficient financing remains the most pervasive obstacle to success. The range of financing mechanisms available to assist “survival entrepreneurs” remains extremely limited, whilst those initiatives seen as successful in helping disadvantaged youth into business have only supported relatively small numbers. The objective of this session was to present and discuss several examples of successful or effective financing mechanisms for disadvantaged young entrepreneurs, and extract lessons for scaling up these programs.

Speaker(s): Andrew Fiddaman, Youth Business International (YBI)
Coordinator: Justin Sykes, Technical and Communications Officer, Youth Employment Network (YEN-ILO)

There remains a severe lack of effective micro-credit programs for young entrepreneurs in the ECA region.

Box 3: Innovative models to scale up financing for youth entrepreneurship

Matched funding grants
Youth Business International recently signed a funding agreement with the IADB who provided a matched funding grant of USD4m for YBI’s Latin American projects on the proviso that YBI was successful in mobilizing USD2m from their own partners (i.e. foundations, private sector representatives, bilateral donors etc). The ability of YBI to raise this financial collateral demonstrated to the Bank the credibility of the organization. Equally by demonstrating the provisional commitment support from the IADB, YBI was better able to convince its partners to join the partnership. This partnership is enabling YBI to support the financing over 1,500 new youth businesses in Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay and Mexico.

Leveraged funding
In 2006, Canadian Youth Business Foundation produced a report that demonstrated that the organization had returned to, or saved revenues for, the state in the region of CAD50m since its start-up in 1996. This figure is based on an estimation of the cost savings made by the government from not having to pay out unemployment benefit to new entrepreneurs and those they have employed in their businesses (10,000 new Canadian jobs since 1996) and the tax revenue obtained from these businesses over time. In response to this report, and in recognition of the societal value provided by CYBF, the Canadian government has agreed to recycle a portion of this total in the form of a CAD$ 10m grant to CYBF to assist its expansion

Source: Andrew Fiddaman, Youth Business International and Justin Sykes, Technical and Communications Officer, Youth Employment Network (YEN-ILO)
The rationale for the limited inclusion of young clients in Micro Finance Institution (MFI) loan portfolios is that most MFIs require a minimum of business experience and collateral, and many disadvantaged youth in the region who wish to become self-employed can provide neither. The session suggested that microfinance institutions could be provided incentives to increase their lending to youth through pilot activities that use capital leveraged from International Finance Institutions (IFIs) and other multilateral and bilateral development resources. This sort of pilot scheme could serve to generate practical evidence to counter the perception that youth is a high-risk investment category, and thereby encourage the inclusion of greater numbers of young people in their standard commercial loan portfolios.

- The private sector can be an effective partner in supporting youth entrepreneurship.

Matched funding grants and leveraged funding were presented as two innovative ways for effectively scaling up financing for youth entrepreneurship (see Box 3). The private sector, it was suggested, can provide direct support through start-up capital and business support services to assist young entrepreneurs. Major companies or individual business leaders can play an important role in brokering finance and providing guarantees for the repayment of these funds for organizations supporting young entrepreneurs who may have difficulties convincing commercial banking institutions themselves. Participants felt that these programs, often delivered as part of companies’ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategies, should be encouraged and scaled up across the region. Shell Livewire, which operates in Romania and Hungary, was highlighted as good practice business in this regard. And in Ukraine, a YBI affiliate was able to negotiate lower interest, and longer repayment, rates from a commercial bank for their entrepreneurs as part of its CSR strategy in the country.

- Governments can have a positive role in supporting young entrepreneurs.

The growth in the ECA region of Government supported Youth Employment Funds was considered by participants to be a good thing as they demonstrated clear government commitment to tackle the youth employment issue. Participants felt the performance of national Youth Employment Funds and their positive impact on youth could be improved through the creation of more effective partnerships for their administration, to include the business community, civil society institutions and young entrepreneurs in order to maximize efficiency, transparency and accountability. A key factor constraining the effective growth of youth enterprises and the inability of youth to obtain capital from commercial sources, it was reported, is a lack of financial literacy and business awareness among aspiring entrepreneurs. Besides encouraging the growth of government supported one-stop shops, participants suggested governments should place an emphasis on including entrepreneurship and general business awareness in school and university curricula including a strong emphasis in these courses on financial literacy, bookkeeping, and business planning.
The role of the private sector in promoting youth employment

The private sector can play a key role in promoting youth employment. Initiatives can be implemented through a range of modalities: in the form of individual enterprises implementing program, through employers’ organizations, through a range of public–private partnerships, and through combinations of these modalities. Areas in which the private sector can get involved include: contributions to formulation of policies on youth employment and implementation of program on, for example, youth entrepreneurship, mentoring, skills development, internships and work experience etc. The objective of this session is to present, discuss and extract lessons from several successful examples of youth employment program with strong involvement of the private sector.

Speakers: Gita Griffioen, Netherlands Youth Employment Task Force
Gagik. Makaryan, Executive Director, Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia.

Coordinator: Michael Henriques, Director, Job Creation and Enterprise Department, ILO

What are the most effective ways for the private sector to engage in youth employment issues?

Private sector engagement in youth employment should take place at several levels:

At the national level, the private sector should get involved in policy formulation, either for the development of targeted national youth employment programs, or of Decent Work Country Programs with significant youth employment dimensions. The private sector should also become involved in national Youth Employment Task forces as it has done, for example, in the Netherlands.

The private sector can get involved in collective agreements on youth employment issues between employers and trade unions. Such agreements can result in jobs for young people, as demonstrated by 10,000 new jobs created for young people in the Netherlands.

At sectoral and local levels, private sector engagement can be particularly effective since this is where policies translate into concrete actions. Working with local municipalities and government agencies on concrete programs and focusing on specific sectors with a stronger than average demand for labor can help achieve better outcomes in youth employment. Growth sectors which in many countries have been found to have potential for job creation for youth included tourism, transport, construction. Successful sectoral programmes often included skills development, career guidance, private sector open days and information campaigns aimed at young people.

What actions are most appropriate for effective private sector involvement?

Establishing linkages between enterprises and educational systems can ensure a better understanding among educators of the skills and competencies needed by employers and labor markets.
Concrete actions for private sector involvement in this area include the following: i) participation in curriculum development; ii) facilitating the availability of managers as teachers and managers in educational institutions; iii) assisting with equipment and facilities to raise quality of training and education; iv) facilitating student consultancies in enterprises for students in management, commerce and law; and v) assistance in establishing entrepreneurship programs.

Information programs to bridge the divide between enterprises and young people through workshops, seminars and career days help inform young people about what employers are looking for and facilitate recruitment.

Work practice programs and direct training programs are other areas where private sector engagement can lead to successful outcomes. These programs give young people the opportunity to find a first job and get a foothold in the labor market. They include internships, volunteer programs, apprenticeship programs with or without government subsidy, job search and enterprise linking support, and entrepreneurship training and mentoring.

What partners should the private sector work with?

Partnerships are a key to the success of youth employment programs. Successful programs are in large measure a question of bringing together partners to create common visions, facilitate the smooth exchange of information, generate a better understanding of what partners can and cannot contribute, and develop trust, concrete experience and, eventually, success stories. Specifically, the key partners of the private sector are likely to be local authorities, municipalities and national policy makers. Partnerships with training and educational institutions are almost always key for private sector involvement in youth employment programs.

Youth employment policy and action plans

Despite extensive efforts by many countries over the past decades to tackle youth employment problems, the prospects and position of the majority of young people in the labor market in ECA have not improved. One of the reasons for the limited impact of many of these interventions is their focus on specific programs, which have often been narrow in scope, limited in time and disconnected from long-term and comprehensive employment policies. Today, the renewed commitment, globally and nationally, to productive employment and decent work for young people points to the need for coherent and integrated youth employment interventions across different policy areas (e.g. macroeconomic, sectoral and social policies; education and training policies; enterprise development policies; labor market polices). In many countries, national action plans on youth employment are being developed as a means of organizing and delivering more coherent and concerted policies and programs on youth employment, with the potential of broadening the impact of interventions. The objective of this session was to present, discuss and extract lessons from country experiences of integrated approaches to youth employment that combine supportive economic policies with targeted interventions, address labor demand and supply, as well as the quantity and quality of employment.
Speakers: Robert Drobnič, Director General for Labor Market and Employment, Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia
Ylber Shabani, Director, Labor and Employment Department, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Kosovo
Coordinator: Giovanna Rossignotti, Coordinator, Youth Employment Program, ILO

This session focused on the commonalities and differences in the approach to youth employment in Slovenia and Kosovo – respectively a country and a territory that while both from the same sub-region present different levels of development, different demographics and different socio-economic challenges. On the one hand, Slovenia has a population which is rapidly aging in line with the trend in many European countries. Since the early 1990s, a great deal of efforts have been deployed to increase educational levels, and by 2007, Slovenia has reached the 2010 target of the Lisbon Strategy⁶ for the enrollment rate of young people in secondary education. In spite of highly successful educational outcomes, Slovenia faces the challenges associated with high numbers of educated unemployed. On the other hand, the population of Kosovo is one of the youngest in Europe. Children and youth represent over half of the total population of Kosovo and the rates of unemployment are amongst the highest in Europe. Furthermore, many young workers find themselves trapped into poorly paid and insecure jobs that offer few benefits and limited prospects for advancement.

· How to combine general/preventive youth employment policies with specific/remedial measures targeted at those youth who are most at risk of exclusion?

Both Slovenia and Kosovo have policies that address youth employment as a whole. In Slovenia, the youth employment policy is framed within the Lisbon Strategy and revolves around two main priorities: education and enterprise development. In Kosovo, government intervention in the sector is framed within a youth employment policy and an Action Plan, which focus on three priorities: quality education and training, private sector and enterprise development, labor market policies. In addition, both Slovenia and Kosovo have adopted targeted interventions to address the labor market disadvantages of specific groups of young people, be they youth from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, school dropouts, members of minority groups, etc.

The key factors for achieving results, it was reported, include:

· Strong commitment over time by national institutions
· Careful balancing of long and short-term interventions, taking national circumstances into account.

· How to promote closer coordination, coherence and synergy at the inter-institutional level as well as between central and local levels?

In both contexts, inter-institutional committees have been established. In Slovenia, the committee includes representatives of the Ministries of Education and Labor and other actors

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⁶Adopted in March 2000 the Lisbon Strategy aims to make the EU the most dynamic and competitive economy by 2010. This strategy involves a range of policy areas, from research and education to environment and employment. The target for secondary school completion rates is 85 percent. In 2006, Slovenia had achieved a completion rate of over 90 percent. “Progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in Education and Training” Commission of the European Communities Report, Brussels 2006.
including representatives of youth groups. In Kosovo, the committee has members of 7 ministries, and coordination and coherence are also supported through the involvement of social partners, the establishment of public-private partnerships with enterprises, and linkages between employment services at the central and local levels.

For inter-institutional coordination to be effective a number of elements need to be in place, including:

· Endorsement and support of the process and coordination mechanism(s) at the highest political level (e.g. the Prime Minister in the case of Kosovo).
· Active role of inter-institutional committees involving multiple stakeholders in policy development (e.g. in Slovenia the Committee is developing the youth employment strategy; in Kosovo it has developed the Youth Employment Policy and Action Plan).
· Involvement of different stakeholders throughout the process (from development to implementation of policies and other interventions). This increases the relevance of outcomes and promotes commitment and ownership.

· How to secure funding for the implementation of youth employment initiatives?

Securing funding for the implementation of youth employment initiatives is a big challenge faced by many countries in the region, where the allocation of funds to labor market measures for youth employment are still very limited. Both budgetary and extra-budgetary resources need to be leveraged to address this challenge.
Day 2. Exercising Active Youth Citizenship.

The Plenary session that launched the second day of the Conference explored active youth citizenship in the context of different institutional settings or modalities in which it is practiced in ECA countries. In particular, the session asked: what are the most effective avenues to expand the opportunities for youth engagement, and the most effective policies and investments through which active youth citizenship can be supported? What is the role of schools in supporting students’ engagement, and the role of non-formal education in promoting responsible citizenship? What are the determining factors behind and the consequences of failed youth citizenship? And what are some relevant good practices, for example in the justice domain, which can guide second chance initiatives to reintegrate young people in ECA?

The Plenary Session was chaired by Caroline Kende-Robb, Sector Manager, Social Development, the World Bank; with remarks by Giovanna Melandri, Italian Minister of Youth and Sports; Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport at the Council of Europe; Eduardo Missoni, Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scouts’ Movement; and Tatiana Margolina, Human Rights Commissioner for the Perm Region of the Russian Federation.

“Young people are the bearers of values that will form the foundations of the new ways of cohabitation shaped by respect for human rights and for ethnic, religious, cultural and sexual diversity.”

GIOVANNA MELANDRI
MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS. ITALY

Giovananna Melandri, Italian Minister of Youth and Sports, highlighted Italy’s commitment to youth development in the region, to European cooperation in youth policy development, and to partnerships with countries in Eastern Europe to set the basis for future European integration, with a focus on youth as both beneficiaries and proponents of youth policy. She also noted Italy’s many partnerships agreements with Central Asian countries in the areas of youth policy and sports. She referred to the leadership role played by the Council of Europe in developing youth policies to facilitate the exercise of active citizenship among young people, and in setting a broad vision of the areas in which the rights and needs of young people need to be addressed; including education, training, civil society, social protection, jobs and justice.

Italy’s National Youth Plan, she noted, is implemented horizontally across government; an approach that ensures that youth policy is not viewed as a partial sector. It consists of a package of policies fleshed out in coordination with other ministries and conceived to increase the room for autonomy, empowerment and responsibility of young people. She asserted that it is only by
giving young people access to work, training, housing, digital technologies, culture and politics, that it is possible to imagine the future of our societies. She pointed to the ways in which active youth citizenship is already successfully being encouraged in Italy. Youth councils connected to authorities at the local level, for example, are providing a bottom-up approach to policy development. And a youth consultative committee, composed of young leaders of religious communities and youth associations, is fostering dialogue on religious and cultural pluralism. This committee has helped shape solutions for defining identity and citizenship in Italy; an instrument that is increasingly relevant in Europe and the ECA region, and which has generated strong interest among bilateral cooperation partners. Concrete steps can be taken to promote the tools of democracy and youth participation, she concluded, to generate a demand for good governance, and involve young people in defining what it means to be an active citizen.

“For the Council of Europe the core mission of youth policy is to enable young people to be active citizens and to ensure the necessary conditions for enabling them to play this role successfully.”

GABRIELLA BATTAINI-DragonI
DIRECTOR GENERAL EDUCATION, CULTURE AND HERITAGE, YOUTH AND SPORT, COUNCIL OF EUROPE.

GABRIELLA BATTAINI-DragonI, Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport at the Council of Europe, focused her initial remarks on issues raised by the Background Discussion Paper for the Conference prepared by the World Bank, which she described as ‘ringing an alarm bell’ for vulnerable youth in South Eastern Europe and the North Caucasus, as well as providing a ‘wake-up call’ for other countries of the region. She echoed the concerns raised in the Background Paper that in societies in crisis it is usually the young generation that pays the highest price. And in many countries where the population is aging, greater attention is being given to pension reform than to the needs of young people. In the long run, it is not just the young but societies as a whole that suffer when a fragile, disenchanted youth embraces extremist ideologies, or simply wastes its capital of health, knowledge and productivity, or leaves the country in search of a better life abroad. She noted that the Background Paper’s attention to vulnerable youth who have come into conflict with the law is an area to which the Council of Europe could direct more attention in its own work, particularly to prevention strategies, early detection and intervention. This is all the more critical given that political disillusionment and the perceived lack of opportunities have made young people in the region vulnerable to drugs, violence and crime.

To create the necessary enabling conditions for young people to be active citizens, she highlighted the four main tasks the Council of Europe perceives that youth policy needs to fulfill:

· Ensure young peoples’ wellbeing;
· Provide young people with adequate learning;
· Ensure young peoples’ inclusion;
· Empower young people to participate.
Consequently, reviews of national youth policy undertaken by the Council of Europe have included issues related to participation and citizenship, combating social exclusion and promoting inclusion, mobility, safety and equal opportunities7. Adequate youth policies, she stressed, require a long-term vision, which our increasingly individualist societies have lost some of their capacity to envision. The Council of Europe has accumulated broad experience, a body of knowledge, and a pioneering methodology for developing forward-looking policy. One such approach has been the program on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights. Requested by the governments of member states, the program has been designed to transmit the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, together with values such as equity and solidarity to young generations. The program is based on the premise that democratic institutions cannot function effectively without the presence of a democratic culture.

The Council of Europe is currently preparing the first ever White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. The Paper will try to illustrate the importance of dealing simultaneously with the socioeconomic and cultural divides that now characterize societies across Europe, and will provide recommendations on the kinds of competencies young people can develop to facilitate such intercultural dialogue. In that light, the “All Different - All Equal” campaign, run collaboratively by the youth sector of the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum and the European Commission, has also been an important initiative.

“We can take measurements on individual projects; it’s very difficult to take measurements on the long-term significance of the non-formal education process.”

DR. EDUARDO MISSONI, SECRETARY GENERAL
WORLD ORGANIZATION OF THE SCOUTS’ MOVEMENT.

EDUARDO MISSONI, Secretary General, World Organization of the Scouts' Movement, announced that 2007 is the centenary year of the World Scout Movement. From an organization numbering 20 boys in 1907, the World Organization of the Scout Movement now has 28 million members, and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts 10 million, in 155 countries8. He noted that 2007 thus marks one hundred years of building citizens of the world. Building citizens, he stated, like education, is a lifelong process. And the significance of the Scout Movement’s participation at a conference such as this one is that it brings a century’s worth of experience, and results, in non-formal education.

The Scout Movement, Mr. Missoni explained, provides an education process that can only be understood within the framework of its value system. Scouts are required to make a promise, a commitment to better themselves, to service their communities, and to become better citizens, all the while challenging themselves and having fun. Scouts are citizens of a “glocal” movement:

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7 The Council of Europe’s national youth policy reviews have so far covered 16 countries, including countries in ECA (Albania, Romania, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary and Armenia.) The policy domains examined by the reviews are education and lifelong learning policies, labor market opportunities, health, housing, social protection, family policies, leisure and culture.

8 The Scout Movement continues to attract new membership - with a six percent net increase in Europe between 2001-2003, where the youth population overall has been declining. The 2007 Centenary World Jamboree has brought together 42,000 girls and boys and their Scout leaders from all over the world.
both global and local. It is a unique opportunity for a young girl or boy to be at once a member and active citizen in his or her local community, while at the same time feeling part of a global movement.

Scouting has been developing in the ECA region over the last ten years and the Scout Movement, he noted, anticipates that it should achieve results there as elsewhere, in spite of difficulties encountered along the way. Results so far have been promising: in Azerbaijan they have brought together youth leaders from neighboring countries to live together in a camp where they learn skills such as conflict resolution, diversity management, decision-making, and democratic citizenship; in Croatia, they have used Scout activities for post-conflict reconciliation among young people; in Slovakia, Roma youth leaders following Scout methods have achieved improvements in school attendance and grades. The Scout Movement has also achieved results in reducing long-term negative outcomes of failed citizenship among young people who have become involved in violence or crime. In Bulgaria, Scouting has achieved positive results in reducing school violence. Similar approaches have been successful in other regions as well. For example, in Hong Kong, they are using Scouting in prisons to help reintegrate offenders into society. In El Salvador, they bring together rival gangs and use Scouts to help design local youth policy; they have seen an 80 percent reduction in student related violence where these programs have been implemented.

Mr. Missoni concluded his remarks referring to what he termed the ‘problem of evidence.’ As is so often the case with non-formal education methods or programs, ‘although we know it works,’ there is the problem of providing hard numbers to quantify the impacts. The World Scout Movement has traditionally not felt it appropriate or necessary to invest in impact assessments. Scouts, he explained, are the best ambassadors of the importance of diversity and the importance of scouting to becoming committed citizens. Nevertheless, they do recognize the need, as stipulated by international organizations like the World Bank, that non-formal education results be measurable so as to justify and better target investments. Consequently, the Scout Movement World Congress in Geneva this year will bring together all available studies providing evidence of the positive impacts for society of non-formal education. As a result, they hope that with hard numbers to demonstrate their results, the Scout Movement will become an even more active partner with governments and international organizations in facilitating young people’s transition to active citizenship.

“Conditions must be set up in each region so that young people have a chance to participate in local and state government, especially through elections. Accordingly, not just young people, but also local authorities will become responsible for the issues that matter to young people.”

TATIANA MARGOLINA, HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER FOR THE PERM REGION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

TATIANA MARGOLINA, Human Rights Commissioner for the Perm Region of the Russian Federation, enumerated the key questions that illustrate the youth citizenship challenge for the
Russian Federation: What are the conditions that must be created so that young people can feel they are active players in society – at school, at work, in political life? How can we empower young people, make them feel responsible for their role in family life and at work, in building their future? What does it mean to be a Russian citizen? What does it mean to take responsibility for yourself, for your country, and for the world as a whole?

The Perm Region has established programs designed to help find answers to these questions, and has achieved results that could be replicated elsewhere. Conditions must be set up in each region, Ms. Margolina explained, so that young people have a chance to participate in local and state administration, especially through elections. Tools need also to be established to support non-governmental organizations in the regions. In the Perm Region there are 633,000 young people between the ages of 14 and 30. They account for 26 percent of the whole population and 43 percent of the working population. The Region has been successful in establishing youth programs funded through grant competitions supported by the private sector. There are also community programs such as the one called “Do Something Useful,” that encourages young people to use their initiative in becoming involved in their communities. Another program called “My World Without Hostility” encourages awareness and tolerance of diversity. Whereas youth activities used to be designed for young people, she added, they are now being designed and carried out by young people. Youth participation in organized political life has also increased significantly in the Perm Region in recent years.

The Perm Region is witnessing a surge in youth movements and youth-led activity. The Region has a registry of youth NGOs, of which there are about 400, and a system for financing youth projects. NGOs have been advocating the teaching of citizenship values for some time, and Ms. Margolina was pleased to announce that such courses are now part of school curricula in the Perm Region. Such courses will enable young people to reach their own definition of what it means to be a Russian citizen.

Ms. Margolina highlighted the need, in the Perm Region as elsewhere, for young people to be better informed about their rights and the opportunities available to them. Information resources and venues need to be supported for that purpose, she noted. The Perm Region has created an information forum for young people; an initiative that needs to become part of an ongoing communication platform at the regional level. She added that young people also face concrete problems - such as housing - that hinder their transition to adulthood. And these problems are part of a bigger picture that needs to be addressed for young people to assume their role as active
citizens. Another serious challenge is to overcome the problems associated with drug and alcohol abuse among young people, and the disintegration of families and the institutionalisation of children and young people that can occur as a consequence of such behaviors.

On a final point, Ms. Margolina stressed the need for a change in mindset from a repressive attitude towards young people who have made bad choices or mistakes. There is a tendency, she added, among young people no less than among older generations, to advocate harsh consequences for youth who break the law or adopt anti-social behaviors. Young people who make mistakes should be provided with the tools and the opportunities for second chances; an issue that Ms. Margolina announced she would be discussing in more detail in a subsequent Break-Out session on Youth and Justice.

OPEN FLOOR FOR DISCUSSION

-- Citizenship: an effective concept for addressing deficiencies in social protection?-- One of the issues highlighted during discussion is the increasing segmentation of the population in ECA in terms of access to basic services: While opportunities for voice and participation might be increasing for some segments of the population, there are many who lack access to basic services—health, primary and secondary education, particularly in rural areas. Active citizenship, it was asked, might be ineffective as a concept for addressing the basic needs of socially excluded populations. Ms. Battaini-Dragoni remarked that taking a rights-based approach to these challenges illustrates how active citizenship encompasses basic social and economic rights such as those provided for by the European Social Charter⁹. Active citizenship presupposes that without access to health, education and employment, young people cannot participate as active members of society. The Council of Europe monitors the capacity of member states to facilitate access to these rights for all segments of the population, and provides policy advice for states to take remedial action where necessary. Social inclusion, which is an integral part of that policy advice, is key to active participation and citizenship.

-- Filling gaps left by the state with non-formal education programs-- It was asked to what degree non-formal education programs like those organized by the Scout Movement fill the gaps left by the state, and whether the Scout Movement works with states to help them deliver programs more effectively. What is the balance of NGO and state responsibility in providing safety net programs? An organization like the Scout Movement, Mr. Missoni explained, should ideally not serve as a substitute for state-provided education or services, but as complementary to the formal sector. Part of the added value of non-formal education methods is their volunteer basis and administrative autonomy. States need to address the gaps in formal education and other services, and can also take an active role in non-formal education by facilitating physical spaces and financing for these programs, and by removing bureaucratic or legislative barriers. It was further suggested that what is needed is a balance between formal and non-formal education programs to reach all young people, including those who may not be a part of volunteer youth programs.

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⁹ The European Social Charter guarantees social and economic human rights. It was adopted in 1961 and revised in 1996. The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) is the body responsible for monitoring compliance in the states party to the Charter.
Transforming local initiatives into regional or national programs-- It was noted that there are great regional disparities in the reach and impacts of youth programs. A recent World Bank study on the North Caucasus¹⁰ found that federally targeted programs in the Russian Federation, which have recently been discontinued, were not reaching areas where the needs were greatest. What would be required to scale-up regional programs, like those described in the Perm Region, to the federal level? Ms. Margolina indicated that replicating successful regional programs at the federal level could be achieved through partnerships with, for instance, the Ministry of Education and the Council of the President, to scale up civic education programs. But youth organizations can also play a key role, she added. The Youth Forum in the Perm Region, for example, is a highly suitable vehicle for scaling up initiatives since it brings together youth representatives and organizations from different regions.

A wide range of participatory instruments are required and their impacts need to be measured-- Young people who are actively engaged in society, it was remarked, are usually also members of structured youth organizations. Many young people, however, do not feel motivated or interested to participate. This may in part be due to the fact that they not have been exposed to information about, or opportunities to discuss, the issues that affect them. It was suggested that “any space can be a space of interaction and communication among young people” and citizenship activities should be envisaged within a variety of public or private spaces where young people spend time, so as to reach young people who are not already members of participative or representative youth structures. It was also emphasized that youth participation programs need to have built-in impact evaluation mechanisms to ensure that funding is generated to sustain the programs and to replicate them elsewhere.

“There is a need to promote and facilitate cooperation and coordination among all the different actors involved in the many aspects of education, to practice citizenship that promotes fundamental values, such as participation in justice, tolerance, respect for human rights, minority and gender equality.”

KAROLY BORBELY, CONFERENCE DISCUSSANT
PRESIDENT, NATIONAL YOUTH AUTHORITY, ROMANIA,

Information is a precondition for participation, but it is not everything-- The Web has become a highly valuable tool for disseminating information to young people and facilitating their exercise of active citizenship. The importance of making information available cannot be overstated: “if you want to be part of the game, you need to know that it exists,” remarked one participant. And it is important that the information be tailored to appeal to a youth audience. But information alone is not enough. What are also needed are skills. Young people need opportunities to put information into practice and acquire the skills of active citizenship. In addition to the Internet, therefore, the face-to-face encounters facilitated by community or youth friendly centers are an important resource of peer education, where young people can come together to share knowledge and practice the skills of active citizenship.

“Peer education can be an effective tool for young people to acquire skills. One such program is run by the Youth Information Agency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which last year ran 320 workshops in schools in 20 towns, reaching 7,000 students, ages 14-18. Young people who have acquired skills in political dialogue, presentation, organization, and so on, are more effective at taking their concerns to decision makers, who typically do not expect young people to be informed or articulate about political issues.”

JAN ZLATAN KULENOVIC, CONFERENCE DISCUSSANT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, YOUTH INFORMATION AGENCY
BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA

—Who is responsible for ensuring youth participation - governments or young people?— The question of responsibility prompted considerable debate. In the ECA region, it was asserted, there is not one country where youth information as a service is provided by a government institution. It was pointed out that youth participation is a responsibility that should be shared by governments and young people. Young people need to be informed of their rights and options, and given access to opportunities, to enable them to become active participants. Many young people, it was argued, are already fulfilling their side of the citizenship bargain: they are engaged, informed and lobbying for policy change, it is time for governments to deliver on their side of the bargain. And reaching out to excluded youth, particularly in rural areas, must be a priority.

“Although schools should be the place where young people are equipped with the knowledge and the tools be active members of society, that is rarely true in practice: learning about democracy in school, a British school inspector once said, is a bit like reading holiday brochures in prison.”

GEORG BOLDT, CONFERENCE DISCUSSANT
DEPUTY CHAIR PERSON, ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH, COUNCIL OF EUROPE

—Coming to terms with a changing conception of “youth”— While youth was formerly understood as an age bracket that lay somewhere between childhood and active employment, the concept of youth, it was suggested, is now getting broader all the time. This is partly a result of marketing strategies, but chiefly because of the challenges that young people now face. Given the challenges that young people face in ECA—such as housing, mobility, a safe workplace—it is difficult to talk about “activating young citizens” while many of the basic needs which we associate with the transition to adulthood are left unfulfilled.
Break-Out Sessions on Exercising Active Citizenship Summary Reports

Schools and active youth citizenship

Formal education in ECA does not currently play a significant role in young people’s transition to active citizenship: schools and universities do not equip young people with the life skills and awareness to be active citizens. It was agreed, however, that this is too important a dimension of educational development for schools to neglect that role. This session addressed the following questions: What kinds of skills are needed for active citizenship? How can school curricula promote active citizenship? How can school environments promote active citizenship?

Speaker: Todor Arsovski, World Bank Youth Voices Group
Coordinator/Speaker: Isak Froumin, Senior Education Specialist, World Bank

What competencies should be developed in schools for the transition to active citizenship?

A “competence” approach to civic education is becoming more and more popular. The word is yet to be precisely defined, but refers to the idea that less emphasis should be placed on purely academic knowledge. School graduates should be able to apply what they learn to new situations and the realities of life in a democratic, law-governed market economy.

Different youth groups currently face uneven access to educational opportunities and may have need for different competencies. Roma, disabled youth and other ethnic and religious minorities may need particular attention to certain competencies, such as language for ethnic minorities.

Exams that test factual knowledge alone are inadequate. The problem is how to assess capabilities and competencies. More complicated assessment techniques are needed to evaluate school graduates. However, any competence-oriented EAC project is already threatened by the existing and proposed national standards.

How can school curricula promote active citizenship?

From a curricular point of view the education for active citizenship (EAC) can be delivered through specialized subjects as part of a mandatory or an optional curriculum. It can be delivered also through cross-curricular themes and projects.

In most ECA countries “social studies” is the main curricular avenue for EAC delivery. During the last 15 years although old history and social studies textbooks were abandoned, the existing curriculum structure remained the same – as a rule, old textbooks were gradually replaced by new more “democratic” textbooks (often written by the same authors). Sometimes new titles were used to cover the same content.
It was suggested that an integrated subject like “social studies” implies a “superficial” knowledge of important concepts from the social sciences. A more specialized approach to civic education was suggested. However, subjects such as law, political science or sociology are rarely part of mandatory national curricula.

There is a great variety of approaches and content within optional parts of national curricula. In some cases this part is entirely non-compulsory. So students may decide whether they want to attend the EAC classes. In other cases students are forced to make the choice among two or more curriculum options.

Many practitioners argue that the inclusion of social and political questions into “non-social” subjects may dilute specific content and confuse students. They believe that other subjects should transmit not just civic awareness but key competencies that are essential for civic participation.

The main challenges to make school-based EAC effective are the outdated curricula and teaching methods. Analysis of the best practice around FSU countries shows that radical changes are needed, such as:

· introducing a problem-based curriculum for social studies;
· making school life one of the subjects for social studies teaching;
· linking formal curriculum and project-based activities.

**What are the elements of school environment that promote active citizenship?**

Non-formal curriculum activities could include linking school and students with local communities. Some schools initiate community-based projects, introduce compulsory practical social experiences, and invite representatives of local communities to participate in school governance. There are also a growing numbers of student voluntary associations, clubs, etc. Schools need to be friendlier to youth associations that can be useful in creating a civic environment in schools.

In general schools tend to concentrate on “big” policy issues and on the transmission of information. They tend to ignore the fact that active citizenship begins not with participation in national elections but from civic agency at the local community level and before young people are legally entitled to vote. The Armenian Law on Education, for example, has a special provision on extracurricular activities: “The goal of out-of-school education is creation of conditions for development of interests through organizing the leisure time of students. It is directed to their spiritual, aesthetic, physical development, military-patriotic education, ecological and practical knowledge.”
Citizenship development and non-formal education systems

Whatever the environment in which they live, all young people have similar needs; they need to acquire the ability to cope and the ability to become the architects of their own development as individuals and as citizens. For this purpose, non-formal education programs which are primarily delivered by youth organizations constitute an essential tool for ensuring that young people acquire citizenship skills that are difficult to acquire through formal education systems. The objective of this session was to present several successful non-formal education programs that contribute to active youth citizenship and develop recommendations for youth programming in ECA.

Speakers: Miroslav Radeski, Secretary General, Babylon Youth Coalition, FYR of Macedonia
Coordinator: Ventseslav Kozarev, YMCA Bulgaria

· What are the characteristics of non-formal education programs that are effective in promoting active youth citizenship?

The Break-Out session conclusions echoed the remarks from earlier in the day that non-formal education should be viewed as complementary to formal education. Non-formal education has key benefits and advantages derived from its non-formal status. It has the benefit of elasticity: non-formal education programs are better able to welcome diversity and anticipate the invariable changes that occur in the teaching-learning exchange as well as changes in society. Non-formal education focuses on transformation as a goal and as a process: All individuals involved in non-formal education (learners, teachers, trainers, administrators, stakeholders) can experience benefits from participation. Other characteristics of include: volunteerism, experiential learning, peer group involvement, leadership development, and the development of a value system.

· Non Formal Education Programs are most effective when implemented in partnership with other actors.

Non-formal education is collaborative and typically developed and offered by organizations other than traditional education institutions, often involving multiple organizations from public, non-profit and private sectors through collaboration and shared leadership. Partnerships with educational institutions are equally valuable. It was suggested that the trust young people feel towards youth organizations and other partners in non-formal education is a factor in their appeal and positive impacts. Non-formal education programs also provide visibility to young people’s engagement in communities, and can have a positive demonstration effect of the value of such programs.

· How has the impact of programs been assessed, what are the results in terms of young people’s active participation in society?

11 The World Alliance of YMCAs (Young Men Christian Association) is a federation of YMCAs in 124 countries with a membership of over 45 million. YMCAs seek to share the Christian ideal of building a human community of peace with justice for all, irrespective of race, class, religion, or gender. Formed in 1844, the YMCA is one of the largest and oldest youth movements in the world. http://www.ymca.int/
The issue of evaluation was discussed in some detail during the session, echoing the remarks from the morning about the “problem of evidence” in measuring the impacts of non-formal education. The occurrence of in-depth, high-quality program evaluation in non-formal education settings is very low. It was agreed that methodologically rigid studies are generally impracticable, given the limited resources such programs usually have at their disposal. However, these programs could more systematically generate useful case studies to demonstrate their methodology and impacts to help replicate successful programs elsewhere.

**National youth policy development with youth participation**

The objective of this session was to examine participation mechanisms at the national level that contribute to the development and implementation of national youth policy. The different actors in the process (Youth NGOs and the state) and the interrelation between them all play an important role. While the State holds the power of decision-making and the funds for administering policies, youth organizations bring a legitimacy that comes from representing large numbers of young people. It is a relationship in which both sides can gain and mutually advance if they cooperate. The session aimed to identify ways of increasing and improving the level of both representation and cooperation (co-management) between youth NGOs and the authorities.

Speakers: Giedrius Vaidelis, State Council for Youth Affairs, Lithuania
Igor Casapu, National Youth Council, Moldova
Coordinator: Tamuna Kekenadze, Bureau Member, European Youth Forum

· **The role of governments in enabling youth participation**

Discussion highlighted the need for governments to improve existing mechanisms and create new ones to improve youth participation in the development of national youth policy. Strengthening Independent National Youth Councils has proved to be an effective way of ensuring young people’s ownership of the policies that affect them. Other priorities highlighted in the session touched on both the role of government and on international organizations:

· Governments need to ensure that young people are equally represented in decision-making structures. The case of Lithuania is particularly interesting: a system of co-management, based on the approach developed at the European level by the Council of Europe, was
developed to ensure equal footing between state representatives and the non-governmental, independent, National Youth Council. For such steps to be effective there must be a genuine willingness on the part of policymakers to enter into partnership or dialogue with young people.

- The role of international organizations in the development of youth policy was also raised as an important factor. Better coordination is necessary since experiences show that different international organizations are either not aware of their respective activities or these overlap to the detriment of a coherent approach.

- Governments need greater expertise in how to deal with youth issues, including how to engage and empower young people. Some of that expertise can be gained from young people themselves.

It was noted that mutual trust and respect are pre-requisites for a sustainable and effective partnership between state actors and youth organizations. This was felt by participants to be a key issue, given the difficulties experienced by many youth organizations in the region in gaining recognition. It was reported by the participants that the level of cooperation is often very limited because of this lack of mutual trust; a situation that may be the result of various causes, such as political will, or even an understanding of the importance of sustainable cooperation in order to achieve effective results. Youth organizations can be a valuable resource of talent and insight into how to build a “culture of cooperation” between youth and state actors to ensure mutual trust and understanding.

- Youth participation should be based on sustainable structures like youth councils.

While in many countries in the region there is adequate legislation “on paper” for effective youth policy and youth participation in policy development, there is a need in many instances for concrete mechanisms to put legislation into practice. Youth participation structures should not be one-off participation events. The role that young people are to play in these structures must be made clear from the outset. For instance, are youth members to play a consultative role, or will they be given decision-making responsibilities? What is the timeframe and what are the areas of their participation? Accordingly, governments should provide funding not only for single or stand-alone projects but to support the development of youth organizations in general, including administrative costs. State budgets should make provision for these structures and their activities and for raising civic awareness about the importance of effective youth policy and youth participation. Independent and democratic National Youth Councils should be directly consulted about the state programs and policies on youth; this will better ensure that State programs and policies reflect and address the needs of young people.

¹² Also scheduled to speak at this session was Nikola Jovanović from Belgrade who was unable to obtain a visa to travel to the conference.
Local youth policies development: EU Charter on youth participation in local and municipal life

The objective of the session was to identify best practices for developing effective collaboration between young people and local authorities to implement jointly-designed action plans.

Speakers: Raphael Dembe, Glocal Youth Parliament, Warsaw, Poland
Coordinators: Cecilia Pietrobono, Glocal Forum
Olivia Barata Cavalcanti, Glocal Forum
Julia Pond, Glocal Forum

· The Glocal Forum’s experience in assisting municipalities in working with youth.

The Glocal Forum bases its work on the concept of Glocalization, a new paradigm for international cooperation which applies the benefits of globalization to the work of local authorities. Its purpose is to create a network of city leaders, local resources and young citizens and to empower the network through partnerships. The Glocal Forum network currently counts the participation of more than 70 cities around the globe. Its activities include peace building, development, youth empowerment, etc.

Key lessons from the Glocal Forum experience include:

· The need for targeted policies to enable young people to participate in municipal life.
· Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) can have a positive impact and influence on their municipality.
· Youth have better chances of approaching local authorities and of cooperating with them if they are part of a youth network that supports them.

· Effective Strategies for young people to become involved with local authorities.

A key challenge for youth organizations is how to approach local authorities and establish cooperation channels with them. The session highlighted effective strategies for young people and youth organizations to approach and become involved with local authorities. Based on experiences such as World Bank youth outreach activities in Poland the session came up with the following recommendations to young people seeking to become involved in their municipalities:

· Take the initiative in approaching local authorities and try to establish an effective collaboration;
· If no formal communication mechanism exists such as a Youth Council, approach an eligible CSO or NGO and work together to establish collaboration with local authorities;
· Involve local authorities in the implementation of your youth organization projects;
· Be bold and contact every possible partner – based on the principle that “If you don’t ask you don’t get;”
· Use the network of contacts provided by the Glocal Youth Forum: you will achieve your goals more effectively if you are part of a network;
· The role of the European Charter on Youth Participation.

A key step to facilitating youth participation at the local level is to enhance awareness among civil society and local authorities of legal instruments such as the European Charter for Youth Participation in Local and Municipal Life of the Council of Europe. Formal communication channels need to be established to enable young people to dialogue with local authorities. These need to be sustainable communication structures, and capacity building support is needed to enhance both the young people’s and local authorities’ ability to create effective partnerships. In cities where youth councils have not been set up, young people, it was suggested, should approach local NGOs to begin establishing effective collaboration.

Promoting social inclusion and cohesion: youth media and youth engagement in accessible IT

The objective of the session was to present youth media networks and programs aimed at providing young people with a platform for expressing their opinion on a range of issues. The session provided an overview of the ways young people use television and the Internet as a vehicle for raising awareness of social issues and connecting to peers, civil society, journalists, political leaders, and other stakeholders. More specifically the session addressed the following questions: What is the role of youth media in building capacity in youth and promoting youth citizenship, as well as social inclusion and cohesion? What is the impact of youth media networks on the global flow of information and ideas, and the society at large? What are the methods for making information and communication technologies more accessible by young people? What are some recommendations for achieving youth empowerment through youth media and increased access to information and communication technologies?

Speakers: Marinela Prifti, Reporter, TROÇ Albania
        Anila Miria, Communications Officer, UNICEF Albania
        Madelaine Hamilton, Online Community Manager, TakingITGlobal, Canada

Coordinator: Piero di Pasquale, RAI International, Italy

· Taking IT Global: A new global medium for youth messages.

This session highlighted two successful programs to illustrate the use of media and IT in youth engagement. The first is a program from Canada called “Taking IT Global” (www.takingitglobal.org). It is a virtual youth community that enables young people from all over the world to connect with each other over the Internet through its Web portal. With 140,000 members in over 250 countries, it is a powerful resource for information as well as a channel for voice. Young people can submit articles to the site, they can launch discussion groups and take part in discussions. They can also network and submit proposals for projects.

· TROÇ youth television in Albania

The second good practice example highlighted in the session is a TV show from Albania, developed in cooperation with UNICEF, called TROÇ, (“straight talk”). It enables young people
to voice their concerns about issues that affect them in a format that is appealing to young people. The goals of TROÇ are to assist young people in becoming more involved in community and national development efforts; build young people’s confidence in their ability to assess social problems and find community-based solutions; and to help raise a new generation of talented independent journalists in a country that currently has no professional training institution for journalism, television and filmmaking. Impacts of the TROÇ program over the last six years include:

- TROÇ has now aired more than 125 shows, making it the longest running television programme in modern Albania.
- For the first time Albanian youth informed the public at large about the democratic process
- 14 former young reporters are studying journalism or working as journalists, setting the stage for improved media in the future
- TROÇ’s evaluation – 70 per cent of Albania’s population have seen the show at least once.

Videos of these programs can be viewed on UNICEF’s Website at: http://www.unicef.org/videoaudio/video_4763.html.

- Young people are producers as well as consumers of media, and increasingly of non-traditional media.

Discussion highlighted the fact that programs such as those made by TROÇ are a reminder that young people are not just consumers of media, but producers as well. It was pointed out that although many young people do not read newspapers or seek information from traditional media outlets, they are familiar with a variety of information sources that can often be overlooked by an older generation unfamiliar with YouTube and other sites. It was emphasized that any discussion of media in ECA should take into account that freedom of expression and open democratic spaces are not always a given. It was pointed out, however, that while many traditional media outlets are subject to control, whether commercial or political, there are new forms and sources of media that are not subject to these controls, particularly on the Internet. Access to media resources in general, it was pointed out, is still a challenge in many areas where young people do not have access to the Internet.

The value of a conference such as this one was noted by the session participants in terms of the opportunity it provides for representatives of youth organizations from across the region to network with each other and with representatives of governments and international and multilateral organizations. A reporter from the TROÇ program in Albania, for example, was able to schedule an interview for a direct TV program with the Deputy Prime Minister of Albania while attending this conference; something she had been unable to do from home.
Development of inclusive policies for youth from ethnic and religious minorities

The objective of this session was to gain a better understanding of the social inclusion policies that have worked in different country contexts in tackling problems of ethnic minority exclusion and marginalization. The session discussed Roma inclusion policies in Central and Eastern Europe, issues relating to rural exclusion in Russia, and the exclusion of Muslim women in Chechnya. Although the circumstances and aggravating factors for the exclusion of minority groups vary across the region, examples of successful interventions offer useful lessons for the region as a whole.

Speakers: Beata Olahova, Roma Education Fund
Maria Amelina, World Bank

Discussants: Amina Belghoul Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organizations
Rezita Djemchuraeva, Islamic University of Grozny

Coordinator: Anush Bezhanyan, World Bank

The European Union and the Council of Europe declared 2007 the Year of Diversity. Numerous initiatives aimed at promoting equality and tolerance have been undertaken encompassing racial tolerance programs in Hungary (such as the Ministry of Education’s “Black and White” program); initiatives for Chechen youth education in the Russian Federation; and Roma education programs across the region. A key message from the session is the need for increased funding of minority inclusion programs by national and local governments as currently funding is largely provided by international donors.

- Ensuring minority issues are addressed in decision-making processes.

The Roma are a pan-European minority, present in all EU member states. The ten million Roma in Europe face social exclusion in the form of segregated communities and segregated schools, which also leave young Roma at a distinct disadvantage in labor markets. Roma face discrimination in access to health care, housing, and other basic rights. The Decade of Roma Inclusions has brought a spotlight on the need for active policies to address exclusion and discrimination. Active policies for promoting the inclusion of Roma youth such as those promoting school desegregation in Bulgaria, and minority scholarships in Macedonia, are examples of targeted initiatives that have had positive impacts on the social of inclusion of Roma youth. Positive fiscal impacts have also been seen as a result of increased access for Roma youth to educational opportunities.¹³

¹³ Also scheduled to speak at this session was Nikola Jovanović from Belgrade who was unable to obtain a VISA to travel to the conference.
· Promoting participation of minority youth in decision-making.

One of the key challenges to promoting greater participation of minority youth in decision-making, it was reported, is the low confidence felt by minority and rural youth alike in Government. Lack of trust in national and local government leads to low levels of participation in public life. There is a need not only for more government funding and evaluation of equality programs, but also for programs to promote civil society awareness of diversity issues, and cross-border collaboration to replicate and mainstream successful participation initiatives.

· Raising awareness of ethnic and religious minority youth

Greater awareness of the issues faced by minority youth is needed to ensure that policy decision-making adequately addresses their needs. Roma youth organization representatives spoke of the need for much greater international awareness of the social exclusion of young Roma. Video campaigns have been a powerful tool in combating discrimination and stereotypes. One example is the regional campaign called Dosta, meaning “enough,” which is part of the Council of Europe/European Commission Joint Program “Equal Rights and Treatment for Roma in SEE” (www.dosta.org).

Development of policies pertaining to youth with disabilities

Social and economic exclusion is far greater for young people with disabilities than for young people in general; they face a double discrimination because they are young and because they are disabled. Market oriented transition and large public sector reforms in many East European and Central Asian countries have excluded youth in general and young people with disabilities in particular from their nation’s social and economic development. Disability in the region has traditionally been treated as a sickness and personal tragedy rather than as part of social diversity, and people with disabilities are largely hidden from public view. Inadequate support and sporadic governmental assistance for families and parents of young people with disabilities further perpetuate this exclusion: families often lack information about specific ailments and the individual becomes trapped in predetermined expectations of what they can and cannot do. The objective of this session was to discuss strategies for participating countries to provide for disability-inclusive design when planning and implementing youth investments and policies.

Speakers: Milan Saranovic Association of Youth with Disabilities, Montenegro
          Goran Pavlovic, Association of students with disabilities from Serbia
          Svetlana Kotova, Perspektiva, Russia

Coordinator: Aleksandra Posarac, Senior Economist, World Bank

· De-institutionalize disabled youth and build community-based support.

Until the European Year of Disability in 2003, the majority of European and East European countries maintained the institutionalization model for the care of people with disabilities. As a result of large media campaigns, public service announcements, forums, and policy action plans awareness and understanding of the civic rights of people with disabilities has increased and
independent living concepts have flourished in some countries, providing greater opportunities for participation in public life. However, in many parts of ECA public resources directed towards de-institutionalization have been limited and there is a great need for increased awareness of the rights of disabled people and for the development of community-based services.

A restructuring of resources is needed to move away from a system based on the segregation or exclusion of people with disabilities to one based on inclusion, with the long-term goal of promoting independent living in communities rather than in institutions. Examples of successful programs include the introduction by NGOs in Serbia and Hungary of personal assistance pilot projects that support independent living and the full participation of people with disabilities.

- Improve economic capacity of youth with disabilities.

The Russian NGO Perspektiva and the Association of Disabled Students of Belgrade estimate unemployment in the region between 80–90 percent for young people with disabilities. For people with disabilities, higher education provides the opportunity to compete in open markets with their non-disabled peers. However, students with disabilities in ECA face both physical and attitudinal barriers that contribute to their social segregation and exclusion from educational opportunities and the life-long outcomes of higher education. Close to 98 percent of secondary schools in Eastern Europe are not accessible programmatically and physically to disabled youth. In Serbia Only 30 percent of children with disabilities who completed primary school continued their education, compared to 79 percent of the general population.

The biggest barrier in the education of children with disabilities is the deep divide between two parallel systems: special and mainstream schools. The curricula of special schools are shortened, children are segregated, and the programs have increasingly become boarding institutions. There is also a lack of recognition of some forms of disability such as some types of learning disabilities. Recently, new laws for higher education in Bulgaria, Serbia, Lithuania, Russia and others have included chapters concerning the rights of students with disabilities, but the laws are far from fully implemented.

Partly as a result of inadequate schooling, most young people with disabilities are not employed, or are only employed in sheltered workshops. Access to labor markets and supported work programs are needed to allow young people with disabilities to realize their potential and contribute as members of society.
· Create a participative environment and integrate youth in setting goals and shaping services.

The possibility of accessing information in alternate formats is essential for people with auditory or visual impairments. Universal design standards apply not only to the built environment but also to communications. Public forums without sign language interpretation, television programming without closed captioning, or telephone numbers without teletype (TTY) make it impossible for someone who is hard of hearing to access information. Likewise written material that is not provided in electronic format or in Braille makes it impossible for a young person with a visual impairment to read and respond to. Universal design standards in electronic communications have yet to be implemented in the region. Access to public transportation is also a key factor for participation.

Youth-centered peace and tolerance programs

The objective of this session was to discuss examples of successful youth-centered peace and tolerance programs that could serve as models elsewhere in Europe and Central Asia. More specifically the session addressed the following: What are specific examples of successful approaches to effective youth-centered peace and tolerance programs? What are mechanisms to engage youth stakeholders? What are the advantages and challenges specific to youth-centered peace and tolerance programs? What are the results of such programs?

Speakers: Carel de Rooy, UNICEF representative in the Russian Federation and Belarus. Tiniko Abuladze, Youth Innovation Fund grantee and Georgia Youth Voices Coordinator: Lola Ibragimova, Sustainable Development Department, World Bank

· There is a strong need for youth-centered peace and tolerance programs and there are successful examples of such programs.

The Europe and Central Asia region is multiethnic and religiously diverse, home to over 65 million youth. Given limited social and economic opportunities and a sense of disempowerment, many young people can become vulnerable to recruitment by religious extremists and succumb to violent activities. On the other hand, young people can be a tremendous influence for positive change. Youth-centered peace and tolerance (PT) activities aim at enhancing the role of youth as key stakeholders in conflict prevention in ECA.

Successful examples include programs in both formal and non-formal education settings. For examples, in the Northern Caucasus (Russian Federation), UNICEF has been working to:

· Promote structural inclusion of PT centered programs in school curricula through dialogue with the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation
· Publish materials such as handbooks for PT-centered curricula, awareness-raising posters, and various training materials
· Organize summer camps, workshops and youth festivals.
Areas recovering from conflict face specific challenges

Such challenges include difficulties in the overall security situation and concerns for safety of participants of youth-centered PT programs. Acute lack of trust among communities represents an additional challenge. In South Ossetia, for example, youth participants of the “Living in Peaceful Neighborhood” program, organized by youth from Georgia and South Ossetia, reported challenges to the program both in terms of trust and perceived security concerns.

To promote youth-centered PT programs there is a need to create strategic partnerships with NGOs, government officials and the private sector. Measures could include:

- Learning about successful examples of youth centered PT programs through ongoing dialogue, conferences and round tables discussions;
- Scaling up programs and activities;
- Cooperation and dialogue between NGOs, government and private sector on developing joint strategies and programs for promotion of Peace and Tolerance activities.

Youth and justice

The objective of this session was to identify policies and action plans in the justice sector that can enhance the impacts of judicial system interventions on young people's transition to active citizenship. Second chance programs, including restorative justice and diversion programs, seek alternatives to the incarceration of young offenders and support the rehabilitation and reintegration of those who receive custodial sentences. Experiences show the value of investing in preventative and second chance mechanisms for young people who come into conflict with the law, compared to the social and opportunity costs of excluded youth in the long run. International best practices in juvenile justice are increasingly being piloted and implemented in the region to meet international juvenile justice standards. Examples of regional and international good practices in youth justice were discussed.

Speakers: Tatiana Margolina, Human Rights Commissioner, Perm Region, RF
Carolyn Hamilton, Director, Children’s Legal Center, UK
Coordinator: Waleed Malik, Lead Public Sector Management Specialist, World Bank

Multi-agency cooperation is needed to ensure the effectiveness of second chance programs in youth justice.

The young people who come into conflict with the law tend to be the most poor and vulnerable and they are typically not among those who are included or who participate in youth projects and volunteer organizations. To be effective, justice sector interventions for vulnerable or excluded youth need to be implemented in conjunction with other social safety nets and welfare policies that will support the sustainability of second chance restorative or diversionary justice measures. To be effective, multi-agency cooperation is needed to support the introduction of new working methods in juvenile justice, such as Victim-Offender Mediation, and Family Group Conferencing as alternatives to incarceration, and to facilitate young offender’s reintegration and participation in society. Successful pilot projects have shown that multi-agency collaboration and new working methods in the justice system can result in positive outcomes for youth, (See Box 4 for one example from Tajikistan). A pilot program in Ukraine has established a working
partnership with the judicial system to develop cooperation mechanisms with the courts and to train specialists in victim-offender mediation.

- Schools and Non-Formal Education centers can become effective partners in dispute resolution and prevention programs, reducing youth violence and crime

Second chance practices and principles can be supported by integrating education and prevention activities in existing youth programs, such as school councils and in other non-formal education activities, and by introducing dispute resolution skills and methodologies in schools. In the Perm region of the Russian Federation school reconciliation services have been piloted with the participation of 43 schools. Results for Perm City indicate that the introduction of school reconciliation services has contributed to a 62 percent reduction in the number of registered student offenders. A program in Poland called “Solve disputes without violence – what do you know about restorative justice?” has raised awareness about non-violent dispute resolution among students and has demonstrated the importance of developing the concept of restorative justice in Poland’s justice sector. In 2003, 37 schools and 7000 participants were involved in the project.

- There is a lack of information and statistics about juvenile justice systems and emerging best practices in juvenile justice in ECA.

Improved data collection will enable more accurate assessment of needs, definition of the issues, and better-targeted policy development. Mapping the various actors in youth and justice is necessary to establish benchmarks and better target coordination mechanisms. A common framework of analysis needs to be developed to generate comparable data for the region and internationally and to help bridge the many existing and emerging approaches to youth and justice. Support is needed to further strengthen knowledge sharing among practitioners and to involve policy-makers in other sectors in exploring best practices at national, regional, and international levels.

Box 4: TAJIKISTAN JUVENILE JUSTICE ALTERNATIVES PROJECT - Children’s Legal Centre UK

Project goal: To respond to the need for community alternatives to the incarceration of children and adolescents who are detained for non-serious offences in institutions that do not provide effective rehabilitation.

Project Achievements
- First juvenile justice alternatives project in Tajikistan
- Participation of all relevant agencies
- Appointment of the first dedicated juvenile judge
- Public defender participating regularly in juvenile trials
- NGO representative on the Commission on Minors
- NGO advocating for children throughout the investigation and interview process
- Multi agency cooperation
- Effective cooperation between state and non state bodies
- New work methods introduced

Referal criteria: to participate, young offenders must be aged 11-18, have committed a minor offense to which they admit, and consent to participating in the project.

Positive Outcomes
Judicial alternative mechanisms have been shown to deliver positive social and economic impacts by contributing to:
- Reduction in re-offending
- Reduction in the number of children deprived of their liberty
- Reduction in the work load and costs for the criminal justice system

Next Steps “The benefits of alternatives”: Inform stakeholders of the benefits alternative approaches in the treatment of young offenders; increase funding for projects such as this one; legislative reform to reduce delays in referring children.

Source: Prof. Carolyn Hamilton, Director, Children’s Legal Center UK
Youth migrants, integration and citizenship

Migration can put young people in vulnerable situations, in their countries of origin, transit or destination. The issues that need to be addressed in this field are linked to the need for prevention measures as well as the recognition of youth rights as universal and not solely linked to their citizenship. The session discussed measures to limit youth vulnerability and protect youth rights in migratory processes.

Speakers: Francesco Manaresi, Researcher, University of Florence
Coordinator: Teresa Albano, Counter-trafficking Focal Point, IOM Rome

· Although migration is viewed as a positive source of economic development in the form of remittances, it carries many hidden and overt costs.

In Moldova in 2004 labor remittances amounted to 30 percent of GNI. Increasing numbers of children across the ECA region are being left alone by parents who have migrated in search of work. The Break-out Session emphasized the need for new legislation, both at the national and European levels, to mitigate the human and social costs of migration, including the increased vulnerability to human trafficking as a result of labor migration. It was pointed out that labor migration, in Moldova for example, is predominantly female; leaving children behind. Legislation is needed to regularize migration channels for adult labor migrants, and social assistance should be better targeted to meet the needs of children left behind. In several orphanages in Moldova, for example, notably in rural areas, more than 10 percent of children had been institutionalized due to parental migration.

· Pilot programs have tested measures to mitigate the consequences of labor migration.

The session also highlighted pilot programs, such as those run by the International Organization for Migration in Romania and Moldova that have been effective at protecting young people from human trafficking by providing social support networks. An IOM pilot project financed by the Italian Development Cooperation pursued an integrated approach based on three pillars: enhance secondary and tertiary prevention measures, and promote structural interventions, in order to meet the needs of children left behind in Moldova and Romania. Secondary prevention measures, which aim at reducing the conditions of danger and vulnerability of persons involved in the migration process included:

· Enhancing local capacities of social services/staff of juvenile centers in the target areas to reach out children left behind and provide assistance to them;
· Enhance local capacities of proximity police to prevent juvenile delinquency through a better understanding of the needs of children as well as the setting up strategic networking relations with social services

Tertiary prevention measures, which aim to help directly the persons involved in the migration
process were carried out through a peer-to-peer approach involving adolescents from high schools in the selected areas, providing social assistance, support to school reinsertion, vocational and life skills training.

· Youth mobility should be supported as an option rather than a necessity.

Labor migration enriches Western Europe, it was pointed out, often at the expense of the countries of origin of labor migrants. But the positive dimensions of youth mobility were also raised. There was considerable discussion about the importance of freedom of movement across borders for young people to pursue work or study opportunities. Travel, it was pointed out, is a powerful medium of communication. The Balkans are now surrounded by the European Union, it was remarked, and are thus geographically enclosed like a virtual prison due to the difficulty of crossing borders. One of the conference speakers, it was pointed out, was unable to travel from Belgrade to attend due to visa restrictions. Youth mobility needs to be made easier and young people need to be educated about existing legal channels for migration and travel.

Art and culture as a tool for youth development

Creative arts programs on community level can (i) prepare youth to lead more enriched lives as adults, (ii) encourage youth to greater civic responsibility, and (iii) contribute to improved quality of teaching in schools. Discussions in this session focused on the project “Dreams Workshop”, a life skills enhancement program for youth volunteers carried out through creative art and design workshops for disadvantaged children and adolescent youth by the NGO TEGV in Turkey to: (a) increase civic responsibility among youth; (b) promote positive youth development in Turkey through art activities; (c) increase the visibility of art in the community; (d) develop awareness about importance of art in education among families and schools.

Speakers: Suat Özçağdas, TEGV, Turkey
Anna Onukova, Czech Republic
Coordinator: Riccarda Zezza, Head of Europe Corporate Community Investment, Nokia Group

· Art and culture programs can be adapted easily to new contexts and have universal appeal.

The session provided an opportunity to discuss projects from the Czech Republic, Turkey, Russia, Macedonia, and Serbia. It was remarked that we usually don’t think of art as a tool for development. However, art has the great advantage of being a universal language; it can take discussion to new levels and reach wide audiences. Art can be a tool for promoting youth policy reform; it can also be a tool for highlighting failures in youth policy.

· Art and culture programs are associated with higher levels of youth participation.

The session highlighted a program called Make a Connection Program, part of a global youth
development initiative by Nokia and the International Youth Foundation in the Czech Republic. The program supports volunteerism and community involvement of young people aged 16-24. Youth teams receive small grants (up to 1600 EUR) for projects that are beneficial to the community and for training focused on life skills and project management. Since 2002, more than 350 projects have involved the direct participation of more than 2,700 youth, which have indirectly benefited more than 140,000 local community members. According to program assessments, more than 80 percent of the young people who have participated in the Make a Connection program:

- have improved their team work and communication skills;
- make more effort and have higher motivation to contribute to the community life around them;
- have better understanding and respect for people who differ;
- report increased involvement in public/community life;
- report a positive influence in their expectation for a better job and/or leadership in their community;
- report being successful in making contacts and cooperating with their local community stakeholders (local authorities, schools, businesses, media);

· **Partnerships with firms are often key to financing youth art projects.**

In seeking out partnerships with the private sector youth organizations should identify firms that share common values. Partnerships with the private sector are preferable to sponsorship arrangements since they are more sustainable: a partnership ensures that each partner respects the other's competencies and contribution.
DAY 3. Investing in Youth at the Country Level: Options and Challenges

The last day of the conference focused on sub-regional and country level discussions of youth transition to employment and active citizenship. The day began with a plenary session in the form of a “Conversation on Investing in Youth at the Country Level,” led by Klaus Rohland, World Bank Country Director for Russia, and Nadir Mohammed, World Bank Country Manager for Albania. Break-Out sessions followed, allowing participants to focus discussion on the issues of particular relevance to the countries in each group. The findings and recommendations of these group discussions were reported in a concluding Plenary Session, followed by an open dialogue between conference participants and the World Bank. Joy Phumaphi, World Bank Vice President for Human Development, then addressed participants and responded to questions. The following is a summary of the proceedings.

A conversation on investing in youth at the country level

Klaus Rohland, World Bank Country Director for Russia, and Nadir Mohammed, World Bank Country Manager for Albania, opened the session by remarking that the day’s Break-Out sessions would retake the issues identified during the previous two days and approach them from a country level or sub-regional perspective. They emphasized that the discussions, which should focus on practical and actionable measures, would provide participants an opportunity to influence World Bank policies as well as the policies of Governments and other international institutions. By generating practical and actionable recommendations, they explained, these discussions could help international organizations refocus their investments in youth and help make Government counterparts more responsive to youth issues. Part of the day’s activities would therefore also consist in drafting a Conference Statement identifying key findings and recommendations and outlining commitments by international agencies and partners present to investing in youth in the ECA region. Two members of each Break-Out Group would participate in drafting the Statement.

Nadir Mohammed reminded participants of some of the key messages that had emerged over the previous two days of discussion and pointed to the need for practical actions and a systematic approach to the issues of youth unemployment, joblessness and idleness that present such a huge challenge for the ECA region. Recommendations on what has and hasn’t worked in the transition
of young people to active citizenship were also greatly needed, including practical measures for enhancing intercultural dialogue and social inclusion.

**Based on key messages generated in the previous two days of discussions, participants were invited to focus their country level discussions on practical measures to address the need for:**

- core reforms to the business environment to promote and sustain economic growth, with targeted measures to improve labor market participation for young people given the current context of “jobless growth” in the region;
- addressing rigidities in labor market regulations in many countries of the region, particularly relating to hiring and firing, entering and exiting the labor market;
- introducing active labor market policies (ALMPs) to facilitate youth insertion in the labor market;
- a reduction in payroll taxes, which are very high in the region (43 percent in Albania, for example) to help counter the flow of young workers to the informal market;
- pension reform and reform of the civil service that would help attract and retain talented young people in the public sector;
- making secondary school enrollment a priority, and ensuring that outcomes from secondary and tertiary education match the requirements of the labor market;
- equipping young people with entrepreneurial skills and opportunities including access to credit for start-up businesses;
- enhancing the complementarities of formal and non-formal education and introducing civil education in school curricula;
- supporting opportunities and capabilities in civil society for pursuing a “third way” whereby direct services provided by civil society organizations complement those provided by the public and private sectors, and addressing any legal obstacles to their participation;
- introducing measures that support circular migration to mitigate risks for young migrants and children left behind, and to promote a win-win-win situation for labor migrants and their sending and receiving countries;

“**Youth employment, joblessness and youth idleness are a huge problem in this region. Something needs to be done to resolve these issues. The time for action is now.”**

NADIR MOHAMMED

WORLD BANK, COUNTRY MANAGER FOR ALBANIA

Other key messages that were raised from the floor during this session included a reminder that young people should not be viewed as victims or as passive subjects of policy. Many young people, it was explained, are already actively participating and delivering their part of the citizenship compact, as evidenced by the youth delegates and organizers present at the conference. These actively involved young people, it was added, have a mutual responsibility with governments and international donors to facilitate the integration of other youth, whose participation may be
hindered due to difficult circumstances. Open floor discussion raised the following suggestions for generating practical recommendations for the active participation of all young people: i) advancing the dialogue on inclusive education for disabled youth, ii) paying serious attention to non-formal education, since there are young people who do not perform well in school but do perform well in a different learning environment, iii) allocating more resources for leisure and sport, which is also likely to engage youth and contribute positively to their transition to citizenship, and iv) reducing inter-regional economic and social disparities. The latter have, for example, proven crucial in Russia, where a discussion of national health and education programs has very different implications for the different regions.

“Any society lives on a social contract between the old and the young: the working population has to make sure that the next generation has a chance and if the working population doesn’t deliver on this, it fails the next generation.”

KLAUS ROHLAND
WORLD BANK COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR RUSSIA

Break-Out Sessions: Sub-Regional Discussions on Youth Employment and Active Citizenship

The objective of the country level Break-Out sessions, organized in sub-regional groups, was to enable country delegations and representatives to define priorities, trade-offs and modalities of investment as they relate to youth transitions to work and citizenship. Specifically each discussion group was asked to consider:

· What are the major youth employment related issues that you need to address in your country?

· What kind of resources does your country need to successfully respond to these issues (eg. financial, human, institutional)?

· What kinds of interventions have so far been employed? What kind of interventions would you like to see developed in the future?
GROUP 1. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, The Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia

WORLD BANK FACILITATOR: SUMAN MEHRA, COUNTRY PROGRAM COORDINATOR, ECA

As part of the employment discussion, the group identified two broad areas where young people face challenges in their transition to work: i) quality of education and ii) cooperation between educational institutions and the private sector. The group underlined that young people should not be treated as a homogenous group, that there are different issues faced by different groups of young people depending on their age group or their educational attainment. For instance, the challenges faced by university graduates are significantly different from those faced by secondary school graduates. These challenges, it was argued, and educational reforms are the main priority for this sub-region. Discussion highlighted that the content and quality of education need to be reformed, to provide the necessary skills to allow young people to integrate the labor market. Educational opportunities, the group argued, should be made available to all groups of young people, including young people with disabilities and young people living in rural or remote areas. The group also emphasized that although relevant, vocational education should not be presented as a substitute for formal education.

Dialogue between educational institutions and the private sector is a crucial element in facilitating young people’s transition to work and sustainable cooperation mechanisms are needed. The group called for a clearer vision from governments to update their strategies for education and refocus these on young people’s transition to employment over the medium term with an immediate tangible show of political commitment to implement these strategies.

In terms of young people’s transition to active citizenship, youth apathy was presented as the chief obstacle to engaging young people. Another important obstacle that has a bearing on young people’s limited interest in participating is a lack of access to information. In many countries, disadvantaged youth, particularly those in remote and rural areas are rarely aware of the opportunities that may be available to them or of the role they could play in their communities. There are a number of youth organizations trying to mobilize young people to participate that have had some success in mobilizing minority youth in their respective countries. Ongoing interaction and dialogue between active youth organizations and governments can play a significant role in further amplifying the impact of the outreach efforts made by these organizations. The group concluded that involving youth organizations in all aspects of decision-making at the national and local level will give them not only the capability but also the legitimacy to make a difference, and to attract more young people to active participation in civil life.

GROUP 2. Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic Of Macedonia, Romania and Turkey

WORLD BANK FACILITATOR: MANINDER GILL, SECTOR MANAGER, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, ECA

Group 2 focused on addressing challenges in the labor market. Issues relating to corruption and nepotism and their influence on young people’s achievement in educational institutions and on
their incorporation into the work place were highlighted as a major source of discouragement. The need to improve the quality of education to meet the challenges of a competitive labor market was another important issue that was addressed.

Government and youth organization representatives agreed that skills such as communication and team-work abilities are significant for success in the workplace, but are not being cultivated in education systems. Investing in reforms in formal education is crucial across the sub-region, as many young people feel that their qualifications do not match the demands of the labor market. The group called on the Governments to invest more in research and innovation processes to enhance performance and create opportunities for young people.

The group emphasized the importance that the state recognize non-formal education experiences, given that in the countries represented in the Group non-formal education is fulfilling many of the functions of the inadequately equipped formal education system. It was argued that governments at the national and local levels should invest in non-formal education programs as skills currently gained through these programs respond to labor market needs better than the skills or qualifications provided by formal education institutions.

Finally, the Group argued that labor migration is not a negative phenomenon, but should be an opportunity based on choice rather than necessity. A system of formalized circular migration that allows migrants to work abroad and return to their home countries with more skills and opportunities needs to be established by providing incentives to receiving countries to formalize the presence of host labor migrants, and for sending countries to attract migrants to return.

GROUP 3. Albania, Bosnia And Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro

WORLD BANK FACILITATOR: NADIR MOHAMMED, COUNTRY MANAGER FOR ALBANIA

The Group's discussion of the challenges in youth employment focused on the mismatch between what is offered through formal education and the needs of the labor market as one of the most important issues that needs to be addressed. On the self-employment front, it was argued that youth face barriers as they try to start up new businesses, which include difficulty in accessing credit and rigid regulations for first time entrepreneurs. The situation, the group concluded, is worse for young people with disabilities and minority youth, who have limited opportunities and face additional challenges.

On the citizenship front, apathy among young people with regards to active participation in social and political life is an important challenge that needs addressing. A lack of communication and coordination among stakeholders constitute an additional barrier in addressing youth issues, and a lack of coordination among international institutions leads to a poor use of limited resources and overlaps in implementation.

The Group recommended the following practical steps and policy directions to tackle these challenges: (I) Governments and international agencies should engage in active programs rather than writing reports; (II) promote more effective communication among institutions that address
youth problems; (iii) support exchange programs within the region for sharing regional expertise (iv) encourage secondary school enrollment and introduce job-shadowing programs for tertiary education; v) increase investments in education for the Roma, and for children and youth with disabilities, (vi) teach more practical skills like communications and debate skills in formal education; (vii) increase the teaching of IT in schools and including Internet access; (viii) use media as a resource for promoting good practices, particularly in the promotion of youth entrepreneurship, ix) create and utilize specially designed funds for starting young entrepreneurs and x) create a transparent and accountable institutional framework that will enable and encourage young people to actively participate in social and political life.

GROUP 4. Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.
WORLD BANK FACILITATOR: ALEKSANDRA POSARAC, SENIOR ECONOMIST ECA

The Group identified an urgent need for the recognition of non-formal education as complementary to formal education by the private sector, universities and the state. It was argued that the knowledge provided by formal education is often theoretical with limited practical application, and non-formal education, usually provided by youth organizations and other NGOs, provide the practical skills young people need to succeed in the labor market.

The group also emphasized that youth employment does not take place in a vacuum, and the overall macro-economic conditions in the country which lead to high general unemployment rates often exacerbate the situation for youth. Macro-economic reforms that will liberalize labor markets and make economic growth and development effective and sustainable are necessary.

The Group also agreed that migration is a vital issue in their respective countries and that labor migration opportunities should be formalized across the region. Information resources for young people informing them about opportunities abroad as well as related information about migration and travel opportunities and challenges would be an important step in facilitating and formalizing migration. Access to financing and support for youth entrepreneurship would also create additional opportunities for young people at home and encourage them to stay and work in their own countries.

The Group defined active citizenship as a long term learning process, which is about preparing people to become active citizens and underlined the importance of including civic education programs earlier in life, starting from pre-school, continuing into primary and secondary education and beyond. The ways leading to active citizenship, it was argued, include appropriate
education, value recognition, identity formation, and learning to make compromises. Giving priority to the development and implementation of youth policies and creating an enabling environment for youth participation in decision-making are key requirements to support young people’s transition through this learning process.

The group called for sustainable and systematic communication between all stakeholders, State, private sector, NGOs and international organizations. Such dialogue, it was argued, can have a great impact on the development of youth employability and employment, and can open channels for young people to become more actively engaged.

GROUP 5. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

WORLD BANK FACILITATOR: KLAUS ROHLAND, COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR RUSSIA

Emigration and brain-drain, spurred by disillusionment with the home economies, are among the most serious deterrents to development and job creation in Central Asia, which impact young people disproportionately. Only two countries in the region – Russia and Kazakhstan – tend to attract young migrants, whereas the trend is outward migration in the other countries. There is a problem in many countries in the region concerning the lack of data about real levels of youth unemployment. Another issue is that in some cases labor markets are over-regulated, as is the case in the Russian Federation, where several years of experience is a prerequisite for entering exams for the civil service. The group stressed the importance of conducting more research to understand the nature of employment problems in general and migration specifically.

Citizenship and particularly active participation of youth in social and political life is a broader topic than employment and there are larger differences between the countries in this group in terms of the challenges and policies to active youth participation. States rarely pay attention to youth and what they have to say, and this vacuum in most instances is filled by private interests, who invest money to attract youth markets. To increase active engagement of youth in all aspects of life, the capacity of civil society institutions needs to be developed, and strengthened.

The All Different – All Equal campaign of the Council of Europe was highlighted as a good practice example for enhancing tolerance and values of social inclusion among youth.

**Open Dialogue between Youth and the World Bank**

Discussion focused on the following talking points: youth apathy in the region; the role of Youth Councils; the composition, capacity and legitimacy of youth organizations; and youth mobility.

-Civic apathy among young people is an overarching problem in the ECA region- Most young people are simply not interested in becoming involved in NGOs or youth activities. They feel that their voice will not be
heard, do not trust public institutions or are discouraged by the difficulties involved in participating in organized youth activities. NGOs working with youth or for youth in the region, have, in most cases started ‘from zero’ with limited resources and/or with international funds, and continue to face numerous bureaucratic obstacles. These challenges contribute to youth passivity, along with a widespread mistrust of public institutions among young people. To overcome youth apathy caused by the barriers to participation requires a proactive approach from governments to eliminate funding and bureaucratic obstacles and to create more channels for communicating with the authorities. Such steps, it was observed, would go a long way to reducing the perceptions of apathy among young people.

“If you can make young people feel that you are hearing them and not just listening to them, if you facilitate and support their participation, they will come to you with innovative ideas and initiatives.”

**Youth Representative From Armenia**

With more aggressive outreach strategies, youth organizations can also be more successful in galvanizing interest among young people within their constituencies. For instance, the Romanian National Youth Council reported that a practice of supporting bottom-up projects – receiving requests by regions for certain youth projects and trying to match them with sources of funding has provided an incentive for youth in the regions to be active in initiating youth activities.

In Kosovo, building the capacity of student leaders through training, putting them in contact with people who know more about organizing community activities, and providing the physical space for youth activities has brought positive results in increasing youth activity. In Georgia, round-tables and multi-level discussions have been effective in engaging youth – more so than one-way-communication seminars. The Youth Partnership Program in BiH has used arts and culture, for e.g. by organizing a youth festival, to demonstrate to young people the advantages of being involved.

Youth organizations, it was argued, provide a safe and constructive space for youth engagement in social and community life, allowing them to develop life-long personal and professional skills with a hands-on approach, while contributing to the communities in which they live. Making the benefits of these opportunities known to young people through effective PR and media campaigns can help transform youth apathy into more productive outcomes.

Furthermore, establishing a communication bridge between Government and youth constituencies can prove instrumental in defining youth policy, providing young people with the forum to raise their concerns, and can help ease some of the deeply embedded mistrust young people have with regard to public institutions.

“Youth organizations in general can hold a huge potential for any government, if the government creates a space for them to operate, to have their own role, to behave democratically, to behave independently and to have their own views.”

**Youth Representative From Lithuania**
Youth Councils are an effective avenue for youth-government communication. They are (i) able to bring together members of very different social spheres: including sports, religion, politics; and (ii) if they operate democratically, i.e. elect representatives from each local Youth Council branch, they also acquire legitimacy to approach governments and speak on behalf of young people.

Youth organizations and Youth Councils can play a significant role in reaching out to rural and excluded youth, where apathy towards civil society participation tends to be higher, and information on civic activities is scarce.

Youth Councils can play a significant role in working with Governments for the implementation of national and local youth policies in the region. The Lithuanian model of national youth policy implementation, based on the co-management principle of the Council of Europe, was cited as a good practice of involving youth organizations in the decision-making process. In Lithuania, the national youth policy is implemented through a Council of Youth Affairs, whose composition is based on the principle of parity, where six members are delegated by the Government and the remaining six are delegated by the Lithuanian National Youth Council.

Participants agreed that the World Bank and governments alike should support the development and work of Youth Councils. So far, Youth Councils in the Baltic States and a few eastern European countries have evolved and managed to bring together and give a voice to many youth organizations within their countries, ranging from youth wings of political parties to religious organizations. In other parts of ECA, youth are still concerned about the transparency and legitimacy of Youth Councils; perceive them as an extension of government and expect them to be excessively bureaucratic, closed and unresponsive. Nevertheless, participants agreed that ECA Youth Councils, as well as ECA democracies are still young and it would be unfair to disparage their role or condemn them as unrepresentative. Even if Youth Councils only effectively involve one percent of young people, it was argued, they give this one percent a safe place to participate and develop. It was emphasized that most youth organizations need support to enhance their capacity to become more inclusive as organizations, in addition to needing long-term funding and a more enabling environment in which to operate.

“We should just work together to help youth organizations to develop their capacity, to be more open, so that more young people can have the opportunity to participate.”

Youth Representative from Estonia

Young people face challenges in exercising mobility across Europe and the region. Participants raised the issue of visa restrictions as a discouraging factor for youth participation, obstructing young people from connecting with peers in other countries, or from attending conferences or other educational opportunities where they can exchange opinions, information and experiences. The European Youth Forum’s ‘Get Visable’ Program has been one initiative aimed at facilitating mobility, eliminating stringent visa restrictions for youth, and achieving a Europe without borders for a healthy youth policy. Young people called for support from the World Bank in their efforts...
to lobby the European Commission and Governments to further facilitate youth mobility for young people in ECA.

“Let’s unite together with all organizations to achieve a Europe without borders, where young people can share experiences, exchange knowledge and work together for a healthy youth policy in Europe.”

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE FROM MOLDOVA

A Global Perspective on Youth Policy and Initiatives
JOY PHUMAPHI, WORLD BANK VICE PRESIDENT FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

“I am convinced that youth today are the most challenged population age group at any time in history. The challenges you face in your communities, in your own environment, even at home are much more complex than they have ever been, for any young people, at any given time, in the history of humankind.”

JOY PHUMAPHI
VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, THE WORLD BANK

As part of the open discussion between youth and the World Bank, Joy Phumaphi, World Bank Vice President for Human Development, provided her perspective on youth issues globally and answered questions from participants. Below is a summary of the points raised:

The challenges faced today by young people around the world are complex and enormous. While young people are the most valuable of a country’s resources, the risks for young people are consistently rising. 47 percent of all unemployed people globally are young people. Young people often lack basic skills, to the extent that 130 million young people worldwide are still illiterate, despite the global information age; secondary school enrollment is very low in many regions of the world; and every day about 6,000 young people are infected with HIV. The risks young people face affect girls at a disproportionately higher rate than boys. This is true of under-achievement in education and it is also true of human trafficking. Gender inequality is a key problem, and it is a priority for the Human Development Network at the World Bank.

Youth citizenship, and monitoring and evaluating citizenship programs, are challenges for the global community. Facilitating youth transition to citizenship is a challenge not only for today’s youth but for tomorrow’s generations as well, therefore all actors – governments, civil society, donors, all representatives at this Conference – need to have a long-term vision when it comes to citizenship programs. Young people should not have to feel that they are misrepresented, because young people should be representing themselves. They should be included as citizens, as they are more likely to understand the extreme nature of their circumstances better than everyone else.
Many young people in the ECA region are very actively involved in issues of concern to them; however civic engagement and non-formal education are not given high enough priority in many regions, including this one. You seek meaningful participation, not just consultation. There is no reason for the World Bank not to promote non-formal education, given that it is an evidence-based approach and applied properly has provided many positive results. Non-formal education was not a crucial part of the WDR 2007 but is being supported by other World Bank activities. There are reports that support the value of non-formal education programs in Africa. Youth in Africa have become involved in various areas of social, political and economic life, including on the issue of their own participation. Achieving the quality of life that youth are entitled to, and reducing poverty through participatory approaches are important prerequisites for building citizenship values. It is true that approaches for each region, each country and each community must be different and that there is no one size that fits all. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that for every community and country there is a size that fits.

Young people in ECA see themselves as members of the human family. They see themselves as being able to transcend the barriers that have been established by human events, to inform progress in China, to inform progress in South America, in Africa, in Australia, in any and every part of this global village. They recognize themselves as agents of development, as a means of investment, rather than an object of investment, because it is only when you see yourselves as a means to an end that you can actually drive the process. Youth should seek for themselves and drive governments and donor institutions to deliver to them conditions for empowerment and inclusion.

The issue of second chances is significant in order to facilitate the inclusion of all youth. It comes with the understanding that when one door of opportunity closes, another should open. But are we walking the talk? And what can we do to open more doors? Donors can advise and fund governments to put into practice youth-friendly policies, to support youth councils, or fund trainings that help young people find jobs. But donors also need to hear young people’s feedback. During this conference we have heard their comments and criticisms on the World Development Report 2007, on specific youth programs. Sustainable policies are those based on consistent learning from past mistakes and successes.

The commitment of the World Bank is a commitment to what youth would like the Bank to do. The Bank would like to be assured that the youth have a voice, and that this voice is what guides engagement. We would like the way forward to be informed by learning so that we can expand the evidence base that informs youth interventions, so that we can benefit from the groundwork that has been laid by you in critiquing this year’s World Development Report, for instance, to help show us the way forward. The way forward has to be informed by listening so that the Bank’s engagement in an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, with young people, with
youth organizations, with governments, with developing partners, benefits both the tools that it has created and also enables the creation of new tools and avenues for dialogue.

The way forward is a way of action, that has youth at its centre; action that is unique, action that plays a role in scaling up investments in young people, action that scales up successful interventions, action that ensures that the World Bank learns from successful programs like the second chances program in the Dominican Republic, the non-formal education activities of the Macedonia and other Youth Projects. This learning from youth will enable sharing experiences with other young global stakeholders, within the World Bank, and with development partners in countries globally.

“Achieving the quality of life that youth are entitled to, and reducing poverty through participatory approaches are important prerequisites for building citizenship values. It is true that approaches for each region, each country and each community must be different and that there is no one size that fits all. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that for every community and country there is a size that fits.”

JOY PHUMAPHI
VICE PRESIDENT, HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, THE WORLD BANK
Revisiting the Conference Objectives: Implications for Investing in Youth Development in ECA

MARTA DASSU, ADVISOR TO ITALY’S MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

“Labor mobility, not just jobs but the mobility of young people, need to be viewed in and around Europe as a driving force to joint development. Europe could achieve a lot simply by revising its visa policies.”

MARTA DASSU

ADVISOR TO ITALY’S MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Eastern Europe and Central Asia is a truly vast region, so much so that external observers might say it doesn’t make sense as a regional entity. We have heard young people from the Balkans, from new European Union members, from Turkey, from Russia and so on. This diversity, which is part of the legacy of the end of the Cold War, could lead the World Bank to redraw its activities map for the region. But then again, even if the ECA region is a strange and vast combination of countries, there is also a solid geopolitical case for the region to be defined as it is: Europe’s new East and South-East. Some of these countries are now Members of the EU, described by some as today’s “voluntary empire” – a strange empire based upon democratic consent and active citizenship, rather than force. I don’t know that I share this view completely, but the definition is an interesting one. Countries in the enlarged union share a border with Russia. That is also why the region – including some of the 29 ECA countries, namely Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova etc. – will define the future shape of EU-Russian relationships. The latter are crucial from an energy standpoint as well as owing to Russia’s choices with respect to the region.

The bottom line is that the future of your countries will have a profound effect on Europe. The issues at hand relate to demography, migration, energy and security. Europe has a vital interest in bolstering the region’s budding democracies. That necessarily involves fighting youth unemployment, in terms of its human and social implications as well as in terms of its effects on Europe’s broader security policy. I think I need not explain why job creation for young people makes ethnic conflicts and illegal migration less likely. Economic growth without job creation leads to migration, legal or illegal, and the result is brain drain.

Kosovo presents a good example of the issues and challenges that have been discussed here. Eight years after NATO intervention and the establishment of a de facto UN protectorate, Kosovo is a microcosm of all the challenges related to high unemployment rates, disillusioned young people, brain drain, and illegal migration. Under these circumstances
we can take it for granted that tensions will heighten as the UN Security Council begins discussions over the final status of Kosovo.

A very interesting ESI study, the European Stability Initiative, shows how a new generation of angry and desperate young men and women in Kosovo is ready to express its dissatisfaction in a violent way. The study’s conclusion reads as follows: “It is simply incoherent to invest hundreds of millions of euros in the stabilisation of Kosovo and at the same time to slam the door so abruptly on any further legal immigration.” This is a point which I feel warrants an in-depth discussion.

On another front, the World Bank and the European Union need to cooperate more closely if we wish to achieve results in the ECA region through concrete, meaningful action. Investing in young people is clearly the best possible form of investment, and we need the appropriate political and social settings to turn investments into concrete results. The World Bank’s technical advice is crucial and I think that in the ECA region financial aid is also paramount.

There are three political choices of vital importance for youth policy in the region. First, the European Union must leave the doors of the European club open to new candidate members; the Balkans, and possibly Turkey. If the EU turns into a closed club, new generations in these countries will feel excluded and Europe will lose an important source of demographic and socio-economic dynamism. It is true, however, that enlargement has its limits. Second, Europe needs to revise and invest more resources in its neighborhood policy. We have to take stock of the fact that this policy is not working, and needs to be deeply revised. It has to become a crucial tool in involving partners such as Ukraine, Georgia and other countries. Europe has a fundamental relationship with Russia, but this cannot come at the expense of these countries. Third, we need to develop a working strategy concerning Central Asian republics.

The EU has a special responsibility to bring about the necessary conditions for the World Bank’s efforts in the region to succeed. And we need to improve the way in which European countries themselves are represented at the World Bank. International institutions need to adapt more readily. Europe would provide a significant contribution to the process of reforming itself as well as international financial institutions by unifying its representations at the World Bank and the IMF. This is a point often raised by the Italian Foreign Minister, Massimo D’Alema. Clearly, I don’t mean a single representation to cover both the World Bank and the IMF. This issue may not be part of the conference agenda today but it has to become a part of the plan for tomorrow.

“Europe needs younger generations not only for demographic reasons or to avoid the negative consequences of unemployment or youth dissatisfaction. We need younger generations for extremely positive reasons. Europe needs to be run better, as do the 29 countries of the ECA region. It is only through the social, political and economic rise of new generations that this can come about.”

MARTA DASSU
Advisor To Italy’s Minister Of Foreign Affairs
CONFERENCE STATEMENT

YOUNG PEOPLE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA: FROM POLICY TO ACTION

May 21-25, 2007

Conference Statement

More than 230 representatives of governments and youth organizations from 29 countries and Kosovo in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and representatives from Italian Development Cooperation, International Labour Organization, the World Bank and other international organizations and the private sector met in Rome for the regional ECA Youth Conference. This conference was sponsored by the World Bank, and the Italian Development Cooperation, in collaboration with the International Labor Organization.

Building on the earlier World Bank youth initiatives¹⁴ and its emphasis on youth employment, social inclusion and overall human capital formation as pivotal prerequisites for sustained economic development and poverty reduction, the ECA Youth Conference provided the first ECA-wide forum to discuss the findings and recommendations of the 2007 World Development Report Development and the Next Generation. The conference focused in particular on two primary youth policy domains articulated in the WDR: (i) transition to work and (ii) transition to citizenship¹⁵ , which are today especially problematic for the young people of the ECA Region.

While transition to a market economy and open political systems opened up a range of potential opportunities in ECA, they have also led to a series of specific disadvantages and exclusion of young people, especially young women. Youth unemployment, joblessness (i.e., youth who are out of school and out of work), and low quality employment, often in the informal sector, have emerged as serious problems since 1989, driving migration¹⁶ and pose potentially very high costs to societies in the region. Formal education and training systems have been slow to adapt to the changing requirements placed on them by the rapidly changing economic environment. In spite of the economic recovery in the region, secondary school completion rates are far from the norm in some countries — too many young people are out of school and out of work.

Young people have been major agents of for positive social and political change in the ECA region through their participation in democratization processes, peace and dialogue movements and anti-corruption efforts. However, they have been subsequently unable to influence any significant, lasting institutional renewal process. As a result, they are experiencing growing disillusionment with the citizenship opportunities available in their countries. Failed citizenship opportunities in the region are contributing to, among other consequences, rising youth crime and incarceration rates, labor migration patterns and human trafficking.

¹⁴ Namely the 2002 Rome Conference on Youth in South Eastern Europe: Policy for Participation, Empowerment and Social Inclusion, the first and second Youth, Peace and Development conferences held respectively in Paris in 2003 and Sarajevo in 2004.
¹⁵ The other main transitions discussed in the WDR, related to formal learning and health, have been more systematically covered by specific sector conferences, including the ECA Education conference in Saint Petersburg held in October 2006.
¹⁶ The social costs of migration are especially high for young migrant women who leave their children behind leading to problems of abandonment, abuse school dropout, risky behaviors and human trafficking.
On the occasion of this conference the conference participants agree to support action in the following areas:

**Policies affecting young people**

There is need for integrated youth policies at the national level that address challenges and needs of young people both as regards their employment opportunities as well as broader youth citizenship issues. These could take the form of youth policies that cut across sectors and sector policies that are sensitive to, and address the needs of young people. Employment policies should address in parallel issues in both the supply of (to increase young people’s employability) and the demand for labor (to increase job opportunities) including the removal of constraints to the creation of employment and self-employment. These could take form of a national youth policy that cuts across sectors, sector policies (e.g. education, employment and housing) that are sensitive to, and address the needs of young people as well as youth policies at the local level. These policies should be formulated with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including young people, and informed by systematic collection of relevant data. Implementation of these policies needs to be supported by capable and well-resourced institutions, and strong inter-agency coordination mechanisms that include government, and civil society stakeholders, especially youth organizations.

**Support for Investments**

While policies are important, there is urgent need to translate them into action. Single-sector interventions cannot adequately address the multi-dimensional nature of youth issues. Cross-sector and age-based investments are needed to respond to young people’s needs and help them develop their full potential. Strengthen existing structures and processes through integration and linking to youth-based programs and initiatives should also be a priority.

Strategies to facilitate the entry of youth into productive employment must be centered around strategies for growth and job creation as a whole. Nevertheless, specific youth-employment oriented investments are needed to enhance youth integration into ECA labor markets, so that young people can contribute more effectively to economic growth, development and social cohesion in their respective countries. These investments, which need be gender-sensitive include formal and non-formal education and training as well as targeted Active Labor Market Policies that have proven successful or show promise in redressing disadvantages faced by many young people in getting and keeping productive employment. In the light of the inability of formal education systems to adapt to changing labor market needs, it is necessary to promote investments in, as well as recognition of, non-formal education and training, as well as expediting efforts to reform formal education.

Investments should place special emphasis on the needs of different groups of disadvantaged young women and men including:
young people with disabilities;  
• the Roma, and other ethnic and religious minorities;  
• rural youth;  
• young migrants;  
• youth from low income households; and,  
• young people with low levels of education and skills.

Since improvement of opportunities for disadvantaged people requires a long term investment, second chance programs are needed.

Rigorous impact evaluation of youth-oriented investments needs to be carried out to assess their impact on, amongst other things: (a) education participation and attainment; (b) creating employment in the formal sector, and (c) reducing risky behaviors.

**Active Citizenship**

To enable young people to become active citizens, they need to participate in decisions that affect them increasing learning opportunities outside the formal classroom. Such involvement needs to be based on provision of adequate information, conveyed in a form and manner that is useful to them, as well as on regular consultations with youth organizations. Active citizenship also needs to be promoted through: (a) community-based initiatives that complement formal education, and impart life and livelihood skills, including core competencies necessary for active civic engagement (non-formal education); (b) opportunities for self-expression that enable them to interact in new and innovative ways, including the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT); (c) creation of avenues for inter-cultural dialogue that help in the understanding and appreciation of different value systems, promote social cohesion and build trust; (d) programs on restorative justice to help integrate juvenile offenders into society, especially given the high rates of incarceration in some ECA countries, building on the capacity of young people to be actors for positive change in society (e) awareness on rights as citizens and productive agents in the world of work; and, sharing best practices and experiences through various modalities including web-based instruments; (f) removal of constraints to the mobility of young people and promotion of exchange programs; and (g) promotion of migration as an opportunity and not a necessity, creating win-win-win strategies for sending and receiving countries as well as for migrating individuals.

**Resource Mobilization and Partnerships**

In a region where a significant proportion of youth programs are funded by international actors, it is important to ensure their long-term institutional and financial sustainability. To promote financial sustainability, it is important that adequate budgets are allocated for youth development from national budgets. Gaps in funding should filled by multi-lateral and bi-lateral funding, and by the private sector, including foundations, which are playing an increasingly important role in providing resources for program interventions. It would be important however, to ensure that resources are channeled to countries and groups with the highest needs along with the youth policy priorities identified at the country level.
Engagement with Youth Organizations

In order to promote gender sensitive youth empowerment and involvement in decisions that affect them and their societies:

- Promote and recognize membership-based youth organizations, and youth groups;
- Encouraging youth participation at different levels of the society, including development projects and programs, and through periodic consultations with youth organizations at the local and national levels;
- Promote youth participation in employers’ and workers’ organizations;
- Enable youth organizations to become service providers, responding to the needs of other young people as well as the broader community;
- Encourage young people to give back to their communities, and promote policies recognizing the value that volunteers bring to society. Promote, through continuing dialogue with civil society organizations, policy making and legislative efforts aimed at recognizing the value that volunteers bring to the economy and society.

Next Steps

- The World Bank will convey to counterparts in the ECA region the outcomes of the conference, requesting their commitment and support for youth-oriented programs,
- The World Bank and partnering organizations will assess progress in two years and explore the possibility of a follow up workshop in 2-3 years.
Annex 1: Conference Agenda

YOUNG PEOPLE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA: FROM POLICY TO ACTION

May 21-25, 2007
Radisson Hotel, Rome

AGENDA

Monday, May 21

Arrival of participants

20:00 Opening Remarks and Reception at Terrazza Caffarella, Campidoglio

- H.E. Romano Prodi, President of the Council of Ministers, Italy
- H.E. Gazmend Oketa, Deputy Prime Minister, Albania
- Shigeo Katsu, Europe and Central Asia Vice President, The World Bank
- José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director, Employment Sector International Labor Organization

Day 1

Tuesday, May 22

09:00-9:15 Welcome by Famiano Crucianelli, Undersecretary Relations with Europe, the Caucasus and CIS countries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Italy

9:15-10:00 Challenges for Investing in Youth in ECA: Conference Objectives

The proposed 2007 Conference on "Young People in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: From Policy to Action" is the first ECA-wide forum to discuss options for investing in youth. The conference will focus on (i) transition to work and (ii) transition to citizenship, which are two primary youth policy domains articulated in the WDR Development and the Next Generation. Why is investing in youth a challenge in ECA? The region presents very different demographic profiles and levels of economic development, so depending on individual situations, different countries may set other investment priorities. Nevertheless, should countries consider the worrying levels of youth unemployment and idleness (rate of out of school/out of work youth), which are common to most countries in ECA, as the determining factor in prioritizing youth investments? If so, what type of investments would be desirable to address these issues? What would be the optimal modalities to adequately address young people’s multi-dimensional needs? These questions will be addressed in two thematic sessions, respectively on youth employment and citizenship, followed by sub-regional and country discussions.

- Gloria La Cava, ECA Youth Coordinator, The World Bank
- Pierre Mairese, Director of Youth, Sports and Citizenship Department, DG Education and Culture, European Commission
- Paola Viero, Senior Expert Children and Youth Policies, Italian Development Cooperation
- Bettina Schwarzmayr, President European Youth Forum
**Plenary Session 1: A Dialogue on Youth Employment, Employability and Labor Markets**

Chair: Gazmend Oketa, Deputy Prime Minister, Albania

This session will discuss the significance of high youth unemployment in specific ECA countries vis-a-vis good economic growth throughout the region. The session will explore to what extent youth unemployment is a function of broader labor market issues or whether there are specific age-based labor market disadvantages young people are facing. The plenary session and, more specifically, the following break-out sessions, will discuss (i) what measures have been most successful in facilitating young people’s transition from school to work, and (ii) what are the most effective labor market policies to address youth unemployment, including second chance programs for vulnerable youth.

Moderator: Piero Di Pasquale, Deputy Director, Rai International
- Fizuli Alekberov, Minister of Labor and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan Republic
- Josè Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director, Employment Sector, International Labor Organization
- Mamta Murthi, ECA Education Sector Manager and former Deputy Director of the World Bank World Development Report

11:00-11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-12:30 Discussion and Q&A
- Vladimir Curovic, Association of Employers of Montenegro
- Erion Velaj, MJAFT, Albania
- Maninder Gill, ECA Social Development Sector Manager, The World Bank

12:45-13:45 Lunch with Umberto Paolucci, Senior Chairman, Microsoft Europe, Middle East and Africa

13:45-15:15 **Thematic Break-out Sessions I**
- Formal Education and Youth Employment
- Non-formal education and youth employability
- Second chance programs to integrate or reintegrate disadvantaged youth into the labor market
- Youth Entrepreneurship and Access to Financing
- The role of the private sector in the promotion of youth employment
- Youth Employment Policy and Action Plans

15:15-16:00 Coffee Break

16:00-17:15 **Report back from Thematic Sessions and General Discussion**
17:15-17:30 **Wrap-up and Conclusions**

- Next steps
- Objectives of Day 2

18:30-20:00 **Launch of the Multi-Media Art Exhibit, Complesso S. Michele**

*Inbetweeness: Balkans, Metaphors of Change*

- Danielle Mazzonis, Undersecretary, Italy’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage
- Ludovico Pratesi, Curator

This first large scale multi-media exhibit presented in Italy, includes a new generation of internationally acclaimed artists whose works reflect the social, political, and cultural changes which occurred in South Eastern Europe since the early 1990s. The overview focuses on themes like mobility, marginalization, uncertainty, cultural diversity and displacement.

20:30 Dinner at *Meo Patacca – Piazza dei Mercanti - Trastevere*

**Day 2**

**Wednesday, May 23**

09:15-11:00 **Plenary Session 2: Exercising Active Youth Citizenship**

Chair: Giovanna Melandri, Minister of Youth and Sports, Italy

The session will discuss the current definitions of active youth citizenship in the context of various institutional settings and the modalities in which it is practiced in different ECA countries. In particular, the session will focus on what are the most effective avenues to expand the opportunities for youth engagement and the most effective policies and investments through which active youth citizenship can be supported. What is the role of schools in supporting students’ engagement? What is the role of non-formal education in promoting responsible citizenship? What are the determining factors behind and the consequences of failed youth citizenship? What are some relevant good practices, particularly in the justice domain, which can guide second chance initiatives to reintegrate young people in ECA.

Moderator: Caroline Kende-Robb, Manager Social Development, the World Bank

- Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, Council of Europe, “Lessons learned on National Youth Policies in CoE Member States”
- Eduardo Missoni, Secretary General WOSM, World Organization of the Scouts Movement
- Tatiana Margolina, Human Rights Commissioner Perm Region, Russian Federation

Discussion and Q&A:

- Karoly Borbely, President of the National Youth Authority of Romania
- Jan Zlatan Kulenovic, Executive Director, Youth Information Agency, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Georg Boldt, Deputy Chair-Person, Advisory Council on Youth, Council of Europe
11:00-11:45 Coffee Break

11.45-13.15 *Thematic Break-out Session II*  
· Schools and Active Youth Citizenship  
· Citizenship development and non-formal education system: Lessons from ECA  
· National Youth Policy Development with Youth Participation  
· Local youth policies development: European Charter on Youth Participation in Local and Municipal Life  
· Promoting Social Inclusion and Cohesion: Youth media and youth engagement in accessible IT

13.15-14:15 Lunch

14:15-15:45 *Thematic Break-out Session III*  
· Development of Inclusive Policies for Youth from Ethnic and Religious Minorities  
· Development of Policies Pertaining to Youth with Disabilities  
· Youth-centered Peace and Tolerance Programs  
· Youth and Justice  
· Youth migrants, integration and citizenship  
· Art and Culture as a Tool for Youth development

15:45-16:30 Coffee Break

16:30-18.00 Report back from Break-Out Sessions and General Discussion

18:00-18:15 *Wrap-up and Conclusions*  
· Next steps  
· Objectives of Day 3

20:30 Dinner and Concert with Orchestra Piazza Vittorio at *Centrale Risto-Theatre*

**Day 3**

**Thursday, May 24**

**Investing in youth at country level: Options and challenges**

Chair: *Klaus Rohland*, Country Director for Russian Federation, The World Bank

**9:30-10:00 A Conversation on Investing in Youth at Country Level**

*During this session a conversation will take place between a World Bank Country Director and a Country Manager on investing in youth at the country level. The conversation will address youth issues and discuss options and challenges in youth investments as they relate to youth transition to work and citizenship.*

Sub-Regional Discussions on Conference themes: Transition to Employment and Exercising Citizenship

The objective of these country level discussions, organized in sub-regional groups, is to enable countries to define priorities, trade-offs and modalities of investment as they relate to youth transition to work and exercising active youth citizenship. Specifically each discussion group will address:

· What are the major youth employment related issues that you need to address in your country

· What kind of resources does your country need to successfully respond to these issues (e.g. financial, human, institutional)

· What kind of interventions have so far been employed? What kind of interventions would you like to see developed in the future?

· What does "exercising active youth citizenship" mean in the context of various institutional settings and the modalities in which it is practiced in your country?

· What kind of resources you need to better facilitate active participation (e.g. participation in community life, decision making processes at local and national levels, membership in civil society organizations) of young people in society?

· What kind of interventions can help support youth transition to active youth citizenship in your respective countries

Sub-regional groups:

Group 1
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia

Group 2
Bulgaria, Croatia, FYR Macedonia, Romania, Turkey

Group 3
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro

Group 4
Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine

Group 5
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

In parallel
Meeting of Selection Committee of the 2007 ECA Youth Conference Innovation Grants

12:00-13:30 Lunch

13:30-15:00 Consolidated Reports from Country Discussions

15:00-15:30 Coffee break
15:30-16:45  Open dialogue between young people and World Bank representatives

16:45-17:30  Joy Phumaphi, Vice-President, Human Development Network, The World Bank
            “Global Perspectives on Youth Policy and Initiatives”

17:30-18:00  Announcement of grant winners
            - Joy Phumaphi, Vice-President, Human Development Network, The World Bank
            - Martin Sandelin, Vice President CSR and Community Involvement, Nokia

18:00-18:30  Announcement of Conference Statement by young people

18:30-19:00  Revisiting the Objectives and Final Conference Statement on the
            Implications for Investing in Youth Development in ECA
            - Marta Dassu’, Advisor to Italy’s Minister of Foreign Affairs

20:00  Closing Reception

Friday, May 25th

Free day, optional tour of Rome organized by the City of Rome

Saturday, May 26th

Departure of participants
Annex 2: Summary of Keynote Speeches

H.E. Romano Prodi, President of the Council of Ministers, Italy.

Summary of Inaugural Remarks made at the Conference Reception, Monday May 21, 2007:

The Conference on "Young People in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: From Policy to Action", which opens tomorrow under the auspices of the World Bank and with the support of the Italian Development Cooperation, addresses crucial issues.

I was very curious about the "geographical" choice of this conference which has brought together members of the European Union, candidate countries, associated countries and countries linked by our Neighborhood Policy, together with countries with which the European Union must still make an effort to forge closer relations.

And I was curious because you all come from different backgrounds and experiences, and face different future prospects. But I believe that you all share the same concerns and ask the same questions.

The global challenges of our time – fighting poverty, climate change, combating terrorism and pandemics – need a far broader dimension than our narrow national confines. Alone, we are doomed to irrelevance. Together, we can address and overcome the challenges ahead.

My thoughts on this account specifically concern the young people from those countries which have just recently joined European Union. The path to ever-closer European integration is unavoidable. It is no longer an option, it is a necessity, just as the enlargement of the European Union was a "necessity".

Enlargement has brought continent-wide prosperity and well-being. It has created jobs. It has expanded the market. It has brought together what had been artificially divided in the wake of the Second World War.

And I would also like to say with the same clarity and robustness that the enlargement process must also include the Balkans. I am also personally convinced that Turkey also belongs to Europe. But I cannot conceal the fact that accession negotiations are time-consuming and complex, and that we must be patient and persevering.

The European perspective bears relevance to the countries which emerged from the break-up of the former Soviet area. My very strong advocacy of Neighborhood Policy has sought to send out a signal to countries looking to establish closer ties with the European Union but who lacked any immediate prospect of rapid accession. A policy I sum up as "everything except institutions", meaning that the European Union is ready to share programs, commitments, markets, free movement, all its policies – but not its institutions – with those countries.
Great progress has since been made in this direction. Action Plans have been agreed between the Union and all countries covered by Neighborhood Policy, both east and south of Europe.

Solid ties also link Europe and Russia through partnerships in four common areas of interest: policy, trade and economy, education and culture, as well as cooperation on immigration, justice and domestic affairs. The recent Samara Summit between Russia and the European Union may have failed to generate further progress, but I am confident that it will prove to have been a temporary setback only. Russia and the European Union are closely linked and interdependent and will soon manage to find the way to grow together.

I am particularly happy that the European Union is currently finalizing a complete and detailed strategy with Central Asian Republics. I truly hope that this will make it possible to become better acquainted with each other, multiplying exchanges and contacts.

I should not forego mention of the Erasmus Program – Erasmus Mundus especially –, open to talented young people worldwide, in that it provides another example of how Europe can successfully reach out to young people. We recently celebrated the program's 20th anniversary in Bologna, with Jacques Delors. Over one-and-a-half million students have taken part in it. In my opinion, the program should compulsory and "regionalized". Student exchanges covering the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia are among the highest-yielding investments we could possibly make in favor of younger generations.

I firmly believe Europe holds the answer to broader cooperation and to countering the threat of marginalization. Our foremost commitment must be to offer education and training, develop youth policies, create employment and job opportunities. Only by working in that direction will we be able to counter the marginalization which fuels crime, creates drug dependency and feeds religious and ethnic terrorism.

Achieving all this requires swift action. We must curb the sustained, steady flight of our younger generations' best talents – driven away in their quest for employment and by disenchantment as to the prospects of their country's future economic, social and cultural revival. That scenario we will not, and cannot, accept.

The message I would like to send out to the young people of the Balkans, Eastern Europe and Central Asia is a message of concern and solidarity. The Italian government wishes to stand by their side as we build up a more just and participatory Europe, underpinned by the shared common values of democracy and freedom, with young people leading the way.
H.E. Gazmend Oketa. Deputy Prime Minister, Albania


The participants of this gathering come from different countries, some of them are members of the EU, some are not. The issue we are discussing concerns all countries. Solutions differ from one country to another, owing to cultural and domestic issues. Solutions may well differ, but we share the same aim, by trying to move from policy to action; my hope is action will be the main focus of our meeting.

I would like to share with you the Albanian Government’s experience and efforts. Although Albania is an “old” country with an Asian history and identity, it is also a young country with 60 percent of its population comprising young people. The Albanian Government acknowledges young people as a resource in its efforts to achieve comprehensive development, to strengthen democratic standards, and to successfully face the challenges of European integration.

Last year, the Albanian Government adopted a comprehensive health scheme targeting economically deprived youth. The strategy for that scheme was drafted in compliance with the programs of the Albanian Government and the European Commission, as well as Youth in Action 2007 to 2013 guidelines, CCA and European Youth Forum recommendations.

The Government considers youth to be a real partner in governance, and seeks to co-opt direct youth action in the establishment of a democratic process. Our Government’s goals are to encourage significant levels of engagement among young people, at both the national and local level, on issues relating to youth policies in education, employment, governance, public transparency, environment, safeguarding cultural values etc. Accounting for the concerns of young people as part of the policy-making process and in drafting governmental programs, stimulates regional cooperation among young people and helps - as well as empowers - the more alienated and needy groups.

Professional and technical schools have been restructured in order to better respond to the needs of the current world market. Technical and professional schools offer their students lifetime qualifications through continuous professional training. The concept of lifelong learning has been incorporated into our 2006 education strategies. Our aim is to increase hands-on professional education by as much as 20 to 40 percent by the end of 2009. As part of our reforms we have sought to offer more in terms of technical professions and have established new professions in the fields of business, transportation, construction and agriculture.

Hands-on training in the professions and in industry accounts for a significant proportion of technical schools’ educational curricula, namely 30 to 50 percent of all learning time; the aim being to provide students with an awareness as to current state of the market. Where we have failed, it is because of businesses’ failure to understand that today’s students are the employees of the future. Despite the great work done so far, much remains to be done.
The average Albanian is 28.3 years old; that is a very positive thing in the world market. Our policies and programs targeting unemployment focus on youth employment, businesses and self-employment, professional training and their customer relations skills.

The complexity of youth employment challenges requires the cooperation and the steady commitment of government, world market institutions, employer and employee organizations and civil society. The development of young people's businesses has a special bearing on new jobs and the country's economic development. We believe that the Albanian Government will be able to face up to the challenges brought on by the integration process only by mustering the full potential of its young people, by paying special attention to enacting mechanisms that stimulate young people's attempts at opening new businesses. These measures will grant special priority to initiatives submitted by young people in rural areas and young immigrants.

The Albanian government's policies also focus on: hands-on development of business and management skills learned through education; internships; business start-up training programs; programs for young persons with handicap. In job-creation terms we look to: establishing opportunities for young people in rural areas; supporting and perfecting job skills. The Albanian Government also supports businesses by offering start-up capital, providing fiscal advice, increasing hands-on training opportunities.
José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs, Executive Director, Employment Sector, International Labour Organization


I’m especially pleased by the fact that the agenda of this conference singles out two transitions: the transition to work and the challenge of exercising active youth citizenship. These are mutually reinforcing phases of life that are crucial to unleashing the potential of young people from Eastern Europe and Central Asia as the workers of tomorrow, entrepreneur citizens and the agents of change. Young people have a lot to contribute and this is why we are inviting them and engaging them. It is a profound irony and a threat to future growth and living standards that in a region with an aging population and rising dependency, precisely the segment of the workforce that is most vital for future prosperity encounters disproportionate difficulties to join the labor market. Young people’s unemployment rates are high across the region: more than twice those of adults and, in many countries, twice the EU-15 average. Non-European Union, Central & Eastern Europe and CIS countries, have the world’s second highest youth unemployment rate, at almost 20%.

However, unemployment figures alone are not an accurate indicator: across the region, thousands of young people work long hours for low pay, on precarious or no contracts, limited job security and no say. Discouraged youths forego employment, education and training.

There is still a clear gender disadvantage in youth labor market access, particularly in South Eastern Europe. Ethnicity is also a source of disadvantage. As we well know lack of access to education and to quality jobs in the early stages of life, perpetuates a vicious circle of poverty and exclusion across generations.

These are a waste of resources that triggers heavy cost on economies and societies and represents a threat to democracy and security. Joblessness and low quality jobs have forced many youths to emigrate. The involvement of young people in the informal economy is also disproportionately high: in some countries, the absence of productive employment has pushed a growing number of young people into antisocial behavior, violence and juvenile delinquency. In others, young people are the first victims of human trafficking and the sex trade.

Therefore creating jobs for young women and men entering the labor market every year is a critical component of the path towards wealthier economies, fairer societies and stronger democracies across the region. The ILO emphasizes the importance of work as more than just earning a living; it means productive work coupled with rights, adequate income and social safety nets.

How easily and how effectively youth are able to make these transitions depends critically on how well they are prepared for the labor market, and also how well prepared the labor market is to receive them and to incorporate them. And in a region with the democratic background of
Eastern Europe and Central Asian countries - where population is expected to peak within the next 30 years - debate is both timely and needed.

Around the world many initiatives have been set in motion to address these challenges. Let me share the lessons that the ILO has learned from work in countries similar to countries in this region. A general lesson is that the productive employment and decent work for young people cannot be achieved and sustained through fragmented and isolated interventions: long-term concerted action is required, addressing a wide range of policy areas and programs. What’s required, on the one hand, is an integrated strategy for growth and job creation, and on the other, targeted interventions to help young people overcome barriers faced in entering and staying in the labor market.

The former aspect requires bolstering the link between growth and jobs. Job-creation is dependent on a wide range of economic and social policies: design, implementation and time scales greatly affect the quantity and quality of work created.

Central and Eastern Europe witnessed an economic acceleration as of the late ‘90s, but in some countries this has not led to job creation, resulting in “jobless growth”. Growth disconnected from jobs leads to widening in income inequalities and fuels social tensions. What is required are policies that increase demand for labor and increase employability.

National level microeconomic, structural and sectoral policies can increase the employment content of growth. By identifying the employment intensive sectors and sub-sectors of an economy, policies can focus on creating an environment that is not un-favorable to their growth.

Ministers responsible for labor policies from South Eastern Europe last year agreed that to avoid workers quitting agriculture improved productivity in agriculture - applying better production and commercialization methods and switching to higher value-added products – was required. That approach could apply to CIS countries as well: moving up the value chain is required, since the competitive edge of low labor cost can be wiped out by emerging competitors elsewhere. Service sector growth also offers an important avenue to creating more and better jobs across the region.

A sectoral or structural approach to growth and jobs should not mean picking winners; they require, rather, balancing interventions and incentives across relevant sectors, fostering employment quality and accelerating technological change and productivity.

Sustained economic and productivity growth is critically linked to three major factors: the capacity to diversify the structure of production, the capacity to strengthen linkages (e.g. via regional integration and the European Union), and the creation of domestic technological capacities. Economies need to dynamically diversify their agricultural, industrial and service sector activities.

Let me now turn to the second issue: how to smooth the transition of young people into the labor
market through targeted interventions. Although the public sector can play an important role as an employer, in a market economy the main challenge for governments is to create an enabling environment so that the private sector can develop its full potential, generating new investment, jobs and financing development.

A major engine for growth is entrepreneurship; promoting youth entrepreneurship can boost both economic growth and jobs. The number of youth-specific entrepreneurship programs, however, remains limited in most ECA countries. Countries like Tajikistan have already introduced entrepreneurship educational schemes into vocational training curricula. A key priority for the region should be to improve the regulatory environment, allowing business - including small and micro enterprises - to operate and to grow.

Supply-side, education and training are the foundation of future employability for young people. Education leads to trainability, trainability leads to employability; attitude and continuous learning keeps people employed. Education skills and lifelong learning are at the centre of all innovative high productivity economies.

The educational systems in most ECA countries are currently unable to handle the needs of large youth populations. The situation is especially urgent in Central Asian countries with peaking youth populations and plummeting education budgets. Governance issues are also of crucial importance.

Linking school to subsequent work – through internship and on-the-job training - can help young people enter the labor market. Career guidance, job counseling and labor market information are also crucial.

Although rather new in the region, active labor market policies are increasingly used to raise the demand for young workers and enhance their employability. ILO experiences worldwide and specifically in your region points to their usefulness and can indeed help reintegrate disadvantaged youth who need a second chance.

I cannot conclude, however, without stressing the importance of partnerships in meeting the youth employment challenge: social partners, civil society, youth groups, are key to increasing effectiveness, commitment and ownership. As the major engine of growth and job creation in most ECA countries, the private sector also has a vital role to play: public/private partnerships are proving to be a powerful complement to governmental and intergovernmental action.

At the international level, the Youth Employment Network - a World Bank, United Nations and ILO partnership – is an example of interagency efforts to strive for better coherence and coordination on youth employment. The ILO has long been active on the issues of youth employment through normative assistance. Our youth employment program looks to deliver - at both the national and international level – a strategy on expanding the knowledge base, advocacy and technical assistance.
Italian relations with the Western Balkans are a natural priority of Italy’s foreign policy. By political tradition, geographical proximity and cultural affinity, what happens in this area has immediate repercussions on our country’s foreign relations and on its stability and safety. The achievement of a balanced order across the Adriatic is also an essential element of the overall stabilization of the European continent. The prospect of a further enlargement of the European Union represents, in this regard, an important driving force.

Although we are at a stage in which both national governments and public opinions regard the possibility of any further expansion of European borders with some anxiety, we have always argued that the Western Balkans should be supported and guided from the standpoint of their future accession. The issue of young people and the European enlargement process is of the utmost importance. The crisis triggered by difficulties posed by the ratification of the European constitutional treaty will also characterize our relationship with countries who wish to join to the European Union.

The general enthusiasm of the countries wishing to join the European Union confirms the good things accomplished within the European Union. This urges us to look to the future of Europe with some optimism. Regional stabilization, economic recovery, the democratic consolidation of our institutions, the development of a cooperation policy centered on the improvement of the condition of young people and minors, with special attention to gender issues in early childhood, are our country’s main objectives and they characterize Italy’s cooperation policy.

The difficulties faced by many countries in undertaking reforms, the sensitive nature of the global challenges that lie ahead – think of Kosovo which, should we fail to solve it within the next few weeks, will be cause for great concern - all this indicates a political and institutional scenario characterized by fragility, insecurity and uncertainty in many parts of the region.

In committing to support youth policies in a region which is crucial to the continent’s stability, we should look to increase younger generations’ opportunities as they approach the market, by providing them with an opportunity to play a lead role within their social settings.

This can also be achieved by accompanying the labor transformation process, by granting young people access to credit lines for youth employment, by improving technical and managerial training and by providing appropriate services for professional and cultural growth. The economy, reconciliation and social development are three strongly interconnected issues.

But the focus of our foreign policy is not only the Western Balkans. Stability concerns heighten our high degree of focus on regions that are far from remote. Caucasian countries such as Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have great strategic, economic and cultural relevance. Fragility
in those areas stems from so-called frozen conflicts: countries such as Abkhazia, Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh are party to phenomena which over the years have sapped their energies and eroded stability.

Our Development Cooperation has contributed to the exacting job done by the World Bank with its financial support to actions that directly benefit young people. The aim of this approach is to afford young people greater say in the process of rebuilding their own countries.

I therefore hope that this conference will provide a basis for recommendations capable of influencing political and practical decisions. Italy’s Development Cooperation is willing to commit to that process. The philosophy of Italy’s Development Cooperation is that development can be achieved by investing in the young people as human capital; young adolescent women especially. Our endeavors focus of establishing legality and solidarity, as support to cultural, social and economic growth.

Such commitments require the active cooperation of stakeholders: national institutions and NGOs entrusted with youth policies, the business and industrial community, as well as larger international organizations such as the World Bank. In partnership with the World Bank, especially in Balkan region, the Italian Development Cooperation looks to establish a greater focus on promoting fundamental human rights issues.

Further priorities lie with providing recognition to the youth who are in greatest need of protection, through realistic and sustainable projects, aimed at redress the balance of economic, social and cultural marginalization. Italy’s foreign policy looks to support outstanding positive entities and constructive forces that truly wish to contribute to the development of their societies in a democratic and participatory manner.

Young people can and must be active players in this process. These countries have enormous problems – economic, social and financial problems. They also lack many things: infrastructure, an economy, and businesses. But I believe that the main problem all these countries face is their own future, the creation of their future ruling class.

It is clear that young people are a prerequisite to face the future. When I refer to ruling classes, I don't mean the political establishment but the people's ruling class – so to speak. They are a huge resource in cultural, intellectual, professional and educational terms. Addressing young people's needs should not simply imply addressing young people's marginalization, poverty and weakness: the purpose of our cooperation should also be to establish the means by which young people may build a future for their countries.

We as Italians are particularly interested in a balanced social development of the Balkans as well as more remote areas. Our investment in young people marks an extraordinary political investment and should not be considered as a show-piece: it is essential to addressing the future of those countries.
Pierre Mairese, Director of Youth Sports and Citizenship Department, DG Education and Culture, European Commission


I would like to explain a little bit what we do for young people in the European Union. I hope to help you with some fruitful ideas for the conference. We have had some success, but we also have had some great difficulties. The European Union started fifty years ago more or less here in Rome. Youth policy was not top of the agenda at the time; it was only about ten years ago that education, employment, culture and youth topped the Union's political agenda. Demographic changes in Europe have been very important.

Globalization impacts immigration issues, employment and young people. We have also witnessed a change of paradigm in youth itself, with transition periods which are longer and longer. For all these reasons we thought it was necessary and important to launch a European youth policy.

There are three pillars to our policy: firstly, active citizenship, which took off after the publication of the civil agenda White Paper in 2001. I think we are on the right path towards improving active citizenship in the European Union. The second priority is young people's social and professional inclusion: how to be an active citizen if you don't have a job? That aspect ties in directly with the 2002 Lisbon Strategy on improving growth and increasing the number of jobs in the European Union.

Frankly speaking, our achievements after five years of youth policy have not been impressive. The general feeling was that, ultimately, thanks to demographic changes, young people in the European Union could easily find a job. That is not the case, and for a number of reasons. It's difficult for young people to find good, solid employment, even in the European Union. So we added a specific chapter on young people to the Lisbon Strategy, called European Youth Pact, extending it to all 27 Members.

We are still a little bit weak on the side of results, but we started only two years ago, and time is needed in order to implement political decisions. The third pillar is dialogue with young people. Structured dialogue with young people is an essential prerequisite to European Youth Policy success. That has led to consulting with young people as stakeholders. But we want to go further. Our aim is to really involve young people in the decision-making process, to establish a two-way dialogue.

We have in all EU countries a National Youth Council. We have at the European level a European Youth Council. It’s a great asset, we can organize dialogue with NGOs and with representatives of young people at this level and we try to do that in the best possible way. But another important tool is our European program, which is substantial in terms of funding: it’s called the European Youth in Action Program.
The program looks to provide young people with a chance to engage in active citizenship and their involvement in society at large. We have other programs as well: we have Erasmus, we have the Leonardo European apprenticeship program. But the European Youth in Action Program is really dedicated to active citizenship issues and we organize exchanges of young people throughout Europe, we support youth initiatives, we have a European forum, we organize training and we support youth workers, as well as youth leadership.

An important feature of this program is that it is open to countries outside Europe. Clearly our priorities lie with our neighbours, namely the Balkans, Eastern Europe, Southeast Europe and the Mediterranean. We welcome young people from these countries in this program. Our foremost priority with regards to external action is certainly the Western Balkans, and we look to grant the Western Balkans the possibility to fully integrate in the program during the next years. Many possibilities also lie with Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. We have even established a Polish centre to coordinate such action.

About the future: frankly speaking, we are not completely satisfied with our policy. We see five key challenges for young people. The first is child poverty. The European Union’s situation is somewhat incredible considering it comprises some of the world’s richest countries. One in five children grows up in poverty. It’s a truly dramatic situation and we, the European Union, have to tackle the issue.

Our second challenge is health. We have a number of difficulties for young people regarding nutrition, physical activity, tobacco, alcohol, drugs and mental disease. Tackling poverty and health is essentially a prerequisite for future policy. More needs to be done in education. One in four secondary education graduates lacks the appropriate qualifications. We have a drop-out rate in schools which is far too high.

Concerning employment for young people: we have created seven million jobs during the last four years, thanks to the Lisbon Strategy especially; but these jobs have not really targeted young people. Youth employment is developing below par and 20 percent of active young people are without a job; some lack employment as well as education and training.

Our last challenge is active citizenship. Speaking of second chances, I think we have to give young people a first chance. We need to invest and to convince everybody that it is important to invest early in young people. In economic terms we have to invest: investing in young men and women only to ease commitments ten years down the line leaves us with no return on investment. The issues we have to tackle are social and economic in nature.

Despite our problems, I’m still quite optimistic: generations have the power to overcome these problems and I’m sure that the current generation of young people will do that. And the responsibility of public authorities is to create opportunities to establish the framework to empower young people.
To address this theme, allow me to illustrate the challenges we are discussing, by using a prominent but very average family. Let's imagine the Simpson family lives in the ECA region. Father Homer left school after finishing lower secondary level and is an industrial worker and an alcoholic. Mother Marge completed upper secondary level education and since then has been taking care of their three children - Lisa, a smart, musical third-grader who is able to adapt to different situations and is performing well in school; Bart, a fourth-grader, is a nasty little brat. He’s a low-achiever at school, but very creative and interested in experimental learning. Finally there’s Maggie, the toddler. The family lives in the small town of Springfield, in the middle of nowhere; they share a hereditary disability of having only four fingers and their nutrition is really bad. If this family was living in the ECA region, what are the challenges that Lisa and Bart would face when trying to complete their education or transition from education to work? Statistics say that as they come from a working class family from the countryside, they are both likely to endure periods of unemployment and precarious work contracts and neither will ever reach higher education.

Not only Lisa and Bart face difficulties - students from disadvantaged societal groups are, in general, more likely to drop out. There are several groups of people that are marginalized in education, and it is these groups that are more likely to leave school early or not complete their studies successfully. These groups are: students with inadequate high school preparation; students who are recipients of welfare or vocational rehabilitation program benefits; students from remote and rural areas; students who have the language of instruction as a second language; students who have a cultural heritage or lifestyle choice that is not sufficiently or accurately represented in the traditional curriculum; students with a non-academic family background; women in courses which are traditionally perceived as male - such as technical studies and science; students with disabilities; students with a lower socio-economic background; and second chance or mature students; people with caring responsibilities, particularly single parents; and also, students whose wellbeing is endangered because they are discriminated against.

Dropping out is too often seen as a failure on the part of the individual, whilst it is a failure of the system. Unfamiliarity with higher education often leads young people from deprived neighborhoods to enroll in inappropriate courses, with many students who are the first in their families to enter university, feeling that schoolteachers, guidance staff and careers services had poorly advised them. They often receive little prior information and preparation for the courses they follow. In addition there is often a lack of encouragement from the teaching staff as well as from the families. A lack of money and financial security of course limits choices and the length of time students are prepared to stay in higher education before they look for a full-time job.

Youth organizations play a vital role when it comes to reaching out to disadvantaged youth, empowering them and enabling them to speak up for their own needs, and helping to integrate
or reintegrate marginalized young people into society. We speak the same language and hang out at the same places.

**So how can we address such challenges in the ECA Region to help Lisa and Bart?**

Let’s first identify the policy approaches that the countries in the ECA Region have in common.

I would say the most dominant policy complex and approach are the Lisbon Objectives of the European Union: to become the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010, with more and better jobs and a greater social cohesion.

**Why is this EU goal relevant for the ECA Region?**

*The member states:*
First of all because 10 countries are members of the EU and have committed to achieve the Lisbon Objectives.

*Accession countries and candidates:*
Turkey, whose accession to the EU is still under negotiation, and the EU candidate countries, which include Croatia and Macedonia, receive accession support measures through a number of specific programs. However they are also expected to meet certain political, economic and fiscal criteria, developed at the meeting of the Council of Ministers in Copenhagen in 1993, and have to comply with the acquis communautaire.

*Western Balkans and Stabilization and Association Process (SAP)*
The countries of the Western Balkans have a very specific political relationship with the European Union, which is called the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). In addition to Croatia and Macedonia as candidates, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro are included in this process. These countries are granted access to the internal market of the EU and receive financial as well as political support in their internal political reform processes.

*European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)*
Furthermore, the EU has developed a so-called European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), which encompasses countries in Eastern Europe as well as the Southern Mediterranean and countries in the Middle East. Through this program the Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan receive partial access to the internal market of the European Union, favorable trade regulations, as well as financial support under the condition of the implementation of democratic and economic reforms, the rule of law and the safeguarding of human rights in their respective countries.

The political impact of the EU on the countries of the Western Balkans as well as Eastern Europe stems from the precondition for the diverse financial support measures and access to the internal market of the EU outlined above. So the Lisbon Agenda of the EU leaves its footprints in all of these countries.
Part of the Lisbon Process is also the European Youth Pact, which is providing a cross-sector approach to youth policy.

**What are the key policy areas that the Lisbon agenda is promoting?**

There are five key policy areas – all of them related to Youth Policies, the Lisbon re-launch and the Kok Report: ¹⁷

1. The knowledge society: increasing Europe’s attractiveness for researchers and scientists, making R&D a top priority and promoting the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs);
2. The internal market
3. The business climate: reducing the total administrative burden; improving the quality of legislation; facilitating the rapid start-up of new enterprises; and creating an environment more supportive to businesses;
4. The labor market: developing strategies for lifelong learning and active ageing; and underpinning partnerships for growth and employment;
5. Environmental sustainability

Let’s have a closer look at Education and Employment policies affecting youth, starting with Education, as employment can be seen as harvesting the fruits of education.

We are living in times of continual educational reform. Now, more than ever, the lines between education and commerce are being blurred. We are told that we have to be “competitive” with the American market and that to achieve this goal there will have to be “winners and losers.” These are the keywords used in promulgating the Lisbon Agenda and it seems also to be a general zeitgeist; these are the keywords used by people promoting the commercialization of Education in the name of achieving a “knowledge-based society.”

The Youth Forum strongly disagrees with this reasoning. We believe that what is needed for a true knowledge-based society is the involvement of stakeholders such as youth organizations in all processes, increased accessibility to education and committed and qualitative governmental funding and support for education institutions and students, a diversification of the student body and the recognition of non-formal education.

And this is where Youth Organizations come in to remind governments about their commitments. Youth organizations play a key role in reducing the gap between where decisions about employment and education are made and where they are implemented. We do this by being there both when decisions are made and when they are carried out. We are engaged in opening up political processes at all levels, and making them accessible to young people. Our wish and ability is to contribute with a spirit of enquiry, new thinking and competence.

**What are key concepts that become apparent when trying to become a knowledge economy?**

Innovation is the key word in the policies surrounding this knowledge economy, according to the

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¹⁷ The 2004 report of the High Level Group on the Lisbon strategy, chaired by the former Prime Minister of The Netherlands, Wim Kok.
American researcher Paul David and his French colleague Dominique Foray there are two ways innovation comes about. First, research as a formal activity generates new knowledge. Second, individuals learn by doing and thus make discoveries, which can progress knowledge. Both approaches are central to the Lisbon strategy: producing marketable knowledge and educating human resources for the labor market. Since education and research are not primary responsibilities of the European Union, the coordination of the Lisbon agenda works through management by objectives.

So for the Simpsons this would mean Lisa would be better placed in a formal setting, whilst Bart would not function well in a research institute and would for sure prefer experimental learning. But would anyone be ready to recognise Bart’s out of school learning experiences?

And how also can we stimulate innovation in the future whilst there is negative progress in basic reading and writing skills in the ECA region, as well as unpromising figures for early school leavers and completion of upper secondary education?

**What are the shortcomings of the Lisbon agenda and the difficulties for the ECA region?**

The problem of setting the agenda through diverse means instead of developing it with all partners involved on an equal footing leads to a problem of acceptance and or resistance to these policies. Non of the countries present here, with the exception of Italy, was an EU member when the objectives were set for the Lisbon Strategy.

The meanings of terms like learning, knowledge and education are losing their emancipative character; education is mainly seen as an instrument through which to improve the global competitiveness.

Management by objectives often results in shortcomings in the democratic process. For effective long-term policy-making it is imperative to involve all relevant stakeholders in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies.

Fiscal and monetary regulations are often in conflict with investments needed to achieve greater social cohesion. Most countries argue that financial constraints keep them from implementing necessary reforms in the fields of social inclusion and employability.

Unless significantly more efforts are made in the areas of early school leaving, completion of upper-secondary education, and key competences, a larger proportion of the next generation will face social exclusion, at great cost to themselves, the economy and society.

The Lisbon agenda or more generally – internationalization - is abused by policy maker as rationale for unpopular and often short-sighted policy measures.

**How can these challenges be addressed in the ECA Region?**
Where should the World Bank and the European Union work together to address the challenges mentioned so far?
Implementing national Youth Pacts with a real impact in the ECA region. A cross-sectoral approach to youth policy is the only way to address the multi-dimensional needs of young people.

Investing in education and training has a price, but high private, economic and social returns in the medium and long-term outweigh the costs. Reforms should therefore continue to seek synergies between economic and social policy objectives, which are in fact mutually reinforcing.

Creating a European Qualifications Framework, that will also focus on increasing the quality of teacher education and on adult learning. When countries are creating them – and many have committed to do so through the Bologna Process, they must foresee from the beginning the recognition of non-formal education.

The recognition of the providers of non-formal education is equally important as the investment in qualitative research on non-formal education.

Clear regulations for internships must be implemented. This concerns decent work conditions as well as the type of work, as not many get a decent job through a coffee-making internship.

The inclusion of all stakeholders in policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies is key to their success. Youth Organizations must play a formal role in defining employment, education and citizenship agendas.

Governments have to recognize the category of youth as a progressive one, the one carrying development and democratization, an investment in youth is an investment in the future of the country and its society, and an investment in co-management and power-sharing is a direct step towards the development of an open and democratic society with a sound basis for economic and social development.

Investment must be made in vocational training, civil society projects, fostering youth participation on local and national levels, development of civil society, human rights education and active citizenship.

The Youth in Action Program, the PROGRESS program and comparable programs must be given more financial resources to truly empower young people, reach out to the disadvantaged and extend the programs.

The Tempus program funds cooperation projects in the areas of curriculum development and innovation, teacher training, university management, and structural reforms in higher education. It puts special emphasis on the mobility of academic and administrative staff from higher education institutions, both from the EU and the 26 partner countries. Similar funding schemes are needed for primary and secondary education.

Creating a funding mechanism for the development of access policies as well as retention and completion strategies to widen participation in education and diversify the student body. These
policies must include multiple entrance and exit points to allow a life long learning approach and they must recognize prior learning experiences.

If these measures and similar ones are not taken, Lisa is very likely to be a teenage mum, she is at high risk of getting HIV/AIDS and despite her intelligence will never get a well paid permanent job contract. Bart will soon start to smoke, binge drink and drop out, he will be a violent and unhealthy young unemployed.

If Bart gets to be active in the scouts and his sense for adventure and experimental learning is taken care of and if those experiences are recognized he has a chance. And if Lisa becomes involved with Jeunesse Musicale and she is finally rewarded for all her efforts and finds a place in the world where she can be who she is, her future will be bright.

So it is time to get started to move from policy to action.
Fizuli Alekberov, Minister of Labor and Social Protection, Azerbaijan


The issues we are debating are top priorities for many countries in the world. As for the general situation of global employment for young people, youth employment, we fully appreciate that there are no common recipes that can be applied everywhere. In different countries in the world, different recipes are applied to integrate young people in economic life, and this is essential also to achieve other objectives such as social justice and the right to work.

The main objective of reforms in the Republic of Azerbaijan is that of improving living standards, especially those of young people, and promoting employment at the microeconomic level. In the last three years, we have grown at a hectic pace. Particular relevance has been given to creating new jobs: 535,000 new jobs have been created. Sustainable development and rising employment have reduced poverty from 46.7 percent in 2002 to 20 percent in 2006. Over the last ten years, the number of employed workers in the private sector has increased more than twofold, and in this timeframe unemployment has gone from 17.2 to 7.7 percent.

Giving priority to Azerbaijani young people in the building of the democratic state, our government has issued specific laws to implement youth policies. NGOs are particularly active on this front. In 2005, a state program was launched for young people, which includes specific actions to involve young people in the political and economic process; as part of general youth policy, a youth fund was also established. We realized that youth unemployment is a severe liability for the country.

The promotion of youth employment has to be looked at along two major lines of economic policy. Firstly we have to establish balanced labor market policies: stable micro economic development and the creation of sustainable jobs for young people are the very foundations of our country’s future. Employment isn’t always an assurance against poverty: we have to improve the way in which work is paid, we have to increase salaries and wages and consider all the other aspects related to social policies. We also need reforms in the education system; we need appropriate education policies.

Over the last few years, we have established more than 800 new schools in the compulsory education system in Azerbaijan. This system allows us to enhance the professional skills of young people through vocational training. We have hundreds of students also studying abroad right now and the Government is taking appropriate action to provide suitable employment to students returning to Azerbaijan after their studies abroad.

Another factor is the youth employment market’s lack of a stable balance between supply and demand; in which respect it differs greatly from the general labor market. Young people seeking first-time employment lack a competitive starting point; policy should be tailored around needs.
of young people. The measures which are being introduced to reduce unemployment are part of overall plans to increase employment in Azerbaijan.

The implementation of these programs have met endorsement by international organizations: the International Labour Organization has signed an agreement with Azerbaijan. Our Government attaches great importance to the health of young people. At the regional level, we have introduced a number of support centers and clinics, implementing policies to promote better health for young people so that they can also be successful in sports.

I would like to draw your attention to another aspect. Amongst immigrants, there are many young people, we know this. The development of the oil industry in Azerbaijan and other industries will allow us essentially to make sure that young people don’t leave our country to move elsewhere. We will be able to certainly keep especially illegal migration under control. Our Government is devoting great attention to the regulation of migration.

Through effective policy we look to implementing our political manifesto: 24 projects have been funded, financed by the World Bank and $1.058 billion were allocated for this; World Bank cooperation also covers youth employment projects; we have ratified 80 ILO conventions, focusing on youth employment and the European Charter. Certainly, more could have been achieved, but neighboring Armenia’s aggression has led to migration flows and great damage. We believe that interaction amongst different countries, economic integration, increases employment and reduces poverty among young people. International institutions are implementing programs for development; we can join forces and launch joint endeavors targeting youth policies in transitional economies.
Giovanna Melandri, Minister for Sport and Youth, Italy

Summary of Keynote Speech given at the Plenary Session, May 23, 2007, on “Exercising Active Youth Citizenship.”

Integration, citizenship, youth policies and youth employment. Each of these issues brings us back to crucial questions that deeply involve new generations, and it is impossible to speak of youth in Eastern Europe and Central Asia without thinking of the great, enormous, social, cultural, political and economic changes that have swept across this immense region, at times, in the traumatic form of conflict.

In the process of material and human rebuilding going on in many countries across the region, young people are the bearers of values that will form the foundations of the new ways of cohabitation shaped by respect for human rights and for ethnic, religious, cultural and sexual diversity.

We already work side by side within the European Union with many counties in Eastern Europe. Two days from now, the Council of Youth Ministers will approve two important resolutions, specifically for young people: one on equal opportunities and the full participation of youth in society; the other on future prospects for European cooperation in the field of youth policy.

With other countries in Eastern Europe we are putting in place the basis for further integration, including the future entry in the European Union, and Italy is also concluding cooperation agreements covering a variety of fields including youth, policy and sports with countries of Central Asia.

The Council of Europe itself recognises the crucial part that young people themselves have to play in developing youth policies, by exercising active citizenship, submitting their broader vision in areas where the rights and needs of young people – such as education, training, civil societies, social protection, jobs, justice – can and must seek expression.

Italy just very recently appointed a Minister of Youth to assert the centrality of young people in developing policies for the country. This is why we have developed a National Youth Plan, which consists of a package of policies fleshed out in coordination with other ministers and conceived to increase the autonomy, emancipation and responsibility of young people.

In terms of new reforms in the pension system, in the labour market, in the access to housing, we are looking at these reforms with the eyes of new generations.

At the international level – the Balkans and South Eastern Europe especially – international cooperation can perform a fundamental role in realising projects that target youth, and with a particular focus on those most vulnerable and at risk, exploited on the undeclared jobs market, or underpaid and underage, or in the vice of illegal immigration.
We can already do something concrete right now by promoting democracy and youth participation, councils, youth forums, participation in institutional decision making.

In this country we have already seen the results of promoting this very large movement from grassroots, from a local basis. We sponsored a conference, some months ago, with all local youth councils. They shared their idea of connecting themselves - and their ideas - with the decision making processes at the local level.

I also want to, briefly, relate to the extraordinary importance of sports as a factor in social promotion and integration, and in promoting the values of respect and mutual understanding. In recent years UN agencies, international sports federations, NGOs and citizens groups have included sports among their strategies for action in support of development, peace and democracy.

In the area of youth integration we recently set up, together with the Ministry of Interior, the first ever youth consultation for religious and cultural pluralism. This consultative committee has involved the participation of youth representatives of different religious communities.

We, in this country, are in the process of defining our own model of integration, looking for the Italian way to integration. And what I can tell you is that these consultative committees helped us very much in defining identity, citizenship, women's rights issues and how we handle religious symbols as well as other critical issues.

Several governments and the United Nations are looking at this experiment with great expectation and I believe that our model can be usefully exported elsewhere.

Let me conclude with a new proposal: a house of inter-culture and global-ness, a place where different cultural expressions meet in a continuous and fruitful exchange where young people can discover opportunities to learn and to become aware of different realities. A place where they can debate issues such as international cooperation, environment, gender, ethical and sustainable development, youth and female entrepreneurship and micro-credit.

A house open to everyone, where young people can envision their own futures. I think the time is now right for us to make this project a reality.
Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture & Heritage and Youth & Sport, Council of Europe

Summary of Keynote Speech given at the Plenary Session, May 23, 2007, on “Exercising Active Youth Citizenship.”

I would like to pick up from the themes that were presented in the papers distributed by the World Bank, and I would like immediately to share with you the analysis made by the World Bank, the feeling that in crisis societies “the young generation usually pays the highest price.” Overwhelmed by political fights or by daily survival, adults neglect to educate, socialize, integrate and empower the young. In the long run, however, societies, as a whole, suffer when a fragile, disenchanted youth embraces extremist ideologies, or simply wastes its capital of health, knowledge and productivity, or when it simply leaves the country in search for a better life abroad.”

The excellent studies carried out by the World Bank ring brutally the alarm bell for youth in South Eastern Europe and in North Caucasus, but are also a wake-up call for many other countries. South Eastern Europe has long been a magnifying glass for Europe’s contradictions, privileges and clashes. Concerned with youth, their development, their education, their well-being is no exception. Everywhere in Europe the impact of globalization and jobs and salaries has widened the gap between generations. But in South Eastern Europe the effects of war, economic demise and ruined welfare states have left young people even more affected by joblessness and poverty than their peers in the West. Demographic imbalances and rampant individualism have moved children and young people to the bottom of the political agenda almost everywhere.

For Europe’s aging societies’ medical care and pensions schemes seems more important than education and job opportunities for the young. In south eastern Europe, years of “survival mode” during conflict and post-conflict disintegration have left young people to their own devices and with few possibilities for having their voices heard. All countries experience problems with literacy, school attendance and the acquisition of skills required for the knowledge economy, but in South Eastern Europe political disillusionment and the perceived lack of opportunities have also made young people extremely vulnerable to school dropout, drugs, violence and crime. Many of these concerns are equally valid for the other countries that are the focus of this conference. It is urgent to take the measure of the problems and do something about them.

I would therefore like now to introduce the Council of Europe approach to active youth. Our modern individualist societies have lost some of their capacities for long term vision. Adequate youth policies, however, require a long-term vision and investment in youth as a vital resource for the societies of tomorrow. The Council of Europe, the human rights watchdog and policy think tank for 47 European countries, an organization with long experience and exemplary achievements in the fields of youth, education and social cohesion, has developed a body of knowledge and a pioneering methodology for developing such forward-looking youth policy.

The Council of Europe’s core mission in youth policy is to enable young people to be active
citizens and to establish the conditions necessary to enable them to play this role successfully. To accomplish this, youth policy has to fulfill four main objectives: firstly, ensuring young peoples’ well-being; secondly, providing young people with adequate tuition; thirdly, ensuring young peoples’ inclusion; fourth and lastly, empowering young people to participate.

The Council of Europe is known for the work it has carried out on national youth policy reviews. Since 1987 the Council of Europe has implemented national youth policy reviews in 16 countries. Countries party to the review process include Central and Eastern European countries: Albania, Romania, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary and Armenia.

Which policy domains were examined by these reviews? First of all, education and lifelong learning policies. Secondly, labor market opportunities, health, housing, social protection and family policies, as well as leisure and culture. A shortcoming of these reviews is a lack of focus on issues concerning young people and crime, prevention strategies, early detection and intervention policies.

The main policy domains and key youth policy issues tackled in our national reviews are: participation and citizenship, countering social exclusion, multicultural societies, minority and mobility issues, as well as safety and protection, and equal opportunities.

I would like briefly to mention another very important program: the program on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights, now running in its seventh year. It was established at the express will of heads of state and government of our member states when they met at their second summit, marking a clear political promise to invest time and energy in educating our young generations. In 2005, national committees were established in all member states, and this enabled us to place considerable emphasis on the need to transmit the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, together with other values such as equity and solidarity to the young generations. Democratic systems cannot exist without democratic culture, and this program is of enormous significance on that account.

Whether we live in the Western part of Europe or in the Eastern part of Europe, we are characterized by two kinds of divisions: socio-economic and cultural. And the issue at stake nowadays for our member states is to assess the complexity of our multicultural societies and to ensure that we tackle inequalities and discrimination, and establish proper dialogue between different peoples, communities, to foster stability, trust and social cohesion.

The Council of Europe is preparing the first ever White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. We are at the end of the consultation process and will submit the draft after the summer. The White Paper will try to illustrate the importance of tackling socio economic and cultural divides on the one hand, and submit Council of Europe recommendations on dialogue and young people on the other.

The Council of Europe is also running an ‘All Different - All Equal’ initiative, for which an important event is coming up in a few days’ time with the participation of young people from the Mediterranean area, not just from Europe. I welcome this event as a very strong contribution from the Italian Government to the ‘All Different – All Equal’ campaign.
Eduardo Missoni, Secretary General, World Organization of the Scout Movement

Summary of Keynote Speech given at the Plenary Session, May 23, 2007, on “Exercising Active Youth Citizenship.”

The story of Scouting is now a long story, it’s a hundred years old. We’re just entering our second centenary; which we will celebrate on the 1st of August: a hundred years of building citizens of the world. And the story started with 20 boys taken from different social environments, the richest and the poorest of London, brought to a ‘Scout Camp’ on small island in the Channel by Lord Baden Powell, on August 1, 1907. Just one year later the founder made this experience available to young people in a handbook, and by chance this book was called ‘Scouting for Boys, a Handbook for Instruction in Good Citizenship’. We understand that this book, after the Bible, is possibly the most translated book in the world.

So what is scouting? It’s a non-formal educational process. It’s based on a value system. It’s not just educating towards something, but it’s educating inside the framework of a value system, a value-based framework. But you cannot propose education if you don’t offer a vision. And scouts have a very clear vision for creating a better world. And it’s not just about a richer world, it’s about a world where human beings can live better together, everywhere and with everybody.

Recent studies show the importance in non-formal education of having a method. This 2003 study says: “The most relevant implication for the development of citizenship education projects is that action can be a powerful learning tool, but only if it is intentionally designed and systematically supported. It means not just a project for once, you need a process, a lifelong process, just like education is on the long term”.

And this is what we have in scouting. We have a method which is unique. There is no other organization in the world which bases its method on a strong personal lifelong commitment, a promise and a promise.

Among the values which are included in our educational offer to young people in Scouting, we feature duty to others; the other two being duty to your spiritual development and to bettering yourself as a citizen. Duty to others involves loyalty to one’s country, promoting local, national and international peace, understanding, cooperation and participation.

Over the past decade we have sought to establish scouting in ECA countries, but have met - and continue to meet - with a number of difficulties. But there should be no reason why it shouldn’t work there, as it worked in Europe and the rest of the world.

We submit that the young must face up to the challenges of our present times, and we act on that via our Global World Project, debated at both local and world levels. Project management is not our work, however. Our work is the project of life, and it lies with turning young people into committed, adult citizens. Our core business is lifelong education. We do conduct projects,
however, some of which are devoted to building citizenship.

From a global perspective we could look at the Hong Kong’s jail Scouts: we train Scouts in prison, promoting offenders’ reintegration. In El Salvador we work towards bringing together rival gangs leading to a demonstrable 80 percent reduction in student-related violence. We carry out similar projects in Bulgaria.

The World Scout Jamboree is a gathering of thousands of young people, who don’t just come together for a rock concert, they come together to live together for ten days, bringing together all the cultures, all the religions, where they really talk, and learn how to live together. We like to see diverse people and bring them together because we like a world where we are all different but all equals.

This year’s Jamboree will be the Centenary World Jamboree: young girls and boys, with their leaders, come to live together, a unique experience where they will pray together in their different languages, in exchanging their different faiths, learning how their food tastes are different and how they do the same things in a different way, sleeping in the same camp, singing the same songs, marching together, taking part in activities, adventures and challenges together. And each one of these young people, when she or he will be back in his country, in his community, will be the best ambassador of the importance of diversity and the importance of scouting to becoming committed citizens.

But then we face the problem of evidence. We had a long discussion with the World Bank, when we started to discuss our participation in this interesting conference, and they say, okay but where is the evidence for non-formal education? After a hundred years you must have proven evidence. We know it works, unfortunately we’re not researchers, and unfortunately Scouts have a kind of a private saying: “don’t tell the good you do, the good turn you do everyday, you keep it to yourself”, this is the good part of scouting - and that’s why we never show off how good we are, but we realize that society today wants us to put forward evidence.

So let me tell you an old story of an African girl called Korbia. Korbia once – eleven years old, twelve years old – was facing the big decision of making the scout promise. So she prepared for a long time, her patrol leader – we work in small groups – so an older peer of hers – fifteen years old – was telling her how important this moment in her life was. So Korbia studied, prepared for her scout promise. And at one point she goes to her Troop Leader, Victoria, a member of the African regional council, and said, “Victoria, I will not make my promise.” And Victoria, surprised, “Why, it’s the most important thing in your life?” Korbia said, “I thought things through, I read carefully, and you know, it says I have to be loyal, I have to be trusted, I should always be optimistic; I have to always help others”, enumerating all the values of scouting. “I cannot do it. I live in the street and I’m a thief. I take from others to live. I cannot be trusted.”

But scouting works miracles. Her leader, Victoria, said “You see, Korbia, scouting is not about obeying a law, you have to do your best, your promise is to do your best to obey the law. You make your own project of life. It’s a challenge.” Korbia made her promise the very same day and today is a group leader in scouting, fully integrated into society. That is the measure of scouting. That is our evidence.
In education, symbols, belonging, are important. You learn, you are part of the educational process. But then, all at once, you stop education, you become an adult. You are supposed to be ready to contribute as a fully committed citizen. You have to make decisions, and choose whether to put your learning into practice. It is very important moment, a time of departure. In Scouting, you may leave your group, but you are always a Scout. You may remember a man called Neil Armstrong who landed on the moon: he was a scout. The scouting badge in my office sits beside a picture of Armstrong; that badge was on the moon. Need I mention that President Chirac, or President Clinton, and a number of parliamentarians, including Minister Melandri, were also scouts?

So this is also evidence for us. Now let me conclude with a proposal: the pursuit of evidence will be part of our centenary World Congress. The World Congress will be held in Geneva, and will tackle the issues of non-formal education and scouting’s contribution to non-formal education, and we will try to put together all the available studies, and submit the evidence that demonstrates the importance of non-formal education to our societies.
Tatiana Margolina, Human Rights Commissioner, Perm Region, Russian Federation

Summary of Keynote Speech given at the Plenary Session, May 23, 2007, on “Exercising Active Youth Citizenship.”

What are the conditions that must be created in the [Perm] region in such a way that young people of 14 to 30 years of age can feel their dignity, can feel they’re active participants? When we talk about school, work, political activity, young people must become real actors, real players; they must bear their responsibilities.

How can we empower them? How can we make them feel responsible for what is happening today, so that they can become dignified members of our societies tomorrow? Young people in our region understand that being active is a quality of youth. Activity can be of a different nature, it can be a productive and constructive activity; it can also be a destructive activity, such as that of offenders.

We must create the conditions in each region so that young people have a chance to participate in local and state government, especially through elections. The region needs to support its non-governmental organisations. We are doing this work in the Perm region and we intend to achieve this objective by carrying out social initiatives with the involvement of young people. This approach would make regional authorities responsible for young people. They need to take on responsibility for their families, their jobs and building a career for themselves.

Our businesses and employers often contribute to providing young people with the opportunity to express their ideas, to implement their projects, both at the local level, through competitions, as well as at the national level. It is fundamental that we support youth initiatives, and it is a major part of our policy.

One youth action programme called ‘Do Something Useful’, engages young people in specific, concrete activities in their cities or villages; these activities lend great visibility to concrete initiatives; they help change the life of the whole society. Our region is witnessing the rise of youth and student movements; a whole system has been set up – we have a registry of youth NGOs, and there’s also a system to finance all these projects – and the number of these organisations currently stands at around 400. Previously our initiatives for young people were addressed to young people, whereas initiatives for young people now are being organized by youth themselves.

Among our many youth initiatives I would like to highlight a major initiative, supported by many people in the region called ‘My World without Hostility’. Small pieces of cloth are stitched on a large sheet to form a world shape, a kind of world framework, harmonising social relations at the national level that enables us to become more understanding of others; the fact that young people are now taking on the responsibility of creating this climate of social understanding and solidarity is extremely significant.
From a social standpoint, we are openly addressing the problems faced in our region by young people. Take family problems and children, for instance. The figures provide a clear picture: the issue is a significant one as far as our region is concerned. Alcohol and drug abuse are a major problem among younger generations: it’s a loss to society. Young people not involved in building a life for themselves end up in jail.

Political participation has grown significantly over the past four years; the number of young people running for office has risen 17-fold. 2006 may have marked a reduction in the share of young persons running for office, but that is offset by a larger sample. A look at the overall picture shows that the extent of young people’s active engagement is encouraging. But what can we do to increase the effectiveness of youth action?

Firstly, we need an information system, a system whereby young people can be informed about their rights and opportunities available within the region as well as outside. They need to know what is going on in the world.

Secondly, we need to tackle the problems holding back young people from successful transition to adulthood: housing for young people in our region is a major problem. An ad hoc regional and federal programme is needed.

Thirdly, we need to establish an ongoing communication platform, a regional forum for young people. The engagement of young people enables adults to understand a number of problems concerning young people, enabling us to create new methods with young people.

This is the first year that we are implementing a dedicated course on citizenship for young people. It was hard at first, but thanks to positive pressure the course is now taught in schools. Our hope is that through this programme we can provide answers to the question of what it means to be a Russian citizen. The issue at hand is “what are the consequences of taking responsibility for yourself, your family, your country and the world as a whole”. Young people need to be educated towards taking on responsibility and being accountable: these issues are relevant to our youth policies and to the national agenda.

I also think that we should seriously rethink our approach to young people: we shouldn’t repress them. Repressive culture, surprisingly, is also a characteristic of our youth culture: young people view that a mistake deserves to be punished. We need to change this repressive approach: we need to be more understanding. We should provide help to young people rather than repress them.

And I would like to sum up my approach from this standpoint. I firmly believe that, in each region, at the regional level there has to be a dedicated policy that can change the situation of young people, make them feel more confident about their possibilities and their future, they must become real and active subjects. It is unfortunate that this takes longer than we would like it to.
ANNEX 3: 2007 ECA Youth Innovation Grants Competition

In connection with the ECA Youth Conference, the World Bank (Children and Youth unit of the Human Development Network and the Social Development Department's Small Grants Program in partnership with the ECA Region) with the support of Nokia organized a Youth Innovation Grants Competition and showcase for young people in the ECA Region. The competition was open to registered youth NGOs and groups of young people aged 15-24 working in partnership with a registered youth NGO.

Objective:
The main objective of the competition was to identify and support innovative and sustainable small-scale projects developed and implemented by young people, for achieving better opportunities and outcomes for the young people (aged 15-24) in their i) transition to work and ii) active citizenship and participation. The showcase of the finalist projects during the conference aimed at (i) emphasizing and demonstrating the potential and importance of youth as active participants in development; (ii) showcasing good practices; and (iii) providing opportunities for participants to interact and share ideas in an environment conductive to building partnerships and acquiring new sponsors.

Structure:
The competition was composed of two parts:
1st round, which took place prior to the conference in which proposals from all over the ECA region were submitted to compete for the small grants (a total of 183 proposals were received). A group of technical experts from inside and outside the World Bank reviewed the eligible proposals (129 in total), and selected 20 proposals for the finals, 10 from each of the two categories. The finalists represented 10 countries in the ECA region: Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kyrgyz Republic, Macedonia, Moldova, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

2nd round and showcase. The 20 young representatives of the finalist proposals were invited to Rome to the conference, where 17 of them (as 3 could not make it) showcased and presented their projects to the ECA Youth Conference participants and to a competition jury. There were two high profile juries (one for each theme) of 5 members, including World Bank, Nokia and Italian Development Corporation representatives as well as youth representatives from the European Youth Forum and the World Bank Youth Advisory Group. The juries visited the showcased booths, interviewed the candidates individually and evaluated each final proposal. Those 3 finalists who couldn’t make it to Rome were also given an opportunity to present their projects and answer questions from the jurors via telephone.

Training and Knowledge Sharing:
The finalists attended the general conference events and break-out sessions. In addition, they received special training during the conference in proposal writing, grant management
project management. The World Bank Small Grants Program and coordinators from the country offices went through each project proposal with the respective finalists and helped them review and revise the project budgets.

Grant Recipients:
The two juries selected ten winning proposals, five in each category, to receive up to 10,000 Euros to implement their respective projects, depending on their revised budgets.

In Transition to Active Citizenship / Participation Category, the grants were awarded to:

- **US$12,707** to the project "We Want To Be Heard" by the organization Centre of Cultivating Dialogue, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The purpose of this project is to give youth an opportunity to be heard and to communicate directly with authorities on their concerns and problems through five major TV debates between the young people and relevant authorities, designed and organized by young people. In addition the project will facilitate several training work-shops, discussions and school debates.

- **US$13,041** to the project Comics Journal by the organization "Initiative Group of Youth" with partnering organization "Youth of 21 Century", Tajikistan. Creating a comics journal on topics of concern to young people such as reproductive health, human rights, corruption and tolerance, which are typically not openly discussed in the society. Young people of different backgrounds will be involved in the development and collection of materials for the journal, and it will be distributed widely in the schools around the country.

- **US$12,442** to the project PeRLA (Personal Radio Legal Adviser) by Students’ Trade Union Organization of International Institute of Labor and Social Relations, Belarus. Developing a youth led radio program broadcasted throughout the country and corresponding web-page to discuss current youth issues and problems and share professional legal advice on relevant topics. The purpose of this project is to ensure active and informed participation of youth in social life. It also provides young people involved in the project implementation with an opportunity to gain their first job experience.

- **US$9,310** to the project Imam Petlju! (Having What It Takes!) by Youth Red Cross Ilidza and NGO GARIWO, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Imam Petlju bus tour will visit major cities and towns throughout the country with a youth organization team from each locality traveling on the bus, and youth-led social awareness and networking events taking place in each city stop. The purpose of the project is to inspire young people to improve their society and expand the youth movement in the country.

- **US$7,271** to the project League of Young Leaders by Youth Volunteer Organization "Leadership", Kyrgyz Republic. The purpose of the project is to educate youth on local governance issues, develop productive local youth structures and facilitate the creation of discussion/dialogue space. This will be done through the creation of a youth league, as well as by helping to create school clubs and providing training on participation in community policy making, creating a monthly discussion forum between village youth leaders with local government officials and facilitating TV broadcasts.
In the “Transition to Work” category the grants were awarded to:

- US$ 13,300 to the project “Circus as a Bridge from Streets to Society” by NGO Upsala-Circus, Russia. Assisting adolescent and youth from social risk groups to reintegrate into society through involvement in social circus work. In addition to circus training and psychological and social skills training the young people will receive career guidance and tutoring for school finals and entrance examinations. They will be engaged into charitable circus performances to improve their level of social responsibility and to realize their potential.

- US$ 13,300 to the project “Smooth Transition to Inclusive Employment: Youth Entrepreneurship Connection” for Trafficking Prevention of Institutionalized Youth by Bulgarian Network for Child and Youth Trafficking Prevention, Bulgaria. The purpose of this project is to provide an entrance to the labor markets to young orphaned or disabled graduates lessening their vulnerability to human trafficking. Creating Public-Private partnerships to train graduates on entrepreneurship through different training events and platforms and a business idea contest. The project also provides campaigning and advocacy for community and institutional support for youth entrepreneurship.

- US$ 11,239 to the project New Skills for New Working Challenges by the organization CEREBRA, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The purpose of the project is to enable youth in BiH to compete more successfully in the labor market and find jobs by promoting non-formal education as a supplement to formal education, and improving participants’ “internationally recognized soft skills” that meet the employers’ demand. Young people will be provided life skills training and workshops, as well as career guidance. The program is initiated and organized by young people who have earlier received similar training.

- US$ 13,258 to the project Employment for disabled children and youth by the organization "Hayot Ishonchi" ("Trust in Life"), Uzbekistan. The purpose of the project is to provide 30 girls with limited abilities / disability and 30 healthy girls from deprived families between ages 15-24 integrated skills training on four professional directions such as sewing and ceramics in order for them to find employment opportunities and be able to better integrate into the society.

- US$ 13,111 to the project Employment for Young Orphans by NGO Tighina Volunteer Center, Moldova (interviewed over the phone). The Purpose of this project is to help young orphans from the Bender town boarding school for orphans in Moldova to increase their employment opportunities through theoretical and technical employment training provided to them by the local enterprises.

The jury members were extremely impressed by the quality of all the proposals and therefore decided to grant all the remaining finalists smaller awards in the amount of 2,000 Euros, to either implement part of their proposals or submit new youth targeted project proposals. Nokia will provide the additional funding, and the World Bank Small Grant Program will manage the grants.
Conference participants who visited the showcase were also given a chance to vote for the best project. The popular vote winners, one in each category (from among those who did not win full grant funding) were both awarded 1,000 Euros. The winners of popular vote were:

- Center of Intercultural Dialogue from Macedonia (in transition to citizenship category)
- Organization O.I.K.O.J.O.T.I. from Bosnia-Herzegovina (in transition to work category)

**Outcomes and Next Steps:**
In addition to the grants received, the competition spurred other positive outcomes in the form of plans to start a network by the young finalists, plans for collaboration and combined projects across the region, interest from sponsors, as well as interest from other participating countries for the young people to come and present their ideas in their respective countries.
Plans are also being made to further develop the youth grant competition and make it part of the World Bank's offerings across all the regions.
ANNEX 4: In-Betweeness Exhibit. The Balkans: Metaphor of Change

During the last decade a series of large scale exhibitions have been organized to present work by artist from the Balkans whose art explores the complex process of transformation that has affected this region since the beginning of the 1990s. The INBETWEENESS exhibition – subtitled “The Balkans: Metaphor of change” – was the first large-scale presentation of artists from the Balkans in a single institutional space in Italy. It provided a panoramic view of artistic practices that have emerged in recent times, focusing primarily on the younger generation of artists who mainly live and work from their home countries.

The exhibition was jointly organized by the World Bank, the Development and Cooperation Office of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Space Italia, Fondazione Guastalla, and Energie, to coincide with the Conference on Young People in ECA: From Policy to Action. The official sponsor of the exhibit was Unicredit Group. The curators of the exhibition were Dobrila Denegri, Art Director of nKA/ICA Belgrade, and an independent curator associated with the Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome; and Ludovico Pratesi, Director of the FUTURO Cultural Association in Rome, and Art Director of the Center for the Visual Arts Pescheria, Pesaro.

In-betweeness as a concept: The concept that informed the exhibition – INBETWEENESS – implies a condition of being between two places: one of departure and one of arrival, or between past and present. It is a state that resonates powerfully with the inherently transitional condition of youth. It also captures the Balkans’ identity as a border region that has been a meeting point of East and West for centuries, all too often in the form of bloody conflicts. In-betweeness can also be understood as a state of mind, a psychological condition or an existential state, as well as a legal status.

In-betweeness also alludes to the notion of a multiple identity, one that combines the cultural characteristics of one’s place of origin with those of a place of residence. A common theme of the exhibit therefore is the exploration of difference. The curators described the exhibit as a chorus of different voices from the region, expressing multiple points of view. The art, they added, displays a state of uncertainty, of identity in flux, which reflects not only the condition of youth, but the circumstances of the region in which these young artists live and work.

The different works of art in the exhibit touch on a range of issues from nomadism, mobility, marginalization, cultural diversity and displacement. Each work is an entry point to a different story, and the style of expression in each is very different, sometimes dramatic or touching, occasionally ironic or seeped in humor. The complex and contradictory realities of the Balkans are rendered in a variety of forms, from video installations, to painting, photography, and sculpture.

Young artists from the Balkans: The artists, most of whom are in their 20s and 30s, were chosen because they represent in their artwork the abrupt and dramatic process of change experienced in their countries over the last 20 years. A slight generational difference is apparent in the artists’
work. The older artists’ work has been shaped by the events that marked the first half of the 90s - the fall of the Berlin wall, war in the former Yugoslavia, and the beginnings of the economic and political transition in the region. The work of the younger artists, those who came of age during the last decade, has been shaped more by the social and economic impacts of early democratic processes. There are stronger notes of detachment and humor in their work.

The artists were Maja Bajević, Maja Beganović, Pavel Braila, Mircea Cantor & Gabriela Vanga, Nemanja Cvijanović, Nezaket Ekici, Nicu Ilfoveanu, Pravdoljub Ivanov, Sejla Kamerić, Daniela Kostova, David Maljković, Ebru, Özseçen, Adrian Paci, Tobijas Putrih, Anri Sala, Erzen Shkololli, son: DA, Mića Staicić, Jelena Tomasević, Slavica Tosevska, Nikola Uzunovski, Vesna Vesić, Natalija Vujosević.

The location: The exhibition took place in the powerfully evocative space of the Complesso de Ex Carcere del S. Michele – the Former Juvenile Detention Center of the San Michele Complex; an interesting example of 18th century correctional facility architecture and a strikingly unique space for an art exhibition.
ANNEX 5: Background Paper

YOUNG PEOPLE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA:
FROM POLICY TO ACTION

May 21-24, 2007
Rome, Italy

The World Bank
Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region
May 14, 2007
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary ...............................................................................................................110

Introduction ........................................................................................................................117

I. Youth Employment, Employability, and Labor Markets ...............................................118
   Economic and demographic background .................................................................118
   Educational preparation for the job market ............................................................121
   Youth unemployment and joblessness .................................................................122
   Active labor market policies .......................................................................................126

II. Exercising Active Youth Citizenship: A Holistic Approach .........................................128
   Challenges and opportunities for active youth participation in ECA ......................129
   Developing capabilities for youth engagement as active citizens .........................131
   Addressing failed citizenship through second chances .........................................135

III. The Case for Integrated Youth Policy: Concluding Remarks .....................................141

References .........................................................................................................................144

Appendix 1. Figures ...........................................................................................................156

Appendix 2. Suggested Areas for Youth Investment .........................................................164
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This conference discussion paper examines the challenges faced by young people in the Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region in their critical transitions from school to work and citizenship. It is intended to set the stage for the discussion at the World Bank conference “Young People in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: From Policy to Action,” to be held in Rome from May 21 to 24, 2007.

In ECA countries with peaking youth populations and those due to peak within the next 20 years—Moldova, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Tajikistan—the “demographic dividend” described in the World Development Report 2007 can be reaped only if adequate investments are directed to the generation now coming of age. Even in countries in the region where the peak in the youth population has already occurred, many states are currently undergoing a relative boom in the numbers of young people in to the population. In aging societies of the region, young people remain a precious human asset for sustaining national development, both in terms of the economic growth process, pension systems and social cohesion.

While transition to a market economy and open political systems opened up a range of potential opportunities in ECA, they have also led to a series of specific disadvantages for young people. Youth unemployment and joblessness (i.e., youth who are out of school and out of work), have emerged as serious problems since 1989, and pose potentially very high costs to societies in the region. Formal education and training systems have been slow to adapt to the changing requirements placed on them by the rapidly changing economic environment. It is of concern that despite economic recovery in the region, secondary school completion is far from the norm in many parts of the region, and too many young people are out of school and out of work. The region faces the very real risk that this trend could act as a brake on growth, leading to increasing poverty at home, illegal migration or worse still, local conflict.

On the political citizenship front, young people have been major players advocating for positive social and political change in the ECA region through their participation in democratization processes, peace and tolerance movements and anti-corruption efforts. However, they have been subsequently unable to influence any significant, lasting institutional renewal process. As a result, they are experiencing growing disillusionment with the citizenship opportunities available in their countries. Failed citizenship opportunities in the region can be seen, among other consequences, in rising youth crime and incarceration rates, labor migration patterns and human trafficking.

The damage arising from mounting youth expectations in the region and the failure to accommodate these expectations is likely to have long-term consequences. It is therefore imperative to refocus attention, concrete actions and investments on young people in ECA. National policy makers at the conference are invited to consider the following questions:

- What are some of the useful initiatives being undertaken in your country to address youth employment and citizenship?
- What does your country need to better address youth employment and citizenship?
- What areas in your view require further attention?
- What kind of specific interventions would you like to see developed in the future?
- Is there any other youth specific data and/or information you would like to share with conference participants?
Youth Employment, Employability, and Labor Markets

Overall, the youth populations of the EU-NMS countries peaked in the twentieth century. However, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are now either experiencing this peak or will soon reach it. Turkey and Tajikistan, moreover, have the youngest populations in the region and will reach this peak in 2020 and 2035, respectively. Certain other regions in ECA, such as the Northern Caucasus republics of the Russian Federation and Kosovo in SEE, also have growing youth populations.

Although enrollment in secondary education is increasing in almost all ECA countries (with the exception of Turkmenistan and Tajikistan), many countries have not returned to their 1989 enrollment levels, particularly in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Completion rates for secondary education throughout the region are, however, a serious problem. In many areas of ECA, young people complain of the irrelevance of their education, claiming it does not prepare them for the job market. Secondary school students in particular complain of poor teaching skills, inappropriate teaching materials and methods, and corruption in the school system. Vocational and technical education (VTE) in the region is also not adequately preparing young people for the school-to-work transition. In Southeast Europe as a whole, for example, 90 percent of vocational school graduates reported in 2003 that they had been unemployed one to five years upon graduation.

Against the background of low national employment rates (Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and, above all, Poland, Turkey, and Macedonia have employment rates of under 60 percent), the labor force participation of young people has been falling throughout the region since transition. Of note, the participation rate of young women is falling more than that of young men. At the same time, youth unemployment rates are very high in the ECA region, particularly in Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Armenia, Poland and Slovakia. Relatively low youth unemployment rates in European (and some non-European) countries of the former Soviet Union reflect the different approach in the CIS to the negative labor demand shock in the early 1990s, which emphasized wage, and not employment, adjustment.

Youth joblessness (i.e., youth neither in school nor in work) provides a broader and more accurate indicator of youth labor market problems than the unemployment rate alone. This indicator includes all young people who are not in some sort of “productive” or “useful” activity. Specifically, it captures a potentially substantial group of people who are not actively seeking work but would do so if conditions in the labor market improved.

On the whole, there is a significantly higher rate of joblessness among young people than adults in the ECA region. In Southeast Europe, more than 35.6 percent of the youth population fit this description in 2001. In the Russian Federation, youth joblessness in the republics of the North Caucasus runs two to seven times the national average. It is precisely discouraged young people who are most in need of intervention in terms of education, training and/or Active Labor Market Policies in order to assist their entry into the labor market. The following groups of disadvantaged young people in ECA face the greatest difficulties:
· Young Women. While young men almost never face a significant gender-based labor market disadvantage, young women regularly do. For the most part, young women in the EU countries face unemployment rates that are slightly lower than for young men. In CIS countries on the other hand, young women tend to have higher unemployment rates than young men.

· Ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups. In Bulgaria and Kosovo, for example, youth unemployment and joblessness rates are roughly twice as high for Roma than for other youth. In Romania this is true for the jobless rate, but not for open youth unemployment. A similar disadvantage holds for Muslim young people in the North Caucasus republics of the Russian federation. Rural youth in the poorer countries and disabled youth also face greater jobless rates.

· Young people with low and/or inadequate education and skills levels. Education and job skill levels are the key characteristics that determine the success of young people on the labor market. Young people in Bulgaria who have no more than primary education, for example, are more than four times more likely to be jobless than those who obtained at least some post-secondary education.

· Young people working in the informal sector. Such evidence as does exist universally suggests that the involvement of young people in the informal sector is disproportionately high. In Serbia, for example, the incidence of informal sector employment amongst young workers at 52.1 percent is around twice as high as for adults (25.9 percent). Moreover, for young people with little or no education, the incidence of informal sector employment is even higher (86.4 percent). Growth in the informal economy, moreover, means that a growing number of young workers do not enjoy labor code protections and are not adequately protected against health risks and old age.

Active Labor Market Policies

While youth unemployment is strongly influenced by aggregate economic factors, there is significant room to affect youth labor market problems more directly with youth-oriented policies. Active Labor Market Policies (ALMPs) in ECA have, for example, played a fundamental role in filling the gaps left by insufficient initial education and training systems, which have been slow to adapt to the changing labor market. Evidence suggests, moreover, that ALMPs have been more successful in ECA than in the USA and EU-15.

Labor market-based training is the most common form of ALMP for young people in the ECA region. The most effective ALMP for young people overall appear to be programs which involve work experience combined with training. Other programs that have been shown to have positive effects include wage subsidies (or more generally, financial incentives to firms), programs that promote start-up businesses for youth, guidance and counseling on available employment alternatives, and job search assistance, particularly Internet-based.

Exercising Active Youth Citizenship: A Holistic Approach to Youth Development

With the ongoing enlargement of the European Union in May 2004 and January 2007, the
political, geographic and economic interdependence of the region has reinforced a more pervasive EU presence throughout the ECA region. EU initiatives such as the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), the “Youth in Action” Program and a Development Cooperation and Economic Cooperation Instrument (DCECI) are currently helping to build youth capacity in the region. One of the core principles of youth policy elaborated by the Council of Europe is that of co-management, which supports the structured involvement of youth organizations in the design and implementation of youth policies, in partnership with local, national and international bodies.

Given poor economic opportunities, many young people in the European Union new member states (NMS) and non-member states alike are experiencing growing disillusionment with the citizenship opportunities offered in their own countries. To address this disillusionment, sizable budgets and adequate institutional capacity is needed to coordinate youth policy across sectors and monitor outcomes.

Youth programming across the ECA region can be maximized by establishing systematic linkages among local and national authorities, NGOs and the private sector. The European Youth Forum, in its capacity as the European umbrella youth organization that represents the youth constituency of most member countries of the Council of Europe, is already working to strengthen the role of National Youth Councils. Other youth fora, including youth parliaments, that have emerged at national and local levels throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia are also allowing youth to influence public policies and legislation that affect their lives.

In a region where most programs on youth civic training and youth participation have been initiated and heavily funded by international actors, it is important to ensure the sustainability of youth initiatives by developing and formalizing grassroots initiatives that can be taken forward by local youth civil society. Much could be done to expand young people’s skills for life, work, sports and leisure through youth-friendly spaces with an emphasis on local, low-cost solutions accessible to a large number of disadvantaged youth. It is important, however, that such interventions be rigorously evaluated so as to allow for dissemination of the outcomes on young people based on empirical evidence. Good practices in creating grassroots youth organizations can be seen in the Kosovo Youth Network (KYN), the Youth Information Agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina (OIA) and the newly created Babylon Youth Centers Network in Macedonia.

**Addressing Failed Citizenship through Second Chances**

Policies that help young people overcome adverse circumstances and negative outcomes, referred to as “second-chance” policies, are very much needed in the ECA Region. Unproductive citizenship outcomes have various dimensions—young people can turn to crime and religious extremism, or become marginalized or victims of violence. Poverty is often a common denominator of these dimensions.

One of the most visible costs of unproductive citizenship outcomes is the rising number of young people in conflict with the law across the ECA region. In some cases, the number of juvenile
offenders increased by over 100 percent in the first six years following transition. The International Center for Prison Studies had, for example, identified the highest rates of incarceration of young people in the world to be in the Russian Federation, followed by Belarus, Ukraine and the United States. The social and economic costs of youth crime are increasingly relevant region-wide.

Alternatives to predominantly retributive models of criminal justice, such as restorative justice programs that focus on accountability, are gaining visibility and acceptance in the region. Despite the adoption of legislation and procedures in support of restorative justice in certain countries, there are significant challenges to the adoption of such programs in the ECA region as a whole. International experience shows that for second-chance policies for youth to be effective, legal and judicial reforms need to make provision for a range of specific mechanisms, among them specialized youth police units and specialized juvenile magistrates.

State institutions can be more effective at reaching out to vulnerable youth when they enter into partnerships with non-governmental groups, the private sector, and other civil society and community organizations. These groups are often highly effective at mobilizing resources and community networks, and may more readily inspire trust and confidence among young people.

Amidst the vacuum left by declining state-supported youth services, the risk of adverse citizenship outcomes is particularly tangible for young people in certain areas of the Caucasus and Central Asia, where youth “bulges” persist and young people may become attracted to militant Islam. These circumstances call for an urgent conflict-prevention strategy centered on teenagers and youth in certain areas of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Such a strategy should include targeted interventions that offer free services in remedial education, support to youth engagement in community life, non-formal education, leisure and sports, and active labor market interventions to support work-based training and youth entrepreneurship. Development of this conflict-prevention strategy should also involve active collaboration with religious institutions in the targeted areas.

Labor migration is directly affecting citizenship outcomes in the ECA region, incurring high social and economic costs that are felt not only by the young people directly affected, but also by the economies of the sending countries. For children born to labor migrants abroad, these risks are compounded by the legal and social risks associated with low rates of birth registration among undocumented migrants and, subsequently, a lack of legal identity in their country of residence. Lack of a birth certificate may, for example, prevent a child from being enrolled in school. Later in childhood, identity documents can help protect children against early marriage, child labor, premature enlistment in the armed forces or, if accused of a crime, prosecution as an adult.

The consequences of youth being displaced as a result of conflict are also adversely affecting life-long outcomes for youth in the ECA region. There is consequently a need for interventions both locally, to identify needs and create sustainable opportunities in settlement camps, and nationally, to enhance youth-positive impacts of settlement planning and management.
Large numbers of young people in the ECA region are also being displaced against their will for exploitation in forced labor, begging, and the sex trade. The human and social cost of trafficking calls for massive and concerted prevention efforts by all affected states. Interventions also need to be developed or scaled-up to address the reintegration needs of large numbers of victims, whose plight is often exacerbated by law enforcement agencies or social services that are ill-equipped to address their special circumstances.

Another minority group whose participation in social and economic life is restricted by discrimination are youth with disabilities. Discriminatory attitudes and practices exclude disabled children from attending school and benefiting from other forms of social support and interaction, ranging from leisure activities to employment training. Social inclusion for disabled youth has been supported through sports programs. Where available, the Internet has also proved an invaluable tool for promoting the social, intellectual and emotional development of youth with disabilities and facilitating communication among them, as well as their active participation in broader social movements.

**The Case for Integrated Youth Policy**

Any strategy to facilitate the entry of youth into productive employment must be centered around a strategy for growth and job creation as a whole. Nevertheless, specific investments are recommended to enhance youth integration into the ECA labor markets, even for aging countries with relatively smaller youth populations, so that young people can contribute more efficiently to economic growth and the pension systems of their respective countries. These investments include specific Active Labor Market Policies that have proven successful or promising, and youth programming centered on building skills for life, work and the exercise of active citizenship.

These targeted investments should be made part of a national integrated youth policy in individual ECA countries, complete with a monitoring and evaluation system to measure their impact. Investing in education to raise its quality and relevance is an essential pillar of youth policy in ECA, especially for countries with high rates of secondary school leaving. Active Labor Market Programs and citizenship initiatives should be regarded, however, as a much-needed complement to—not a competitor of—investments in secondary and tertiary education for several reasons. These investments can:

- reach out to young people who have dropped out of school;
- help develop a range of extracurricular activities and experiences that were discontinued in many countries during the early 1990s, but are nevertheless in high demand among young people;
- offer jobless young people opportunities for constructive use of their time; and
- help stem youth out-migration from the region; and, where relevant, reduce the attraction of radical Islam among out-of-work/out-of-school Muslim youth.

In addition to available bilateral funding, domestic budgetary resources and/or World Bank grants could also be matched by private philanthropy from corporations and foundations that have developed a focus on youth development. Donor coordination with the private sector, whose philanthropic donations are already much higher than IDA grants, will become ever more
important to ensure that grant funding reaches countries in the region with the highest needs.

When we discuss “youth” we usually dwell on their problems, but this report focuses on the promise of youth and how policies can help youth fulfill their potential, which in turn can improve the quality of active citizenship and employment in the ECA region. Losing the young generation in this region to poverty and unemployment is not inevitable if national policy makers and international actors alike make investing in youth an urgent priority.
INTRODUCTION

Most of today’s youth cohort in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA) was born between 1985 and 1995, a time with many monumental changes, including the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), the Romanian Revolution of 1989, the disintegration of Yugoslavia (1991), the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) and the transition from a centrally-controlled state to the beginning stages of a market economy and open political systems. During these transitions, government institutions and political arenas altered dramatically. Where once the socialist “cradle-to-grave” system of guaranteed jobs and education was commonplace, the emerging political economies now offer few guaranteed social entitlements. Following the collapse of the socialist system, a majority of the state and party-sponsored youth programs throughout the ECA region also dissolved. These are the common denominators of young people’s experience in this diverse region.

The 29 countries in the ECA region are difficult to compare for many reasons—they are dissimilar in their economics, demographics, politics, ethnicities and religious affiliations. For example, the peak of the youth populations in ECA for the most part occurred in the last century. This is true of all the new member states of the European Union (EU-NMS) and of South Eastern Europe (SEE), save Turkey. In 2025, one in five Bulgarians will be more than 65 years old and the average Slovene will be 47.4 years old, among the oldest populations in the world (World Bank 2007b). On the other hand, in several ECA countries or sub-regions—for example, Kosovo, the North Caucasus and Central Asia—the youth population is currently reaching its peak. In the younger ECA countries, what the 2007 World Development Report refers to as the “demographic dividend” can be reaped only if adequate investments are directed to the generation now coming of age (World Bank 2006h). But even in aging societies, young people are a precious human asset for sustaining national development, both in terms of the economic growth process, pension systems and social cohesion.

While transition to a market economy and open political systems opened up a range of potential opportunities, they have also led to a series of specific disadvantages for young people. Youth unemployment and joblessness (which refers to out-of-school/out-of-work youth¹⁸), have emerged as serious problems since 1989, with potentially very high costs. Formal education and training systems have been slow to adapt to the changing requirements placed on them by the rapidly changing economic environment. It is distressing to note that despite economic recovery in the region, secondary school completion rates are very low. Too many young people are out of school and out of work. The region faces the very real risk that this trend could act as a brake on growth, leading to increasing poverty at home, illegal migration, or worse still, local conflict.

On the political citizenship front, young people have been major players advocating for positive

¹⁸ In some studies, this phenomenon is identified as idleness.
social and political change in the ECA region through their participation in democratization processes, peace and tolerance movements and anti-corruption efforts. However, they have been subsequently unable to influence any significant, lasting institutional renewal process. The damage arising from mounting expectations and the failure to accommodate these expectations is likely to have long-term consequences. It is important, then, to refocus attention, concrete actions and investments on the young generation in the region.

The timing for developing an ECA-wide approach to youth engagement is good, given growing interest in youth economic and social well-being across national-level policy makers in Europe and ECA. A recent report by the Bureau of the European Policy Advisers, for example, calls for a “renewed investment strategy” that entails a comprehensive set of long-term social investments “by the young themselves, their parents, local communities, schools, sports clubs, various layers of governments and other stakeholders,” especially the private sector (Barrington-Leach et al. 2007). There are two important implications emerging from this study: (i) the social and economic costs of not investing is much higher than investing early in the life cycle, (ii) a multi-dimensional investment strategy is required as “school-based learning and apprenticeship are no longer sufficient to last the whole life-course” (World Bank 2006h).

This report aims to provide a rapid overview of the key issues to be addressed at the conference in on Young People in Eastern Europe and Central Asia: From Policy to Action in Rome, Italy, from May 21-24, 2007; one of the first regional conferences to discuss key aspects and recommendations of the World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation, as they apply to ECA countries. In particular, it focuses on young people’s challenges and opportunities in ECA relating to (i) youth employment, employability and labor markets and (ii) exercising active youth citizenship¹⁹, which are especially problematic areas for the young people throughout the region. In other words, the report specifically addresses the critical transitions of young people from school to work and citizenship.

I. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT, EMPLOYABILITY AND LABOR MARKETS ²⁰

Economic and Demographic Background

The transition to a market economy in ECA led to substantial industrial restructuring, followed by deep recession in most ECA countries. By 2005, the EU-NMS countries had all recovered their 1990 levels of GDP. SEE countries were largely slower to recover—Serbia and Montenegro²¹ above all. Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Macedonia, are also still suffering the effects of internal turmoil and conflict. In the CIS countries, the recession was much longer and deeper. Relatively few countries have yet recovered their 1990 levels of GDP, however, signs of recovery are now clearly visible.

¹⁹ The other main transitions discussed in the WDR, related to formal learning and health, have been more systematically covered by specific sector conferences, including the ECA Education conference in Saint Petersburg held in October 2006.
²¹ Although the two countries are now separate entities, until recently they composed a single administrative unit and so for the purposes of statistical reporting, information is generally presented for the two countries as a single entity.
Compared to EU-15 countries, employment rates in the region are relatively low, however, there is great variation. Among EU-NMS countries, only Slovenia is above the EU-15 average of 65.2 percent, although the Czech Republic and Estonia are also very close. At the other end of the scale, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and, above all, Poland and Turkey, have employment rates of under 60 percent. Poland is more than 12 percentage points below the EU-15 average and over 17 percentage points away from the Lisbon 2010 target of 70 percent. Turkey fares even worse with an overall employment rate of 43.7 percent.²² In the rest of SEE, the performance is also poor. Macedonia has an employment rate which is little more than 30 percent and even the best performing country, Croatia, is still ten percentage points below the EU-15 average.²³ In the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the picture is apparently somewhat better.

In the European states of the former Soviet Union (CIS-EUR), only Moldova—at 46 percent—is struggling with a low employment rate. However, since the situation in the CIS in part reflects low-productivity employment rather than a buoyant labor market, the conclusions to be drawn from this number are less than encouraging. In Russia and Ukraine, recent signs of a recovering employment rate are notable. Although employment rates tend to be relatively high in the states of the Caucasus and Central Asia (CIS-CCA), the trend is clearly downwards in these countries, with the exception of Kazakhstan, where revenues from oil are linked to climbing employment rates in the new millennium. This trend reflects the ongoing process of substantial industrial restructuring linked to the transition itself.²⁴

The maintenance of employment levels despite recession in some countries reflects the tendency to keep people in low-productivity jobs, which is another major element of the ECA employment picture. Whereas even the poorest performing EU-NMS countries have now more than recovered their pre-transition productivity levels, the countries of the former Soviet Union—with the exception of Belarus and Armenia—clearly have not. This fact reflects the slower approach to reform adopted in the CIS, which, as noted, maintained low-productivity employment. SEE lies somewhere in between. Croatia and, particularly, Albania have seen sustained productivity growth over the last decade or so, whereas Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro are still some way from recovering their pre-transition performance. Turkey displays a pattern more familiar outside the ECA region, with a general upward trend in productivity.

Overall, the youth populations of the EU-NMS countries peaked in the twentieth century, but the populations in Turkey and Central Asia are just now peaking or will do so over the next 30 years. As Table 1 shows, Tajikistan has the youngest population in the region—its youth population will peak in 2035, followed by Turkey, whose youth population will peak in 2020.

²² Figure is for 2004 for the population above 15 years of age (ILO-KILM database).
²³ Although here, too, one might note that information for Macedonia is taken from the ILO’s KILM database which reports, for this and some of the other countries in the region, employment rates for the 15+ population which would tend to underestimate slightly the rate in comparison with EU country data based on 15–64 year olds.
²⁴ At this point, some data issues should be raised. As far as possible, an attempt has been made to maintain data comparability across countries. However, this has a cost. The figures on trends in employment rates are taken from the Transmonee 2007 database, which defines the working age population as 15–59, and consequently reports employment rates for that age group. The EU standard definition of the working-age population is 15–64, which leads to a significant difference in the rates reported for 2005. In EU-NMS countries, for example, employment rates of 60–64 year olds are in the region of 10–20 percent. One might also note that the substantial year-on-year variability in the employment rate, particularly in some CIS-CCA countries, may well reflect data reliability problems in addition to substantive trends.
In addition, a number of Central Asian and Caucasus states are now either experiencing this peak or will soon reach it: Azerbaijan in 2007, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan in 2008, and Uzbekistan in 2009. Certain other regions in ECA, such as the Northern Caucasus republics of the Russian Federation and Kosovo in SEE, also have growing youth populations. (See Figure 1 in Appendix 1.)

Table 1. Many countries in the CIS are just reaching their peak in youth populations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year of peak in relative size of youth population</th>
<th>Average annual growth rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2005-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EU-NMS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>-3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>-1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>-3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>-3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>-2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>-2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>-1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia &amp; Montenegro</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CIS-Eur</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>-4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>-3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>-4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>1976</td>
<td>-4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CIS-CCA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>-3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>-2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>-2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>2035</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkmenistan</strong></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Extracted from Lam (2006, appendix B).
Note: Countries shown in bold are those that have reached or are about to reach their youth population peaks between 2000 and 2010. Countries peaking after 2010 are shaded.
Educational Preparation for the Job Market

The educational systems in most countries in ECA, which are already under pressure to deliver the skills required by the labor market, are currently unable to handle the needs of large youth populations in the region. The situation is especially urgent in Central Asian countries with peaking youth populations, where education budgets have been significantly reduced (ICG 2003).

Although enrollment in secondary education is increasing in almost all ECA countries (with the exception of Turkmenistan and Tajikistan), many countries have not returned to their 1989 enrollment levels, particularly in the CIS-CAA. Enrollment levels in EU-NMS countries are, however, significantly higher than in the rest of the region.

Enrollment in secondary education is on the increase throughout almost all the region, but secondary school completion is still far from the norm in many parts (see Table 2). There is a huge divergence between the EU-NMS and SEE countries (apart from Croatia) regarding the Lisbon target of secondary school completion. In EU-NMS, the indicators on early school leaving and secondary attainment are generally positive, with several countries, including Croatia, having already reached the Lisbon 2010 objectives. In SEE and to some extent in Romania and Bulgaria there is more cause for concern. In Albania and Turkey, the majority of young people aged between 18 and 24 years have not completed secondary education. In addition, secondary school completion rates in the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation (specifically, the republics of Chechnya, Dagestan and Ingushetia) are substantially lower than the national average.

Table 2. Not completing secondary education is a serious problem in SEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2005</th>
<th>% of 20-24 year olds who have completed upper secondary education</th>
<th>% of 18-24 year olds who not completed secondary education and are not in education or training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lisbon target for 2010</td>
<td>00:00.0</td>
<td>10:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-15 average</td>
<td>01:00.0</td>
<td>17:03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-NMS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>05:00.0</td>
<td>21:04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>03:00.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>09:00.0</td>
<td>14:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>03:00.0</td>
<td>12:03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>08:00.0</td>
<td>11:09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>02:00.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>00:00.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>00:00.0</td>
<td>22:07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>05:00.0</td>
<td>5:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>06:00.0</td>
<td>4:03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>09:00.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>02:00.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11:04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>05:00.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: European Commission (2006a) all countries, except Albania, Bulgaria (early school leaving), Romania (early school leaving), and Macedonia (ETF, 2005); and, Bulgaria and Romania (secondary completion), Eurostat (2007). Croatia, Serbia and Turkey (European Commission 2006b).

Note: The table reports data for 2005 except for Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania (early school leaving) and Macedonia—all 2004.

In order to raise levels of human capital among young people, EU countries have established the Lisbon targets for education: by 2010, at least 85 percent of 22 year-olds should have completed upper secondary education, and early school leaving, measured by the percentage of 18-24 years olds having achieved lower secondary education or less, should stand at no more than 10 percent. (For practical purposes, the statistic reported by Eurostat inter alia is the percentage of 20-24 year olds who have completed secondary education).
In many areas of ECA, young people complain of the irrelevance of their education, claiming it does not prepare them for the job market. Secondary school students in particular complain of poor teaching skills, inappropriate curricula and teaching materials and methods, and corruption in the school system. In many cases, the line between paying education fees and bribery has become blurred (ICG 2003), with gifts for teachers, informal payments to teachers and schools, and outright bribes (to secure a place in university, as well as to take departmental exams) common practice.

Vocational and technical education (VTE) in the region is also not preparing young people for the school-to-work transition. Even though reform of vocational training is well advanced in the EU-NMS sub-region, particularly in Hungary and Slovenia, high numbers of vocational secondary school students continue to drop out and/or subsequently become unemployed. In Southeast Europe as a whole, 90 percent of vocational school graduates reported in 2003 that they had been unemployed one to five years upon graduation (World Bank and UNICEF 2002). Similar findings have been documented for vocational graduates in Turkey, with 22 percent of vocational school graduates aged 20 to 24 unemployed (World Bank 2006g). In Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2001, adults 25 and over who had attended vocational/technical schools were significantly less likely to be employed than those who had attended general secondary education. Their hourly wages and earnings also were significantly lower (LaCava, Lytle and Kolev 2006).

At the same time, enrollment rates in tertiary education have generally been increasing throughout the ECA region, although the gap between EU-NMS countries and the rest of the ECA region has widened. In Slovenia, for example, enrollment in education is close to universal, right through to the tertiary level. At the other end of the scale, less than 10 percent of 18–24 year olds are enrolled in tertiary education in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan; the figure for Turkey is higher, at 29 percent.

Youth Unemployment and Joblessness

The labor force participation of young people has been falling throughout the region since transition, with the participation rate of young women decreasing more than that of young men (see Figure 2 in Appendix 1). In the case of the European countries of the CIS, reduced youth labor force participation was discernable well before 1989. In Moldova, however, the participation rate of young people fell hardly at all between 1991 and 2005. In Russia, there was a rapid decline between 1990 and 1992, and a more gradual fall subsequently. In CCA, the pattern is somewhat varied. Across the region there was a fairly substantial drop in participation between 1990 and 1992. Two countries, Georgia and Tajikistan show a fairly constant decline over the 2 decades leading up to the new millennium. The other countries, with the exception of Armenia, demonstrate very modest declines in participation over the quarter century.

27 Many studies and results from international tests, such as TIMMS and PISA, have highlighted concerns about the quality and relevance of education in ECA countries, including the quality of inputs as well as the quality of learning outcomes for students. See World Bank (2005d).
28 See, for example, ETF (2003a) for a recent review.
29 UNESCO database.
30 The figures reported in this section refer to young people aged 15 to 24 years.
31 ILO-KILM database.
Youth unemployment rates are very high in the ECA region (see Figure 3 in Appendix 1). In the EU-NMS countries, Poland has a youth unemployment rate of nearly 40 percent and Slovakia, slightly under 30 percent, although the rate in both countries is decreasing. As a whole, the ten new EU member states had an average youth unemployment rate of 30.4 percent in 2005, which is almost twice that of the EU-15 average of 16.7 percent (European Commission 2006). In SEE, youth unemployment rates in Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro have oscillated in recent times between 60 and 70 percent. In the European CIS countries, youth unemployment rates are much lower. In 2005, they varied between 15 percent in Ukraine and 18.8 percent in Moldova. In the CCA countries, there is substantial variation in rates, with Armenia hovering around a rate of 60 percent.³² In Turkey, where the youth unemployment rate was 19.3 percent in 2005, the picture is more similar to the European CIS countries.³³

Relatively low youth unemployment rates in European (and some non-European) CIS countries reflect the different approach in CIS to the negative labor demand shock in the early 1990s. Specifically, in CIS countries, the primary response was through wage adjustment, not employment adjustment (Boeri & Terrell, 2002, Rutkowski, 2006). Particularly, but not exclusively, in these countries youth unemployment rates are a rather limited indicator of youth labor market difficulties.

Youth joblessness (i.e., youth neither in school nor in work) provides a broader and more accurate indicator of youth labor market problems than the unemployment rate alone.³⁴ Recent attention has focused on discouraged young workers who are excluded from youth unemployment statistics. How this group is defined varies, but it usually includes all young people who are not in school or employed.³⁵ The indicator is useful because:

- it includes all those young people who are not in some sort of “productive” or “useful” activity, specifically, it includes a potentially substantial group of people who are not actively seeking work but would do so if conditions in the labor market improved. Arguably it is precisely these discouraged young people who are most in need of intervention in terms of education, training and/or Active Labor Market Policies in order to prevent them from becoming entirely detached from the labor market;

- it gives a sense of the size of youth labor market problems in relation to the youth population as a whole. It is perfectly possible for youth unemployment rates to be very high but, if labor force participation is very low, it affects only a very small proportion of the youth population. The youth jobless rate is an indicator of the incidence of youth labor market problems among young people as a whole.³⁶

³² There is also, despite attempts to maintain comparability, variation in the definitions and reliability of the figures. This particularly affects the figures from Armenia.
³³ ILO-KILM database.
³⁴ The extent to which the youth unemployment rate is a sufficient indicator of youth labor market problems has increasingly been questioned over the last decade. See, for example, Bowers et al. (1999), Fares et al. (2006), ILO (2006), Kolev & Saget (2005), O’Higgins (1997, 2001 & 2003), Ryan (2001) and World Bank (2006h).
³⁵ In their exhaustive paper on youth labor market disadvantage in South Eastern Europe, Kolev & Saget (2005) report, in addition to the more standard indicators, both the broad ILO unemployment rate and the youth joblessness rate.
³⁶ Thus, for example, if almost all young people continue in education until they are 24, then even if the youth unemployment rate is very high, the youth jobless rate will be low. One might argue consequentially that this is not, strictly speaking, an indicator of “labor market” problems among young people. The debate is ongoing. The authors would argue that it is, at the very least, a useful additional indicator of youth labor market problems—or possibly, more accurately, school-to-work transition problems—for the reasons given above. Precisely this type of reasoning has led the European Commission to include the youth unemployment ratio (i.e., youth unemployment narrowly defined as a percentage of the youth population) in addition to the youth unemployment rate amongst the standard indicators reported in its Employment in Europe annual reports.
On the whole, there is a significantly higher rate of joblessness among young people than adults in the ECA region (see Figure 4 in Appendix 1). In Southeast Europe, more than 35 percent of the youth population fit this description in 2001 (LaCava, Lytle and Kolev 2006). In Turkey, youth labor participation rates have been falling for some time and the slow growth in job creation in recent years has particularly affected the young (World Bank 2006d).

Youth joblessness appears to be positively related to the size of the informal sector in a country. Figure 5 in Appendix 1 plots the rate of joblessness against the extent of the informal sector, as measured by the share in GDP accounted for by the informal sector in ECA countries for which data is available. The relationship is clearly positive, albeit not very strong. However, it suggests a fruitful area for further investigation, given that recent studies suggest the existence of a substantial informal sector, particularly in CIS countries.³⁷ In Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Ukraine, the informal sector is estimated to be larger than the formal sector and in a number of others—Armenia, Moldova and the Russian Federation—almost as large as the formal sector. Throughout the ECA region the informal sector is larger than the OECD average. Moreover, without exception, it is on the increase.

It has been increasingly recognized that policy attention needs to focus on disadvantaged groups of young people who face the greatest difficulties in their labor market entry.³⁸

Who are the “disadvantaged youth” in the ECA region?

· **Young Women.** While young men almost never face a significant gender-based labor market disadvantage, young women regularly do. For the most part, young women in the EU countries face unemployment rates that are slightly lower than for young men. In CIS countries on the other hand, young women tend to have higher unemployment rates than young men. In Turkey, young women’s unemployment rates were consistently lower than those of young males from 1998 through 2005, when the two rates converged at 19.3 percent. However, the labor force participation rate of young females in the country is less than half that of young men (30 percent versus 67 percent).³⁹ A similar situation is apparent in the North Caucasus republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria of the Russian Federation, where the labor activity rates for young women are all below 50 percent—well below the Russian national average.⁴⁰

· **Ethnic minorities and other marginalized groups.** Although data on the unemployment of minorities is fairly thin on the ground, Kolev and Saget (2005) report that both youth unemployment and joblessness rates are roughly twice as high for Roma—one of the most disadvantaged ethnic groups in the region—than for young people as a whole in Bulgaria and Kosovo.⁴¹ In Romania this is true for the jobless rate, but not for open youth

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³⁷ See, for example, ILO (2002a, 2002b) and the ILO-KILM database.
³⁸ See, for example, Bowers et al. (1999), Godfrey (2003), OECD (2003), O’Higgins (2001) and Quintini & Martin (2006).
³⁹ ILO-KILM database. A significant number of Turkish women who are not working are also not looking for employment. The extremely low participation rate of women in the Turkish labor force is about half of the OECD norm and holds in all age categories, but is most striking in the prime-age group (25–34 years). See World Bank (2006d).
⁴¹ Although it might be observed that here the disadvantage reflects more the general disadvantage of Roma as a whole, rather than a specific disadvantage of Roma youth. Ivanov et al. (2006) show that while Roma as a whole have much higher unemployment rates (and much lower wages) than their majority counterparts, young Roma do not face significant additional disadvantages. The unemployment rates of young Roma are less than one-and-a-half times those of adults—less even than Latvia.
unemployment. La Cava and Michael (2006) find a similar disadvantage for Muslim young people in the North Caucasus republics of the Russian federation. In Chechnya, for example, young people are more than five times as likely to be jobless than in the Russian federation as a whole. In Ingushetia, the figure is seven times. Another dimension of labor-market disadvantage is observable among rural youth in the poorer countries of the region, who face greater jobless rates than their urban counterparts. Kolev and Saget (2005) also point to the additional labor market disadvantages faced by disabled young people.

· **Young people with low and/or inadequate education and skills levels.** Education and job skill levels are the key characteristics that determine the difference between success and failure of young people on the labor market. Kolev and Saget (2005) found that young people in Bulgaria who had no more than primary education were more than four times more likely to be jobless than those who had obtained at least some post-secondary education.²² They also found that youth joblessness is strongly correlated with poverty. Guarcello et al. (2005) observed a similar pattern with respect to both education and poverty in Georgia, suggesting that this trend is not limited to SEE. It is worth noting here that rising employment and wage differentials between more and less educated young people emerged across the region in the early 1990s. Returns to education have risen fairly rapidly, particularly early in the transition, as have differences in the employment prospects of those with more or less education. This is particularly evident if one looks at jobless youth.

· **Young people working in the informal sector.** Although employment figures for the informal sector broken down by age are not generally available at an international level, such evidence as does exist universally suggests that the involvement of young people in the informal sector is disproportionately high. In Serbia, for example, the incidence of informal sector employment among young workers at 52.1 percent is around twice as high as for adults (25.9 percent).²³ Moreover, for young people with little or no education the incidence of informal sector employment is even higher (86.4 percent): almost nine out of ten young people with low levels of education who manage to find work in Serbia do so in the informal sector. Similar results have been found for other countries. In Georgia, for example, 76 percent of young workers are employed in the informal sector as opposed to 57 percent of the employed as a whole (Bernabè 2002). Growth in the informal economy, moreover, has seen a rise in the number of young workers who do not enjoy labor code protections and are not adequately protected against health risks and old age (LaCava, Lytle and Kolev 2006).

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²² Although less marked in other countries, Kolev and Saget (2005) find a similar pattern also in other countries in South East Europe.
²³ World Bank (2006c).
Active Labor Market Policies

While youth unemployment is strongly influenced by aggregate economic factors, there is significant room to affect youth labor market problems more directly with youth-oriented policies.

Active Labor Market Policies (ALMPs) in ECA have played a fundamental role in filling gaps left by the failure of initial education and training systems to adapt to the changing labor market. They are likely to continue doing so for some years to come. Evidence suggests, moreover, that ALMPs have been more successful in ECA than in the USA and EU-15 (Betcherman et al., 2004, 2007).

Labor market-based training is the most common form of ALMP for young people in the ECA region (Betcherman et al., 2007). The most effective ALMP for young people appear to be programs which involve work experience combined with training. On the one hand, the training component remedies the lack of employable skills of school leavers while on the other, the work experience component provides direct links with employers and the world of work. Such programs are relatively uncommon as yet in ECA, however, all of the three comprehensive programs considered by Stravreska (2006) seem to have had positive impacts on employment prospects.

Wage subsidies, or more generally, financial incentives to firms, have also been used to promote the employment of specific groups, such as young people. Such subsidies must, however, be implemented with care. In each case, the key question is: does the subsidy create new jobs that would not have existed in its absence? For obvious reasons, it is difficult to ensure this is so and such programs have often been criticized on the grounds that they are a relatively costly way of increasing overall employment with a low level of net job creation. However, careful targeting of both direct recipients (firms) and the ultimate beneficiaries (new employees) can mitigate this problem. Stavreska (2006) finds that all 7 wage subsidy programs (for which outcomes were available) considered in her study had positive impacts. While a net impact evaluation with cost-benefit assessment was undertaken in only one case, this suggested that the program was also cost effective.

Although programs that promote start-up businesses for young people are relatively few and far between in the ECA region, a recent study found that overall, such programs have highly positive effects (Betcherman et al. 2007). The number of such interventions is small, which impedes the drawing of general conclusions. Certainly, policies aimed at overcoming the additional barriers that young people face in establishing their own businesses appear to be popular with the young people themselves (La Cava, Lytle and Kolev, 2006) and should therefore be piloted and evaluated to create a larger body of evidence so as to allow for scaling up these programs.

ALMPs that offer a guidance and counselling on available employment alternatives have

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44 Evaluated principally on the basis of gross as opposed to net outcomes.
proven to be relatively cost-effective interventions for young people and often obviate the need for more expensive work-oriented training. More and more, ALMPs also include an element of job search assistance. Given that jobs in most ECA countries, particularly in the CIS, are largely filled through informal contacts of relatives and friends or through direct recruitment by firms, the establishment of and access to Internet based job-seeking services may contribute towards a more even playing field. One major obstacle faced by many countries, however, is the basic lack of labor market information on which to base guidance and counseling, or indeed, the more general job matching function fulfilled by public (and increasingly private) employment services. Such information is also required for monitoring and evaluation of labor market interventions. Although progress is being made in collecting appropriate labor market information in ECA countries through regular labor force surveys, experience shows that the importance of this task is generally underestimated. Appropriate labor market data need to be collected and packaged in a way that is useful for guidance and counseling services in their efforts to help young job seekers.
II. EXERCISING ACTIVE YOUTH CITIZENSHIP:  
A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

What we learn in formal settings (schools, colleges, training centers, etc.) is only one part of acquiring skills. We learn in non-formal and informal settings too (e.g., youth clubs, sports associations, within the family, in political life).

EUROPEAN COMMISSION WHITE PAPER, 
“A NEW IMPETUS FOR EUROPEAN YOUTH,” 2001

… there are no places to go, nothing to kill time. In the villages, we have no stadium, we play on the road. We have no libraries and no books. We have no television except state television.⁴⁶

RURAL STUDENT IN UZBEKISTAN

The 2007 World Development Report Development and the Next Generation refers to active citizenship as the process by which “individuals should hold public officials accountable for their actions, demand justice for themselves and others, tolerate people who are ethnically or religiously different, and feel solidarity with their fellow citizens…” (World Bank 2006h). The notion of active youth citizenship implies that young people are not only recipients of rights and obligations, but also important actors, initiators and partners of citizenship activities and policies (EC 2001). Young people’s active engagement can benefit society by providing alternative mechanisms for delivering services, mobilizing democratic processes, challenging institutions and embracing new ideas. In many countries, youth have played crucial roles in social and political transitions, contributing to democratic accountability.

Accordingly, the European framework for youth policy developed by the Council of Europe situates young people as active citizens at the core of youth policy development. According to this framework, exercising active youth citizenship is not an exclusive task of youth policy—other policy domains should work equally towards the same goal, i.e., policies relating to schools, the labor market, civil society, social protection and justice. Therefore, this framework envisages a comprehensive set of youth policy instruments that offer young people opportunities through which they can acquire multidimensional skills and experiences. This framework considers non-formal education and learning, a process of social learning centered on the learner that is realized through activities outside of the formal education system, “one of the key approaches of youth policy” (Council of Europe 2007).⁴⁷

A holistic approach to support youth in their transition to work and citizenship lends itself well to the countries of ECA, given their shared history of active youth engagement practices. Aside

⁴⁵ This section draws on a background paper prepared for the Rome 2007 Youth Conference by World Bank social scientists Kathleen Kuehnast, Alexandra Habershon and Sophia Georgieva.
⁴⁶ Interview with rural students (Uzbekistan, March 2003), as documented in ICG (2003).
⁴⁷ Non-formal education/learning is by definition voluntary and intentional, and covers a wide variety of learning fields: youth work, youth clubs, sports associations, voluntary service, and many other activities which organize learning experiences, all of which aim at conveying and practicing the values and skills of democratic life.
from the ideological implications of youth programming before 1991, non-formal education and leisure opportunities were widely available in both urban and rural areas. These opportunities included movie theatres, even in small villages, youth theatre, ballet, dancing groups, hobby circles, youth television and newspapers, contests, discos and sport centers. Apprenticeship opportunities were also available to students at the secondary level through summer work brigades, in which they often gained practical work experiences, as well as formed friendships that lasted throughout their adulthood. Although it is important not to idealize the “forced volunteerism,” many still view it as a source of positive formative experience.

**Challenges and Opportunities for Active Youth Participation in ECA**

Young people have been major players advocating for positive social and political change in the ECA region through their participation in democratization processes, peace and tolerance movements and anti-corruption efforts. In Serbia, for instance, the student movement Otpor played a key role in ousting Milosevic in 2000. The movement relied on a philosophy of non-violent resistance, used ubiquitous slogans and attempted to include rather than oppose local law-enforcement officials. In Georgia, the youth movement Kmara organized anti-government protests and called for free elections. The protests that it spearheaded in Tblisi in the summer and fall of 2003 led to the resignation of the president, a series of events known as the Rose Revolution. Similar youth movements have emerged in other countries of the region, such as Kelkel in Kyrgyzstan. Most of these movements have subsequently faded when their leadership was absorbed into different political organizations; therefore it is difficult to note any significant and lasting youth-driven institutional change process.

Many young people in the EU-NMS and non-member states alike are experiencing growing disillusionment with the citizenship opportunities offered in their own countries. Little empirical data exists on the evolving perspectives of active youth citizenship across ECA countries, but available surveys point to greater disillusionment among ECA youth about their influence on decision making, compared to youth in the EU-15 member states. In a 2004 survey of young people in EU and Eastern Europe, 34 percent of youth aged 18 to 29 in the NMS states and 37 percent of youth in Russia strongly agreed with the statement that the government does not care what they think, compared to 18 percent in the older EU states (ZACAT 2004). In the 2001 “Young Voices” UNICEF survey, 35 percent of young people in Western European countries did not believe that their opinions were taken into account by local government, compared to 41 percent in the ECA region. A recent survey in Kosovo, moreover, showed that around 80 percent of young people felt they could not have any impact on issues happening in their municipality (UNDP 2006).

At the same time, the political, geographic and economic interdependence of the ECA region has reinforced a more pervasive European Union presence within the region following its

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Because access to radios, televisions and new media such as the Internet is so much greater than it was in a decade ago, young people are more aware of what is going on in the world and possibly have higher expectations than their parents (World Bank 2006h). Yet while availability of the Internet is on the rise throughout ECA, great disparities remain among the various sub-regions and great access disparities continue to plague individual countries.
ongoing enlargement in May 2004 and January 2007. Even before the accession of post-transition states as EU members, the EU was considered a strong motivating force for youth policy development in the region, including its messages of civic values, participation, human rights and tolerance. Initiatives such as the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI),⁴⁹ which began in January 2007 and whose partners include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine and the Russian Federation, have linked EU opportunities and policies to young people in ECA far beyond the current border of the EU. The initiatives emphasize cooperation on youth issues through training and student exchanges, as well as through updating educational standards with the goal of convergence with EU standards. Under Article 14 of the ENPI Regulation, youth organizations from all partner states are eligible for funding to implement action programs and joint cross-border cooperation programs (European Union 2006).

The EU Commission’s “Youth in Action” Program is very relevant to advancing youth opportunities in the region. It has, for example, extended non-formal training programs in civic action and program development skills to a number of non-member states, including countries in the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova and Belarus.⁵⁰ The program’s objectives are to promote young people’s active citizenship (and European citizenship values in particular) to develop solidarity and tolerance among young people, foster social cohesion within the EU and between the EU and its neighbors, and contribute to the capacity of national youth support systems and civil society organizations in the youth development field. Implemented jointly with national authorities, national youth-in-action agencies and a network of trainers, the program is developing both local capacity and regional cooperation in youth affairs. Training exchange programs for youth are another priority of the EU/Eurasian Neighborhood Policies and Partnership Agreements.

EU programs complement national initiatives for youth development in Central Asia.

EU financing for youth development is becoming available through a Development Cooperation and Economic Cooperation Instrument (DCECI) targeted to several geographic areas, including Central Asia. This instrument will provide a useful complement to various national initiatives which have been established in Central Asia: the Umid Fund of Uzbekistan, Balashak scholarships of Kazakhstan, and the “Cadres for the XXI Century” program of Kyrgyzstan. The Umid (meaning “hope”) Fund, an Uzbekistan state effort to promote youth development, sends high-achieving college and graduate students abroad for two to three years (Kuehnast 2004). The Kazakhstan Bolashak (meaning “future”) Presidential Scholarships, established in 1993, support students majoring in economics, oil and gas engineering, agricultural, transport, computer engineering, international relations and public affairs to attend renowned universities in the USA, UK, Australia, Canada, France, Germany and Japan.⁵¹ And the Kyrgyzstan “Cadres for the XXI Century” program supports study abroad. Encouraging graduates to return is an especially effective way of investing in youth development and overall development in Central Asia, where opportunities for mobility are generally very low. However, information on and access to these programs remains mainly limited to capital cities.

⁵⁰ These programs are offered by the Salto-Youth Resource Centers in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.
EU integration is a significant concern of the Central European Initiative, whose members include Albania, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Moldova, Macedonia, Ukraine, Serbia and Montenegro and underlies prominent youth movements in the region: MJAFT in Albania, Zubr in Belarus and Pora in Ukraine. The beginnings of EU negotiations to facilitate the visa process with Western Balkan countries (i.e., Albania, Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia) in November 2006 signals not only greater opportunities for youth mobility, but also a progress toward an expanding notion of citizenship and values that include, but also go beyond, young people’s relationships with national authorities.

Opportunities for mobility, improved visa regimes and flexible labor markets are less significant, however, in the context of young people’s limited opportunities to successfully complete transitions to work and citizenship. A UNDP survey in 2000 showed that 60 percent of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina were willing to leave the country if they had the opportunity. In 2002, nearly all of Moldovan youth responded they would emigrate if given the chance. In Macedonia, 85 percent of students qualified to find work abroad reported that they were either considering or had taken concrete steps to emigrate (LaCava, Lytle, and Kolev 2006). Two thirds of young Central Asians reportedly want to leave the region and a growing number do migrate, mostly to Russia or Kazakhstan (ICG 2003). Recent analyses of migration flows from ECA countries acknowledge costly side effects, ranging from human trafficking to national brain drains to increasing social vulnerability of children and young people left behind by migrant parents. But if adequate policies and levels of investments—particularly those directed at youth—were put in place, this situation could be reversed. A recent World Bank study, for example, concludes that “Improvements in the overall quality of life in sending countries have the potential to (a) reduce out-migration rates, (b) induce migrants in the diaspora to return home and (c) provide incentives for migrants to use the human and financial capital, including remittances, accumulated abroad at home” (Mansoor and Quillin 2006).

Developing Capabilities for Youth Engagement as Active Citizens

Establishing systematic linkages among local and national authorities, NGOs and the private sector can maximize the impact of youth programming. Promoting active citizenship among youth requires establishing institutions of accountability in government, as well as enhancing civil society and youth participation (World Bank 2006h). In recent years, most countries in ECA have developed some form of youth legislation and national youth policies and actions plans, although funding to implement them has been limited. The Council of Europe, whose membership extends to most ECA countries, has been an influential actor in promoting youth cooperation and policy, particularly in the areas of diversity, participation and human rights. In fact, the Council’s “Eleven Indicators of a National Youth Policy” (shown below in Box 1) have helped provide a set of guidelines on youth policy both for state authorities and grassroots organizations.

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52 Much of the emigration in Western ECA is directed towards Western Europe, while most emigration from CIS countries remains within the CIS.
53 ICG (2003); UNICEF (2006); and Mansoor and Quillin (2006).
54 States can facilitate, hinder or play a neutral role in developing youth active citizenship. For a more detailed discussion of the role of the state as an agent for youth citizenship, see La Cava, Ozbil and Michael (2006).
55 Except Belarus, Montenegro and the Central Asian Republics.
When youth policies at the national level have not been formulated and/or implemented successfully, regional and local policy can fill the gap, as demonstrated by Russia’s Saratov region. On the basis of the Law on State Support for Youth and Children’s Public Associations (1998) and Law on Youth Policy in Saratov Oblast (2001), a number of administrative acts were adopted to guide government/NGO cooperation and funding of youth programs. The Ministry of Youth Policy, Sport, and Tourism of the oblast created an expert council of NGO leaders and ministry representatives, set up a grant fund and held annual grant competitions among youth and children’s associations in the region (Lesniakova 2003). The European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, ratified by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (Council of Europe), provides a policy framework for this type of bottom-up activity.

Effective national strategies to support active youth citizenship can be structured in various ways, but adequate budgets and adequate institutional capacity to coordinate youth policy across sectors and monitor outcomes are necessary pre-conditions. The Macedonian National Youth Strategy, for example, is being administered by a youth-specific body, the Agency for Youth and Sports (AYS), in cooperation with representatives of youth coordination associations. An inter-ministerial steering committee was created by governmental decision in 2005. It consists of 12 representatives of youth organizations and 12 representatives of different ministries and state agencies and is chaired by the State Agency for Youth and Sport. Between 2002 and 2007, the central budget allocation for the Youth Department of the AYS increased by 60 percent (from 10 million to 16 million Macedonian dinars), in addition to an increase of municipal funds for youth programming.

The National Program on Youth in Slovenia provides an alternative model of mainstreaming youth policy. This program is being implemented by line ministries via their respective sector...
One key aspect of the program is that it highlights cooperation with the NGO sector and support for grassroots organizations through an “increase in the number of international, regional and local youth centers and local youth councils and improvements in the conditions for their performance.”

Among the EU-15, Spain’s Integrated Youth Plan can be considered a best-practice program for addressing youth needs and reducing social exclusion. The plan includes participatory youth policy development in municipalities, creation of national youth institutions (the Spanish Youth Institute, Council of Spanish Youth, inter-ministerial youth committees, local youth centers and youth councils), and the provision of decentralized assistance in the areas of education, quality of life and youth participation, among others.

One of the core principles of youth policy elaborated by the Council of Europe is that of co-management, which supports the structured involvement of youth organizations in the design and implementation of youth policies, in partnership with local, national and international bodies. In practice, however, very few National Youth Councils have strong bottom-up representation and fully represent the youth constituency at the policy level of their respective countries. The European Youth Forum, in its capacity as the European umbrella youth organization that represents the youth constituency of most member countries of the Council of Europe, is working to strengthen the role of National Youth Councils. Local NGOs and community organizations are essential for enhancing the capacity of young people to overcome participation barriers, be they cultural or institutional. These councils provide a space where young people can learn citizenship skills, and experience the opportunities and challenges of participating in decisions and taking action with other young people. Unfortunately, less than 5 percent of young people in South Eastern Europe, for example, are currently involved in youth organizations (UNDP 2006), a participation rate similar in the remaining post-transition countries of the ECA region.

Youth parliaments have emerged at national and local levels throughout Eastern Europe and Central Asia as a form of direct youth participation, allowing youth to influence public policies and legislation that affect their lives (UNICEF 2001a). Although promising, these fora have yet to be evaluated in terms of their institutional impact and long-term sustainability. Issues of youth engagement addressed by such parliaments have ranged from participation in national and local governments to youth-led surveys and policy proposals to awareness-raising campaigns on HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. The Ryazan Youth Parliament, for example, was the first such parliament established in the Russian Federation at the district level and was attached to the oblast Duma. Among its activities was the establishment of legal-issue awareness among students, legal consultations with young people on army draft procedures and obtaining housing and mortgages for young families on preferential terms.

In a region where most programs on youth civic training and youth participation have been initiated and heavily funded by international actors, it is important to ensure the sustainability of youth initiatives by developing and formalizing grassroots initiatives that

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57 For a brief assessment of Spain’s Integrated Plan, see La Cava and Michael (2006).
can be taken forward by local youth civil society. Since the early 1990s, many international actors (e.g., bilateral and multilateral donors, international NGOs and foundations) have stepped forward to fill national institutional gaps and address certain key risks for youth associated with transition and conflict. Most international programs are temporary, however, whereas the process of building youth capabilities for active citizenship is a continuous and iterative endeavor. In this context, some of the most successful international youth initiatives are those in which external youth initiatives have been transformed into independent local organizations or networks through wide grassroots youth participation.

Good practices in creating grassroots youth organizations can be seen in the Kosovo Youth Network (KYN), the Youth Information Agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina (OIA) ⁵⁸ and the newly created Babylon Youth Centers Network in Macedonia. The Kosovo Youth Network emerged from the Youth Post Conflict Participation Program of the UNDP/International Rescue Committee in 2001. The mission and structure of the network were defined by a Kosovo-wide youth congress in June 2001 and subsequently reworked through a series of meetings with youth. Currently, the KYN is an independent network representing over 100 youth centers and organizations throughout Kosovo. It addresses issues such as youth participation, youth mobility, drug abuse and unemployment, and as such, plays a key role in maintaining active dialogue on youth risks and opportunities for engagement in the region.

The Youth Information Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) originated in an Open Society Institute initiative of 2000, which facilitated the formation of local youth councils in all areas of BiH in 2001. In the same year, a Joint Youth Program brought all local youth councils together at a conference to discuss their systematic participation in society and options for a coherent state youth policy, using lessons from the Slovenian experience. Currently, the BiH Youth Information Agency is a major local actor that coordinates youth activities aimed at facilitating active youth engagement in the political process.

More recently, the Babylon Youth Centers in Macedonia (see Box 2), established through a joint effort of Italy’s Development Cooperation and the World Bank, have created a national network of 33 community-based youth friendly centers that offer free non-formal education modules (life skills, livelihood skills, IT training, language training and creative activities) through highly trained teams of young educators.⁵⁹

In addition, the Junior Achievement programs begun by the Open Society Institute have been especially effective in encouraging youth entrepreneurial learning across many ECA countries, from South Eastern Europe to the CIS (e.g. the Azerbaijan Connections and Exchange Program,⁶⁰ Junior Achievement in Tajikistan,⁶¹ Junior Achievement in Uzbekistan, etc.). These programs, initially funded by OSI and currently run with sustainable local resources, have exposed youth and teachers to new styles of teaching, especially in economics and free enterprise, both within their individual countries and through educational exchanges.

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⁵⁹ UNICEF initially provided the content for the life skills, creativity and language training modules for younger children.
Box 2. Macedonia Children and Youth Development Project

The main development objective of the Macedonia Children and Youth Development Project, part of a World Bank IDA credit approved in June 2001 amid escalating inter-ethnic conflict, was to significantly increase social cohesion. Its goal was the social integration of youth-at-risk from different socio-cultural backgrounds. The project has annually benefited almost 16,000 disadvantaged youth through its regular activities, as well as 2,000 youth in programs outside centers. The project’s outcomes and lessons were measured through an impact evaluation conducted at project’s closure, in the summer of 2006.

First, non-formal education programs offered by community-based youth centers provided much-needed additional skills that complemented the country’s secondary school curricula, supporting young people in their transition to work and active citizenship. The life and livelihood skills, such as problem solving, creative thinking, team building and IT and language training, provided in youth-friendly environments were instrumental in increasing young people’s self-esteem and overall sense of empowerment, as highlighted in beneficiary surveys. The Babylon Youth Centers also supported schools by providing school-based extracurricular activities. They worked with special categories of students in cooperation with school personnel to reach out to youth with obstacles to learning, young violent and criminal backgrounds, and school drop-outs. Second, program experience showed that (i) non-formal learning opportunities provided through community-based youth friendly facilities can be extremely cost effective and (ii) greater success is achieved when institutional and financial sustainability are emphasized at the beginning of project implementation, leading to early community engagement.

With respect to its social integration development objective, the data on trends in youth violence available for one rural community suggest a correlation between BYC activities and the reduction of violent behavior among youth. According to official police records in the rural community of Caska, violent behavior among young people significantly dropped as a percentage of the total number of registered cases after a center was established there. In addition, project impact evaluation analysis showed that the longer young people benefited from youth center programs, the more actively they became engaged in community affairs, including participating in youth organizations, directly interacting with municipalities and taking part in peaceful demonstrations. Finally, the impact evaluation analysis showed that 18-year-olds who spent more than two years in the BYCs (benefiting from IT training, English-language training and basic livelihood skills) were more likely to be employed (either as employees or self-employed) than 18-year-olds with only one year or less of exposure to youth center programming. However, young females overall were less likely to be employed than males.


Much could be done to expand young people’s skills for life, work, sports and leisure through youth-friendly spaces with an emphasis on local, low-cost solutions accessible to a large number of disadvantaged youth. It is important that such interventions be rigorously evaluated so as to allow for dissemination of the outcomes on young people based on empirical evidence.

Overall, the success of national youth strategies and investments is contingent upon the collection of adequate data on youth trends and evaluations of the outcomes of youth policy and investments in terms of young people’s well being. Time series and comparable data sets across countries are much needed, together with survey data on evolving youth perceptions. Apart from their role as local partners or initiators of youth projects, local youth networks and NGOs can thus be important partners in participatory youth research.

Addressing Failed Citizenship through Second Chances

Policies that help young people recover from negative outcomes, referred to as “second-chance” policies, are very much needed in the ECA Region. When policies fail to integrate the large, politically visible and sensitive youth group into the development process, their views and actions can pose risks with socially disruptive ramifications (World Bank 2005c). Failed citizenship has various dimensions—young people turn to crime and religious extremism or can become marginalized or victims of violence. Poverty is often a common denominator of all of these dimensions. Lack of education and employment, for example, can portend a lifetime of poverty. Many youth from ethnic minorities are disadvantaged in education due to the unavailability of mother-tongue instruction and the irrelevance of the curriculum to their lives, and see few options but to engage in high-risk behaviors.

62 Data on trends in youth violence for one rural location indicate that the Babylon Youth Center (BYC) appears to have been instrumental in contributing to the reduction of violent youth behavior among youth. According to official police records in the rural community of Caska, violent behavior among youth (up to age 24) decreased by fifty percent over a two-year period following the creation of the center, and petty crime decreased by almost 50 percent. Local police, who worked closely with the center in the implementation of awareness programs, attributed the decrease in violent behavior to BYC activities that addressed youth joblessness in after-school hours. World Bank (2007a).
The number of young people in conflict with the law has risen dramatically across the ECA region in recent years—one of the most visible costs of failed citizenship. In some cases, the number of juvenile offenders increased by over 100 percent in the first six years following transition (UNICEF 2002b). The International Center for Prison Studies identified the highest rates of incarceration of young people in the Russian Federation, followed by Belarus, Ukraine and the United States. This regional trend has many contributing factors, including growing youth joblessness, political unrest and, in some cases, armed conflict. The large numbers of young people in detention, and of young people who have become victims of violence and crime, have drawn attention to the need for policies and institutional capabilities that provide young offenders and other at-risk youth with second chances to support their successful transition to adulthood and active citizenship.

Although particular circumstances differ across the region, the social and economic costs of failed citizenship as a consequence of youth crime are increasingly relevant region-wide (see Box 3). States hold a responsibility for creating conditions that help prevent crime and violence among young people, and for protecting minors from the risk of harm. They can also invest in their social capital by supporting the social re-integration of young people who have come into conflict with the law.

### Box 3. Among the Costs of Failed Citizenship: Youth Crime

The annual public and private costs of a career criminal to society include victim costs, criminal justice-related costs, and the opportunity costs of offenders’ time during incarceration. Applying the methodology developed by Cohen,* Behrman and Knowles, the total estimated social cost of a career criminal in Serbia and Montenegro in 2002 was estimated at US$42,594.

These calculations assume that a criminal career spans the ages of 14 to 23, that a criminal will commit an average of ten crimes as a juvenile (ages 14–17), 63 crimes as an adult (18–23), and will be incarcerated for an average of 8 years.


Source: LaCava et al. (2006).

Lack of trained staff, appropriate facilities or probationary alternatives for dealing with young offenders often means that young people end up serving sentences or spending pre-trial detention in adult facilities, sometimes in maximum-security prisons. Despite the fact that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which is almost universally ratified, stipulates that incarceration of minors should be a last resort, it is still far from universally applied in practice.

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*In spite of overall reductions in crime rates, juvenile crime rates now exceed general crime rates in transition countries. For example, one-third of Macedonian offenders arrested in 2000 were juveniles. Crime rates in Russia among youth aged 14–29 increased by about 8 percent between 1995 and 2003. The severity of crimes committed by young people in the Russian Federation is also increasing. The number of offenders under the age of 30 sentenced for murder increased from 3,900 in 1990 to 10,600 in 2002, and for drug-related offenses from 5,000 to 62,000. *M. Agronovich et al. (2006).


*National or regional data for incarcerated youth, or data disaggregated by gender and age are hard to come by. In terms of incarceration rates, the Russian Federation has experienced a somewhat positive trend with a decrease in the absolute number of juvenile offenders in prisons from 32,000 in 1993 to 25,000 at the end of 2003, but Russia nonetheless remains one of the world leaders in terms of the number of young people in prisons (17 per 100,000 population). There was also a significant increase in the use of prison sentences for young offenders in the Russian Federation (136 percent) between 1990 and 1998), UNICEF (2002); LaCava, Lytle and Kolev (2006).

*Although international conventions do not stipulate a specific age for criminal responsibility, the UNCRC requires that states establish a minimum age “below which children shall be presumed not to have the capacity to infringe the penal law,” and Human Rights conventions propose that beyond that age young people who are subject to criminal laws but not yet regarded as adults by the justice system be treated through measures that support their protection, assistance, supervision or education rather than through criminal sanctions, and that treatment be commensurate with the minor’s emotional, mental and intellectual maturity. Age of criminal responsibility in ECA ranges, for e.g., from age 10 in Ukraine, 11 in Turkey, 13 in Poland and Uzbekistan, 14 in RF, Lithuania and Hungary. The practice in many EU countries is a system wherein ‘relative’ criminal responsibility begins at age 13 or 14 entailing special court procedures for juveniles, and ‘full’ criminal responsibility begins at age 18. In the UK criminal responsibility begins earlier for e.g. at 8 (in Scotland) and 10 (England). For legal implications of the CRC on age of criminal responsibility see Alston and Tobin (2005).
In addition to a growing number of young people serving custodial sentences, the number in pre-trial detention is also high and on the increase due to backlogs in the courts, leaving many young people languishing in prisons for periods of months or years. In Albania, for example, 80 percent of young people arrested on charges of theft spend up to two years in pre-trial detention due to backlogs in courts. The implementation of conventions like the CRC is made more challenging by gaps and weaknesses in the institutional capabilities of courts and law enforcement agencies.

Alternatives to predominantly retributive models of criminal justice, such as restorative justice, are gaining visibility and acceptance in the region. Restorative justice programs, which have been integrated to varying degrees in judicial systems around the world, focus on accountability rather than on retribution as a means to prevent re-offending. They encompass a broad range of strategies and procedures that aim to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation among victims, offenders and communities. Using voluntary mechanisms, these programs encourage the reintegratio of offenders and promote more stable and peaceful communities (McEvoy and Eriksson 2006). Techniques that have shown positive results include victim-offender mediation (VOM), family group conferencing (FGC), citizen panels, supervision measures and other procedures that introduce or expand probation mechanisms for young offenders. They have been applied in post-conflict settings with some positive results.

The success of restorative justice practices has been credited in part to the fact that victims, offenders and community members are treated as stakeholders and active participants in the decision-making process towards reaching a mutually positive outcome. Restoration often involves compensation for harm done (either in monetary form or an activity in the interest of the victim). Restorative justice and diversion programs are not suitable in all cases, but where applicable can yield positive impacts for the offender, the community and the state. Restorative justice programs are associated, for example, with lower recidivism rates than harsh sentences or incarceration alongside adult or seasoned criminals. In Russia, 57 percent of all offenses committed by young people are relapse offenses; the probability of recidivism increases among younger offenders and offender that have been placed in detention (M. Agranovich et al. 2006).

Advantages of restorative justice programs for the state include the elimination of costs associated with custodial sentences and attendant costs of rehabilitation and reintegration post-release, as well as a reduction in caseload and better use of resources for the courts.

A number of countries in the ECA region have both legislation and procedures that support restorative practices, such as victim-offender mediation (for example in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia). Other countries lack legislation but have experimented with pilot programs (Russia, Ukraine). Reconciliation procedures also exist in the region, but according to OSCE/ODIHR studies, these are largely unregulated and unsupervised. Still other countries...
are laying the groundwork to establish frameworks and institutions for specialized juvenile justice procedures. Azerbaijan, for example, is establishing its first specialized juvenile justice court under a pilot project with assistance from UNICEF and a World Bank Judicial Modernization Project. It is also training judges in international juvenile justice standards. Kyrgyzstan is undertaking mapping exercises to identify currently available formal and informal resources for juvenile justice.

There are, however, significant challenges to the adoption of restorative justice programs in the ECA region, including resistance to change by police, prosecutors and judges, who may fear the competition from alternatives; an uncritical reliance on incarceration; and a generally highly punitive attitude among the public and policy makers (Johnstone and Van Ness 2006). International experience shows that for second-chance policies for youth to be effective, legal and judicial reforms need to make provision for such mechanisms as the creation of specialized police units trained to deal with young people either as victims of crime or as agents of crime and violence; specialized juvenile magistrates, prosecutors and public defenders to ensure the enforcement of special rights and protections for young offenders; mechanisms for fast-track handling of young people in pre-trial detention; training in juvenile justice issues and law reform for court personnel, as well as social workers and mediators; and the creation of legal aid and legal assistance for minors. Information and training on international standards and best practices for law-enforcement officials, prosecutors, judges, and lawyers can also build support and reduce resistance to change among stakeholders.

State institutions can be more effective at reaching out to vulnerable youth when they enter into partnerships with non-governmental groups, the private sector, and other civil society and community organizations. These groups are often highly effective at mobilizing resources and community networks, and may more readily inspire trust and confidence among young people. Engaging in partnerships with informal community authorities, such as the council of elders (aksakal or mahallas in Central Asia) could be explored as potentially beneficial to the mainstreaming of restorative justice initiatives, with a view both to formalizing the rights of young offenders within community dispute resolution practices and to involving communities as stakeholders in the judicial process.⁷³

Amidst the vacuum left by declining state-supported youth services, the risk of failed citizenship is particularly high for young people in certain areas of the Caucasus and Central Asia, where youth “bulges” persist⁷⁴ and young people may become attracted to militant Islam advocated by such organizations as Hizb-ut Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.⁷⁵ Members of these organizations are educated and trained in militant Islam in

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⁷² Such measures are all the more necessary given that in many ECA countries, the police inspire even less trust among young people than the courts. The percentage of young people (ages 15–29) in countries surveyed in the region who expressed “not very much” confidence in the police ranged from 13 percent in Turkey to 54 percent in the Czech Republic; whereas those who expressed “not very much” confidence in the justice system ranged from 17 percent in Turkey to 60 percent in Lithuania (World Values Survey, 1981–2004). Corruption among police was cited by young people as the cause for low confidence in the North Caucasus (LaCava and Michael 2006).

⁷³ This is an area that warrants further study, particularly since dispute resolution or “reconciliation” is commonly undertaken by these informal bodies with the participation or tacit consent of police and prosecutors. As such, partnership with these community bodies in youth justice reform would seem to be indicated rather than just beneficial.

⁷⁴ Studies suggest that a so-called “youth bulge”—a high proportion of youth in comparison to the total population—represents a serious potential source of conflict, particularly in countries facing deep economic problems.⁷⁵ The majority of young people in Central Asia and the North Caucasus Republics of the Russian Federation claim to be religious. The overwhelming majority are Muslims, mostly Sunnis. In some of these areas, religious organizations are offering alternative services not provided by state administrations, such as medical and hospital facilities; kindergartens, schools and after-school programs; and a variety of social welfare services. See Sotsialny portret molodezhi tsentralnoi Azii v aspekte obespecheniya gosudarstvennoi i regionalnoi bezapostnosti [A social portrait of youth in Central Asia from the standpoint of state and regional security], Izhitimoi Fikr Center for Public Opinion, Astana-Bishkek-Dushanbe-Tashkent, 2002, as cited in ICG (2003). Also see La Cava, Lytle and Kolev (2006).
local religious schools, where the cost of education is only a fraction of that in secular schools and universities, and where tuition, lodging and food expenses are often also subsidized (ICG 2003). According to the International Crisis Group, the numbers of young people in these ECA sub-regions who are actually involved in radical Islam or other potentially destabilizing groups is still limited, but “behind those who actually join up is a much larger disaffected group that sees little hope in the future…” (ICG 2003).

These circumstances call for an urgent conflict-prevention strategy centered on teenagers and youth in certain areas of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Ideally, such a strategy should include targeted interventions that offer free services in the following areas: remedial education, support to youth engagement in community life, non-formal education, leisure and sports, and active labor market interventions to support work-based training and youth entrepreneurship. Development of the conflict-prevention strategy should also involve active collaboration with religious institutions in the targeted areas. This approach to conflict prevention has been suggested in a recent World Bank policy report on the North Caucasus (LaCava and Michael 2006) and was embodied in subsequent conflict-prevention grants for youth in that sub-region, as well as in Tajikistan.

Labor migration is directly affecting citizenship outcomes in the ECA region, incurring high social and economic costs that are felt not only by the young people directly affected, but also by the economies of the sending countries (IOM 2005). This type of migration poses a double risk for young people: those who are left behind by one or both parents⁷⁶ and young people who themselves become labor migrants. Migration inevitably results in the weakening or loss of family structures and community support networks.

For children born to labor migrants abroad, these risks are compounded by the legal and social risks associated with low rates of birth registration among undocumented migrants and, subsequently, the lack of a legal identity in their country of residence. Lack of a birth certificate may, for example, prevent a child from being enrolled in school. Later in childhood, identity documents can help protect children against early marriage, child labor, premature enlistment in the armed forces or, if accused of a crime, prosecution as an adult (UNICEF 2004a).⁷⁷ In the event of arrest and detention children may be separated from their parent(s) and in some cases may be repatriated without adults. Undocumented children are particularly vulnerable to being trafficked. Policies that promote circular migration by formalizing the status of temporary migrant workers in receiving countries, and providing incentives for return and reintegration in sending countries could offset the social costs of migration, and mitigate the negative outcomes suffered by young people as a consequence of displacement.⁷⁸

The consequences of youth being displaced as a result of conflict are also adversely affecting life-long outcomes for youth in the ECA region. For example, almost 90 percent of the over 200,000 people displaced in Serbia and Montenegro during the Balkan conflict live below the

⁷⁶ For a detailed study of the psychosocial and economic impacts of parent migration on children in Moldova, see CIDDC/UNICEF (2006).
⁷⁷ In 2000, 10 percent of births in CEE/CIS countries were unregistered, compared to 41 percent globally and 2 percent in “industrialized countries” (UNICEF 2001b).
⁷⁸ The ILO Action Plan on Migrant Workers, adopted in 2004, provides a framework for putting policy into action through multilateral approaches.
poverty line, almost exactly the reverse of that of the resident population.⁷⁹ In Azerbaijan, where according to Internal Displacement Monitoring Center data, there are still up to an estimated 690,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) 13 years after the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, prospects for children and young people in the “New Settlements” are very limited. There is consequently a need for interventions both locally, to identify needs and create sustainable opportunities in settlement camps, and nationally, to enhance youth-positive impacts of settlement planning and management.

Large numbers of young people in the ECA region are also being displaced against their will for exploitation in forced labor, begging, and the sex trade. Trafficking in persons has become a pressing national and regional issue for many countries in ECA Surtees (2005).⁸⁰ In South-Eastern Europe, 90 percent of foreign women working in prostitution are alleged victims of trafficking; 10–15 percent of these victims are girls under the age of 18.⁸¹ The number of trafficked women and children from, through, and into SEE account for a significant proportion of totals worldwide.⁸² The human and social cost⁸³ of trafficking calls for massive and concerted prevention efforts by all affected states. Interventions also need to be developed or scaled-up to address the reintegration needs of large numbers of victims, whose plight is often exacerbated by law enforcement agencies or social services that are ill-equipped to address their special circumstances. The reintegration of victims of trafficking is made more difficult by their criminalization at the hands of law enforcement agencies. Without appropriate support services, cross-border cooperation and reintegration mechanisms, children and young women who have been trafficked for exploitation in the sex industry are vulnerable to further abuse upon repatriation.

Young people in ECA who are members of national minorities frequently experience increased social and economic exclusion as a result of discrimination.⁸⁴ Minorities are more likely to be excluded from having a voice in communities or of participating in civic life. Excluded and disenchanted, these youth are more likely to take part in criminal or other risky behaviors.⁸⁵ Roma youth, for example, suffer massive unemployment due to their lack of formal skills and discrimination. (Half the estimated population of 7–9 million Roma, whose life expectancy is 10-15 years less than the average for the region, is under 20 years of age.) Exclusion is compounded by low birth registration rates among Roma, and concomitantly by the lack of identity documents, residence permits, and other documents required for eligibility for state-provided social welfare.

⁷⁹ According to a 2003 ICRC study, only 11.2 percent of the 227,800 people who fled their homes in Kosovo in 1999 have incomes placing them above the national poverty line (88.8 percent of the IDPs, or 202,300 people, have to survive on 2.40 euros per day or less). The ratio for the resident population is almost exactly the reverse, with only 10.6 percent living beneath the poverty line. ICRC (2003).
⁸⁰ In a 2003 report on the ECA region as a whole, the IOM highlighted human trafficking as a pressing issue in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan (IOM 2003a).
⁸¹ UNICEF, UNOCHR, OSCE, ODIHR (2003), as cited in UNICEF (2004a). UNICEF estimates that about 1.2 million children are channelled into the sex trade every year. See also Kelly (2005).
⁸² An estimated 175,000 persons from CEE and CIS countries are trafficked annually, that is, up to 25 percent of the 700,000 to 2 million people trafficked around the world each year (La Cava, Lytle, and Kolev 2006). See also Cler and Gomart (2005).
⁸³ The ILO estimates that the global economic gains from eliminating child labor, particularly sexual slavery, would be tens of billions of dollars annually, because of the added productivity that future generations of workers would bring with increased education and public health. ILO (2002a), as cited in IOM (2005b).
⁸⁴ The proportion of ethnic groups in secondary education is typically much lower than the group’s ratio among the total population, particularly in terms of female participation. In Bulgaria, for example, 89 percent of the Roma ethnic minority had primary education or less, and only 10 percent had some secondary education.
⁸⁵ In Kosovo in 2004, for example, youth violence amounted to a total cost of more than USD 220 million (La Cava, Lytle, and Kolev 2006).
Another minority group whose participation in social and economic life is restricted by discrimination are youth with disabilities. Many children with disabilities do not attend school because their families think that they do not need an education. Discriminatory attitudes and practices exclude disabled children from other forms of social support and interaction as well, ranging from leisure activities to employment training. Social inclusion for disabled youth has been supported through sports and leisure programs. Where available, the Internet has proved an invaluable tool for promoting the social, intellectual and emotional development of youth with disabilities and facilitating communication among them, as well as their active participation in broader social movements.

III. THE CASE FOR INTEGRATED YOUTH POLICY: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Any attempt to facilitate the entry of youth into productive employment must, of course, be centered around a strategy for growth and job creation as a whole. Job creation that leads to a general improvement in youth employment naturally requires a conducive investment climate. In fact, Rutkowski et al. (2005) found that differences in job creation across the region largely reflect differences in the investment climate. They also found that the main impediments to investment and, consequently, job creation are poor access to finance, excessive market regulations, administrative barriers and high rates of taxation, and not labor market regulation per se.

Nevertheless, specific investments are recommended to enhance youth integration into the ECA labor markets, even for aging countries with relatively smaller youth populations, so that young people can contribute more efficiently to economic growth and the pension systems of their respective countries. Specific investments are also required to expand youth engagement in active citizenship as a means of building social cohesion within and across neighboring countries. These investments include specific Active Labor Market Programs that have proven successful or promising, and youth programming centered on building skills for life, work and the exercise of active citizenship. These investments should be made part of a national integrated youth policy in individual ECA countries, complete with a monitoring and evaluation system to measure their impact. Gender-sensitive national youth policies should incorporate the crucial elements of (i) community-based, non-formal education led by young people and youth organizations, (ii) practical work experience and support to small businesses, and (iii) youth policies developed in conjunction with national and sub-regional youth councils and/or organizations, and (iv) a focus on disadvantaged youth.

The strength of these investments is that they are more specifically tailored to young people’s needs than are general sectoral policies and can impact the current situation more rapidly. Moreover, the costs of failed citizenship opportunities, such as crime and violence, the impact of labor migration on abandoned children, and the intergenerational transmission of poverty by out-of-school/out-of-work youth to the next generation, far exceed the cost of investing in targeted youth programming now. And the benefits of such programming can be reaped much

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86 It is estimated that nearly 180 million young people between 10 and 24 years of age live with a physical, sensory, intellectual or mental health disability. Approximately 150 million of them are living in developing countries (World Bank 2007d).
earlier than the benefits of long-term sectoral reforms, which by their nature require longer time frames.

**Investing in education to raise its quality and relevance is an essential pillar of youth policy in ECA, especially for countries with high rates of secondary school leaving.** Active Labor Market Programs and citizenship initiatives should be regarded, however, as a much-needed complement to—not a competitor for—investments in secondary and tertiary education for several reasons. These investments:

- reach out to out young people who have dropped out of school, creating a bridge between them and the school system by supporting them in returning to school or providing them with remedial education;

- help develop a range of extracurricular activities and experiences that were discontinued in many countries during the early 1990s, but are nevertheless in high demand among young people, especially in isolated and poor areas with limited access to leisure, information technology and useful work experience;

- offer young people who, for various reasons, will not return to secondary schooling opportunities for constructive use of their time, in lieu of being exposed to negative and costly outcomes for themselves and society as a whole;

- help stem youth out-migration from the region and where relevant, reducing the attraction of radical Islam among out-of-work/out-of-school Muslim youth.

Skeptics of such investments argue that (i) there is not enough evidence that these programs work and (ii) they would take away scarce resources from core investments in infrastructure, education and health sectors, among others. Both concerns could be addressed through a concerted effort. Regarding the first concern, investments that are considered either promising or have already demonstrated positive impact should be given a chance to be developed more widely so that rigorous evaluations can be initiated and the evidence made available throughout the region.

Regarding the second concern, investing in youth programs that are known to be cost-effective is certainly affordable for most ECA countries, which have undergone sustained growth and are not facing particular macroeconomic challenges. This category includes the EU-NMS, or accession countries, which also have access to the EU Youth in Action Program, and countries neighboring the EU that have access to its ENPI. For lower-income countries in the region, initial grant mobilization outside the limited IDA envelop is possible through various existing World Bank grant facilities (including the Post Conflict Fund, the Japanese Social Development Fund and the Development Grant Facility⁸⁷).

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⁸⁷ A multi-donor trust fund for youth employment, cosponsored by several multinational corporations, is in the process of being established at the World Bank. When available, it will provide grant funding to all regions served by the World Bank.
In addition to available bilateral funding, domestic budgetary resources and/or World Bank grants could also be matched by private philanthropy from corporations and foundations that have developed a focus on youth development. Donor coordination with the private sector, whose philanthropic donations are already much higher than IDA grants, will become ever more important to ensure that grant funding reaches countries in the region with the highest needs.

When we discuss “youth” we usually dwell on their problems, but this report has focused on the promise of youth and how policies can help youth fulfill their potential, which in turn can improve the quality of active citizenship and employment in the ECA region. Losing the young generation in this region to poverty and unemployment is not inevitable if national policy makers and international actors alike make investing in youth an urgent priority.
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APPENDIX 1: FIGURES

Figure 1. Even in ECA countries where the youth peak has already been reached, many countries are currently undergoing a relative boom in youth populations.

Note: The figures report estimates (1980–2003) and projections (2004–2020) of the youth population as a % of the total population in ECA countries.
Figure 2. The labor force participation rates of young people are falling throughout the ECA region.
Note: The figure reports labor market participation rates of young people (15–24), 1980-2005. Much of the data in these figures has been interpolated so not too much significance should be given to single observations, although, for the most part, the identified trends can be considered reliable. One exception is Armenia which is based on very few data points and should be considered relatively reliable only after 1997.
Figure 3. The incidence of youth unemployment is highest in SEE, but it is also very significant in EU-NMS.
Source: Compiled from ILO-KILM, Transmonee 2007 & UNECE database – see previous figures for web addresses. Note: The figure reports youth unemployment rates, 1992–2005, based on LFS data and ILO definition.
Figure 4. Joblessness is worse among youth than adults in the ECA region

Source: Staff calculation on the basis of WDR dataset of household surveys.
Note: The figure reports Youth and Adult Jobless Rates for ECA. The youth (or adult) jobless rate is calculated as number of young people (adults) who are neither in employment or education as a percentage of the youth (adult) population.
Figure 5. There appears to be a positive relation between the size of the informal sector and the extent of youth joblessness in ECA countries.


Note: The figure plots the rate of youth joblessness against the size of the informal sector.
This appendix offers a selective list of suggested areas of investment that should not be considered exhaustive, particularly for the education sector. These initiatives are presented as a basis for discussion. Please note that not all interventions will be relevant for all ECA countries and/or sub-regions.

**Education**

- Encourage critical thinking in students by improving the quality of teaching, textbooks and methodologies, including the use of classroom interaction instead of rote learning. In particular, invest in improving the quality and relevance of secondary education in ECA countries. It is crucial that educational reforms at this level lead to the teaching of skills needed to pursue ongoing life learning and meet the demands of a changing labor market, including analytical thinking and key behavioral skills, such as motivation, cooperation, and team building.
- Tackle corruption by enforcing greater transparency in examinations by instituting national examination systems outside the control of individual teachers, as well as instituting student participation in school governance.
- Balance the rising financial strain on parents with increased involvement in school management by parent groups.
- Merge general and vocational education. In line with current EU trends, skills-based secondary schooling, not vocational tracking, is recommended for most students, together with establishing more active links between schools and employers.
- Offer free remedial education to secondary school dropouts.
- Increase programs designed to boost school attendance in poor, rural areas, including school food programs, and design incentives for female students to complete schooling.

**Active Labor Market Policies**

- Institute Active Labor Market Policies (ALMPs) in Southeast Europe, the European Union new member states of Romania and Bulgaria, and the former Soviet Union to improve the employability of youth and redress the skills mismatch between secondary and vocational education and workplace requirements. Given the lag in educational reform in these countries, work-based training programs will be needed for some time to come, even as overall economic growth becomes more robust.
- Training contracts with built-in wage subsidies for employers to hire first-job seekers would in particular enable young workers to develop marketable job skills in real jobs without the guarantee of permanent employment.
- Provide strong economic incentives for young entrepreneurs and ease restrictions on the registration of new businesses and facilitate the access of young entrepreneurs to financing. Invest in small business development programs for this target group, featuring free business training and small loans.
- Implement monitoring and evaluation programs to evaluate the impact of ALMP programs. Such programs should begin with coherent baseline data and evaluate progress using clearly defined outcome indicators.
Enhancing Youth Citizenship

· Increase investments in youth programming to maximize the outreach and social impact of these programs. Focus on local, low-cost initiatives with good sustainability prospects.
· Invest in youth-friendly spaces for disadvantaged youth, particularly in SEE and the CIS-CAAA, that offer non-formal education (e.g., in life skills, livelihood skills, IT training, language training and creative activities), Internet access, and sports and leisure opportunities. In many such countries facilities (e.g., former Culture or Pioneer Houses) are still available, but require some physical rehabilitation.
· Continue to strengthen National Youth Councils to make them more representative of youth constituencies, as well as NGOs that are service providers for young people. Ensure the sustainability of youth NGOs by developing and formalizing grassroots’ initiatives. Establish systematic linkages among local and national authorities, youth NGOs and the private sector that can maximize the impact of youth programming.
· Invest in building the capacity of regional and municipal governments to conduct successful youth policies. Facilitate inter-ministerial cooperation on youth programming, particularly at the regional and local level, leading to collaborative efforts such as competitive grant funds for youth associations.
· Allow and encourage the formation of youth-oriented electronic and print media dealing with issues from the viewpoint of young people.
· Invest in developing restorative justice programs for young people instead of incarceration, working collaboratively with enforcement agencies, the courts, social services and community-based organizations.
· In collaboration with religious institutions in targeted areas, introduce conflict-prevention approaches in areas where Muslim youth bulges persist and young people may become attracted to militant Islam. Such a strategy should include targeted interventions that offer: free remedial education, support for youth engagement in community life, youth-friendly spaces and programs, and active labor market interventions to support work-based training and youth entrepreneurship.
· Create a monitoring and evaluation capacity to measure the impact of investments in youth citizenship programming. Mobilize youth to participate in much-needed research (with comparable data sets across the region) on youth perception and well-being.
Annex 6. List of Participants

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<td>Baiba Zelve</td>
<td>Youth Council of Latvia</td>
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<td>Eva Ikstena</td>
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<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>Juras Pozela</td>
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<td>Macedonia</td>
<td>Ivica Georgievski</td>
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<td>Ljuben Tevdovski</td>
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<td>Hristijan Jakulovski</td>
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<td>Ferki Demirovski</td>
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<td>Ismaili Ferdi</td>
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<td>Vladimir Curovic</td>
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<td>Alina Nicoleta Radu</td>
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<td>Radu Becherescu</td>
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**Nokia - World Bank Innovation Grants Competition**

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<td>Anna Belova</td>
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<td>Volha Kisel</td>
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<td>Adela Llatja</td>
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